

# **A NEW CAPSTONE FOR DECISION MAKING**

**Decision Making with Discernment**

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# Introduction

Universities call Capstone (cornerstone, foundation stone) to the final course of many programs, as it integrates the subjects studied and prepares graduates for decision-making.

This book proposes a new Capstone, as shown in Figure 1, where the decision-making mechanism is based on our “Discernment.”



**Volume 1 incorporates a new version of strategic management in the Capstone** (on the left in Figure 1) that introduces unity, simplicity, clarity of ideas, and, most importantly, critical thinking and interdisciplinary thinking. These are key competencies for decision-making. **Volume 2 completes this exercise: it incorporates discernment**, a much richer and more human mechanism than critical thinking, and broadens interdisciplinary thinking by incorporating several disciplines that are pillars of discernment: philosophy, cultures, religions, spirituality, psychology, ethics, and social responsi-

bility. Discernment incorporates the whole person and the community into decision-making.

**Volume 1 incorporates political economy into the Capstone**, providing crucial insight for society: the success of a nation and of any organization is based on its **intellectual capital**, which is composed of **human capital** (knowledge, skills, health, motivation), **social capital** (values, civility, community, democratic functioning, institutions, culture of trust, social responsibility), **renewal capital** (capacity for innovation and growth), **process capital** (production capacity, technology, management). **This Volume 2 completes that exercise, showing how discernment helps build intellectual capital**, promoting the success of society.

**Volume 1 incorporates leadership into the Capstone**, a leadership based on an organizational process that seeks excellence and greatness. **This Volume 2 completes that exercise, showing how discernment helps build great, excellent leadership**, maximizing the happiness and success of individuals and societies. Making decisions with discernment humanizes and integrates society, maximizes its happiness and well-being, and leads to a peaceful world.

### **The value of discernment**

Discernment is a key process for making decisions that seek the best for the future of individuals and society. It inspires, enlightens, energizes, humanizes, transforms, heals, and promotes social action. Discernment leads the decisions of individuals, organizations, society, and nations to constant improvement, to making decisions with wisdom, awareness, transcendence, values, religiosity, community, meaning, in touch with oneself, seeking transformation, healing, and

social action. This helps everyone in their daily lives—parents, children, families, students, professionals, managers, government officials—to make decisions with a mature, profound, rational, broad, integrated, unified, and simple vision that leads to the common good.

### **A journey toward personal and social transformation, happiness, and peace**

What happens in our lives when we introduce the habit of discernment? How does it change our lives, whether we are religious or not, whether we are believers or not? For many of us, life is not easy, and readers may well identify with some of the following groups:

- People in a difficult economic situation, people who are homeless or jobless,<sup>1</sup> or who have difficulties with work and financial instability; people living in poverty;<sup>2</sup> people who suffer abuse in their jobs, and young people who cannot find their first job.
- People who feel lost, disoriented, without a clear identity, without a purpose for their lives<sup>3</sup>, especially young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Between 0.1% and 95%, depending on the country. *Unemployment*. CIA World Factbook. January 1, 2018. <https://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?c=xx&v=74>.

<sup>2</sup> 10% of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day. *Poverty*. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>.

<sup>3</sup> 54% do not know or is not sure what the purpose of life is. *Survelum Public Data Bank Life Purpose Survey*. <http://www.survelum.com/survey-results/life>.

- People born into broken families<sup>4-5</sup> or who see their own families fail,<sup>6</sup> lonely people;<sup>7</sup> people with autism,<sup>8</sup> and people who suffer discrimination.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> 40.5% Percent of all births to unmarried women. Hamilton, Brady E., et al. *Births: Final 2014 data. National Vital Statistics Reports*. Volume 64, Number 12 December 23, 2015. and *Unmarried Childbearing*. National Center for Health Statistics. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarried-childbearing.htm>

<sup>5</sup> 84% of Colombia's children are born out of wedlock. Gill, Stephen. *84% of Colombian children are born out of wedlock*. March 12, 2016. <https://colombiareports.com/84-colombias-children-born-wedlock/>

<sup>6</sup> 50% chances of divorcing of US couples marrying for the first time. American Psychological Association. *Marriage and divorce*. <https://www.apa.org/topics/divorce/>.

<sup>7</sup> 3 out of 4 Americans are lonely. Fikes, Bradley J. *The San Diego Union-Tribune* <https://phys.org/news/2018-12-americans-lonely.html>

<sup>8</sup> About 1 in 44 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network. ASD is reported to occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. ASD is more than 4 times more common among boys than among girls. About 1 in 6 (17%) children aged 3–17 years were diagnosed with a developmental disability, as reported by parents, during a study period of 2009–2017. These included autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, blindness, and cerebral palsy, among others. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

One in 54 children had a diagnosis of ASD by age 8 in 2016, a nearly 10 percent increase over 2014 when the estimate was 1 in 59. <https://www.autismspeaks.org/press-release/cdc-estimate-autism-prevalence-increases-nearly-10-percent-1-54-children-us>

1 out of 37 boys and 1 in 151 girls are diagnosed with autism in the United States. Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S. <https://tacanow.org/autism-statistics/>

Autism prevalence has increased by 178% since 2000. <https://tacanow.org/autism-statistics/>

- People with emotional struggles,<sup>10</sup> anxiety,<sup>11</sup> depression,<sup>12</sup> and suicidal.<sup>13</sup>
- People with addictions who feel unable to overcome them.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Percent of each group saying that, generally speaking, they believe discrimination against their own group exists in America today: Black Americans 92%, Latinos 78%, Native Americans 75%, Asian Americans 61%, women 68%, LGBTQ 90%. *Discrimination in America: Final Summary*. Survey conducted for National Public Radio, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

<sup>10</sup> 25% people are affected by mental disorders. *World Health Report*. World Health Organization. [https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media\\_centre/press\\_release/en/](https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/)

*Prevalence of any mental illness (AMI)*. National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>.

<sup>11</sup> 19.1% of U.S. adults had any anxiety disorder in the past year, 31.1% of U.S. adults experience any anxiety disorder at some time in their lives. National Comorbidity Study. National Institute of Mental Health. [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/any-anxiety-disorder#:~:text=Prevalence%20of%20Any%20Anxiety%20Disorder%20Among%20Adults,-Based%20on%20diagnostic&text=An%20estimated%2019.1%25%20of%20U.S.,than%20for%20males%20\(14.3%25](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/any-anxiety-disorder#:~:text=Prevalence%20of%20Any%20Anxiety%20Disorder%20Among%20Adults,-Based%20on%20diagnostic&text=An%20estimated%2019.1%25%20of%20U.S.,than%20for%20males%20(14.3%25)

<sup>12</sup> People suffering with depression: average 7%, teenage females 20%. *National Institute of Mental Health*. [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml)

<sup>13</sup> During 2020: 13.5 per 100,000 inhabitants in the USA. Garnett, Matthew F., M.P.H.; Curtin, Sally C., M.A.; Stone Deborah M., Sc.D. *Suicide Mortality in the United States, 2000–2020*. NCHS Data Brief No. 433. Centers for Disease Control. March 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db433.htm#Summary>

<sup>14</sup> People with addictions: 6% of the population, and people unable to recover from alcoholism: 96%. *Addiction Statistics*. Addiction Center. <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/addiction-statistics/>

- People who suffer sexual abuse, physical violence, harassment,<sup>15</sup> and psychological aggression.<sup>16</sup>
- People who live surrounded by dishonesty, corruption, and lies.
- People who suffer wars and genocides, who must emigrate because of violence, or are surrounded by violence and crime.
- Societies and nations are confronted because of cultural opposites, traditions, history, ideologies, and opposite political economies.

Whatever our age or the reality of our lives, and especially for people who are struggling or vulnerable, becoming accustomed to discernment gives rise to a series of mechanisms that help us to be wiser, live fully, be happy, have values, and find meaning in our lives, all of which have enormous power for transformation, personal healing, and social action.

### **The practical approach of this book**

This book seeks to present a practical approach to decision-making.

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<sup>15</sup> On average, more than 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the US will experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner. *Facts and figures*. National Domestic Violence Hotline. <https://thehotline.org/resources/statistics/>.

<sup>16</sup> 48%. Ibid.

For this reason, each chapter invites readers to construct the ten dimensions of discernment based on their own experience and analyze their impact on decision-making: strategic management, political economy, and leadership.

The “Introductions” to each chapter have the same structure and aim to provide practical, simple, integrated, and humanistic guidance.

They begin by presenting the chapter's purpose, linking the ten dimensions of discernment with the search for a better world through great leadership—excellent leadership that builds a leadership culture. To this end, they draw on the Baldrige Framework for Excellence, the world's most recognized and reputable management system for achieving excellent leadership that produces the best social results.

They continue explaining how we build each dimension of discernment, based on experiential exercises.

They conclude by showing the benefits of discernment for decision-making in the three disciplines presented in Volume 1: strategic management, political economy, and leadership. This helps us have a simple, integrated, humanized vision of decision-making, seeking the common good.

In all introductions, the last sentence is a reflection on how discernment in decision-making leads to world peace.

## **Towards peace**

All chapters show the impact of discernment on world peace, seeking to heal the division that René Descartes' proposal caused in

humanity 400 years ago, which led the world in two opposite directions, often extreme and irreconcilable: empiricists versus idealists, conservatives versus progressives, orthodox versus liberal, individualists versus collectivists, right versus left, democracy versus dictatorship, dividing societies and generating wars in cases of extreme confrontation.

Descartes was wrong; the solution to the complexity of reality is not what he did, locking himself in his house and saying, “I think, therefore I am,” isolated.

He should have relied on his discernment to remain in the world, seek to understand the world, accept diversity, connect with people, understand each other, and unite society.

Naturally, there are more conservative and progressive people, for example. The problem arises when there is no discernment to help them understand each other, collaborate, and live in harmony.

Each dimension of discernment integrates the person and the people with each other and communities and unites society. Each dimension of discernment integrates cultures, religions, and nations.

The summary of the ten following chapters, the common thread between the first and last chapters is that discernment leads us to seek the good of the whole society, to seek peace.

Juan Pablo Stegmann, Ph.D.

# Chapter 1

## **Building the cognitive dimension of our discernment; incorporating knowledge, awareness, wisdom, and humanism into our decisions**

**Introduction.** Great, excellent leadership requires the best knowledge.

This chapter introduces the first dimension of discernment in decision-making: better knowledge, awareness, wisdom, and humanism.

When we make decisions, we seek the best for the community, which requires great leadership, excellent leadership. To seek that great, excellent leadership, we will rely on the Baldrige Excellence Framework as the system with the highest recognition and reputation worldwide, to achieve the best social results.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework requires the ability to create knowledge, manage knowledge, know people, listen to them, know what they feel and want, and create a relationship with them.

The Baldrige Framework for Excellence is based on the following core values, which require comprehensive knowledge: visionary leadership, organizational learning and agility, customer focus, people focus, focus on social results, ethical behavior, management for innovation, systems perspective, results orientation and value creation, transparency, and focus on success.

Excellence demands knowledge, conscience, wisdom, also called prudence, the habit of knowing how to do good things. Wisdom is a virtue that illuminates other virtues such as justice, fortitude, courage, moderation, integrity, altruism, transparency, generosity, etc. As Aristotle stated, virtues lead us to happiness.

### **Building the best knowledge, awareness, and wisdom, pillars of discernment**

Leadership literature proposes several mechanisms that leaders use to create knowledge: rational intelligence (IQ), Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence (EQ), Tony Buzan's spiritual intelligence (SQ), and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences.

Phenomenology proposes mechanisms to create personal and organizational knowledge, recognizing that we are all wired differently and perceive certain phenomena more effectively than others. It acknowledges that we process information differently. According to phenomenology, meditation and contemplation strengthen our capacity to perceive phenomena and organize them, relying on personal and community knowledge: multiple information of objects, intuitions, symbols, metaphors, hermeneutics, analogies, affections, emotions, empathy, different perspectives of the same object, different perceptions of people who apprehend reality in different ways. These promote better personal and community knowledge.

This broad, human knowledge is the foundation for discernment, enabling us to make decisions that lead to excellence and happiness. When we make a decision, we give ourselves time, reflect in silence, meditate, contemplate, breathe deeply, connect with our inner selves and emotions, connect with others, with our loved ones,

connect with the outside world, with the landscape, and conclude whether this decision will help us feel good and at peace. We connect with our conscience, building a richer knowledge than critical thinking.

In this deep peace, integrated internally and externally, we can make decisions with discernment, that is, decisions that lead us on a journey towards good, peace, harmony, and happiness. Our discernment is based on personal and community knowledge, confronting ideas, looking for trustworthy sources, from wise people who act with virtue, from respected scriptures, with moral authority. We want our decisions to be wise and reflect virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

### **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment, enriched by the best knowledge, awareness, and wisdom, is a much richer and more humane decision-making mechanism than critical thinking. It leads us to greatness and excellence by incorporating all intelligences (IQ, EQ, SQ, multiple intelligences, and phenomenology) to understand ourselves, others, the community, customers, employees, suppliers, and society.

Our discernment enriched by rich, human knowledge, awareness, wisdom, maximizes **intellectual capital**: maximizes **human capital** (better insights and communications, better knowledge reinforcing Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, better organizational knowledge), **social capital** (connecting internally and with others, generating emotional intelligence, empathy, humanism, integration and social harmony), **renewal capital** (going to the roots, questioning boundaries, creating, innovating), and **process capital**

(better cross-functional processes and technology) maximizing economic growth and social justice.

Our discernment, supported by rich human knowledge, awareness, and wisdom, promotes excellence and continuous improvement, fostering a **leadership culture**. It enlightens and creates ideals, discovers and energizes values, builds relationships, and leads teams with social commitment. This discernment inspires our ability to make decisions, energizes our will to transform, heal, and execute social actions, ultimately promoting the common good.

Our discernment fosters a leadership culture that integrates society, surpassing both individualistic cultures that isolate and fragment individuals and collectivistic cultures that massify societies. Individualistic and collectivistic cultures are at odds with each other, dividing societies.

**World peace** is the result of our humanized knowledge and consciousness, which leads to empathy and social integration. It is the product of each person's inner peace; it begins within each person's interiority, in his or her mind.

### **Experiential learning. Creating knowledge and awareness, sources of discernment.**

We are going to do an exercise, which is the foundation of this book, the basis of discernment, the backbone of each of these chapters. When we get used to doing this throughout our days, we develop each dimension of our life, and thus we immerse ourselves in the heart of discernment.

In a calm, quiet place, let's close our eyes. We will breathe deeply, calmly. We will try to feel how the air we inhale, which has existed for millennia, fills our lungs and purifies our blood.

We can repeat a mantra to help us find inner silence. In chapter 4, we present a mantra called "Maranatha." For Judeo-Christians, Maranatha means "Come, Lord" in Aramaic. Non-believers can repeat it simply as a mantra to help them find inner silence, to quiet their thoughts, anxieties, memories of the past, and worries about the future, helping them to live in the present.

