

What happened when more than 100 people came together in Dublin on April 29, 2009 to explore the models of leadership and leadership development that Ireland needs ?



This document is the abundant harvest of the Authentic Leadership Café held at the Cultivate Living and Learning Centre.

This event was organised by :

Authentic Leadership in Action – www.aliainstitute.org
Burren Leadership Forum – www.burrenleadershipforum.ie
The Change Exploratory – www.changeexploratory.ie
Cultivate Living and Learning Centre – www.cultivate.ie
Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation – www.glencree.ie
Irish Coaching Development Network – www.icdn.ie

Introduction and Acknowledgements

This document is the 'harvest' from the Authentic Leadership Cafe held on Dublin on April 29th, 2009. (An event that was attended by over 100 people)

'Harvest', in this sense, means the product – the pulling together of all the rich material from the event into something that can both consolidate thinking and learning for the people who were there and also give some insight for people who are interested, but who were not present. There is a lot of stuff here – the point is for each of us to pick out the fruits and seeds that are useful to us – take your time letting tasting it, letting it all sink in and who knows what will germinate !

The event was set up with three objectives :

- a) Raising awareness of the global initiative "Authentic Leadership in Action" - known as ALIA
- b) Providing a networking opportunity for all those interested in the development of Authentic Leadership in Ireland
- c) Creating a seedbed for ideas and initiatives that will help the growth and development of the authentic leadership that Ireland needs today

More information on ALIA can be found at www.aliainstitute.org and specifically information about their first European event, scheduled for January 2010 at :

<http://www.aliainstitute.org/programs/2010europe/home.html>

We used a slideshow to help illustrate their work – this can be seen at :

<http://www.slideshare.net/secret/J8Nw2TCzeLDeOs>

The main part of the event used a World Cafe format (for more information re World Cafe as a way of working see <http://www.theworldcafe.com>)

Photos from the World Cafe are available at the following link :

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/chrischapmanireland/sets/72157617520462032>

We used a 'one world' wombat video – this is available at :

<http://www.globalcommunity.org/flash/wombat.shtml>

The rest of this 'harvest' is a summary of material from the World Cafe – it is explained as it goes along. The report concludes with an afterword.

Such an event is only possible with the support of many people: Cara Lynn Garvock and Susan Szpakowski from ALIA; Sheila Cannon from Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation; Ann Cleary, Martin Hawkes, Mary Hawkes-Greene and Paula from the Burren Leadership Forum; Alan Hayes; Davie Philips from Cultivate, Gerry Ryan from ICDN – the Irish Coaching Development Network and Helen Stanton were all to the fore and a pleasure to work with. On the day, many other people lent a hand for which we are very grateful.

A 'harvest' such as this is not and can never be perfect. Any errors, omissions or misinterpretations are entirely my responsibility. Having said that, any merits or great insights are the responsibility of all involved !

Chris Chapman – Facilitator – The Change Exploratory – May 7th, 2009.

Inspirational quotations

(these were peppered around the hall and have been re-produced here because some people asked us to !)

The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener. Our effectiveness as leaders depends not only on what we do and how we do it, but also on the inner place from where we operate, both individually and collectively. Bill O'Brien

To lead people, walk beside them. As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honour and praise; the next the people fear and the next the people hate. When the best leaders' work is done, the people say "we did it ourselves" Lao-tsu.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead.

Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. Covey.

We must become the change we seek in the world. Gandhi

Leadership in this century means shifting the structure of collective action-our listening-at all levels. Otto Scharmer.

To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well. John Marshall

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." — Arundhati Roy

(This is a summary of the same material captured in the photos for which a link has been previously given – the intention is to give a relatively neat one page snapshot)

World Café – Session One - What’s happening in this special time ?

