**LEADERSHIP WISDOM**

**For Achieving and Sustaining**

**Purpose, Profitability, & Productivity**

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WisdomHunger.com

*“We assist people and organizations*

*to become the best version of themselves.”*

**A Guide for Building**

**The Wisdom Organization**

***The WISDOM HUNGER Model***

***For Living and Leading On Purpose***

**PREFACE**

**Why Wisdom?**

When you listen to the radio, watch television, read newspapers, and dialogue with friends and family, you, and millions of others around the globe, feel torn, unenlightened by the conversation, helpless about what to do, and, most likely, feel separated from people you love. We do not know how to converse. We do not know how to create synergy, where one + one = four or more. It is rather, quite the opposite: one + one = minus four or less.

The more we reason, the more divided. We’re confused because most of us are people of good will and good motive. We’re convinced we have ideas that can promote the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, among many others.

We hunger for unity, a connectivity that provides the experience of belonging. But not at the expense of being authentic individuals with our unique take on life. Our need for *belonging* and *individuality* are two sides of one coin called IDENTITY. For ages, we’ve found ourselves choosing between those two sides: do I capitulate to preserve the relationship or dominate to express my individuality? Neither end feeds the *hunger for identity*, which demands an integration of individuality and belonging. Rationality looks at the parts. Wisdom sees the whole.

The institution of marriage is a telling prototype of this dual hunger to make one out of two unique people. Romance lures us into the promised land of oneness, only to discover that it cannot be had without the courage of being authentic in the embrace of closeness. Sometimes, only physical closeness remains as a reminder of the quest for oneness. But without the emotional, mental, and spiritual connectivity, even the physical union loses its skin-deep grip.

In our immature years, closeness and independence are at war: the more of one, the less of the other. This is the same battle being played out in our social and political discourse. Civil discourse is desirable, but it is skin-deep. What we need is real discourse. Wisdom gives us the ability to truly listen, accept other people’s take, share our own, become united around a common vision, and then allow for the uniqueness of how we each get there.

This book will show that reason cannot get us to the land of true discourse where we express our individuality while strengthening our connectivity in the pursuit of effective solutions for problems and challenges that confront us every day.

Only wisdom can get us there. The Wisdom Hunger framework will put its finger not only on the core hunger for identity but also on the dual aspects of that hunger: the need for belonging and for individuality. Emotion won’t do it either.

Only wisdom can take emotion and reason to a way of thinking and doing that allows us to understand without agreeing, to care without capitulating, and to endure the inevitable differences of opinion without dominating, until we find the best solutions to issues that confront us daily. This takes Leadership Wisdom, the kind that is rarely modeled in business and in public life.

Leadership, at home and at work, is in dire need of true wisdom.

Wisdom Hunger offers models, stories, and guidelines for climbing the ladder of maturity from emotion, to reason, to wisdom. There are specific descriptions and prescriptions for climbing this mountain of life up to the wisdom altitude.

This will always be a work-in-progress for us humans, with many challenges along the way. But it is learnable and doable. Besides, the fruits of wisdom are worthy of this effort.

When the Wisdom Hunger is fed daily, we feel a deep sense of meaning and satisfaction that sets the stage for courageous use of our individual talents in the service our human family. One immediate fruit—and clear sign—of wisdom is the capacity to lead a true dialogue that unites us around common goals, without demanding common ground.

I invite you to think and dialogue with me. And I welcome your feedback.

**PART ONE**

**OVERVIEW**

**Launching the Wisdom Hunger**

**Leadership Project**

The WISDOM HUNGER Model of leadership and organizational development views human life within a Four Quadrant framework:

* Individual **AWARENESS**: Mind
* Individual **BEHAVIOR**: Action
* Group **CULTURE**: Shared vision, values, and commitments
* Group **STRUCTURE**: Patterns of interaction

This book deals with the first two quadrants: Individual Awareness & Behavior. The sequel will deal with the Culture and Structure of the Wisdom Organization.

Part 1 gives you the Overview:

* The nature of our hunger for leadership wisdom.
* A description of the Wisdom Hunger Leadership Project as it is designed and executed in a mythical company called Human Innovation Think Tank or HITT. Reed, the CEO, brings in a consultant, James, who introduces him and his Leadership Team to the Wisdom Hunger model.
* You will be introduced to the 4 Quads, the 3 Altitudes of Life (Emotional, Rational, and Wisdom), and the 8 Wisdom Codes that guide us up the ladder of maturity as we navigate these four areas of life.
* The launching of the Wisdom Hunger Leadership Project.

**Chapter 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**The Hunger for Leadership Wisdom**

**TO LEADERS: Your Real Sweat**

I’ve listened to you for many years in the privacy of your offices in those moments of vulnerability when you expressed *anxiety* and *loneliness*. Behind the public confidence you show while leading people, I’ve seen you sweat and I’ve heard your silent sobs. Even when you hit your stride, I could still feel a question gnawing at you in your sleep: *Am I getting the best out of my team members?*

You pose the same question I pose as a coach and consultant: *How can I assist people to become the best version of themselves, individually and collectively?* We’re sweating the same thing from different sides of the table. We’re all in this together. How do we use people’s unique talents to become productive, find acceptance, and create wealth? Yes, wealth. Wealth to create a lifestyle that gives them and their families the security and the freedom to express themselves with dignity and safety. A group that can do this I call the Wisdom Organization.

Throughout this book, you will “sit beside me” as I dialogue with a 50-something CEO named Reed as he and I discuss ways to answer this leadership question. Soon, you will become Reed as I take on the role of James, his coach. As you read and “hear us” in your mind’s ear, you will have your own questions and answers. Your inner dialogue may bring the biggest payoff for reading this book.

In 30 years of working with leaders, I have distilled the patterns that lead to wisdom. I am utterly convinced that only from the altitude of wisdom are we able to answer this question about how to bring out people’s best. There are two altitudes we must climb prior to achieving wisdom: *emotion* and *reason*. The emotional altitude gives us passion and fuels our motivation. The rational aims for negotiated agreements based on the rules of science and the values of fairness.