If we are in a quiet place, we can sometimes feel our heartbeats; we can coordinate our breathing with our heartbeats, experiencing a deep sense of unity, peace, and harmony. For example, in my case, I try to make each inhalation or exhalation occur every three heartbeats. If we don't feel them at first, we can place a finger on the carotid artery in our neck, and with practice, we will be able to feel them more easily.

We can relax our muscles, stretch our arms and fingers, and rotate our neck.

We experience a deep sense of peace, a unity between our body and our inner being, a more profound consciousness.

When we are silent, when we reflect, meditate, and contemplate, we strengthen our awareness, our connectivity, and our capacity to listen, to perceive phenomena and organize them, to illuminate our knowledge, and inspire our wisdom.

Silence, reflection, meditation, and contemplation allow us to connect with ourselves and with others. It is like having bigger eyes and ears, sensitive skin, and antennae that help us connect, perceive, and know ourselves and others better. Through these practices, we

enrich our communication and access personal and community knowledge, helping us to understand symbols and discover universal truths. They allow us to build shared knowledge and ideals amid diversity and complexity.

We propose doing this exercise more frequently throughout the day, in various settings, including when we are alone, outdoors, traveling, driving, and attending business meetings. By exercising regularly for days and months, it can become a natural habit, something that comes to us without us realizing it.

Meditation, contemplation, and awareness build knowledge, enhancing our ability to perceive and organize phenomena, thereby supporting us in developing personal and community knowledge.

They help us to connect with ourselves, to realize who we are, and what is going on inside us.

They help us to connect with others, to communicate better, to develop feelings and empathy, to build relationships, to integrate people and communities, to create community knowledge, promoting humanism, peace, and social harmony.

We are building knowledge, awareness, relationships, wisdom, pillars of discernment. In this way, we enrich critical thinking, we humanize it, incorporating other dimensions of reality.

### **Reflection, meditation, contemplation**

What is the difference between reflection, meditation, and contemplation? All three practices share a commonality in that they involve the mind and spirit, albeit in different ways.

**Reflection** is an active, analytical, and intellectual exercise that leads to learning. It seeks to understand, review, and make sense of experiences, utilizing reason and intellect to interpret their meaning.

**Meditation** is a less active, less intellectual, and less analytical practice. It seeks inner peace, calming and clearing the mind, relying on mechanisms such as breathing and muscle relaxation to strengthen our awareness, live in the present, and let go, without clinging to the past or the future.

**Contemplation** is a deeper, more receptive, perceptive, and appreciative experience, requiring greater inner concentration. We contemplate reality, immerse ourselves in an idea —mental or real—and rely on our inner self to gain a deeper insight, often beyond words or analysis.

To simplify, in this book, we will generally use the term contemplation to express all three.

## **Multiple intelligences**

Those eyes, ears, sensitivity, antennae that are sharpened by silence and contemplation help us to perceive phenomena differently and process them differently.

Howard Gardner<sup>1</sup> states that we all have different types of intelligence. Gardner shows how experiences shape leaders: many of them are people who did not necessarily have happy childhoods, suf-

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Gardner, and Emma Laskin, *Leading minds. An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).

ferred isolation, lost their parents at an early age or had poor relationships with them. This forced them to develop "multiple intelligences"<sup>2</sup> (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, kinesthetic-bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic) and a unique ability to communicate and persuade others. Focusing on their ability to influence others, Gardner describes how the leader must be in touch with their mind, their thoughts, their values, their strategies; the leader must have a strong relationship with the community; leaders must be able to have a story to tell, they must embody virtues.

Gardner explains that leaders must be able to develop mental symbols that allow them to think, categorize, and communicate their stories effectively. Such symbols must be able to reach different people with diverse cognitive structures, who may perceive certain phenomena in different ways (scientists, economists, entrepreneurs, humanists, psychologists, and poets), as well as individuals from different walks of life. Leaders who changed the world can develop stories that are rooted in the population, stories of innovation that propose a new vision. Stories are a form of basic human cognition, using reason and emotions.

## **Emotional intelligence**

But in addition to knowledge, these antennae, which are sharpened by contemplation, allow us to perceive and connect with others, understand them and generate feelings, emotions and empathy,

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<sup>2</sup> Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books Publishers, 2011).

helping us to build relationships. Daniel Goleman argues that IQ is not enough; a leader needs emotional intelligence (EQ) that helps them read the environment, understand people, and develop empathy. Emotional intelligence competencies, such as self-awareness, social awareness, empathy, and the ability to unite intelligence and emotions, are essential dimensions of leadership, which promote a positive impact on personal and organizational excellence.

### **Spiritual intelligence**

Tony Buzan adds another type of intelligence, spiritual intelligence (SQ), to understand meanings and values, go to the roots, question limits, transform, and create. There are three types of spirituality that influence knowledge in different ways.

**Cataphatic spirituality** relies on ideas, words, discourse, dialogue, and what the science of knowledge management refers to as explicit knowledge.

**Symbolic spirituality** expresses realities by relying on symbols, which the science of knowledge management refers to as metaphors.

**Apophatic spirituality** is based on silence, which helps to perceive reality in its fullness (Eastern spirituality), to know and seek goodness, beauty and truth (Greek philosophy), to understand physical, emotional and spiritual symbols (Origen of Alexandria), to find the meaning of our existence (St. Ambrose), to live a life of perfection (John Cassian), to know and experience reality (St. Augustine), to know through personal awareness, connecting with our true self

and with others (20th century Christian Meditation), what the science of knowledge management calls tacit, implicit knowledge.

Louis Bouyer<sup>3</sup> shows that the spiritual senses invite the extinction of the physical senses. Bouyer explains how Origen introduced the spiritual senses into his writings. He relied on exegesis, symbols, allegories, and types to explain reality based on the scriptures: his exegesis became universal, offering insights valid for all times.

Bernard of Clairvaux, according to McGinn<sup>4</sup> relied on the book of experience, on a gradual awakening of our spiritual senses: sight (contemplative vision, illumination), hearing (listening to good spirits, to the Gospel), touch (through spiritual desire, faith), and taste (sweetness). These spiritual senses help us to know and feel God's love, to enjoy his presence, and guide us on the spiritual journey<sup>5</sup>

As McGinn explains, Bernard emphasized the role of experience as something completely necessary on the spiritual journey, above theoretical teachings: "Today we read in the book of experience" must be part of the daily spiritual journey. "Only contemplatives are capable in this life of enjoying free pleasure in some way, and only in part."<sup>6</sup> Bernard's spirituality was a spirituality of love: divine love, human love, nuptial love, sweet love, intense love, love and union.

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<sup>3</sup> Louis Bouyer, Jean Leclercq, Francois Vandenbroucke, and Louis Cognet, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers. A History of Christian Spirituality*, Vol. I (New York: The Seabury Press, 1963), p. 363.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Growth Of Mysticism: From Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 187-188.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

## **Knowledge management**

Modern management has developed a specialty called knowledge management, which analyzes how organizations create knowledge and how this knowledge is translated into products and services.

Knowledge management emerged with the rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT). ICTs enabled the transformation of organizations internally and externally, creating networks, interactions with different areas of the organizations at the local and global level, and interactions with stakeholders: customers, suppliers, channels, etc.

This facilitated the creation of new types of organizations, as described by Gareth Morgan in his book "Images of Organizations": organizations as organisms, sensitive and connected to their environment; organizations as networks, capable of developing relationships; and organizations as brains, capable of creating and storing organizational knowledge.

This gave rise to a new discipline: knowledge management. According to Wiig, knowledge management is the systematic, explicit and deliberate construction, renewal and application of knowledge to maximize the effectiveness and performance of a company's knowledge assets.

Knowledge management explains the mechanisms used by organizations to identify, capture, select, store, share, apply, create new realities, and, finally, sell. Nonaka and Takeuchi have divided accessibility into three categories: tacit (human mind, organization, accessible through indirect access with difficulty through behavioral ob-

servation and analysis), implicit (human mind, organization, accessible through questions and discussions), and explicit (documents, information systems, easily accessible and well-organized).

According to them, Japanese companies (Honda, Canon, Matsushita, NEC, Sharp, and Kao) have learned to respond quickly to customers, create new markets, new products, and develop new technologies at high speed; their secret lies in their approach to creating new knowledge. Companies are not machines, but a living organism; they have an identity and goals, not only ideas, but also ideals. Creating knowledge is an attitude, the way each employee behaves. Making individual knowledge available to others is the main activity of a knowledge-creating company.

A central piece is the way in which organizations create knowledge. David Garvin explains that many times knowledge already exists, and we can resort to "intelligence" to search for it, investigate, and observe. Other times, knowledge does not exist, but there is "experience", which can lead to the creation of knowledge through reflection and review of existing realities, or experiential learning by creating situations that can lead to knowledge creation. Other times, knowledge does not exist, and reality does not exist either; in those cases, it is necessary to resort to "experimentation" through exploratory tests or hypothesis testing.

### **Discernment and the three epistemologies: how we construct knowledge and consciousness.**

These intuitions introduce us to the world of epistemology, the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge (Encyclopedia Britannica).

In everyday life, we rely on three epistemologies: empiricism, subjective idealism, and realism. The three epistemologies differentially impact the way we make ethical, moral, economic, and political decisions.

In the following chapters, we will delve into how the three epistemologies impact our decision-making, which is a crucial source of discernment.

## **Empiricism**

For empiricism, knowledge begins in the senses. All concepts originate in experience, through the five senses. There are no "a priori truths". All concepts are about or applicable to things that can be experienced. All rationally acceptable beliefs or propositions are justifiable or knowable only through experience (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Several thinkers contributed to empiricism: Francis Bacon (scientific method, empirical, observational induction, associationism), Thomas Hobbes (ideas are derived from sensations, experiences, induction), John Locke (knowledge is based on experience, sensations, associations, differs between people generating subjectivism and relativism), David Hume (experience, sensations and reflection, end of metaphysics, substance, causes are a mental creation, radical skepticism, end of religious beliefs), John Stuart Mill (induction based on experience and observation, each person has different knowledge, leading to subjectivism, relativism).

Empiricism enabled the creation of knowledge that led to extraordinary scientific and technological progress. Theories sup-

ported by reason and verified by sensory data, with the help of instruments and the corroboration of reliable witnesses, became the pillars of the modern scientific method. However, empiricism is a fragile epistemology that generates relativism, subjectivism, skepticism, individualism, psychologism, and associationism.

### **Subjective idealism**

Subjective idealism, also known as rationalism, considers reason to be the primary source and test of knowledge. It holds that reality has an intrinsically logical structure and that there is a class of truths that the intellect can grasp directly. According to rationalists, there are certain rational principles, especially in logic and mathematics, as well as in ethics and metaphysics, that are so fundamental that denying them leads to contradiction (Encyclopedia Britannica).

Several thinkers contributed to subjective idealism: René Descartes: (methodical doubt; reason, logic are necessary to construct reliable knowledge), Baruch Spinoza (know essences as caused by God), George Berkeley (all objects are ideas), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (innate a priori ideas, reasoning truths), Immanuel Kant (a priori knowledge, existing in the mind), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (from subjectivism to intersubjectivity, agreements of rational persons require dialectics; synthesis emerges after mutual interaction and the consequent limits imposed by self and non-self), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (from the subjective mind of the individual to a collective consciousness, in a historical progression towards absolute knowledge, enriched by the universal spirit).

Some ideas are universal and unquestionable: mathematics, freedom, equality, rights, justice, non-discrimination, rule of law, prosperity for all, security and religious pluralism.

Subjective idealism seeks to build a perfect ideal world: it promotes dialogue and understanding, positive evolution and growth of ideas, learning from mistakes, creativity beyond empirical knowledge and optimism. However, it runs the risk of ignoring reality, promoting radicalism, wokism, allowing parasitism and abuse of rights, sacrificing the individual.

## **Realism**

Realism grants to things known or perceived an existence or nature independent of the one who thinks or perceives them (Encyclopedia Britannica).

It rests on three pillars: Aristotle's realism with an empiricist orientation (the sensitive faculties perceive an object, a person; the intellect captures the universal, the idea, the form, the essence), Plato's realism with an idealist orientation (it incorporates the knowledge coming from meditation, contemplation, spirituality) and the phenomenology of the 20th century (reality manifests itself through multiple phenomena, each person can perceive some of these phenomena better than others).

According to Cornelio Fabro, contemplation helps us to perceive reality in its multiple dimensions, building awareness, knowledge, unity, and meaning. Although phenomena are diverse, they refer to the same reality, which fosters shared knowledge in a context of diversity and complexity, shared ideals, universal truths, and facilitates communication, encourages social integration, and leads to peace.

Contemplation strengthens our capacity to perceive phenomena and organize them, relying on personal and community knowledge: multiple information of objects, intuitions, symbols, metaphors, hermeneutics, analogies, affections, emotions, empathy, different perspectives of the same object, and different perceptions of people who apprehend reality in different ways.

### ***Connecting with our hearts and with those of others***

Awareness, reflection, meditation, and contemplation enrich and humanize our knowledge, introducing a key dimension that impacts our lives: our ability to connect with our hearts and with those of others, as phenomenologists suggest: Edmund Husserl (consciousness, perceptions, judgments, feelings, language, words and symbols), Cornelio Fabro (wisdom sustained in meditation, contemplation, mindfulness and unified consciousness), Louis Bouyer (the person can connect with himself, with others and with the world, building relationships and transcendence), Max Scheler (morality based on higher values, such as justice, law, beauty, knowledge and truth and religious beliefs), Edith Stein (conscience promotes empathy, leads people to experience the experiences and feelings of others, builds community, suffering fosters compassion and feeling the pain of vulnerable others), Dietrich Von Hildebrand (relationships and community based on the heart as the voice of the personal soul, as the root of all affectivity, empathy; values build communities, the desire to give oneself to the other, to seek the happiness of the other, to participate in the goodness of the other), Martin Buber (the other, dialogue, communication, encounter and human relationships man-

ifest a spiritual life), Hanna Arendt (conscience leads to social integration, human relationships, return to the world in peace), Martin Heidegger (discover the meaning of human existence, starting from conscience, hermeneutics, time, history, people as members of a human community, sharing experiences and accepting differences as we all walk towards truth), Hans-George Gadamer (discovering the meaning of human existence through consciousness, language, intuition, shared existential understanding and the fusion of horizons), Emmanuel Levinas (ethics based on relationships, the human face, expression, human encounter, integration, ethics of the other, goodness, responsibility, justice of the knowing subject), Karol Wojtyła (the value of the person, community participation, social commitment, social action and transcendence).

Realism enables us to build shared knowledge and ideals amidst diversity and complexity. We need "antennae" to listen to our customers, employees, and all stakeholders, to understand them, to know how they feel, to be empathetic.

### **Discernment. Building wisdom and virtues on our way to happiness.**

Contemplation not only builds knowledge, but it also leads to changing behaviors and building virtues.

During contemplation, we experience a deep inner unity and a profound peace, which we strive to maintain throughout the day. This motivates us to do things well, to act with virtue, with wisdom, also called prudence, the mother of all virtues: justice, moderation, generosity, compassion, tenderness, reconciliation, charity, and others.