- A getting back to who we are – a referring back to past wisdoms
- A coming out of our ‘full’ selves
 - o as we do the work within ourselves
 - o as we ‘be the change’
 - o as we seek to lead good and compassionate lives
 - o as we attend to body, mind, spirit and feelings
- A coming together in groups and community – the time of the lone wolf really is increasingly over – we are re-making community
- A shift to pro-activity – we are making things happen and not just re-acting to what happens

- We are the leaders we have been waiting for and we want to share the power we have and be of service
- We are growing increasingly comfortable with chaos and uncertainty
- We are asking difficult questions and finding answers together
- We are letting go of old concepts we had held to be precious

- Sometimes we are fearful and confused
- Sometimes we just have to wait for things to emerge and go more slowly than we are used to

- We are in the midst of system and values transformation - a paradigm shift – a time of breakthrough
- We are growing up, blossoming, connecting and strengthening

- There is a sense of tremendous personal and collective opportunity

- We want to do more, to co-create more processes, to create more fertile soil for this growth

(Quite a few of us were particularly struck by the notion of ‘Gross National Wellbeing’!)

At the end of the first session, individuals were asked to look over the posters that had been produced and write down for themselves (on pink slips) what was striking them most, as individuals, particularly what was new to them – what follows is a collation (in no particular order) of what people said – the intention here is to give a flavour of the diversity of what was going on for people. Where ever any one of us is at, it gives us a more informed picture to be aware of something of where others are at too.

“Education is outdated – leadership from within – leaders to bring us back to our core values”

“There are many different kinds of leadership”

‘How are you thinking ? – you see what you can talk about’ (Edgar Schein)

“Discord – we are the system”

“Leadership – don’t live beyond your means – infuse your words with these values”

“The difference the support of a community could make”

“I think I am going to make us all wombats”

“Uncertainty”

“Evolution always transcends, includes, incorporates and goes beyond” Ken Wilber

“It’s all about love”

“The move from individual to collective – that’s ‘real’ leadership”

“The ineffable journey we are engaging in”

“New Leadership starts within”

“Transformational change – peaceful, positive, non-violent”

“Systems Change – what will the new be ?” “Creativity and openness” “converging ideas and perspectives”

“Isolation – information – openness – core”

“The consistent desire in people to see character / inner qualities in leadership to come out”

“How can we make the transition” – “How can we stay connected”

“The desire to meet the challenge”

“Less is more – gross national wellbeing – we are the ones we have been waiting for – global mindshift – all is one”

“We are the change we wish to see”

“Celebrate the chaos – be aware of what we don’t see – system thinking – diversity – raising awareness – new structures – community”

“Renaissance”

“Transformation is coming”

“The theme of leadership coming from within”

“Opportunities for leadership at all levels”

“Full me, full us, rocket science”

“Mixed bag – where to next – how does it all come together”

“Power from the bottom up”

“Design and live the new authentic leadership together”

“Surprised at the level of “we” awareness – some grasp of the enormity of what needs to change and what I / we need to do right now”

“abundant compassion”

“pink slips don’t have to be scary”

“Talking to so many new people in one afternoon”

“Everyone sees change – but what about looking after the good things we have”

“Gross national wellbeing”

“The journey forward is beginning”

“interesting experience for a world cafe virgin”

“the journey starts from here”

“But, how do we let go ?”

“We are the ones we have been waiting for – loved this”

“Encourage – allow – diversity – creativity – balance between core and periphery – celebrate the chaos and uncertainty – start here”

“It’s not about me anymore”

“Quiet passion at work here”

*“Finding the authentic self within,
Finding the authentic leader within
Finding support to be that leader”*

“The need to develop personal resilience (a search for meaning) from the inside out”

“Personal leadership – it’s OK to be a follower”

“A lot of bullshit talk – not gritty enough – came here knowing there’s a need for change and a sense of what that change is, having been trying to make it work and needing some fresh thinking, not motherhood and apple pie stuff !”

“Connecting to self and community; feeling, heart, passion”

“Chaos and diversity”

“Future”

“We are on the verge of a huge change – the failure of traditional structures and systems – the challenge of authentic leadership”

“Gross National Wellbeing”

“We need immediate determined directed action – organised groups of humans”

“Change and continuity”

“When will the peg be taken away ?”