The first two altitudes, despite being necessary stages of development, are quite insufficient to bring out people’s best while using their talents to realize their common vision. This is true, not just of emotion, but of reason as well.

I have decoded the blind spots that deceive us into confused thinking, torn feelings, polarized positions, and incongruent actions that ruin collaboration and blind us to the innate goodness and talents people bring to the workplace. I have also coded the patterns that lead to individual productivity and team synergy.

To understand these patterns of greatness, we need to understand the deep drives that move us as humans. There are two core drivers in life: the need to be unique (*individuality*) and need to be part of something larger than the self (*belonging*). The wisdom codes will help you understand that these drivers are two sides of one core human hunger. Let’s take a deeper cut into this.

**WISDOM HUNGER: The Need for Belonging and for Individuality**

Our human hunger is rooted in two basic needs: *individuality* and *belonging*. We need to be unique—*apart* from others—and we need to be *a part* of something larger than ourselves. Wisdom feeds both. Until we attain wisdom, these two needs are at war. At the early stages of its development, the human mind deceives us into this false choice: be yourself or belong. Only the wisdom mind can integrate these seemingly opposite aspects of the same pole. This seeming paradox confuses leaders who value independence AND loyalty to the core purpose of the organization. BOTH. Unfortunately, many organizations tend to emphasize one of these and minimize the other.

We are hungry for achievement (individuality) and for acceptance (belonging). Without achievement, acceptance is hollow and fluffy. Praise does not mean much. On the other hand, without acceptance, work can become meaningless and lonely. Achievement and acceptance are the two pillars of self-esteem.

Listen to your *anxiety* and to your *loneliness*. They are the signals of the two sides of this hunger. Let’s take these one at a time. Our need to be unique drives us toward productivity—to use our talents and to achieve our purpose. *Anxiety* is the feeling that most clearly expresses this hunger. Our need to belong drives us to seek acceptance—loved and valued as part of something significant. *Loneliness* is a feeling that expresses this hunger.

*Anxiety* is the expression of our need to *achieve* our personal purpose. Our purpose is uniquely written into our soul DNA. Whatever your belief system might be, you will need to account for this persistent drive in people.

In my view, anxiety is an emotional grenade that reveals our soul need to achieve and to contribute productively to our world. When we feel anxious, we wonder if we will be successful. We live with a degree of uncertainty as to what might happen. This is universally programed into our survival instincts. In our immature stages, anxiety can “own” us and immobilize us. At the wisdom stage, anxiety is transformed into energy and productivity. Anxiety *signals* our hunger for personal **ACHIEVEMENT**. It’s a siren call for fulfilling our unique purpose.

*Loneliness*, on the other hand, is the expression of our need for *acceptance*, to belong to something larger than the self. We long to be *accepted* by our loved ones, by peers, by mates, by children, and by the groups in which we work and express our unique talents. Loneliness is rooted in the fear of separation. This fear is sometimes expressed as anger or hurt from being cast out by those we admire. Loneliness *signals* our hunger for **ACCEPTANCE**. It’s a siren call for belonging.

Take any thought, feeling, decision, or action in your life and you will see how each of these is an attempt either *to define the self as unique* or *to become part of a relationship or group*.

Our lives are a series of stories about how we find achievement and acceptance. Prior to attaining wisdom, we sacrifice one for the other.

*We express individuality through achievement.*

*We experience belonging through mutual acceptance.*

Before we attain wisdom, life and leadership are a series of polarized attempts to achieve or be accepted. In relationships, we aim to experience closeness without losing independence. In business, we see leaders emphasizing loyalty more than independence, or vice versa, but frustrated by the inability to have them both. Those are all signals of our innate desire to satisfy the wisdom hunger.

I welcome you to watch, listen, and dialogue with me and see what resonates for you and your colleagues. Wisdom opens a vast space within you. That inner Mind is full of wisdom. It is in all of us.

**Chapter 2**

**THE WISDOM HUNGER LEADERSHIP PROJECT**

**The Dialogue Begins**

The project we’re undertaking is to assist leaders and their organizations to bring out the best version of themselves as individuals and as teams. To accomplish this, most of the leaders in an organization need to LIVE and LEAD from the WISDOM ALITITUDE OF LIFE. This is the challenge and promise of the Wisdom Hunger (WH) approach to leadership and organizational development.

As you read this book, I invite you to put yourself in the role of *Reed*, the fictional CEO in our storyline. He will be conversing with *James*, our mythical leadership coach. I will be presenting aspects of the WH framework in between their conversations. I have chosen the discourse method of illustrating the ideas and techniques because it invites you, the reader, to pose your own questions and answers during the dialogue. I hope the methodology engages your imagination as you sift through your experiences, finding ways to put them together.

We start the conversation with Reed, our main character, as he reveals his frustrations to James. Reed is 51, a CEO of a human resource company called *Human Innovation Think Tank* or HITT. This company was incubated inside a large multi-national corporation and spun off five years earlier as an independent research and service company. Reed was part of the firm from the start.

Despite Reed’s knowledge of the research on human innovation, he is puzzled by the difficulty of creating a culture of self-responsibility even in his own company, much less among his client companies. He meets with James, his long-time coach. James coached Ralph for a few years before and after HITT was spun off.

Reed was 39 when they first met. He had promised his father he would contact James and consider hiring him as a coach. Six months after his father died, Reed fulfilled his promise and called James. The coaching lasted for 5 years. After that, they met periodically so Reed could check in around some important decisions. Now, after a two-year break, they are discussing a major project to transform the culture and the structure of HITT in a way that embodies the values of self-responsibility, initiative, teamwork, and high-performance.