Socrates (5th century B.C.) considered that the ultimate goal of our life is happiness; the way to achieve it is through the virtues, specifically prudence and wisdom, which can be learned through a good education.

Plato (4th century B.C.) considered that the highest good requires the pursuit of absolute goodness. The virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance, and fortitude lead to harmony, through correct behavior, based on our reason.

For Aristotle (4th century B.C.) the highest good is human happiness, the main goal of all of us, and all other goods are a means to happiness. External goods do not produce happiness, but by our daily activity, the vegetative life we have in common with plants, the sensitive life we have in common with animals, but above them, in a life based on virtues, both intellectual and moral.

For Joseph Pieper, the virtues transform the person, making the human being a good person; it is not only a Kantian duty centered on "acting well," but also one of becoming good, seeking happiness, and contemplating goodness. For example, temperance helps to value, appreciate, and enjoy goodness and beauty.

Alasdair MacIntyre, following in Pieper's footsteps, argues that good judgment is the result of good character, not just following formal rules.

Peter Redpath summarizes the relationship between wisdom and virtue: happiness is determined by the purpose of our existence, which is achieved by living according to reason, leading to a life of virtue.

What is virtue?

Aristotle defined virtue as a character trait or disposition that involves both reason and emotion, striking a balance in our lives.

There are three intellectual virtues oriented towards truth: wisdom is the habit of knowing things in their ultimate causes; understanding, based on an intuitive mind, grasps self-evident truths; science reaches conclusions through demonstration.

There are two practical intellectual virtues: art or craftsmanship, the habit of knowing how to do things, and prudence, or practical wisdom, the habit of knowing how to live.

Happiness is the result of living with virtues, with prudence, justice, moderation, and fortitude.

## **World peace**

World peace is a product of each person's inner wisdom and peace; it begins within each person's inner self, in their mind.

UNESCO's Constitution responds to personal and social approaches by stating:

That, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be built.

This ignorance of the customs and lives of others has been the common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and distrust among the peoples of the world whereby their differences have too often erupted into war.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> UNESCO. Text of the Constitution. <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/constitution> (November 16, 1945).

Antony Adolf<sup>8</sup> considers that:

Tranquility, calm and stillness have long been and continue to be characteristics strongly associated with inner peace, as well as with the natural, social and collective states that are conducive to it.

The most elusive yet most sought-after components of inner peace are probably spiritual and intellectual attainment. The religious imperatives of peace are related to, but distinct from, the spiritual imperatives. The former organize, systematize and prescribe the latter only after the latter have been tested.<sup>9</sup>

Adolf sees world peace as the fruit of ongoing research, innovation, critical dialogue, deterrent incentives, legitimacy and law.

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<sup>8</sup> Antony Adolf, *Peace. A World History*. (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245.

## Chapter 2

### **Building the transcendental dimension of our discernment; incorporating ideals, the journey to transcendence, goodness, beauty, and truth in our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership requires a vision of the future that leads to transcendence.**

This chapter introduces the second dimension of discernment in decision-making: the transcendental dimension, goodness, beauty, and truth, seeking the best.

When we incorporate contemplation into our lives, we acquire a richer, more human, deeper knowledge, rooted in reality, with awareness.

In this way, we discover and enjoy something extraordinary that leads us to happiness: we discover goodness, beauty, truth, what the Greek philosophers called transcendence. And that creates ideals in us to lead our lives on a journey toward transcendence, to build transcendence.

Ideals lead to a positive dynamic: they inspire us, enlighten us, energize us, lead us to improve reality, to transform it, to improve ourselves as people, and even to improve the ideal.

The first leadership capability identified by the Baldrige Framework for Excellence is having ideals, what leadership science calls

“vision,” the future we imagine, which inspires people, organizations, and nations on a journey of transformation.

### **Appreciating and building transcendence and discernment**

When we contemplate a landscape, listen to music, or see a human face, we discover that there is beauty. When we contemplate that there are good things, things well done, with perfection, we discover that there is goodness. When we contemplate that there are ideas that conform to reality, we discover that there is truth. Contemplation leads us to discover that there is transcendence: goodness, beauty, and truth.

Plato said that our life is a journey toward transcendence: we want to enjoy and create transcendence, build transcendence, on a journey of transformation toward a better world.

Our capacity to enjoy and create beauty, goodness, and truth illuminates our discernment, our capacity to make decisions seeking the best, to make decisions that lead to transcendence.

Our discernment builds ideals that illuminate decision-making, decisions that elevate society, lead it on a journey of perfection, toward transcendence, toward a better world, to make decisions with clear criteria, with a defined goal, toward happiness.

Our discernment defines our identity, who we are, our vocation, our ideals, and what we want to achieve in our lives.

Our discernment makes us ask ourselves: Does this decision we must make lead us toward our ideals? Is it in accordance with our identity, with the vision of the future we imagine for ourselves and society? Does it lead us to happiness?

## **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment leads us toward transcendence, goodness, beauty, truth, and **excellence**, in a process of continuous improvement, as we saw with the Baldrige Framework for Excellence.

Our discernment takes us beyond **critical thinking**, questions our decisions, and leads us to seek ideals that lead us to transcendence and happiness.

Our discernment enhances **intellectual capital**: it helps build **human capital**, organizational knowledge toward transcendence, **social capital** with people who share the pursuit of transcendence, **renewal capital** in creating a new reality toward transcendence, and **process capital** in executing actions in the best possible way.

Our discernment **promotes a leadership culture**, illuminates our ideals of appreciating and creating transcendence; builds and energizes values, commitment to society to create transcendence; builds relationships with leading teams; illuminates and clarifies our decision-making capacity; drives our ability to transform, heal, and execute social actions toward the common good.

A **leadership culture** unites society by walking together toward goodness, beauty, and truth, integrating and harmonizing society. A leadership culture is far superior to individualistic cultures that isolate and fragment the individual, and to collectivist cultures that massify societies. A leadership culture integrates society, while individualistic and collectivist cultures are at odds with each other, dividing societies.

**World peace** is the result of a society that enjoys and moves toward transcendence, creating transcendence and promoting the good of each individual and the common good.

**Experiential learning. Martin Luther King. An ideal transforms a nation.**

As experiential learning, readers can watch Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on how an ideal transformed a nation.

"I say to you today, my friends. So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama little Black boys and Black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.”

### **The "Vision" according to Collins and Porras**

Collins and Porras<sup>1</sup> demonstrated that visionary companies can consistently outperform their competitors: visionary companies have created almost 10 times more stock market value than their peers since 1926.

The following are examples of visions, as described by Collins and Porras.

- 3M. Solve problems that were not solved creatively.
- Cargill. Improving living standards around the world.
- Fannie Mae. Strengthen the social structure by continually democratizing home ownership.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Collins, and Jerry Porras. *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. (New York: Harper Business Essentials, 2002).

- Hewlett Packard. Making technological contributions toward the progress and well-being of humankind.
- Israel. To provide a safe place in the land for the Jewish people.
- Lost Arrow Corp. to be a model and a tool for social change.
- Pacific Theatres. Providing an environment for people to flourish and the community to improve.
- Mary Kay. Giving women continued opportunities.
- Merck. Preserving and empowering human life.
- Nike. Experience the thrill of competing, winning and overwhelming competitors.
- Sony. Experience the joy of progressing and applying technology for the benefit of the public.
- Telecare. Helping people with mental disabilities reach their full potential.
- Wal-Mart. Give people the ability to buy the same things the rich buy.
- Walt Disney. Making people happy.<sup>2</sup>

These visions describe an ideal: what the company will do for its customers and what it will offer them, and these ideals are timeless.

Possessing a vision of our future, an ideal, or a vocation is important for us as individuals. It helps us to be happy and successful, to be centered, to manage our lives and give them meaning, to transform and overcome suffering, to transform ourselves, and to promote social action.

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<sup>2</sup> Jim Collins, Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. (New York: Harper Business Essentials, 2004).

Nations also need a vision, as Leif Edvinsson states, which drives their success: "First and foremost, the ability to marshal energies and resources at the national level with a vision for the future based on a knowledge society, clearly articulated by enlightened leadership."<sup>3</sup>

### **Building an ideal, a source of discernment.**

For Luis María Etcheverry Boneo, the journey of our life towards the transcendentals leads us to happiness, because each of the transcendentals fills our powers: truth fills our intelligence, goodness our will, beauty our aesthetic sense, and love our affectivity.

An ideal is a form of concretization of transcendentals, values, capable of being embodied in the external reality or inner reality of mine

Societies build ideals, which originate and generate a process of cultural transformation, of civilization building. The community or individuals successively conceive the following ideas.

The idea of the reality that surrounds him, the idea of his own self, the resolutions I make with my will, the feelings I harbor in my heart, the aesthetic emotions, the psychological climates, my digestion, my state of health, etc.

The idea of transformation, the idea of value, pattern, criterion, point of reference, allows me to choose between them, thus emerging an organism of ideas, a relation of coordination and subordination, a structure, a set of values coordinated and subordinate to each other.

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3 Leif Edvinsson, and Ahmed Bounfour, *Intellectual Capital for Communities Nations, Regions, and Cities* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005).

I begin to conceive a concretization, I already have the idea of the ideal.

Ideals have a transforming and improving dynamic of reality.

First, the ideal acts on external reality, making it increasingly perfect, truthful, and beautiful, drawing it closer to those transcendentals.

Second, the ideal acts on my inner reality, leading me to a state of beatitude, of superior happiness. It acts on the person, on me, making myself available, purifying my powers, and developing them in such a way that they become increasingly capable of reaching the ideal state that we have conceived. This ideal leads me to perfect myself physically, psychologically, and culturally, to develop myself to modify reality, in my capacity to interact with the community, to improve my values.

Third, reality acts on the ideal in two ways. As we transform reality, the ideal adapts. Additionally, the community and I are changing, developing our capabilities and values, which in turn change the ideal.

Fourth, the person acts on the ideal. The ideal is an idea, a value, that I create within me; it is an ideal that I conceive, and naturally, my person influences it. To the extent that I am part of the transformation process, my resources, my enthusiasm, and my strength change.

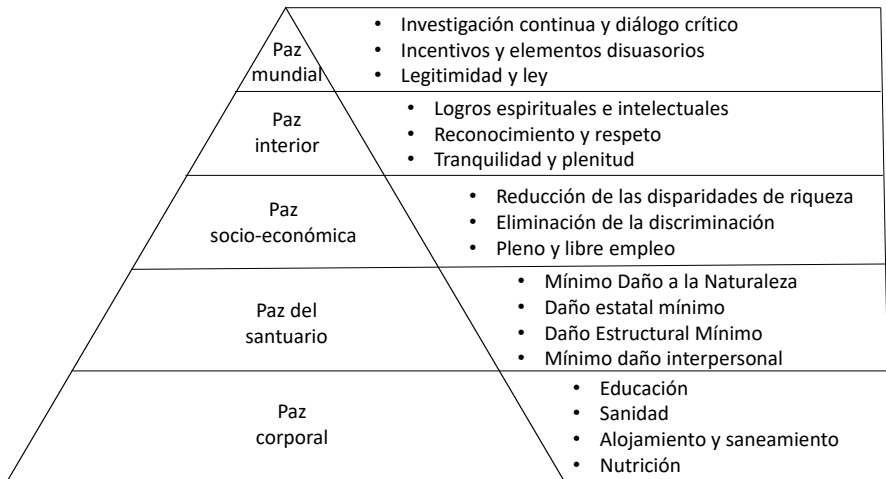
Fifth, the person acts on reality to respond to his own needs, such as food, clothing, and social life.

This process is a source of discernment: ideals transform us, improve us, and lead us to a better world. Ideals are a crucial part of our decision-making.

## World peace

World peace is the result of a society that enjoys transcendence and moves toward transcendence in all aspects of life, as Antony Adolf<sup>4</sup> argues.

Adolf offers an articulate vision of world peace based on Abraham Maslow's pyramid of human needs, where the lower levels are prerequisites for the higher levels:



**Figure 1. Pyramid of Peace<sup>5</sup>**

According to Adolf, world peace results from:

- Bodily peace. Without the well-being of our bodies and minds, world peace is irrelevant.

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<sup>4</sup> Antony Adolf, *Peace. A World History*. (Maiden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibíd.*, p. 235.

- “Sanctuary” peace. Without tangible guarantees and reasons to believe that intentional harm to us as individuals or groups is unlikely, world peace is no less a mirage than the promise of bodily and mental well-being.
- Socioeconomic peace. The way we live and work with each other (or not), as individuals and groups, determines whether peace is achievable and the forms it takes.
- Inner peace. There can be no outer peace without inner peace. Peace within societies is essential for peace between them; similarly, inner peace at the individual, social, and collective levels is a prerequisite for world peace.
- World peace. It must facilitate the different forms of peace in the pyramid (where, as mentioned above, the lower levels are a prerequisite for the higher ones) and help them adapt to conditions and participants according to circumstances. Crucé’s analogy between humanity and the human body, whose organs are in such harmony that the illness of one affects the other, takes on its full meaning at the lower levels and culminates in world peace, and not the other way around. At the top of the pyramid, Adolf identifies three elements that make up world peace:
  - Legitimacy and law, which refer to the need for legitimate laws and law enforcement crucial to peace.
  - Incentives and deterrents, which refer to economic and political sanctions and rewards to maintain peace.

- Continuous research and critical dialogue, which refer to the promotion of dialogue, innovation, and adaptation to promote solutions to social problems.<sup>6</sup>

Adolf concludes:

If the world history of peace should teach us one thing, it is this: like assembling a jigsaw puzzle whose design cannot be known because it is always changing, the updating of world peace lies in continually configuring and reconfiguring the pieces of the world into a dynamic whole rather than forcing them to fit into a static one.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibíd.* pp. 235-247.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibíd.* p. 248.



## Chapter 3

### **Building the axiological dimension of our discernment; incorporating our superior values and leadership culture into our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership requires a mission, based on superior values.**

This chapter introduces the third dimension of discernment in decision-making: the axiological dimension, our higher values.

When we incorporate contemplation into our lives, we acquire a richer, more human, and more profound knowledge. We discover transcendence, goodness, beauty, and truth, and we discover that we all have transcendence, that we are valuable, and that we have values.

The second leadership capability identified by the Baldrige Framework for Excellence is having values, which leadership science refers to as “Mission.” These are drivers of transformation; they motivate us, energize us, and drive us to strive to build a better world. Values are at the heart of an organization's “Mission”.

#### **Building higher values, the heart of discernment**

Our capacity for contemplation builds awareness, connects us with our inner selves and with others. Contemplation leads us to discover transcendentals, goodness, beauty, and truth, and reveals that we all possess these qualities, that we are valuable, and that we have superior values. It leads us to develop values, establish hierarchies of

values, and cultivate intellectual capital, leadership, and discernment.

Values are at the heart of discernment.

Our discernment requires us to weigh the value of an idea or decision, determining whether it leads us in the right direction. We must choose the journey that aligns with life, goodness, beauty, truth, freedom, and happiness, and confront it with a hierarchy of higher values.