“Celebrate chaos and community – establishing and validating values based on gross national wellbeing – moving from individual to collective action”

“Wide open space – full of opportunity”

“Challenge of letting go of my long cherished beliefs – how to be truly open to the well”

“Opportunity : we are the leaders we’re looking for”

“Cross-fertilise”

“Endings – Greeks and Romans, European enlightenment ? – Beginnings ?”

“Community – sense of change – dissatisfaction – emotional”

“Shifting values – me to us – materialism to community”

“Awareness of emergence and next level living has hit society and is not merely resting with very localised pioneers anymore. People do not yet see where we are going, nearly as well as they see what we want to become. They do know some of how we might get there, they see snippets – values living, change processes, personal responsibility”

“Everyone essentially wants the same thing – positive change”

“Hope”

“Ownership – Authentic Decision-Making – be my own hero – self-reliance – help others later”

“Searching”

“Intention – Attention”

“Celebrate – Opportunity”

“Organic leader – we need us now – together – positive”

“Releasing potential within”

“Local is global”

“The capacity of three totally different conversations to yield one integrated confluence – the possibility of people working together to move from womb to tomb in concept terms”

“Finding and living our true selves”

“Energy”

“Revitalize”

“Will we learn enough ?”

“Peeling away layers to find purpose in life – become the change I want”

“Love – opportunity – action from the heart – we are all leaders”

“Gross national courage”

“This is the change I have been waiting for !! – gives me permission to be myself”

“The ripping apart is happening – let us open to the ripping – and be opened by the ripping ! – (Rip is the new dance !)

“That there is such a wonderful diversity of ideas and of possible solutions. Helping test before that evolution is possible”

“Hearts the way in to central self – opportunity – growth – Now – Darkest hour is just before the dawn”

“Inspiration – embracing change”

“This and that – this or that”

“A poster to raise awareness of gross national wellbeing”

“How am I being in my community ?”

“During this time of turmoil, there is a huge opportunity to strip away the old values”

“Community – self – now – values – leaders with integrity”

“Redefining values – the heart of the matter – individual / collective – the heart of the matter – leader as servant – conscious bridging”

“An inclusive, reflective authentic stance”

“Authenticity is the starting point and enabler”

“Detachment from issue to allow you to fix things”

“Discovery”

“It’s a new dawn – back to core values – a reassessment of what is important – we each have responsibility for leadership”

“Mediation – conflict resolution – lightening up !”

“Personal responsibility – Community”

100 views.

The second half of the Cafe work moved into more of a future orientation – what was it that wanted to emerge at this time and what needs to happen next ? At the end of this session, each table produced a summary of their view of what needs to happen next and these summaries have been condensed into the next page.

What needs to happen now ?

ACTION – we need to move from ideas to action – embrace the change

- Get up, get out and go for it
- Create a space for leadership
- Create a space where support can emerge and confidence going forward can take root and grow
- Create a safe space to test ideas together and to listen well

- Connect, build community and interdependence – connect young and old – stay connected – support family units - reassure ourselves that it is OK to think this way
- Create a shared website for emerging bright ideas
- Enable different disciplines to work in small groups and then feed next steps into a forum
- Interest groups to come together
- Do more of these events around the country
- Create networks – change structures

- Grow the focus on values, ‘gross national well-being’, community and authenticity

- Change within – accept what we don’t know – look at ourselves – start with ourselves
- Start with self, then family, then community
- Be oneself – just be it – look after self and health – do and be
- Take responsibility – don’t wait for some expert to save the day – ask what can I influence right now ? – act now – get involved

- Educate. Educate people.
- A new ethos is needed for education
- Facilitate the development of the emergent consciousness (with a pragmatic siting of expressions) – give expression to any self-organising initiatives – highlight the potential for change at a grassroots level
- Parent
- Help the ripples ripple
- Allow others their own process
- Build confidence in people to find their own voice – be inclusive

- Live one’s life sustainably and share knowledge of sustainable living

- Stop a moment, rest, reflect, listen and get a balanced message
- Silence together, dance together, do together
- Use ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ methods

- Forgive, live from love
- Be positive, dynamic and realistic – don’t load the vulnerable with despair
- Spread viral positivity and hope
- Focus and harness the power of attraction
- Keep the things we value, including some old values and wisdom
- Move from greed to community
- Use individual skills for common good
- Cultivate vision, dream courageously – focus on core values and what is critical

- Facilitate a collective ROAR – the community to express itself
- Politicians ask us for their vote. We need to approach them with the policies we want them to lead for us
- One Humanity – A single family – we need to meet in the flesh and engage in face to face dialogue

- We need to use our power ‘right’

And then finally for the harvest, individuals were offered the opportunity to make any comment they wished to as a contribution to this document. No attempt has been made to theme or sequence these comments.