**Reed and James Begin their Dialogue**:

*Reed: Thanks for coming, James. I hope Lilly and your daughters are doing well.*

*James: Thanks for asking about them. Yes, they are in good health, thank God. But as you well know, they are not just a source of my deepest joy but also the source of my sharpest pain. Our daughters are especially good at “reminding” me that they do not cause my pain. I instilled in them the belief that we create our own thoughts and feelings. They’ve learned to serve me a dose of my own medicine!*

*R: My kids quote you when they want to give me the same message. Jenn and I often eat our own words…Anyway, I want to talk to you about an ambitious project I’ve decided to undertake here at HITT.*

*J: Sounds ominous. How did you decide to start this ambitious project? Have you been hitting a wall that just won’t budge despite your innovative approaches?*

*R: You still have a way to get to the heart of the matter! Yes, I have been awfully frustrated by the lack of responsibility people take for their actions. It’s one excuse after another. There’s this idea that if they can explain why they did something, they feel they’ve justified it. And when I tell them their behavior is still not acceptable, I get a puzzled look. My efforts at stating the difference between explaining and justifying amount to nothing. This includes the leadership team. It’s the thing that triggers the strongest emotional grenades within me.*

*J: Let’s cut to the chase, Reed, since you and I no longer worry about being nice to each other. I want you to feel that frustration right now and own it. You created this feeling in response to a series of outside events. If the frustration could talk, what would it “say” about what’s important to you and to the firm?*

*R: The frustration, which has been gnawing at me day and night, finally broke through with the message that our culture here at HITT is corrupted by a shared but subtle belief in the victim mindset! We, as a leadership team, have been “lecturing” on the need for responsibility in every nook and cranny of the organization. We tell our clients the same thing. Nothing changes. I look at the interactions among ourselves and see mainly the veneer of rationality. It isn’t believable, James. I need true transformation, not just flashes of change.*

*J: I hear you, Reed. Thanks for sharing your authentic feeling and the meaning it contains. I’m glad to see how well you’ve learned to listen to your feelings and how to decode the messages within those feelings. These messages are coming from within you, not imposed by the environment. They are your feelings. What is the frustration telling you about how you’ve been approaching the problem?*

*R: I’m not sure how to answer that?*

*J: Frustration can mean you’re waiting for your colleagues to take initiative without being told or you’re expecting them to own their actions, without excuses. And when you don’t see your colleagues take the initiative, you get aggravated.*

*R: I get down on myself because nothing I do seems to work for long. I keep pulling and pulling and the organization doesn’t propel itself without my prodding.*

*J: The messages coming from your feelings also inform you about crucial things that are going on in your organization. Spell out the big vision for me.*

*R: In three years, I see myself doing very little managing of people and teams. I see the leaders and their teams making all the daily decisions and executing these into actions and interactions. I participate in casting the vision of the organization, assigning the resources, inspiring the people I work with, and, above all, helping to create a culture that promotes high performance and generates profit in line with our purpose. I see all members using their talents daily and living their purpose whether they are here or at home. That’s the vision I want to manifest.*

*J: I agree it’s a big, bold vision. But when it comes to leading a company from good to great, to borrow a beautiful phrase, the change management process must include all aspects of individual and organizational life. You want a self-directed, self-propelling company that requires great leadership but little management.*

*R: I think I know what you’re saying but spell it out for me so I can be sure.*

*J: The organizational transformation must include all quadrants of life and leadership: The AWARENESS and BEHAVIOR of all individuals in the company, as well as the CULTURE and the STRUCTURE of the organization itself. The leadership team (LT) members themselves must adopt the paradigm into their awareness—beliefs, values, and commitments—and act congruently with that awareness.*

*R: You’re saying that’s where we start—with the individual LT members. We must each carry the vision, the values, and the vows that bring out the best version of ourselves in Mind and in Behavior. Without this, it’s a nonstarter. Correct?*

*J: Correct. The moment the team members accept this vision and vow to achieve it, you have created a subculture in the LT based on these ideas. When two or more unite in their awareness, they have simultaneously created a new and budding culture. Remember how we defined culture?*

*R: We defined it as the shared inner worldview of a group: our shared beliefs, values, and commitments. James, I’ve pounded this into them. We’ve written down our shared vision, values, and commitments. But that is the source of my frustration. We discuss this all the time. I feel helpless and discouraged. We’re saying the right things and committing to the right goals, yet it doesn’t stick for long. I’m losing faith in these ideas and practices. If these things don’t work, what will? I used to think I had the keys and it would be just a matter of time before these ideas and practices would manifest the vision. I don’t know what else to do.*

*J: Well said, Reed. Your helpless feelings reveal another message: your* ***need*** *to contribute something valuable to the organization, the shareholders, and to those giving their time and talent to create wealth for themselves and their families. Take a moment to thank your feeling of helplessness for letting you know how strongly you wish to bring value to people who work here.*

*R: But that doesn’t solve the problem. I still don’t know what to do. I want to help and contribute, yes. What good does it do if I’ve exhausted my knowhow?*

*J: You’re right. But it’s a start. As your coach, I need to know what’s driving the passion you feel and the commitment you’ve made. I’m not that concerned about your discouragement or even your confusion about what to do. I was concerned about your WILL—your commitment to lead this organization toward greatness. You’ve convinced me that your feelings have not eroded your will.*

*R: Do you have some hunch or feel for what might be going on?*

*J: Yes. I believe you’ve approached your challenges and goals in a very rational, scientific manner. And you’ve experienced the limits of rationality. Reasoning only goes so far. Then you hit the walls. Your frustration and helplessness are signs of a developmental change happening within you. When the leader experiences this, it often means that the organization also needs a change in culture and structure.*

*R: James, are you saying that my reliance on reason or rationality is the problem?*

*J: Yes. Often, the barrier is the approach we use to solve the original problem. Approaching the outcomes from the wisdom altitude will be the key to success.*

**Commentary**

Notice how well James listens to Reed’s feelings (frustration and helplessness) without judgment or any desire to take them away. In fact, he asks Reed to feel those feelings and to read the “messages” within them. The frustration Reed feels revealed his need for the kind of organizational transformation that leads to great initiative on the part of its key leaders. The feeling of helplessness revealed Reed’s desire to contribute something of value to the company and its members.