As phenomenology suggests, we perceive multiple phenomena, hear multiple ideas, some of which are contradictory, and we do not know if they are correct. In our decision-making, our discernment leads us to confront an idea or a decision with those of wise people with values, analyzing the values of the person who conceived that idea, the legitimacy of the sources of information they used, their moral authority, reliability, and trustworthiness, and respected texts.

Values build discernment because they drive society to make decisions that align with higher values, toward a better reality.

### **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment is based on higher values, which lead us to make decisions that promote **excellence**, in line with the Baldrige Framework for Excellence. The Baldrige proposes values for organizations: visionary leadership, organizational learning and agility, customer focus, people focus, social results focus, ethical behavior, management for innovation, systems perspective, results orientation and value creation, transparency, and focus on success.

Our discernment is based on higher values, questioning **critical thinking** for its lack of values.

Our discernment, supported by higher values, has a crucial impact on decision-making, enhancing the **intellectual capital** of organizations and nations: they help build human capital; values maximize knowledge creation; they help build social capital by sharing values, fostering sympathy, promoting a culture of trust, integration, and social commitment; values are drivers of innovation, helping to build renewal capital; values promote the highest quality and continuous improvement, building process capital.

Our discernment, guided by higher values, fosters a **leadership culture** that promotes values that energize and propel society toward a better future. It motivates us to build a vision for society's future, inspires and energizes our mission, builds community with those who share our values, and serves as the driving force behind our desire to transform, heal, take social action, and drive social change.

A **leadership culture integrates and harmonizes society** better than individualistic cultures that atomize society, and collectivist cultures that massify and flatten society, and also generate conflicts between them.

**World peace** is the result of our higher values, which enable us to cultivate a leadership culture that transcends individualistic and collectivist perspectives, ultimately integrating society.

**Experiential learning. Winston Churchill. Values liberate Europe from Nazi tyranny.**

As an experiential learning exercise, readers can watch an excerpt from the film *Darkest Hour* at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on how Winston Churchill managed to unite and empower England, reverse Nazi tyranny, and lead to the

liberation of all of Europe. It is very valuable to analyze not only what he says, but how he says it, and how he transforms, unites, and motivates the English Parliament and the entire nation.

"We will prove once again that we are capable of defending our home island. Overcome the storm of war and survive the threat of tyranny, if necessary, alone. We will continue to the end.

We will defend our island at all costs. We will fight on the beaches. We will fight in the landing zones. We will never surrender.

Until, God's good time, the new world, with all its power and might, establishes the deliverance and rescue of the Old world."

Testimonials from leaders charge us with higher values, help us understand how we build our values, how our values create leadership, how leaders create a leadership culture, how they create intellectual capital, how they promote well-being, peace and social harmony.

### **Values are at the heart of the "Mission", driving forces of leadership.**

Values are drivers of leadership; they are the core of the "Mission" of a person, organization, and nation.

To exercise leadership effectively, we must have a mission that guides us towards a clear vision of the future. Having a mission implies that we have higher values, that we have defined our role in society, and that we have commitment and energy.

As stated by the prestigious Jim Collins and James Porras<sup>1</sup> the success of organizations depends on how well they create meaningful long-term visions, missions, goals.

**John Cassian. Values are the heart of discernment.**

John Cassian<sup>2</sup> (360-430) proposed an intuition of discernment based on values and our ability to perceive them. How can we know if what a person offers us in an exchange of ideas, decisions or goods is valuable?

To discern the value of an interpersonal exchange, I must consider my values, the values of the other person, and the value of what we are exchanging. This reflects the phenomenological intentionality explained in chapter 5.

John Cassian relies on a metaphor: how a merchant discerns whether a gold coin is valid.

1. Whether it is real gold. It refers to the ability to discern the value that people aspire to with their decisions. Are people going in the right direction, choosing the right path? We need to learn to discern whether that path leads to life or death. The role of discernment is to find the differences, to look beyond, to rely on rationality or intuition, on prudence, and justice. It is necessary to discern between values such as good and evil, freedom and coercion, life and death, truth

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<sup>1</sup> Collins, Jim and Jerry I. Porras. *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*. Harper Business Essentials, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Waaijman, Kees. *Espiritualidad. Formas, fundamentos y métodos*. Ediciones Sígueme. 2011. Salamanca. Spain.

and falsehood . Decisions made on the basis of the right values lead to rewards such as peace, happiness, life.

2. Whether the currency is original or counterfeit. It refers to the ability of the human being to discern the legitimacy of the source of information, to interpret the origin of what a person is reading, seeing, visualizing, observing, to analyze where that information comes from, who has produced it and if an authority has a real value. Depending on the reliability of the authority, we can trust the information, the currency
3. Whether the producer is qualified. People can find useful means to discern whether those who generate certain strategies have moral courage or integrity. To do this, it is necessary to confront their claims with other sources, wise people, respected scriptures, communities that offer balanced answers, and engage in dialogue with respected communities and individuals with moral authority and exemplary role models.
4. If the coin has the right weight. Discernment requires a final test, an examination, and a judgment to assess the value of the decision, the strategy, or the person. This involves going deep into them to probe their foundations and roots, to understand their core, and to determine what is real and authentic.

**Phenomenology. How values are born.**

According to phenomenology, reality manifests itself to us through different phenomena: multiple information coming from objects, intuitions, symbols, metaphors, hermeneutics, analogies, affections, emotions, empathy, different perspectives of the same object, different perceptions of people who apprehend reality in different ways.

These phenomena that we perceive produce feelings in us: sensitive, emotional, and spiritual. This happens because such phenomena carry values for us, positive or negative.

Values do not exist in objects, but in phenomena, that is, in the form in which those objects express themselves to us.

Values foster the "relational" dimension. They arise as a result of the interaction between objects and subjects, which produces in us a sense of value. Values arise as a result of a relationship between us and reality.

Values are an extraordinary engine of transformation, as they promote a positive attitude, motivation, energy, discernment, maturity, emotional well-being, healthy relationships, effective communication, dialogue, social inclusion, cooperation, love, compassion, the common good, and solidarity, which ultimately maximize happiness.

Values produce happiness: values help us discover and appreciate what is good, true, and beautiful, enabling us to feel admiration and love for creation. This, in turn, helps us live in the present, move away from negative thoughts about the past, and anxiety about the future, thereby preserving the beauty of the present moment. Peace and harmony lead to happiness.

Values help individuals discover their true selves, their identity, and their value as individuals, thereby developing their personality, building self-esteem, and cultivating the ability to acknowledge and accept their limitations humbly and honestly.

Values help to discover the value of community, to develop empathy, relationships, affection, love, help to develop community-oriented virtues and behaviors such as generosity, kindness, compassion, tenderness, reconciliation, willingness to help others, to give them freedom, to be open to receive their affection, to care for the weakest, the sick, the vulnerable, even to choose careers to dedicate a whole life to help the community, the vulnerable, our happiness is not complete if we do not incorporate the happiness of others, to create a social order.

### **Building discernment. Value ranges.**

Plato established general ranks of values: greatness, justice, goodness, beauty, and holiness as superior values.

Aristotle considered that superior values were those oriented towards developing virtues, which have an impact on the happiness of more people. The happiness of all mankind is considered above the happiness of a nation, and the latter is considered above the happiness of an individual.

Kant considered that our reason can discover goodness as a higher value, alongside truth, beauty, and holiness.

We may have a preference for certain values, but we are free to choose them or not. Some people can choose higher values, while others are value-blind, unable to distinguish between them, just as

some people are poor at mathematics or unable to appreciate good music.

Sometimes, a person may realize what the higher value is, but choose the lower value, such as paying a bribe to avoid being fined, despite knowing it is morally wrong.

This helps define a person's character, whether good or bad, as someone capable of considering a ranking of values in their decisions and always striving for the highest-ranking values.

### **Scheler. Vertical value ranges.**

Max Scheler drew on phenomenology to explain how consciousness leads to the discovery of values. Scheler<sup>3</sup> considered phenomenology to be an "attitude of seeing spiritually [...] something that otherwise remains hidden".<sup>4</sup> Such an attitude opens the possibility of knowing the essence of reality, discovering its value and generating love, a spiritual feeling, the highest possible value.

The act of valuing is something done by the human "heart," which is the seat of love, the center of the person. The essence of human nature is not its reason or thought, but its love and sympathy.

For Scheler, our consciousness enables us to connect internally and with external reality, discovering our value, and constructing higher values (justice, rights, aesthetics, the values of goodness, beauty and truth).

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<sup>3</sup> Scheler, Max. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. Illinois. Northwestern University Press. 1973.

<sup>4</sup> Scheler, Max *Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition*. Selected Philosophical Essays. Illinois. Northwestern University Press. 1973. p. 137.

Values are drivers of transformation, as they promote greatness, transcendence, morality, positive attitudes, motivation, energy, discernment, maturity, emotions, relationships, communication, dialogue, social inclusion, cooperation, love, compassion, solidarity, which maximize happiness.

Scheler<sup>5</sup> established a rank among values, a hierarchy among them, based on the feelings generated by those values:

**1. Sensible / utility values.** This is the lowest range of values, based on the senses, encompassing comfort, discomfort, pleasantness, and usefulness versus uselessness, linked to self-preservation, and physical pain. They are reflected in utilitarian ethics, modern economics. They are closely related to our body, what we have in common with animals, or the way we interact with the physical world. They can produce some states of sensation, such as pleasure or pain.

They change from one person to another, so they do not lead to a common standard, universal values, or a universal code. Instead, each person classifies them differently: we may like strawberries,

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<sup>5</sup> Scheler, Max. *Philosophical Perspectives*. 1958.

Scheler, Max. *On the Eternal in Man*. 1960.

Scheler, Max. *The Nature of Sympathy*. 1970.

Scheler, Max. *Ressentiment*. 1972.

Scheler, Max. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A new attempt toward the foundation of an ethical personalism*. 1973.

Scheler, Max. *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*. 1980.

Scheler, Max. *Person and Self-value: three essays*. edited and partially. 1987.

Scheler, Max. *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*. 1992.

while our friend may hate them; we may prefer to work, while our friend prefers not to; we may like using a particular tool, while our friend does not; we may like this car, while our friend does not.

Consequently, these values lead to massive relativism, to radical individualism; they do not help to develop a social fabric, a community.

These values are very prevalent in modern cultures. In the media, they have a strong influence on personal and business decisions. They can be manufactured and sold in products that people consume.

The duration of these values is short; we may love a product today and change our minds in a week. The realization of satisfaction is also limited: physical pleasures can last seconds and, in many cases, can have a side effect that generates dissatisfaction, such as getting fat from overeating, or the opposite effect of alcohol or drug consumption and the addiction they produce.

The importance of these values can also be very weak; we would not give our lives for a strawberry ice cream.

**2. Vital, noble, ignoble values.** They are felt by the whole organism, whether human or animal: well-being, strength, health, fatigue, vitality, aging, fear of death. Some values are unique to human beings, such as heroism and nobility. They can produce various states of feeling, including happiness, anger, courage, and anxiety.

These values are not easily manufactured into a product and sold for consumption.

These values are not something that people freely choose, but are natural human preferences: most people prefer health to illness. Entire cultures may share these vital values, which generate some de-

gree of universality among certain values at least among some specific groups.

**3. Ego values, based on the feelings of the psyche.** Pride or shame, joy versus melancholy, sorrow, sadness. They can produce some feelings such as joy, delight, displeasure, approval, disapproval, reverence, contempt, retaliation, sympathy, and melancholy.

**4. Spiritual values, based on personality feelings.** These include religious values of the holy and profane, moral values such as justice and injustice, good and evil, aesthetic values of beauty and ugliness, values of knowledge and truth, as well as beliefs, disbelief, awe, humility, repentance, and worship. They appear in absolute objects. They generate feelings, states of bliss, and despair.

These last two rank values cannot be easily manufactured for mass consumption, and, consequently, some societies that overwhelm individuals with lower rank mass-consumed products may generate little information about them, and these values may go unnoticed.

The duration of these values is longer; they can last for centuries, being transmitted from generation to generation. The satisfaction they produce can last forever.

They can be extremely important: people would be willing to give their own lives to defend these values. Why? Because these values somehow coalesce, part of why they are the highest ranking is based on their unity. Justice, truth, and beauty may reflect different dimensions of the same reality.

Value ranges differ between cultures: some are more psychologically, spiritually, and religiously oriented, while others are more

materialistic or secular. Some cultures prefer lower values, such as comfort and pleasure, to higher values, such as the sacredness found in religion.

### **Hartmann. Horizontal value ranges.**

So far, we have talked about a vertical dimension: some values have a higher rank than others, but for each rank of values, there is a horizontal dimension. For example, in the highest rank we can have a conflict of values between the same rank: what is more important: to be honest or to save a life if a Nazi soldier knocks at my door and I have to lie to save a Jewish family hiding in my house?

Hartmann stresses how different subjects can have different values: the state different from the individual; the man different from the woman; the child and the adult; power, justice and love; the morality of work, of production vs. moderation and contentment; the morality of activity vs. inertia; the morality of quality vs. quantity; the morality of harmony vs. conflict; the morality of simplicity vs. complexity; morality of collectivism versus individualism; morality of struggle, of competition, of the expression of energy, versus the morality of peace, of commitment, of charity; morality of the highest or most secret desires versus the inclinations and desires of our own rebellious nature; morality of subjection to authority and norms, versus the morality of finding new norms; etc.

The interesting thing is that these antinomies do not have a universal solution: for example, which is better, harmony or conflict, and the answer depends on each case. Depending on whether we live in a just and organized society, we may prefer to maintain harmony.

However, if we live in an unjust society, we need conflict to ameliorate injustice.

### **Building discernment. Geert Hofstede: cultural values.**

This discussion is crucial in our exercise of building discernment. In the first chapter, we saw that we build discernment by becoming aware that the three epistemologies we use have a differential impact on our lives. In this chapter, we will connect those three epistemologies with different cultural values and the social outcomes they generate.

Epistemologies, values, and cultures are intimately connected.

According to Geert Hofstede, the renowned expert on cultures and organizations, we all carry a "software of the mind" that we call "culture", which is formed on values.<sup>6</sup>

As this author explains, cultural differences refer to value pairings, such as individualism vs. collectivism, the greater or lesser degree of distance from power, masculinity vs. femininity, greater or lesser avoidance of uncertainty, bad vs. good, dirty vs. clean, dangerous vs. safe, forbidden vs. permitted, decent vs. indecent, moral vs. immoral, ugly vs. beautiful, unnatural vs. natural, abnormal vs. normal, paradoxical vs. logical, and irrational vs. rational.<sup>7</sup>

**Individualism versus collectivism** is the first pair of cultural values, referring to the relationship between the individual and the group. The fundamental question that individualism versus collec-

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<sup>6</sup> Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

tivism addresses is the degree of interdependence that society maintains among its members. It concerns whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we." Individualism corresponds to societies in which the ties between individuals are weak; everyone is expected to take care of themselves and their immediate family.<sup>8</sup> Collectivism, on the other hand, refers to societies in which people, from birth, are integrated into strong and cohesive internal groups, which throughout life continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.<sup>9</sup>

**Power distance** refers to the degree to which members of organizations and institutions (such as families, workplaces, and nations) accept and expect power to be distributed equally or unequally. In societies with high power distance, a clear hierarchy exists, and people generally accept the unequal distribution of power, with a significant gap between the powerful (such as parents, managers, and leaders) and the less powerful (such as children, subordinates, and citizens). In contrast, societies with low power distance tend to value equality and expect power to be distributed more evenly among individuals or groups.