“The change is happening – embrace it and connect”

“A wonderful treasure trove in one room – let’s take these jewels and share them with all we encounter who are open to it – let’s embody individually and influence collectively”

“Question – are we here to network and promote ourselves or to move towards real change ? Putting aside my internal cynic – there has been great value in the discussion and I’m looking forward to making the steps that drive real change and a society that values itself and its neighbours for who they are, not what they have. Individuals seeking responsibility, not rights will be the new leaders”

“Aspirational – been there before – empower the youth, they are the future”

“Conversations take time to develop and too often we are juts reaching a really interesting place in a discussion when time is up. More time at the tables and less for feedback, talks, advertisings ? – At the root, I think it is about trusting people – I met great people struggling to allow new thoughts to emerge”

“I wish to meet more young people at future events, to hear their ideas about where we are, where we are going and how we might go about getting there”

“Thank you – I was really engaged and involved all day until the last round table. I struggled at the end – a person joined our group who announced that she was a writer who had not been there for most of the day and had been given permission to attend to observe what was happening here and then continued to argue with all the points made by others. – This is my irritation. I own it and I hope that in the future all people attend such events as authentic participants rather than observers.”

“Individual table discussions could have been longer to allow dialogue to really develop and deepen – the afternoon was good, albeit somewhat fragmented”

“We can create these meetings / gatherings for any topic e.g. ‘grow your own food’ – people gathering in pods of 5 or 6 and sharing knowledge – also parenting, combinging a speaker and these kind of discussions – the potential is endless”

“Some kind of POSITIVE action plan that is GROUNDED ! – to maintain CONNECTION – small projects for a few people, to SUPPORT them – something MEANINGFUL”

“Realising that there is no clear idea is progress – a deeper sense of respect for myself, others and planet – respect for the intelligence of community – recognition of the need for community to survive”

“Where are all of these ideas going ? – How can we pull it all together – desire for a group searching for core values”

“We need a powerful step(s) agreed before we leave today – we want a synopsis and outcome from today – the posters show what is alive in the room”

“Be part of the hundred monkeys and develop a network going forward”

“A good place to start – the cafe is a good space – thanks”

“Great format fostering openness and innovation – next step foster action taking conversations”

“I am glad that there is a clear ecological / systems thinking perspective coming through in the discussions as I feel strongly that this will be central to future leadership. I would like to see concrete suggestions / intentions for action – follow up ?”

“I feel a sense of new hope which is grounded in a more real way with more possibilities of being actually based in the realities of this time”

“Wisdom comes from stillness and the heart – this is where we hold our personal fire and compassion and what gives us the strength to deal with the change and chaos outside – we must become aware that our internal chaos is connected to external chaos and uncertainty for a time because new shoots of change come from working with what’s already there. TRUST the change inside and out, but this is only possible by balancing it with stillness (inside and out) – from this balancing of the poles – the new way emerges”

“A positive and engaging day – one is not enough – time to reflect and return to table – look forward to getting links ! – hope to have some way forward.”

“Ban the sale of leadership and do what’s right when it’s needed – Thanks”

“In future, please emphasise ‘leave your ego at the door’ – too much self-representation and not enough understanding of the world cafe process – felt like rushing, rushing – allow more time or cut down on the extra stuff”

“We need to build a Community of Practice to birth the new ideas, directions and processes we need to face the future. We need to share, interact, build relationship and change the way we think – the place we find ourselves – we are the future.”