An important moment in their dialogues came when James reveals that reason, which was Reed’s bread-and-butter approach, has become the “problem” in the sense that an ineffective solution, when used again and again, gets us stuck. And yet, like the definition of insanity, we repeat it while expecting different results.

This will be the main theme of the book: how to go from reason to wisdom. This is effectively a description of going from good to great. Emotion leads to poor results, reason brings good results, but wisdom leads us to greatness. Listen carefully to James as he lays out the elements and the outline for doing this.

In the next few chapters, we will use the metaphor of “pebbles and ripples,” where “pebble” refers to an external event and “ripple” refers to a person’s feelings about that event. We don’t control the pebbles thrown into our pond, but we create our feelings. Every feeling carries a message about us (our interior response) and about the outside world (pebbles). For now, just note how accepting James is of Reed’s feelings and how skillfully he draws out the important messages (“jewels”) within those feelings.

James knows he has to gauge Reed’s initiative—the degree of his commitment to reach a goal. A coach should not “outrun” the client’s own sweat for achieving the goal. Both parties need equal “sweat”. Let’s continue the dialogue.

*J. As we plan to engage your team, remember the power of culture. Let’s take your marriage. You and Jennifer have been married 26 years. The culture between the two of you includes your shared memories, shared triumphs and tragedies, shared hopes, shared expectations, and shared vision. I have the same shared world I treasure with Lilly, our daughters, and our grandkids. How powerful is that! It’s the power you need to assist HITT to become a Wisdom Hunger Organization. You want to awaken the wisdom hunger in them. You are not alone and you don’t have to do this by yourself. There is the wisdom of the group as well.*

*R: So, we will aim to cultivate not just individual change but cultural development. I’m reminding myself that every change affects all quads: my inner* ***awareness****, my outer* ***behavior****, our inner shared* ***culture****, and our outer* ***structure*** *(interaction patterns). When I think of change management, I think mainly about changing the structure of an organization: processes, systems, boundaries, and communication patterns. I forget we need the buy-in of each individual. Where do we start?*

*J: I suggest we start by influencing the mindset of every leadership team member. We begin by harpooning the victim mindset that is in everyone. I don’t care how mature we are. That victim mindset lurks stealthily. They must all become astute in reading and leading their emotions, instead of being led by their feelings. This will prepare them to manage emotions in the workplace. And, of course, the WILL takes on a special role in action and managing interaction. Seeding the mind with ideas for thinking, feeling, and decision-making at the wisdom altitude is where we begin. This becomes the stronghold of the Wisdom Culture that will influence the Awareness and the Behavior of everyone, as well as inspire the Structure of your organization. The structure will reinforce the culture.*

*R: Give me the gist of what you’re proposing and some of the specific steps.*

**Chapter 3**

**OVERVIEW OF THE WISDOM HUNGER FRAMEWORK**

*James: Before I describe the specific steps, I want to sum up the comprehensive nature of what we are undertaking. We will aim to make 4-Quad thinking a habit of mind for everyone on the Leadership Team (LT). Every event we analyze, or any goal we have, always has these four faces:*

 **THE 4 QUADRANTS OF LIFE & LEADERSHIP**

 AWARENESS BEHAVIOR

CULTURE STRUCTURE

 *Interior Exterior*

*Individual*

*Group*

*Within six months, we shouldn’t have to remind them to describe the four aspects of any situation or the four aspects of the smart goals we agree to manifest. Let me give you a quick feel of this. If someone makes a New Year’s resolution to lose weight, for instance, and he tells us what he will DO (Behavior) to accomplish this, our next questions are: How will your thinking (Awareness) change to make this happen? How will your relationships (Structure) be affected by these actions? Will your change in exercise and eating habits fit in with your family’s expectations (Culture)? These will become habitual if we are relentless in demanding this.*

*R: What’s the rationale for being fastidious about learning the Wisdom Hunger model to the extent you’re describing it? Isn’t the application of the ideas and techniques the more important thing?*

*J: The research is quite clear about change that sticks. Researchers discovered that if you have a positive, intense experience in a weekend retreat without providing a cognitive framework to make meaning of those experiences, the effect on actual behavioral changes fade away with time. On the other hand, if training is mostly technical instead of experiential, the learning doesn’t translate into behavioral changes either. They need to be both. That is the key to the Wisdom Hunger framework and why I’ve labored so long to come up with something complete and comprehensive in its scope. The 4 Quads, which I adapted from the work of Ken Wilber, are the four areas of cause AND effect. The 8 wisdom codes are designed to do two things: (1) to assess the states and the stages of each quad and (2) to create strategies and techniques to promote the development of each quad up the ladder of maturity: from emotional, to rational, to wisdom.*

*R: Okay. That was helpful for me. I’m visualizing the four quads as you drew it for me but in 3-D. Each quad is rising like a pyramid with three levels. That helps to remind me that it’s not just individuals that are evolving up these stages. The culture and the structure of the group are also growing up in maturity.*

*J: Very well stated, Reed. For instance, we want each person on the team to be knowledgeable, passionate, and committed. Those qualities refer to the three parts of the mind:* ***thinking****,* ***feeling****, and the* ***will****. Our training models must show them how to think, feel, and will from the wisdom altitude. Codes 1, 2, and 3 of the Wisdom Hunger framework address these three parts of the mind.*

*R: Those three parts address the Mind or Awareness quadrant of life, correct? So, we need to describe what thinking, feeling, and willing look like at each stage of maturity: emotional, rational, and wisdom.*

*J: Not just describing but also prescribing the practices that get us to wisdom. If we succeed in doing this, we will have increased the cognitive, emotional, and volitional intelligence of your team members. The WILL, by the way, is also the faculty of moral development. Every decision contains the implicit question: Who am I intending to benefit? Is it just me (emotional), me and you (rational) or me, you, and us (wisdom)? More on this later.*

*R: Hang on, James. You’re saying that an act of will determines the height of our moral development every time we make a decision? Explain that please.*