To understand the importance of this debate, it is crucial to recognize that individualism typically correlates with cultures and nations characterized by low power distance, which is often found in democracies. In contrast, collectivism generally correlates with cultures and nations marked by high power distance, often found in totalitarian regimes.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>9</sup>Hofstede's analysis at <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/the-usa/>.

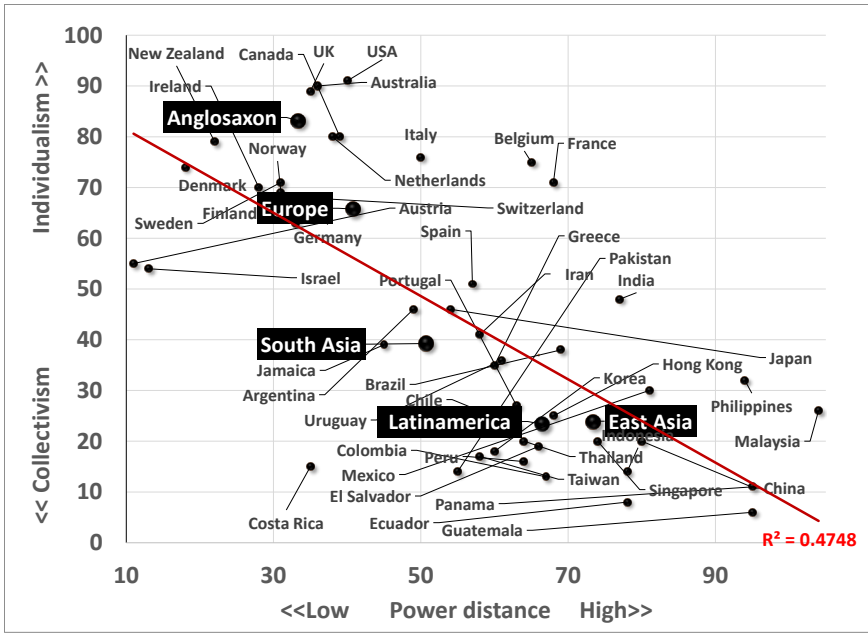
There is a global cultural and military battle between these ideologies, which has a profound impact on economies and politics, leading to severe conflicts between nations and within each nation.

In this chapter, we will only focus on individualism versus collectivism, which indirectly also involves power distance, as they are strongly correlated, as the following chart shows.

In the graphs below, the rectangles consolidate groups with similar cultures:

- Anglo-Saxon: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States.
- South Asia: India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan.
- East Asia: China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan.
- Europe: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.
- Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, El Salvador, Uruguay.

The diagonal lines represent the linear regression of all countries, along with their Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ), which is more or less relevant in some cases.



There is a historical connection between the epistemologies we saw in Chapter 1 and the cultural differences Hofstede analyzed.

Western countries prioritize individual rights, a product of the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation, which gave rise to the Protestant work ethic that emphasizes individual responsibility and personal success. Western culture promotes individual freedoms and human rights, and with it individual autonomy. Individualism is born with the nuclear family, in more urbanized societies where people are more independent, more self-sufficient.

Individualism has its origin in empiricism; the same thinkers who promoted empiricism are the ones who defended individualism. Collectivism, on the other hand, has its origins in subjective idealism.

## **Origin of individualism**

Individualism was born in England, defending a set of values: people are born equal and free, private property, free market and competition are the pillars of individual and public prosperity.

Thomas Hobbes: Humans desire power, a permanent state of war; the need for a contract, the authority of the sovereign derives from the contract signed by individuals; the freedom of one restricts the freedoms of others; morality is based on restrictions; a powerful sovereign is needed to ensure law enforcement and peace; selfishness is still the rule

John Locke: human freedom and equality, minimalist government, rule of law.

Bernard Mandeville: The defense of self-interest, personal greed, the engine of economic prosperity, and progress, and virtues lead to apathy; without private vices, there would be no public benefit.

Adam Smith: *The Moral Sentiments*. Pleasure and pain. An invisible hand regulates self-interest and competition, leading to public wealth, minimal government intervention, and *laissez-faire*.

John Stuart Mill: Strong defense of liberty and liberalism; ends of government: to prevent harm, to secure the constitution, to promote the development of individuality; people must be accountable and responsible.

## **Origin of collectivism**

Subjective idealism often leads to collectivism, with its roots in continental Europe, where thinkers promoted a subjective idealist epistemology.

Immanuel Kant: the categorical imperative leads to human rights; an international order can achieve perpetual peace; republican government, international organization, universal rights

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: The conscience of each person articulates with the conscience of others through reason, regarding rights, laws, institutions, the economy, politics, and the family. The role of the state becomes central, reflecting national spirits or minds, as a whole, the spirit of the world. Historicism implies a process of the spirit toward its full freedom. Hegel argues that universal norms are developed historically by reason, in which the state controls all public activity, with full sovereignty, people must follow the laws and the advice of government officials.

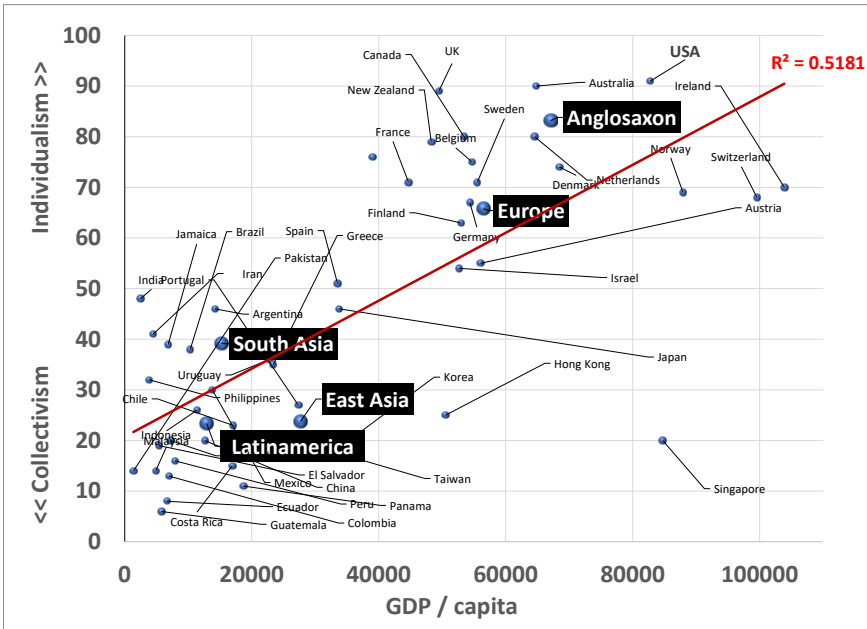
Hegel's thought had a profound influence on Marx: Hegel's dialectical approach and his conception of history as an advance of society towards the universal spirit, impacted on historical materialism, social change and history advance in a dialectical evolution; Hegel's alienation as the process in which individuals abandon their essence and merge with society gave rise to the Marxist concept of alienation produced by capitalism where workers are alienated from their work, from what they produce, from society, losing their capital and freedom.

### **Building discernment. The social impact of individualism vs. collectivism.**

The following two tables illustrate the differences between individualism and collectivism, as well as their impact on the benefits humanity receives.

### Wealth

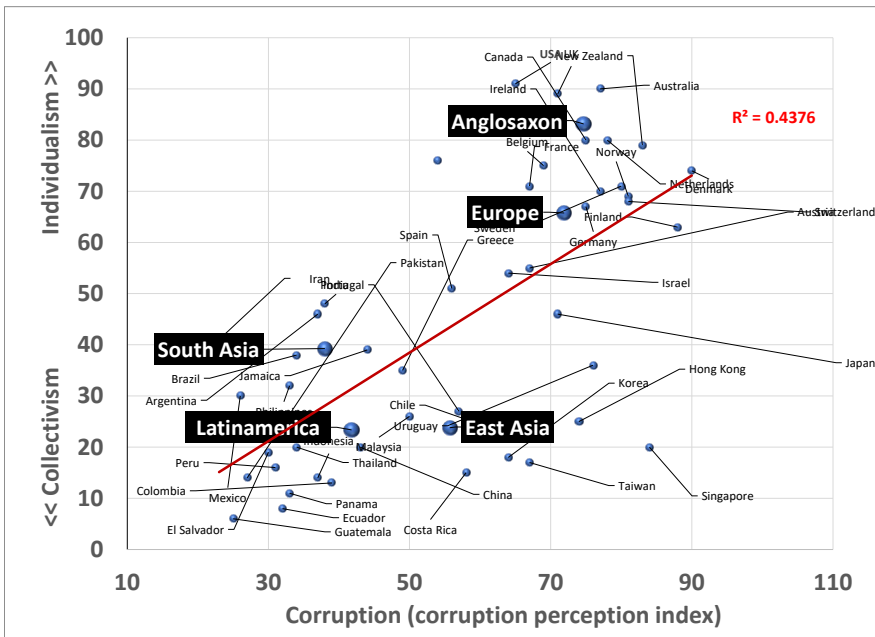
The correlation between Hofstede's Individualism / Collectivism and GDP per capita<sup>10</sup> (Gross Domestic Product) as a wealth indicator has a Coefficient of Determination of 0.52.



<sup>10</sup> GDP per capita. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?view=map>

### Honesty

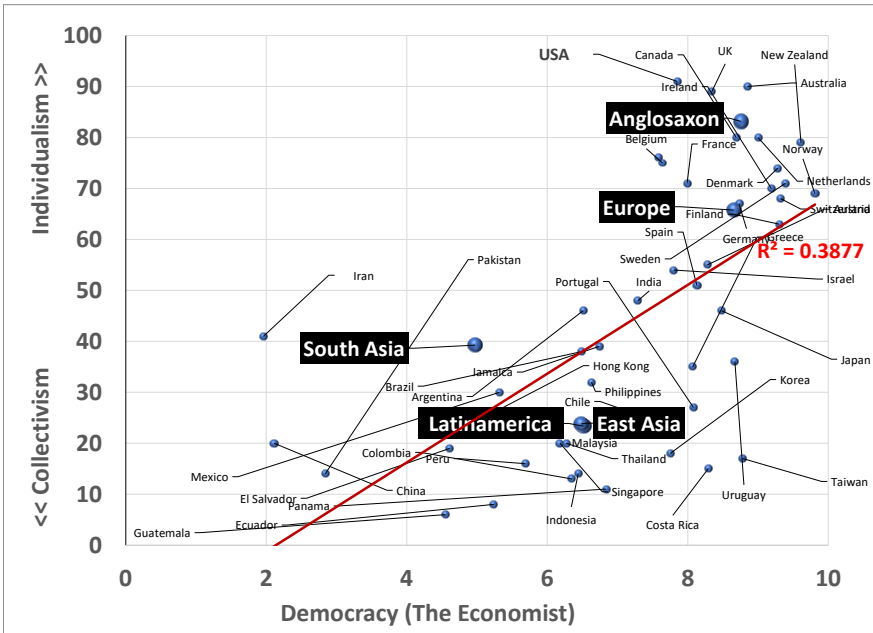
The correlation between Hofstede's Individualism/Collectivism and the Corruption Perceptions Index<sup>11</sup> elaborated by Transparency International, has a Coefficient of Determination of 0.44.



<sup>11</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index. Transparency International. It ranks countries "according to their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion polls."

## Democracy

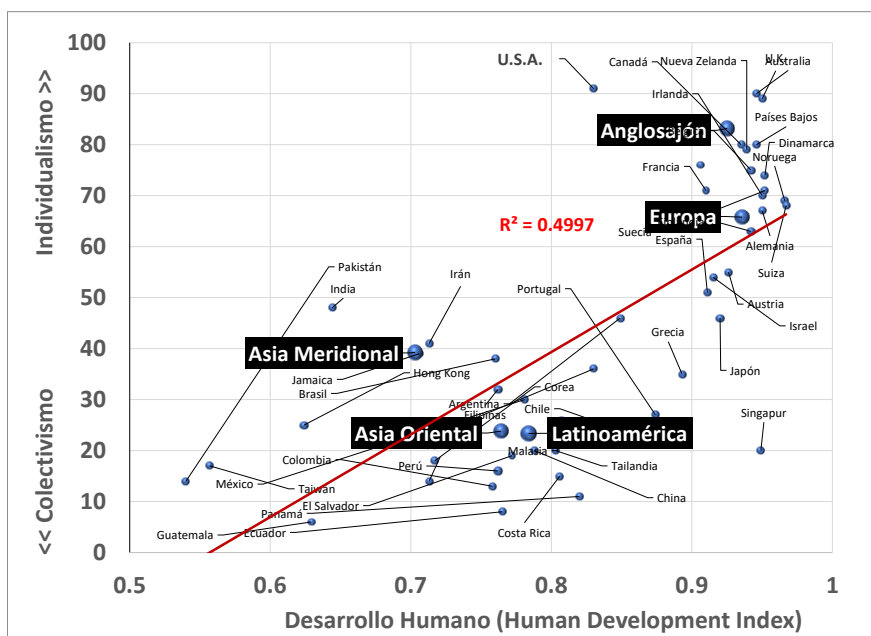
The correlation between Hofstede's Individualism/Collectivism and the Democracy Index<sup>12</sup> published by The Economist Group has a Coefficient of Determination of 0.39.



<sup>12</sup> It measures the quality of democracy worldwide, democratic rights and institutions.

## Human development

The correlation between Hofstede's Individualism / Collectivism and the Human Development Index,<sup>13</sup> has a Coefficient of Determination of 0.33.