“It is us – we are doing it now – talking, exploring is changing the energy, which IS the change. Let’s acknowledge the reality, but let it go, and concentrate on celebrating all that is going right – from this place, the next phase will emerge ...”

“Feedbacks of different voices superb and essential – thank you – opportunity for dialogue – excellent – one quickly recognises voices of wisdom vs those pushing their ‘this is what the world needs’ agenda”

“Met a lot of well developed people with good ideas and a lot of self awareness, strong sense that we know that what we have relied on - state, religion, philosophies from the past – for too long have dissipated and there is a desire to move forward collectively rather than individually to create a new world order”

“Thank you – a good leadership initiative – liked the venue and cafe conversations – disliked the sound system – hard to hear clearly”

“Coaching ? – Where are the horses ?

“An interesting afternoon with like-minded people who are working to create a better world. Thank You”

“Could have done with some structure on how to dialogue – listen, respect, suspend, voice (for example) – a bit chilly – what is next ? – we need to make more of this”

“Do things together – talk – dance – create – claim our local community”

“I feel the time could have been used in a more productive way. I would suggest: people sharing who they are, what they do, why they are here openly to the whole group first – as a way of beginning discussion and networking more memorably – then break into smaller groups, who have the time to have clearer, stronger human connection. NO MICROPHONE ! Especially in a space with perfect acoustics for naked human voice”

“Love, wellbeing, nurturing, young wisdom, old wisdom, new wisdom, community”

“It is great to see what we don’t want – for we can focus more clearly on what we do want. Out of the chaos something can evolve – every situation is perfect – it is the recipe to create something new”

“Excellent + thought provoking – could be more action oriented – on a web site get people to supply up to 5 ideas”

“ ‘The pen is mightier than the sword’ – this was so well conveyed without being said so well today – Presence of persons leads to ideas and concepts”

“I loved meeting so many great people – just sorry I didn’t get to meet all the rest – let’s do it again”

“I like to search for truth. I found some through this event”

“There are lots of leaders, people, groups, communities, DOING lots of good things. They have been coming up against structures and systems which don’t fit very well. I had expected this event to address that – it didn’t. ‘Feelgood’ stuff is fine for people who are just thinking about getting into all that. What happened to SUSTAINABILITY ?”

“Group and individual leadership should value and nurture a willingness to forgive”

“Great event – maybe need to look at sustaining the energy throughout the event seemed to wain a little towards the end – maybe bodywork – want to re-connect”

“Today was a discussion on leadership by training professionals at one level, but the feeling of the need for broad change appeared more important than the need for new leadership”

“Interesting, stimulating, excellent networking opportunity, sceptical about outcomes ?”

“Event reminded me of my leadership practice, it has helped me to notice what I can let go of, it was wonderful to learn together, change is happening”

“In the beginning”

“Thank you, well done, energy, positive, space to reflect and share – can we give space to all voices – all ages ?”

“Take responsibility – don’t wait for some expert to save the day – be positive, but realistic, connect and build community”

47 contributions

Afterword

It’s all a lot to take in. Lots of different voices and views.

What strikes me is that all this isn’t just the outpourings of a hundred random people together for three hours – it is the output of a hundred people with lots of networks and potential influence. If between us, we can get the next steps right enough then we really could make a substantial contribution to substantial change.

So what are the right enough next steps ? From all the above, we are not short of inspiration and ideas. We have a lot of fertile ground within which to grow.

I think the answer has to be different for different people. Some people clearly need to pause. Some people clearly have been pausing too long and need to move to action. We all need to be as intelligent as we can about the ways we connect up. ‘How to enable leaderful networks ?’ seems like a key question. The time of the lone wolf really has to be over.

We need to be aware of the enormity of the challenges we face and the compelling simplicity of some of the actions that are needed.

We need to find smart ways of learning and sharing together as we go.

We need food and fun.

‘Let’s give it a lash’

On a personal note, the time of the lone facilitator really has to be over too.

I am happy to talk more to anyone about all this ! But the bottom line is that the leadership for the next steps can come from anywhere - don’t hang around waiting for someone else to make a move.

Best regards

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