*J: Yes, I am saying that. An act of will is a commitment to do something. Along with that decision comes an intent or purpose to create an effect—the goal. We implicitly or explicitly intend to benefit someone. If my aim is selfish, then I’m including only me as the beneficiary. That’s the emotional altitude. If you are a participant in an interaction and I intend to benefit you too, then I’ve entered the rational altitude of moral development. If I include me, you, and all of us, then I’ve entered the wisdom altitude of moral development. Much more on this later.*

*R: I’m okay with that for now. It’s helpful to see that as part of the will.*

*J: There is an additional function of the will: it engages our instincts and thus triggers action. The will is thus the gateway to the behavior quadrant in which we address the nature of high performance. Code 4, Productive Action, zeroes in on the three major influences of individual performance:* ***knowledge****,* ***passion****, and* ***instinct****. Leaders and coaches are aware of the first two influences, but quite unaware of the role instincts play in high performance. Instincts will play a huge role in developing productivity and is one of the key differentiators of The Wisdom Hunger (TWH) approach. If people don’t achieve goals in their natural, instinctive way, stress goes up, and they will soon find inner resistance. There, Reed, is a clue to some of the lack of initiative that frustrates you.*

*R: So, the first four codes focus on the individuals of this organization. Could you say more about the key differentiators of the WH model, instincts being one?*

*J: The two primary differentiators of this model are INSTINCTS and MATURITY. When we are born, instincts govern the first 18 months of life, especially our mammalian and survival instincts. There is a subset of instincts called Striving Instincts—the natural way we perform as we go from decision to action. The research that’s come out of the Kolbe System in the last 30 years is definitive about success being tied to doing things according to one’s natural inclinations.*

*Awareness of instincts allows us to put people in jobs that match those instincts and to manage people in the way THEY do things, not in the way WE do things. That is a key differentiator. I won’t go into detail since you know your instincts. But you understand that we will need to do a lot of work to help people make a good distinction between learned behavior and inclined (instinctive) action.*

*R: Agreed. I hadn’t realized what a competitive advantage this gives us in the marketplace of human resources.*

*J: Assessing maturity and managing people according to their level of maturity is an even more important differentiator. But the integration of these two dimensions of human performance is the key to sustained productivity and to the development of emotional intelligence at work. Remember, Reed, you can put people in the right place but if they are immature, they will become reactive or tick people off to the point that they won’t be able to work in teams without ongoing power struggles. Power struggles suck energy and derail our focus on goals.*

*R: The first three codes address the mind and the fourth code looks at the conditions of high performance. If I’m tracking with you, we then need to create a culture and a structure that supports and mobilizes these individuals to “run together” toward a common vision. And we need to run together from the wisdom altitude of life. I feel elated and heavy at the same time. I see the map and it gives me hope that we can make a real difference as leaders. However, the map may look simple but the actual territory is rich, complex, and always unpredictable. Are you ready to outline the major steps of the program? Where exactly do we begin?*

*J: Set up a two-day retreat with the LT and share your frustration and your vision. Listen carefully to what your words trigger in them. The first day will be devoted to two themes and only two themes. The first theme would be to share the messages within your frustration and articulate the vision you have for the company. The second theme of Day 1 is to listen to your colleagues’ own feelings and their thoughts. Day One is devoted to understanding only, not building agreements or negotiating solutions. I will restrain any attempt to solve problems so we can assure mutual understanding of the issues and the desired outcomes. The only negotiating we will allow is to find agreement on the desired outcomes.*

*R: Wow! You really want me to be that vulnerable and share the very guts of what’s keeping me awake at night and stressed during the day.*

*J: Yes. Just the pure, authentic Reed, sharing his vulnerable but sober assessment. You are saying you’re not happy with your leadership, with individual and team performance, nor with the culture and structure of HITT. Yet, in doing so, you are clearly implying you want something better for you, for each of them, for the organization, and for the community of which you are a part. Your dissatisfaction is not nihilistic or even pessimistic. Yours is a realistic assessment of the current state that comes with a visionary commitment to the desired state.*

*R: Got it! Yes, I will share my inner world (gulp) and listen to theirs without justifying or promoting my views. Curious about why prevent solutions on Day 1?*

*J: I want to assure mutual understanding of the issues and the outcomes. The knee-jerk response of people under stress is to jump too quickly into solving problems before they have a clear common vision. Watch me. I can assure you I will be doing much redirecting of the discussion back to identifying issues and outcomes, away from negotiating solutions for specific outcomes.*

*R: Boy does that ring a bell. And Day 2?*

*J: You lay down your agenda for individual and organizational transformation. I’ll assist you to devise a two-year plan with a curriculum, training programs, and practices for every individual and team in the company. No one is exempted. The purpose of the 2-year program is to realize the vision and embody the values of the company.*

*R: I imagine that this curriculum, James, will be based on the 4-Quadrant view of Life and Leadership you mentioned earlier. Each of us will need to assess whether our individual awareness and behavior are functioning at the emotional, rational, or wisdom altitudes of life. We will also assess the patterns of the organizational culture and structure to see if those patterns are resonating with the emotional, rational, or wisdom altitudes. Is that the broad framework of the curriculum?*

*J: Yes, it is. We will be using an updated version of the 8 Wisdom Codes to assess each quadrant and to design programs for team and individual development. We start with Code 1: Correct Thinking About Cause and Effect. We will harpoon the victim mindset from the beginning, transform it into the wisdom mindset, and use it as a foundation to build the Wisdom Hunger Organization (WHO).*

*R: Could you give me a description about what happens after the two-day retreat?*

*J: You and I will meet weekly. Wisdom Coaching means that all aspects of your life are open for discussion: your mind, body-brain-behavior, your relationships in and outside this company, your leadership style, and your spirituality. Sometimes, you or I may suggest including one or more members of HITT to resolve issues or develop certain aspects of the company.*