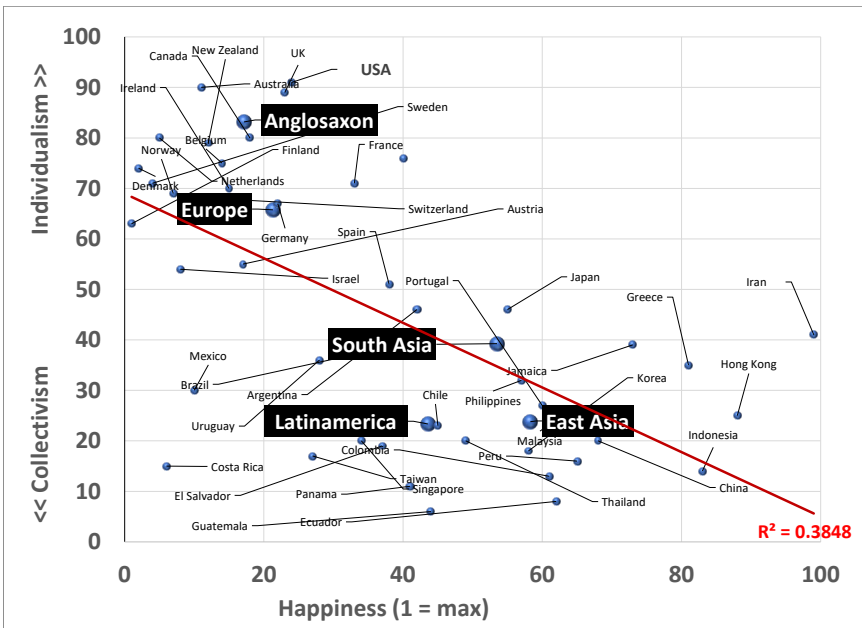


<sup>13</sup> Published by the United Nations Development Program, it incorporates per capita income, life expectancy and education. The HDI was developed by Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

According to the United Nations Development Program, Human Development Reports: "The human development approach, developed by economist Mahbub Ul Haq, is based on Amartya Sen's work on human capabilities, often framed in terms of whether people are able to "be" and "do" desirable things in life."

## Happiness

The correlation between Hofstede's Individualism / Collectivism and the Happiness Index published by the World Happiness Report,<sup>14</sup> led by Jeffrey Sachs, has a Coefficient of Determination of 0.38.



<sup>14</sup> The World Happiness Report is a publication containing national happiness items and rankings, based on respondents' ratings of their own lives,[1] which the report also correlates with various (quality of) life factors.

## Building discernment

The graphs demonstrate a significant correlation between individualism/collectivism and societal well-being, while also highlighting the strong influence of culture on this relationship.

In summary, we can develop discernment by understanding how the cultural values of individualism (linked to an empiricist epistemology, as discussed in Chapter 1) and collectivism (linked to a subjective idealist epistemology, as discussed in Chapter 1) impact society.

### **Building discernment. The social benefits of a leadership culture: statistical analysis.**

In the previous topic we analyzed the social impact of individualism (linked to an empiricist epistemology), and collectivism (linked to a subjective individualist epistemology).

We will now analyze the social impact of cultural values of leadership in more depth, linked to a realist epistemology.

The following statistical analysis is extracted from my third doctoral thesis, "Epistemological Analysis of Strategic Management and Related Sciences." *How realism promotes leadership*, presented in 2020 at the Abat Oliba University (Spain).<sup>15</sup>

Chapter 3 of the thesis performs three statistical analyses: linear correlation, polynomial quadratic regression, and data mining, associating 118 cultural values in 60 countries related to the three episte-

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<sup>15</sup> The thesis was presented as part of the Doctorate in Humanities for the Contemporary World. Specialization in Philosophy and obtained the distinction *summa cum laude*.

mologies, extracted from the World Values Survey, with six social outcomes: wealth, human development, economic freedom, corruption, knowledge, and happiness.

**Table 1** Results of linear correlation analysis

Correlation analysis			
Cultural values	Individualism	Collectivism	Leadership
Positive correlation factors	26	16	73
Negative correlation factors	94	54	9
Average correlation factors	-0.12	-0.18	0.11

**Source.** Stegmann, Juan Pablo. Doctoral dissertation. PhD in Humanities for the Contemporary World. Specialization in Philosophy. *Epistemological analysis of strategic management and related sciences. How realism promotes leadership*. Abat Oliba University. Spain.

This table shows that **individualistic cultural values** are positively and negatively correlated with social outcomes. The negatively correlated factors (94) outnumber the positively correlated factors (26).

In terms of **collectivist cultural values**, negatively correlated factors (54) outnumber positively correlated factors (16).

**Cultural values related to leadership** show a substantial prevalence of positive correlational factors (73) over negative ones (9).

In other words, individualistic and collectivistic cultures appear to have a complex relationship with social outcomes. In contrast, a leadership culture seems to have a strong linkage to social outcomes.

These statistical analyses provide interesting insights into the limitations of individualism and collectivism. In both cases, the negative correlations far outweigh the positive ones.

As we saw in the previous book, “A new Capstone for decision making - New strategic management, political economy, and leadership”, a leadership culture maximizes human, social, process, and renewal capital and thus promotes economic growth and social justice.

The cultural opposites shown by Hofstede are minimized when members of society are connected by higher values, finding common ground to overcome bipolarity. Society becomes more reasonable, people act with discernment, and become predictable, based on knowledge and conscience, in the search for transcendence, on higher values, and in relationships with social commitment, as well as in the discernment of each person and each community.

### **Values transform cultures**

For Luis María Etcheverry Boneo, values are transformational. They create in us a desire to act, they awaken within us a specific emotion, a particular affection, an attitude. They transform us and our attitudes, behaviors, relationships, the communities in which we live, the worldviews we hold, the culture, and reality. In this way, a true transformation of reality takes place. We turn a wasteland into an orchard, we build roads through the mountains, we create artificial lakes with dams that produce electricity.

Culture is a structured set of values that informs the faculties of a subject and a community, and modifies them with stability and permanence in their way of being and operating, and leaves its mark. Structure refers to the relationships between values, their coordina-

tion, and subordination. Our psychology and ethics structure them and define preferences, hierarchies, ranks, convergences, or clashes between values. This structure can reflect a healthy or sick culture, leading to personal and community unity or to fragmentation, destruction, anarchy, and dissolution.

People with a common culture build a community, a civilization, the external expression of a culture. Each member of the community relates to others and creates a society, and together they operate on the environment, build resources, make decisions, transform reality and generate social results.

### **World peace**

World peace is the result of our ability to exercise our contemplation throughout our days, which connects us with our inner selves and with others, reveals the best of life and transcendental values, builds higher values, constructs a leadership culture, ends conflicts caused by cultural opposites such as individualism versus collectivism, and promotes the well-being of society and social harmony.

Samuel Huntington, in his famous article "The Clash of Civilizations", postulated that culture is the most relevant source of global conflicts:

My hypothesis is that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will be neither primarily ideological nor primarily economic. The great divisions between humanity and the dominant source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the major conflicts in global politics will be between nations and groups of different civilizations. The

clash of civilizations will dominate world politics. Fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.<sup>16</sup>

World peace is the result of a leadership culture that provides social capital, promotes law, order, and trust, strengthens democratic institutions, defends the democratic principles of dignity, equality, and mutual respect among people, promotes education and employment for all, and fosters a culture of justice, freedom, cooperation, solidarity, dialogue, and peace, reducing social fragmentation.

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<sup>16</sup> Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs* 72, 3 (1993): 22-28.



## Chapter 4

# **Building the religious dimension of our discernment; incorporating our relationship with God in our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership relies on our religiosity.**

This chapter introduces the fourth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the religious dimension, which involves making decisions based on our relationship with God as we strive to collaborate with Him in His creation, thereby improving reality.

When we contemplate and appreciate transcendence, goodness, beauty, and truth in our daily lives, we may naturally ask ourselves who is the creator of such perfection, the source of transcendence: a superior being who shares its perfections with creatures.

Living in the presence of the Creator leads us to know and love God and our neighbor, to seek the good of society, and to develop our leadership.

Living in the presence of God can lead us to desire to build our relationship with Him, which invites us to collaborate with His creation, thereby developing our leadership.

Our religiosity impacts all dimensions of leadership: in our future vision, the well-being of society and a better world, in our missionary attitude to seek the common good and collaborate with creation, in our willingness to build relationships and communities to

collaborate in the construction of a better world, and in our ability to make decisions that promote social transformation and action.

### **Building our religiosity, we build discernment**

Anyone can experience God's presence and love by discovering His perfections, goodness, beauty, and truth reflected in all of creation. When we enjoy reality, when we enjoy the many expressions of life, when we are at peace within ourselves, we can feel gratitude toward the Creator and connect with Him. We discover His perfections and transcendence reflected in all of creation. We are aware that we are His masterpieces, reflections of Him. God shaped us as an artisan creates a masterpiece, which leads us to see our lives in a different way, serving as a driving force to promote the well-being and happiness of society, developing our discernment.

Living in His presence leads us to desire to build our relationship with Him, participating in His creative work and transforming reality so that it becomes an expression of His goodness, beauty, and truth through our daily work as engineers, doctors, artists, parents, educators, friends, and in other vocations, thereby developing our discernment.

For Jews and Christians, we build our relationship with God by embracing His mission: "The spirit of Yahweh is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, freedom to the prisoners, to announce a year of Yahweh's favor and a day of vengeance on behalf of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18).

For Christians, we build our relationship with God by discovering His community life and His Trinity, which leads us to know others, love them, create communities, and engage in social action.

This chapter presents several experiential learning exercises that build our discernment: living in God's presence, practicing continuous prayer, listening to God's word with a contemplative attitude, participating in the liturgy in a contemplative manner, and following God on His journey of love. Through these exercises, we develop our discernment.

### **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Discernment, enriched by our religiosity and our capacity to live in the presence of God, leads to decisions that foster **excellence**.

Our discernment, empowered by our living in the presence of God, and building our relationship with Him leads us to perfect the world, nature, political economy, organizations, building **intellectual capital: human capital** (the best knowledge as developers, workers, imitating the perfections of God and His transcendence), **social capital** (building a social fabric, community, concern for others, ethical behavior, culture of trust), renewal (innovation in building a better world, creation, innovation, growth), and process (seeking the best for the community, improvement and growth), concern for others, ethical behavior, culture of trust), **renewal capital** (innovation in building a better world, creation, innovation, growth), **and process capital** (seeking the best for the community, improvement and continuous improvement), which have a positive impact on economic growth, social justice, organizational success and social welfare.

Our discernment promotes a **leadership culture**, inspires a vision for the future of society, valuing its transcendence, and invites us to build a better world. It builds a mission, values, and seeks the good of all. It fosters relationships, leading teams with those who share values to build a better world. It enlightens and energizes our capacity to transform, heal, and promote social action towards the common good.

Our discernment fosters a **leadership culture**, characterized by concern for others, the golden rule shared by various religious traditions, which involves treating others as we would like to be treated. This promotes a vocation to create a better world, one that integrates and harmonizes society, surpassing the limitations of individualistic and collectivist cultures.

**World peace** is the result of our ability to live in the presence of God, in inner peace, experience love, compassion, community building, social integration, the golden rule and the elimination of disturbing emotions.

**World peace** is the result of our effort to build a relationship with God, which leads us to discover His perfections, transcendence, and love. This realization prompts us to recognize that we are His masterpieces, made in His image, and impels us to collaborate with His creation, transforming reality to make it more beneficial for humanity. It also inspires us to build community life and carry out social actions.

**First experiential learning. Living in the presence of God as a source of discernment.**

In Chapter 1, we did an exercise that showed us a personal journey to happiness, starting with exercising our capacity for contemplation, which helps us perceive reality more richly. This led us to discover the best of reality in Chapter 2 and to discover values in Chapter 3, the highest of which is love. In this chapter, we will undertake exercises that take us a step further, exploring how the practice of contemplation helps us discover our relationship with God, enriching our journey and ultimately leading to love and happiness.

"The Way of the Pilgrim" is a small book, a jewel of Eastern European Christian spirituality. This book is about continuous prayer, the prayer of the heart. It is a story of how God brought transformation to a lonely and depressed man, relying on the prayer of the heart of the Desert Fathers

One day in the early 19th century, this poor and desperate man went to a church in Russia. He had been orphaned at a young age, had lost the use of his arm in an accident, his brother had stolen his inheritance, and his wife had died after a few years of marriage.

In church, he heard St. Paul's instruction to "pray without ceasing." He was drawn to such a life, but how could anyone pray without ceasing? He decided to set out on a journey to find people who would teach him to pray without ceasing. He met a staretz, a spiritual man, who taught him the prayer of the heart. With an old Bible and the Philokalia, which is a book compiling the teachings of the Desert Fathers on the prayer of the heart, he traveled through the fields of Russia, practicing it.

Prayer lived deep within the pilgrim, warming his heart and transforming him from a depressed and reclusive man into a joyful and loving pilgrim. It healed his wounds, gave meaning to his life, and led him to bless and heal many others.

The prayer of the heart is the constant repetition of the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me", in rhythm with the breath. Many of the miracles in the Bible were preceded by "Lord have mercy on me".

Our first experiential learning is an invitation to practice it during our days, with patience, slowly creating a habit. Non-Christians can do the same exercise by invoking their God.

This incessant prayer leads us to feel God's presence at all times, while we work, eat, or rest. Over time, it becomes spontaneous, an organic part of us, like breathing. It produces inner silence, stillness, and peace, promoting emotional healing and joy, and ultimately leading us to God's love.

And in that silence, in that peace, in that connection with our inner selves, with reality, with God, we cultivate our discernment, realizing whether the decision we are making is the right one, whether it concerns work, family, our relationship with our partner, or something personal.

Let's practice a second exercise that takes us a step deeper into our experiential learning, building discernment.

The daily practice of continuous prayer is an extraordinary source that illuminates each of these chapters.

John Main, a Benedictine monk, introduced a more silent form than the Russian pilgrim's heart prayer we just saw, which has the

richness of converging Western and Eastern spirituality, in a mutual enrichment.

John Main recommends beginning a few minutes of Christian Meditation in the morning and evening; Thomas Keating recommends expanding meditation throughout the day as Centering Prayer. The practice of continuous prayer, also known as contemplative prayer, is an extraordinary source of peace, healing, happiness, and discernment.

John Main spent two years in Malaya. There he learned to meditate with Swami Satyananda. He realized the commonalities between the Desert Fathers and Hindu meditation.

Our second experiential learning is to put into practice the teachings of John Main:

"Sit down. Sit still with your back straight. Close your eyes lightly. Then interiorly, silently begin to recite a single word – a prayer word or mantra. We recommend the ancient Christian prayer-word "Maranatha". Say it as four equal syllables. Breathe normally and give your full attention to the word as you say it, silently, gently, faithfully and, above all, simply. The essence of meditation is simplicity. Stay with the same word during the whole meditation and in each meditation day to day. Don't visualize but listen to the word, as you say it. Let go of all thoughts (even good thoughts), images and other words. Don't fight your distractions: let them go by saying your word faithfully, gently and attentively and returning to it as soon as you realise you have stopped saying or it or when your attention wanders. Meditate twice a day, morning and evening, for between 20 and 30 minutes. It may take a time to develop this discipline and the support of a tradition and community is always helpful."

Maranatha means "Lord come" in Aramaic. Whatever our conception of God, we can rely on Maranatha, even if one does not believe in God. It is a mantra that helps to exercise our contemplation. Over time it leads to a life with more inner silence, simpler, with less anxiety, with more capacity to love, more integrated into the community, more fulfilled, with more peace.

Our second experiential learning is to practice this form of prayer, following John Main's guidelines described above.

There are other ways to promote unceasing prayer.

Thomas Merton proposes living in the presence of God through everyday activities: walking down the street, sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, planting beans, reading a book, taking a walk in the woods. Everything can be enriched by contemplation and the presence of God. Walking with God is one of the simplest and surest ways to live a life in the presence of God.

Several spiritual traditions use rosaries as mantras, to live in the presence of God during the day. Hinduism uses it to count mantras during meditation. Buddhism has 108 beads representing the 108 volumes of the Kangyur in Tibetan. In Islam, rosaries usually have 99 beads and recite the names of Allah.

The Catholic rosary promotes unceasing prayer on the journey to God's love, similar to the Spiritual Canticle of St. John of the Cross, which we will see in the next experiential learning. The repetition of prayers that come from the Bible generates inner silence. In that silence, the rosary invites us to contemplate certain passages from the Bible, inviting us to enter into those passages, becoming part of those episodes, seeing the life of Jesus as Mary, the Mother of Jesus, lived it under her maternal love, living each episode of Jesus' life as part of

his journey toward love, as part of our journey toward love, leading us to love, a synthesis of the Gospel.

Each group of mysteries shows different aspects of the love of God and Mary. The joyful mysteries focus on the childhood of Jesus.

For example, the first joyful mystery invites to contemplate the Annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary, inviting us to be part of that episode, an expression of God's love for humanity, in sending his Son to suffer to bring us to heaven, and an expression of Mary's love for God in accepting his word, in giving her life to God, inviting us on a similar journey, guided by Mary. The second mystery invites us to contemplate Mary's visit to her cousin Saint Elizabeth, to be part of that episode, another expression of Mary's love as she travels a long distance to accompany and serve her cousin, bringing the Holy Spirit to Saint John the Baptist, and sharing with them the love of God, expressed in the Magnificat, inviting us to live our lives of love, service, and contemplation of God. The third mystery contemplates the birth of the child Jesus in Bethlehem, inviting us to be part of that episode, another expression of God's love, an infinite God who became a baby, small, born in extreme humility, to be close to us, with a God who sent his angels to invite humble shepherds and the Magi from the East to celebrate the birth of God, out of love for us, inviting us to live that love in our lives. The reader can continue this exercise of contemplating the love of God and the Virgin Mary in each mystery of the rosary.

The mysteries of light invite to contemplate and be part of those episodes of Jesus' mission of bringing humanity to love, through the eyes of Mary's motherhood. The sorrowful mysteries, living God's infinite love for me, for us, suffering and giving his life for each one

of us, learning to give meaning to our lives, to our sufferings. The glorious mysteries, God leading us to a life of mission, toward eternity.

The Catholic rosary summarizes the central ideas of this book: the invitation to contemplation in Chapter 1, the journey to transcendence in chapter 2, the discovery of love in Chapter 3, living the life of Jesus in this Chapter 4 by following him on his journey to love, the creation of community in Chapter 5, discernment in Chapter 6, the meaning of our life in Chapter 7, transformation, healing, and social action in Chapters 8 to 10. And each of these dimensions reinforces our discernment.

As in the first experiential learning, in that silence, in that peace, in that connection with our inner selves, with reality, with God, we build our discernment for decision-making.

**Second experiential learning. Walking towards perfection as a source of discernment.**

St. John of the Cross, in his poem, *The Spiritual Canticle*<sup>1</sup>, describes how contemplation helps us to walk towards God's love. The Canticle incorporates centuries of contemplative experience, incorporating the Old and New Testaments, especially the Song of Songs by King Solomon, which shows the way to God's love. Non-Christian and even non-religious spiritual traditions highly value the Canticle.

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<sup>1</sup> You can download the *Spiritual Canticle* for free from the Internet. [https://www.ccel.org/ccel/john\\_cross/canticle.html](https://www.ccel.org/ccel/john_cross/canticle.html)

The extraordinary thing about the Canticle is that St. John shows a complete spiritual journey, a kind of x-ray of what happens inside us when we want to follow God, when we seek His love.

It is very valuable to know under what conditions he composed it. At the age of 25, St. John was the confessor of St. Teresa of Avila, and with her he reformed the Carmelite order. That cost him that, at the age of 30, his companions imprisoned him for several months, in an inhuman prison, 2 x 3 meters, almost without light, they whipped him and his wounds became infected, he had worms, he was hungry and cold; they took out his excrement once a week, the atmosphere was so toxic that he vomited. He was dying. He finally managed to escape. During his imprisonment, he began to write the Spiritual Canticle.

Our second experiential learning is to read the Spiritual Canticle, which can be found free of charge on the Internet. Read the following paragraphs, trying to connect inwardly with the Canticle.

The first stanza of the Canticle reflects an experience that many of us live: even when we seek God in our lives, God seems absent. How can we know spiritual realities if they are invisible? How can we know a God who is invisible?

Stanza 2. The soul begins to communicate with other spiritual beings, expressing the emotional effects of the absence of God: the desire for something we want and do not have makes us "suffer and die".

Stanza 3. Thus begins a search, a journey that lasts our whole life, through all that we live. St. John recommended a life of continuous prayer and contemplation to his young monks.

On this journey of continuous prayer and contemplation, in our daily lives, we dialogue with reality, asking it where God is.

And the creatures respond to us, showing us the beauty of God, his goodness, and his love.

Stanza 6. Nevertheless, we still feel that we are not in the presence of God; we are not truly in contact with Him. Enjoying transcendence does not completely fulfill us, it is not enough. The soul is still searching for a personal encounter with God.

Stanza 14. Several stanzas later, God finally reveals himself to us; we are in his presence. Perhaps he does so many times during the day, without our noticing.

In these two stanzas, there is not a single action, not a single verb; everything is contemplation. We begin to know God. God is like the mountains: majestic, gigantic, imposing. The lonely valleys show a calm, pleasant God, full of light, of life, life that manifests itself in the waters, the trees, the song of the birds. The strange islands show a distant and unknown God. The sonorous rivers show a God full of life, energy, and light. God is a spiritual voice that surpasses all other sounds and voices in the world. God is like air, spiritual, infinite, filling us with peace, like Elijah in the cave, who discovered God in a gentle breeze. When we are in the presence of the Spirit of God, we feel the highest delight of which the soul is capable in this life.

Stanza 15. Here, there is one more step: we enter to enjoy the presence of God. The poem describes how our life is transformed by this God who makes Himself present. Our soul is calm, rested, and at peace, after a peaceful night as dawn approaches. In the presence of God, our life experiences a silent music that rejoices us, a solitude that speaks to us, a concert of sublime melody. God nourishes us,

gives us life, cares for us, recreates us, and communicates his love to us.

And there begins the second part of the Canticle, from stanza 16 to stanza 40, where an extraordinary dynamic unfolds. Many stanzas describe our falling in love with God, while other stanzas reveal our inner battle to become better and purify our inner selves.

This third experiential learning is an invitation to read and internalize the Canticle in our lives. Chapter 6 delves deeper into this.

The Canticle is an excellent journey to discernment, offering insight into the entire dynamic of contemplation, our life as a journey of love, with all the difficulties that come with it, and illuminating our decision-making process.

### **Third experiential learning. The transformative power of the Readings as a source of discernment.**

Our third experiential learning is an invitation to watch a video I developed at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/>, enjoy the Psalms, and try to connect them with our own lives. For readers who want to understand the Psalms more deeply, I invite you to read a little book to understand the Psalms: “The School of Prayer” by John Brook.

The Judeo-Christian tradition relies on readings from the Bible and the Psalms to enrich a contemplative journey.

Reading the Bible on a regular basis helps us spiritually, emotionally, and practically. It helps us to understand God and his relationship with us, transforms us, builds love, infuses us with wisdom, virtues, and maturity, strengthens us, heals us, gives us joy and hope,

improves our relationships, gives meaning to our lives, and enlightens us to make decisions.

The psalms help us contemplate very profound themes of the human soul and its connection with God. They help us live God's love in our daily lives and in our psychology. Psalm 1. Listening to the voice of the Lord; Psalm 4. Rest; Psalm 5. Call for help; Psalm 8. Admiration; Psalm 23. Peace; Psalm 42. Thirst for God; Psalm 46. Refuge and strength; Psalm 50. Renewal; Psalm 59. Gratitude; Psalm 62. Trust; Psalm 75. Wonders; Psalm 86. Supplication; Psalm 90. Infinity; Psalm 103. Divine tenderness; Psalm 104. Praying with nature; Psalm 116. He hears me; Psalm 118. I will fear not; Psalm 119. Protection; Psalm 139. Divine wisdom; Psalm 143. Simplicity.

Since the beginning of Christianity, the "Liturgy of the Hours" has been practiced, based mainly on the psalms and other readings, to live in the presence of God, praying at various times of the day, as indicated by Jesus in Luke 18:1: "pray always". The reader can follow "the hours" on this website: <https://www.ibreviary.com/m2/breviario.php?b=1> and also download the app on their cell phone.

The Liturgy of the Hours is a powerful way to deepen our relationship with God, to discover his love, to root our lives in the Scriptures, to create a routine of living our lives with regular encounters with the divine. It has spiritual and practical benefits. It helps us to live in the presence of God, to know and love him, to deepen our relationship with scripture, to create a routine and constancy in prayer, it expresses our most diverse emotions, it helps us to understand ourselves in our interiority, to understand others, to interpret reality, it invites us to grow in virtue and spiritual maturity.

It is an extraordinary journey to discernment. One can find in the Readings answers to doubts about which is the best journey to follow.

**Fourth experiential learning. The Judeo-Christian liturgy as a source of discernment.**

The Jewish Sabbath, the Catholic Mass and the Christian Sunday Celebration are extraordinary sources of discernment when lived in a contemplative mode.

These three liturgies can be symbolized in an Old Testament image, in Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17. Both describe the image of the blessed and happy man, likened to a tree planted by the waters, which extends its roots to the stream, does not fear the heat, and has leaves that never wither. Even in a year of drought, it shows no distress and bears fruit in its due season.

The tree planted by the waters symbolizes the person who lives in the presence of God, builds his life around God, and is in daily contact with the source of life, wisdom, and love. The water symbolizes life, the word, the food with which God nourishes us, and the love of God.

In the following reflections, I will rely on Edward Sri's<sup>2</sup> extraordinary work, "A Biblical Walk through the Mass", which has the richness of linking the Jewish Sabbath with the Catholic Mass and the Christian Sunday celebration. All three share common themes and unique themes of their own.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Sri, *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass: Understanding What We Say and Do In The Liturgy*. (West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2011).

Our experiential learning aims to integrate each part of the Mass into our daily lives, providing extraordinary help in living in the presence of God and giving meaning to our lives. The Mass leads us on a journey of personal transformation.

The Mass begins and concludes with the sign of the cross: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." It invokes the presence of the Trinity in our lives. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, invoking the name implied creating a relationship with that person. The book of Ezekiel speaks of a mark on the forehead in the form of a cross, X, used by Jewish leaders as a sign of protection.

The invocation of God's name in our lives is a powerful protection. The blessing "The Lord be with you" was given to several heroes of the Old and New Testament, such as Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Jeremiah, and the Virgin Mary at times when they were beginning their missions. I invite the reader to investigate each one of them; all of them had to go through very difficult situations.

We can bring "The Lord be with you" into our daily lives by asking for God's presence at all times, as reflected in Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17, especially during difficult times, when we face challenges with God's blessing.

By confessing our faults, we conduct an examination of conscience, acknowledging our errors, taking responsibility, and asking for forgiveness, thereby preparing ourselves to be worthy of being in the presence of God.

"Lord, have mercy" is an act of humility; we invoke God's action in our daily lives. As we saw just now, "Lord, have mercy" was the precursor of multiple miracles in the Old and New Testament. God created us limited, knowing that in our lives we were going to make

mistakes; the first of the seven sentences that Jesus says on the cross, addressed to all humanity, is "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do".

The "Glory to God in heaven" was sung by the angels in Bethlehem before the birth of Jesus, and we sing it during Mass and throughout the day, before the arrival and presence of God in our daily lives as a sign of wonder, joy, and gratitude.

The Liturgy of the Word is common to Judaism and Christianity. It is the moment when God, through the readings, speaks personally to each one of us, initiating a dialogue that we can carry into our days. In Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17, the water is the word, which the tree receives in an attitude of listening and contemplation.

The Creed has its origin in the Old Testament. Jews during the day repeat the Shema, "Hear O Israel. Yahweh is the only God. You shall love Yahweh with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength," which distinguishes the Jews from the surrounding peoples. Similarly, the Creed summarizes the Christian faith. After the readings, we actively give our consent, we carry the word of God throughout our day.

The Prayer of the Faithful is our response to the readings: we assume our active role in the community, praying for its needs.

Jewish and Christian traditions converge in the Passover Liturgy, offering the Lamb as a sacrifice for our liberation and redemption. In the Jewish tradition, the Passover celebration revives the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, as the Jews did at God's direction, to liberate the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. In the Christian context, Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who offered himself as a sacrifice,

with his death on the cross and resurrection, to free us from the slavery of our limitations and open the gates of heaven.

Psalms 1 and Jeremiah 17 express that the tree bears fruit, initiating the offertory with the prayer: "Blessed are you, Lord, God of the universe, for this bread / for this wine, fruit of the earth/fruit of the vine and of man's labor that we receive from your bounty and now present to you, it will be for us bread of life/drink of salvation". For the Israelites, bread was the basic food to preserve life, a symbol of all nourishment. By giving up the bread, the wine, and the money we bring, we offer the result of our effort, our work, and ourselves to God, giving meaning to our daily life.

When we contemplate our daily life, we realize that everything we receive every day is a gift, and we give thanks to God, both in the liturgy and in our daily lives: "It is right and necessary to thank you always and everywhere."

"Holy, Holy, Holy!" is a passage from the Old Testament (Isaiah 6:3) and the New Testament (Revelation 4:8). We sing along with the angels and saints in heaven, repeating it three times to highlight the absolute holiness, perfection, and fullness of God. We add "Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes" from Psalm 118:25-26, a psalm that celebrates God's love and our salvation, which is recited on Jewish feasts such as Passover, and in Matthew 21:9, recites the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, welcoming God who comes to us in the Eucharist. This passage is a pillar of the Mass that we carry into our daily lives, providing us with spiritual nourishment.

The tree of Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17 feeds on the waters, and this is a central part of the liturgy and of our lives. God is giving us our spiritual nourishment. Here again, the Jewish Passover and the

Christian Eucharist converge. In the Passover ceremonies, the first Passover meal in Egypt was relived, where a lamb was sacrificed and the people began their liberation from slavery. In the Eucharist, the Last Supper is relived, the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, where our liberation begins. Thus begins a new moment for humanity, the Kingdom of God. All united, we pray the Our Father, we give each other peace, and we bring this unity into our daily lives.

Thus we come to communion, as John says: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is the true food and my blood the true drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."

And so the celebration concludes. We receive the blessing and leave in peace. The word "missa" means "sending forth" in Latin to live the celebration in our daily reality.

The Mass is a profound expression of God's love. It centers on the Eucharist, the "sacrament of love," where Jesus Christ offers Himself completely out of love for us, as He gave Himself on the cross for the salvation of humanity. The Mass invites us to reciprocate with love, receiving God's love and responding with ardent love, praise, and thanksgiving. The Mass invites us to love the community; it invites us to share the love we have received with the whole world.