*We will schedule monthly team building sessions for about two and a half hours. The first hour will allow us to present a curriculum-based course on the Wisdom Hunger approach to human, leadership, and organizational development. The second hour will be devoted to looking at live issues the LT is facing. As we discuss these issues, we’ll be applying the principles described in the wisdom codes. Here’s a handout naming and briefly describing the 8 Wisdom Codes:*

**8 WISDOM CODES**

**For Building the Wisdom Organization**

*These 8 codes form the foundation of the Wisdom Hungertm approach*

*and provide the guidelines for building the Wisdom Hunger Organizationtm*

1. **CORRECT THINKING: The Cognitive Code for developing self-responsibility for our actions and interactions**
2. **TRANSFORMING EMOTIONS: The Emotional Code for mining and affirming the messages within our feelings**
3. **DIRECTING THE WILL: The Volitional Code for decision-making mastery to make the commitments that drive action**
4. **PRODUCTIVE ACTION: The Performance Code to integrate knowledge, passion, and instinct for achieving and managing high performance**
5. **STRONG RELATIONSHIPS: The Interpersonal Code to build relationships that nurture belonging and individuality as we develop synergy**
6. **DYNAMIC STRUCTURE: The Systemic Code for organizational patterns that promote personal growth, individual productivity, and team synergy**
7. **CREATIVE CULTURE: The Culture Code for generating shared vision, values, and commitments at the integral altitude of life**
8. **CORE PURPOSE: The Purpose Code that links every decision and action to our reason for being, as individuals and as a group**

*We will do a two-day retreat to assess the instincts of the LT members and the degree of fit between person and job. We will learn to communicate and manage by instinct, not just by objective. Three months after we assess instincts, we will also do another 2-day retreat to assess their stage of maturity and learn to manage by maturity as well.*

*You and I will get involved with HR so we can gradually come up with the* ***High Performer Profiles*** *(HPP) for all the key positions in the company. These HPP’s will allow us to hire people with the right knowledge, passion, and instinct. It is our job to hire people smartly and to manage them optimally. If we hire well and manage well, it won’t take long before discovering whether the person is performing well or not. If we don’t hire smartly, poor performance may be due to lack of job fit or poor management. Let’s do it right from the start.*

*Six months into this project, we will do the same one-day retreats (instincts and maturity) with the teams headed by your direct reports so they too will learn to perform, communicate, and manage by instinct and by maturity. You see where I’m headed with this as you project it through a two-year period.*

*R: Yes, I get the overview. And you think it will take two years?*

*J: At least two years—if we’re lucky.*

**THE GIST**

How do we assist leaders to satisfy the wisdom hunger? By creating maps, practices, and programs that guide them to attain wisdom, so they can live and lead from that altitude of life. Emotion seeks self-gain. Reason seeks fair gain. Wisdom seeks mutual gain for all.

**REASON IS OVERRATED AND INSUFFICIENT**

The rational approach to personal, leadership, and organizational excellence is woefully inadequate. Only Wisdom can create synergy between individual ***productivity*** and team ***loyalty*** through time. These two outcomes

are competitors when viewed through rational lenses, but they

become mutual reinforcers at the wisdom altitude of life.

*Wisdom Hunger* provides a comprehensive framework and a plan for leading individuals and teams up the wisdom ladder. Only then are leaders able to bring out the best version of themselves and their companies consistently.

To assist leaders, I have brought together the best maps and programs designed to bring out the best version of ourselves. In the discourse above, James and Reed refer to the 4 quadrants, the 3 altitudes, and the 8 Wisdom Codes. These maps form the skeleton of the Wisdom Hunger approach. Here’s a brief sketch:

The 4 Quadrants of Life and Leadership:

* **AWARENESS** (mind)
* **BEHAVIOR** (action)
* **CULTURE** (shared vision, values, & vows of a group)
* **STRUCTURE** (interaction patterns).

To remember these quadrants, view them as the **ABC’S of Life and Leadership**. Any map that misses one or more of these areas will be an incomplete guide. These areas of life are the 4 main sources of cause and effect. Every situation we encounter has four potential causes. Leaders who focus on only one or two quads miss significant information and potential areas of influence and intervention. They are one or two-quadrant wonders in their thinking.

We experience these quadrants of life within 3 altitudes: 1) emotional, 2) rational, and 3) wisdom. Life and leadership look quite different at each altitude. Wisdom, as you can see below, is experienced at the 3rd level or altitude.

The 3 Altitudes of Life and Leadership:

* **EMOTIONAL** ALTITUDE (power-based): for my wellbeing only.
* **RATIONAL** ALTITUDE (principle-based): for my wellbeing and for yours too.
* **WISDOM** ALTITUDE (purpose-based): for my wellbeing, yours, ours, theirs.

**Wisdom cannot reside for long in the first two stages of life.**

The Wisdom Altitude is the only stage where living and leading on purpose can be sustained through time and through the inevitable cycles of transformation.

**Chapter 4**

**LAUNCHING THE WISDOM HUNGER PROJECT**

At the end of the two-day retreat, Reed addresses the Leadership Team (LT). He and James share the two-year plan for change management at HITT.

*Reed*

*My sincere thanks to all of you for listening to my frustrations and my sense of helplessness. I hope I conveyed clearly that within those feelings, I heard two crucial messages coming from deep within me. My frustration revealed my desire to lead us in creating a wisdom organization that brings out the best version of you, me, and us. My feeling of helplessness brought the realization that I can’t do it alone but that together, with guidance from James and his team, we can harness the synergy to make it happen. I know can count on you to be real, to be vulnerable, to be challenged, and to be supported by you. I don’t feel alone now.*

*To achieve the dream of becoming the premiere human resource company in the world, we are required to operate consistently at the wisdom altitude. If we succeed, I see the following fruits of our joint effort:*

* *An unstoppable, palpable energy of individual and team initiative that go beyond the rational expectations. Individual productivity and team synergy occur naturally without the need for daily management. People and teams are simply driven by our common vision, along with their personal purpose. Only leadership is required for the most part. But when managing people or process is called for, we will give it with unflinching directness and respect. However, leading is the rule and managing the exception to that rule.*
* *We take responsibility for all our thoughts, feelings, decisions, and actions—period—no exceptions. We create every action or reaction we manifest, regardless of what others do. Our actions do not depend on other people’s actions. They are ours: no excuses, explanations or justifications. This shared belief will anchor our culture. Note that this belief is not shared by the larger culture of our society, which is seriously infected by the disease of the victim mindset. James tells me that building this cultural foundation will be our biggest challenge. The human mind is fundamentally infected by this disease and that is why the work we do in this area never ends.*
* *We have jointly committed to think, feel, decide, act, and interact from the wisdom altitude of life. I believe we are innately hungry for this wisdom. Therefore, our commitment to grow into it and live from that level will be organic and an integral part of who we truly are. James has often reminded us that the selfish ego is part of our nature. But so is the rational mind, and even more so is the wisdom mind.*
* *Two questions: In which altitude do we choose to live? From which altitude we choose to lead? James will now describe the proposed program.*

*James*

*Thank you, Reed, and thanks to all for including me into your corporate family in the last two days. I’ve listened with great admiration as Reed laid bare his emotional jugular veins as CEO of HITT. To most, it seems easier to lead with the head than with the heart. But the head cannot integrate the gut. The heart is able to integrate the gut and the head in order to come up with decisions that include all parts of us, individually and collectively. Reed’s willingness to be vulnerable invited us into his inner self. I hope it will encourage us to do the same as we undertake this ambitious project together. It will require mutual trust.*

*Since we have spent a lot of energy looking at where we’ve been, where we are, and what we aim to realize, I will simply share the outline of how we might go about realizing our common vision. The outline will follow the 4 Quadrants of Life and Leadership:* ***Awareness*** *(Mind),* ***Behavior*** *(Action),* ***Culture*** *(Shared Vision and Values), and* ***Structure*** *(Patterns of Interaction). Remember the ABC’S.*

*I’ve identified 8 Wisdom Codes to assess the state and stage of each quad. I’ve also designed practices to help us climb the ladder of maturity up to the wisdom altitude in each quad. The Awareness quad will address the way we think, feel, and decide. The Behavior quad will look at how we get into our performance zone and how we underperform. The Culture quad will shed light on our shared vision, values, commitments, standards, and expectations, including shared memories and feelings of the group. The Structure quad will reveal the way we interact, especially the patterns of our communication, decision-making, boundaries, and the hierarchies in our power structure. That’s the bare skeleton upon which we will build a beautiful and strong body called the Wisdom Hunger Organization (WHO).*

*Although I have a vision of what this organization looks like, I cannot predict what it will eventually become. Every group, like every individual, has a unique form and a unique way of getting there. You are the builders and the occupiers of this body. I team up with you somewhat like a consulting architect who sows seeds of what’s possible. But you are the true architects. Although I will sometimes be obstinate about the principles behind the 8 codes, I have learned not to be attached to any specific form. I have learned to watch with delight as people create according to their own image and their own talents.*

*The foundation of this organizational structure will rest on the way we* ***think*** *about self-responsibility. Among the 8 Wisdom Codes, the first is Correct Thinking about cause and effect. We will spend about three months decoding the victim mindset in stark contrast to the mastery mindset. Spending three months is still cutting it close. I cannot overemphasize the importance of laying this foundation.*

*Every morning, when you and I wake up, our brains revert to its early program of being in the jungle ready to protect ourselves and our young. It’s the outside world that “causes” us to live or die. Our thoughts and feelings are determined by outer circumstances. Therefore, our decisions and actions are simply the “result” of the way we think and feel. Hence, the outer world controls us. The brain operates within this belief system, unaware that there is a mind that creates thoughts, feelings, and decisions as it interacts with the outside world. And so, we have the curious phrase in our language, “you made me angry.”*

*I will assist you in becoming relentlessly and insistently conscious of the utter reality that we, individually, create all our thoughts, feelings, and decisions inside ourselves. The outer world of people and things impact and influence us, but they NEVER create our opinions and emotions, nor do they ever determine our will as we make decisions that then flower into actions.*

*We will create a whole culture of self-responsibility for our individual actions and co-responsibility of our interactions. We will build deep neuronal grooves in our brains to etch this belief system in order to replace the old victim programs. We will design practices for all of us to apply at home, at work, and everywhere else we might be, in calm, stressful, or in potentially dangerous situations. This victim mindset can creep up anytime, anywhere when you least expect it. Even the phrase, “you make me happy” violates the mastery mindset.*

*If there’s any one thing I can contribute to our culture, it is that the “pebble” (an event outside) does not create our ripples (thoughts, feelings, and decisions). Our ability to respond is created by our nature, not by an outside event, regardless of the beauty or ugliness we see in that event. Beauty, or the lack of it, is in the eye of the beholder. Great truth is contained in those words. That’s Code 1.*

*With Correct Thinking as our foundation, we proceed to Code 2: Transforming emotions. We will learn to view all feelings as good and full of vital messages about us and about the events around us. Feelings are pleasant or unpleasant, not good or bad. At the emotional altitude, feelings lead us. At the wisdom altitude, we lead them. Feelings inform us and guide us but we are their leaders. Feelings cannot be logically analyzed or parted into bins or simple categories. We experience feelings with our whole being. As we become informed (in-formed) by our feelings, we become wiser in our views and decision-making. Our actions will embody feelings as parts of our whole selves. This kind of emotional intelligence will help us listen to our feelings but not be overwhelmed by them. We will also learn to listen to other people’s feelings but not fear or deny them. This is the kind of emotional transformation that leads to wisdom.*

*And then there’s Code 3: Directing the Will. The will is the faculty we use to take stands, positions, and make decisions that trigger our actions. We are free to decide. This becomes crystal clear at the wisdom altitude but murky at the emotional altitude where we feel determined by the outside world of pebbles. The victim mindset fears the power of the outside world and hence approaches it with the fight, freeze, or flight syndrome. In the process, the freewill is crowded and clouded to the point of being “victimized” and “forced” into doing things “against our will.” Agreeing with someone and acquiescing to someone is still a choice. The degree of this awareness varies from altitude to altitude. The higher, the clearer.*

*It may take us six to nine months to build this foundation of correct thinking, transforming emotions, and directing the will. Worth every moment of practice. As we’re going through these first few months of foundation building, we will at the same time, do some important assessments. We will assess your* ***instincts****, your* ***personality****, and your* ***maturity****. As you know, I have been using the Kolbe System to assess our instincts. Our instincts governed us from birth and dominate our way of being until about the 18th month of life. So, the instinctive part of the mind precedes our emotional and cognitive development. The Kolbe System has been able to measure accurately a subset of those instincts: our striving instincts or the way we naturally attain goals.*

*We will use the Kolbe A Index to measure our instinctive actions so we can optimize those actions and get us into our performance zone. We will also use the Kolbe B Index to assess the instincts that our jobs utilize. Comparing A to B indexes will give us a good measure of the fit between person and job. In addition, the Kolbe C Index will measure the manager’s view of the job so we can compare our natural instinctive actions to those actions expected by our manager. Analyzing the inter-alignment among Kolbe A, B, and C will give us many clues about how to bring out the best version of ourselves on the job. We will also use the Kolbe System to create teams based on instincts, not just on expertise or interest.*

*I have been using the Kolbe System for over 25 years and I can tell you how immensely accurate it is and especially how useful it is for wise selection and wise management of people’s talents. You won’t have to take this on faith because you will feel it in your own performance and you will see how it can guide you to manage people according to their instinctive ways, not according to your own ways. This will help us avoid instinctive bias: “My way is THE way!”*

*We will also be assessing our level of maturity through the Corrales Maturity Index (CMI). We will use the CMI as an assessment instrument first and then as a heuristic device. A heuristic device is one we can utilize to develop maturity, not just measure it. In other words, we will use it as a training instrument to help develop our maturity level up the higher altitudes of life. The CMI will give each of us a* ***Wisdom Quotient*** *and locate us along the* ***Wisdom Scale****. In the next two years, we will be using the CMI every six months to track our development.*

*In addition, there are several personality assessment tools that describe aspects of our personality or social-emotional styles of being and relating. These assessments can enhance our understanding of the way we store, express, and renew our emotional energy. All of you are familiar with a number of these tools.*

*Most assessment instruments measure our STYLES of being or doing, but they do not measure our STAGES or altitudes of being or doing. Personality assessment tools measure social-emotional styles. The Kolbe System measures styles of doing—our natural performance styles. In fact, it is the only assessment tool that is able to measure ONLY instincts, apart from the influence of our cognitive and affective styles. Nevertheless, what we get are assessments of styles, not stages.*

*The CMI aims to measure STAGES of development in the way we think, feel, decide, act, and interact. We will see how useful it is to do both—measure styles and the stages in which those styles operate. We cannot sustain high performance at the emotional level because, as soon as we become emotionally reactive, we lose sight of the goal and use our instincts in the service of our power struggles.*

*Furthermore, we cannot sustain teamwork at the rational level because rationality can be sustained only if both parties to a relationship remain at the rational level. We know that people do not do that consistently. That is why we need wisdom in order to attain greatness, not just success. Only the wisdom altitude can give us the capacity to do the right thing at every moment regardless of what others do to us. That is a necessary condition of great leadership.*

*Code 4 will give us a model of high performance that integrates our knowledge, our passion, and our instincts. Most performance models emphasize mainly our knowhow and our motivation. The Wisdom Hunger model includes two other dimensions: instincts and maturity. Knowing something and liking something do not predict high performance. We need to have the natural instincts that suit a job in order to generate high performance. In addition, we need a level of maturity that allows us to deal with conflict and with emotional reactivity so we don’t get knocked out of our performance zone that easily. Our Performance Zone Model will take all four aspects into account: knowhow, passion, instincts, and maturity.*

*Codes 5 and 6 take us into the Structure quad to assess our relationships and the organizational patterns of interaction. Codes 7 and 8 deal with the Culture quad: our shared vision, values, commitments, and purpose. Code 8 (Core Purpose) has two aspects: corporate purpose and individual purpose. The second aspect of Code 8 brings us back to the Awareness quad, completing the journey of assessment.*

*Although we went on a sequential tour from the first to the eighth code, we can start our assessment from any code and go to any other code depending on the nature of the issue. For now, just note that we will aim to do a 4-quadrant analysis of every issue to make sure we have a complete and an in-depth view of the salient aspects of a problem and the goals. Our treatment or intervention may however focus on one or two quads depending on the nature of the issue. But our analysis will always be informed by all-quad view. Part of our leadership training will be to become experts in 4-quadrant analysis.*

*Our training will also include expertise in assessing the altitude of development in each of these quadrants. For instance, we will learn to recognize what thinking looks like at the emotional, rational, and wisdom altitudes. We will do this for all quadrants and in each of the 8 wisdom codes. In other words, we will aim to become proficient in doing an all-quad, three-altitude, and 8-code analysis of the issues and challenges we will encounter in our personal and leadership lives.*

*Wisdom begets the capacity to live and lead on purpose: the purpose of each person in line with the corporate purpose. Along the path to the wisdom altitude, we may see some people leave or be asked to leave. My experience has convinced me that not all choose to grow or develop beyond a certain altitude, despite our efforts to bring out their best. It’s difficult to predict who will and who won’t continue the developmental process until we hit the point of resistance.*

*Since we don’t really know in advance, we start with the assumption that all have the capacity to grow. We therefore invite and include them in the project, knowing that some may choose to opt out along the way. That is the nature of evolution. Part of great leadership is learning to read the feedback signals and respect them.*

*Thanks again for taking me into your circle and for allowing me to influence you in the best way I know. I look forward to joining you in this important work.*