Celebrating the liturgy in a contemplative way and bringing each passage of the liturgy into our daily lives is a powerful source of discernment, as it provides structure and meaning to everything we do during the day, which helps us make decisions.

**Building discernment. Experiencing God's presence in our daily lives.**

For religious people, living in the presence of God and building our relationship with Him is an extraordinary source of discernment. It is in those moments of peace in which we connect with God that we can sense whether a decision is right or wrong.

Bernard McGinn<sup>3</sup> explains that the awareness of God's "presence" in our lives is part of a process, a way of life, an encounter between God and us. The word "awareness" is a better term than "experience," as it implies both loving and knowing. Both "presence" and "absence" are part of the experience.

Thomas Aquinas explains how living in the presence of God transforms us. Contemplating the perfection of creation gives rise to an attitude of wonder and gratitude towards the Creator, and a desire to walk towards God, a journey of transformation.

According to Newman<sup>4</sup>, to live we need to pulse and breathe, and we need to contemplate the presence of God in our souls, through continuous prayer during our daily activities, as St. Paul said: "it is necessary to pray always and at all times" (1 Thess 5:17).

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism: 1350-1550* (The Presence of God, Vol. 3) (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Pablo Martí, "Contemplation and the presence of God in Newman's parish sermons" in *Scripta Theologica* 37 (2005/3): 895-909 ISSN 0036-9764.

The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas<sup>5</sup> introduced the relationship with God, the personal contact with the face of God, and the reading of the Scriptures as privileged ways to listen to God's intuitions; each person receives these insights differently. This plurality leads to a deeper human understanding of the reality of God. This relationship leads people to a personal awakening, to a more profound discovery of their own identity. Through language, through expression, through words, the Scriptures are incorporated into the human world, personal and relational, on a journey of personal discernment: truth is found in personal understanding of God's word in the Scriptures and collective knowledge through listening to others.

Living in God's loving presence is expressed throughout Christianity: in the New Testament ("God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him", 1 John 4:16), in Eastern Christianity ("Pray without ceasing", 1 Thessalonians 5: 16, which sustains the prayer of the heart), in Augustine ("Late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new", Confessions Book 10, Chapter 27), in Gregory (contemplation to dwell in his love), in Bernard (contemplation as the way to the presence of God, driven by the love of God), in Francis (inner and outer joy in discovering the goodness of God, living on earth as in heaven), in Thomas Aquinas (the Trinitarian presence of God in our lives), in John of the Cross (contemplation, interior life, prayer life lead to discovering the loving presence of God in all aspects of our life), in Teresa of Avila (an intimate sharing among

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<sup>5</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1985).

friends, being alone with the one we know loves us), in Thomas Merton (contemplation as the work of love), to mention a few references.

**Building discernment. Building a relationship with God, collaborating with him in creation, is an engine of leadership.**

According to Luis María Etcheverry Boneo, we know God, we value Him, we love Him, and this valuation translates into a vital attitude of verbal praise and, with deeds, a behavior of following His will.

We build our relationship with God as He made us. We owe our existence to Him, just as a craftsman or a manufacturer is related to the things they create or manufacture. The craftsman is the efficient cause, and the created is related to him as its effect.

We build our relationship with God, just as a painting is connected to the painter who executes it, based on the form that the artist devised in their mind and transferred to the canvas. The form we have was first created in the mind of God and transferred to us, the creatures. The universe, the stars, the earth, the animals, and we human beings were first in the mind of God, since the formal cause is related to the form of the created.

We build our relationship with God as the supreme source of all goodness, beauty, truth, and love, which we seek as the ultimate goal of our life, because He is our final cause. We may believe that our goals are this or that, but we fail to realize that more than those specific things, we seek God as the supreme goodness, beauty, and truth.

We build our relationship with God when we act according to the values that lead us to express his perfections, his goodness, his beauty, and his love.

We build our relationship with God when we act according to values that lead us to collaborate with Him, making reality more perfect, more beautiful, and more useful for humanity. We transform reality so that it becomes an expression of God's goodness, beauty, and truth through our daily work as engineers, doctors, artists, parents, educators, friends, and in other vocations.

We build our relationship with God by expressing the Trinity of God, his community life, when we act according to values that lead us to develop and perfect social reality, since God is social. He is expressive when we help others know and relate to Him. This is achieved through meeting other people, knowing them, loving them, helping them, and carrying out social actions, thereby creating communities. Many virtues, many capacities can only be exercised in a community.

We build our relationship with God by exercising our vocation, our distinctive role, within our communities, reflecting the perfections that exist in God, to perfect ourselves individually and as communities, to help us develop all our personal and communal dimensions, and to perfect the world, the perfect nature.

This is an extraordinary exercise of discernment because it gives meaning to our lives and to our decisions.

**Building discernment. The connection between leadership, religiosity and spirituality.**

When we talk about leadership, we all use language that, without realizing it, is common to spirituality. For example, we naturally say that leadership illuminates and inspires "visions", instills values that energize, strengthen, vitalize "missions", creates empathy, relation-

ships that build "communities of leaders", promotes discernment for "decision making", brings the power of "transformation, healing and social action": without realizing it, we are using terminology commonly associated with spirituality.

- **Inspiration**

Modern leadership asserts that the core of a leader is their ability to inspire: to inspire trust and loyalty, to foster goodwill and enthusiasm, ultimately leading to improvement processes.

Visionary Leadership states that the vision of an organization must be inspiring, it must inspire performance and results. Visionary leaders who transformed the world were able to inspire society with their ideals. Leaders propose cultural values that inspire ideals in the organization, promoting commitment. Transformational leaders inspire the organization to change reality. Charismatic leaders rely on their expressive, relational capacity to inspire others, promoting loyalty. The keyword of leadership is not only motivation, but also inspiration.

Inspiration is the first function of spirituality, in fact, the word spirituality comes from the Latin, "spirare", which means "to breathe". "Spiritus" means "breath".

Breathing in implies taking in air, breath, impulse, energy, illumination, which pushes us to act, to speak, to write. Just as breathing nourishes our body and soul, so spirituality inspires and illuminates our wisdom, fills our heart, teaches us to live and gives us the energy to do so, makes us more human, brings us peace, heals our soul,

transforms us and the communities of which we are a part, gives us freedom and happiness.

For Judeo-Christians, the Bible shows multiple passages where leaders receive an inspiration that leads them to action, from creation where God inspires his spirit in Adam, to the prophets who speak inspired by God, to Pentecost where the Holy Spirit fills the hearts of the apostles.

- **Knowledge, wisdom**

Leaders must be able to promote human capital: knowledge, wisdom. Modern leadership considers that the success of an organization is based on its resources and competencies. According to Fink, competencies require knowledge, cognitive skills such as critical and interdisciplinary thinking, and finally the ability to learn: organizations must learn continuously. Virtue-based leadership requires wisdom, also called prudence, a virtue that illuminates other virtues that a leader should have, such as integrity, altruism, justice, transparency, fortitude, courage, moderation, generosity, etc. Wisdom is crucial in the decision making of a leader capable of solving problems, a charismatic and transformational leader.

Spirituality also highlights the role of knowledge and wisdom.

For Buddhists, Prince Siddhartha undertook a journey of meditation, seeking an answer to suffering, until he reached his "enlightenment", becoming Buddha ("He who is awakened"). Meditation awakens us, enriches our perceptions, teaches us, enlightens us.

Hindu spirituality is based on the Veda, translated as "the knowledge of truth". Knowledge leads to truth which leads to har-

mony with others. The enlightened mind connects with the inner self, with external spiritual realities, transforms the personal perspective, enhances spirituality.

For Judeo-Christians, Isaiah 11:2 states: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord". The Book of Proverbs shows God giving wisdom to those who ask for it: Sir 51:13 "In my youth, before I walked in the world, I sought wisdom openly in prayer," and God will give it to him if he so desires: "If the great Lord so wills, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding; he shall pour out his wise words like rain, and shall celebrate the Lord with his prayer; he shall rightly direct his counsel and his knowledge, and shall ponder the secrets of God."

- **Energy, strength, motivation, vitality**

A leader is characterized by having energy, and by generating energy in the organization. Charismatic Leadership and Transformational Leadership require creating and communicating energy to promote the common good, transforming ideals into realities, driving change, overcoming obstacles, gaining power and competitiveness, and fostering loyalty and trust.

For Judeo-Christians, in the Bible, the spirit, the breath, is the origin of life: Gen 2:7 "Then the Lord God fashioned man out of clay from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man became a living being", Is 42:7 "Thus speaks God, the Lord, the one who created the heavens and spread them out, who spread out the earth and what it produces, who gives breath to the people

who dwell in it and spirit to those who walk on it". Psalm 104 is a perfect synthesis of how the Spirit, "the breath," gives us life: "They all wait for you to give them their food in due season: you give it to them, and they gather it; you open your hand, and they are satisfied. If you take away their breath, they expire and return to dust. If you send forth your breath, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." Ezekiel 37:9, revive the bones in the valley: "Then the Lord said to me, "Thus says the Lord: 'Come, O spirit, come from the four winds, and blow on these slain, that they may revive.'

- **Relationality, community, emotional intelligence, humanization**

The human, social and emotional intelligence dimensions are crucial for a leader: Servant Leadership and Charismatic Leadership promote human values, a positive human attitude towards others, capable of having sensitivity and empathy for people, listening to them, valuing them, empowering them, helping them to develop their competencies to succeed, to overcome obstacles, seeking to create trusting relationships, caring about their needs, generating the best behaviors, the highest performance, and job satisfaction. Leaders must be able to build social capital, within the organization, and in the communities in which it interacts: social networks, relationships, behaviors, that promote cooperation, a culture of trust, shared values, mutual understanding, that keeps the organization together and facilitates the fulfillment of its objectives.

Our spirituality connects us with others, humanizes us, fills our hearts, gives us the capacity to love.

For Buddhism, meditation leads us to create community.

Love, relationality, are at the heart of the Bible's teachings: Ez 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you: I will tear out of your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." The book of Wisdom Wi 1:7 "The spirit of the Lord fills the earth, and holds all things together," does so with flexibility: "Wisdom, the artificer of all things, instructed me. In her is an intelligent spirit, holy, unique, multiform, subtle, agile, perspicacious, spotless, diaphanous, unalterable, lover of good, keen, free, a benefactor, a friend of men, firm, sure, serene, all-seeing, all-seeing, and penetrating all spirits: the pure and even the subtlest. Wisdom is more agile than any movement; because of its purity, it traverses and penetrates everything."

The Bible promotes love:

Deuteronomy 6:5: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Matthew 22:37-39: "Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." 1 John 4:9-10: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to make atonement for our sins." John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:9-11: "As the Father

has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:12-13: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

- **Power of transformation, of creation, of healing, of execution of social actions**

Charismatic Leadership inspires and energizes the members of the organization. Transformational Leadership also promotes an ideal that inspires and energizes, intellectually stimulates and considers each member of the organization, promoting processes of change and improvement. Transformational Leadership is a process that promotes human capital, greater awareness, better cognitive capacity, better organizational knowledge, greater efficiency, promotes organizational success. Transformational Leadership promotes process capital, inspires the organization, motivates, enthuses, generating better performance. It promotes social capital, better emotional intelligence, organic organizations capable of relating, listening and understanding the environment, better capacity to create community, work teams, better social integration, corporate citizenship, promotes higher values, promotes a culture of ethics, trust, promotes social responsibility, social action, giving meaning to the organization, to the people involved, generating personal satisfaction, loyalty, commitment. It promotes renewal capital, a resilient organization,

adaptable, creative, reliable, capable of taking risks, integrated, honest, sincere, capable of learning, empowering each individual. Transformational Leadership is a process that starts with an ideal, a vision of a better future, that generates a mission, values, energy, that inspires individuals creating teams of leaders, that make decisions and lead to transformation, innovation, creativity, that improves reality.

For Buddhism, meditation teaches us to live with virtue.

As Isaiah 61, Luke 4 state: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor".

### **Building discernment. Building a new man and a new society.**

As Joseph Kentenich<sup>6</sup> states, religious experience penetrates to the depths of the human soul. Religious experience is an affective acceptance and elaboration of religious truths.

Kentenich argues that truth penetrates to the affective level, is elaborated until it captures and penetrates the whole affectivity, the heart (*Gemüt*), and with it the whole person.

For example, it is not the same to know that God exists as it is to create an emotional bond with Him. The heart, emotion unifies and integrates the whole person, their creative and transformative capacity. It is not just accepting an idea, but involving the whole person.

And this has an impact on two worlds: on the one hand, the world of our religiosity, for example, for Christians, sharing the feel-

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Kentenich, *Let the New Man Arise: A Religious Psychopedagogy*.

ings of Jesus, who is God and man, that is, he understands and communicates with our humanity, with our heart; and on the other hand, the world of our lives, our affections, our children, our work, which come to receive our religiosity. God's fatherhood illuminates our fatherhood with our children and with all those who are part of our lives. What we learn from God we practice in our daily lives.

For Christians, in addition to the heart that arises from the fatherhood of God, there is also the motherhood of the Virgin Mary.

This spiritual fatherhood and motherhood that we receive helps us to be parents, to give order to society, unity, a heart, and creative power. And they teach us balance and enrichment in the roles of fatherhood and motherhood.

As Kentenich stated in 1950, "paternal power is moderated by maternal self-denial, paternal despotism by maternal humility, paternal pressure to produce is complemented by an inner, humble maternal attitude and by permanent joy, paternal nervousness is moderated by maternal patience, sacrifice, and self-giving. Motherhood has a deep and total sheltering function in relation to the father. The father can ponder and develop great things with his creative thoughts and ideas, with his flow of ideas, but these great thoughts are sheltered in the feminine heart. Men need the heart of women and mothers for their creative thinking abilities, and even more so for their formative work. That is why, if they want to appear as reformers, they need a legion of noble women. Men can think and plan. Women welcome these great plans into their hearts and lives, and are willing to give everything to realize them. Paternal authority experiences a relaxation, a soothing effect through the moderating, helpful, and kind influence of women. The spirit of domination is

softened by love, just as, conversely, when it comes to complementing women, the softness and delicacy of the female structure are crowned and complemented by the strength, security, and firmness of men.”

This leads to a new society.

"The path to the natural family passes through the mother. She is the one who takes upon herself the whole life of the child, including the child's unconscious life. She is the one who is already forming the unconscious life of the child when it is in her womb. She is also the one who guides the child toward the father. The child does not know who his father is. It is the mother's task to draw the child's attention to the father because of his dependence on him; it is her task to draw and paint the image of the father in a simple and clear way, because the mother bows down in her life before the father in simple dependence and accessibility. The child is shaped by such a maternal experience and moves on to a deep experience of the father."

"If there is a real, noble, and natural experience of the father and mother, the subconscious, instinctive spiritual life of the child will be well predisposed. If a child is truly attached to his father, his heart, his affectivity, and his subconscious are marked by an instinctive security of spiritual life. If there is a real experience of child and mother, the heart is marked by the experience of being sheltered. This is of great importance for men in such confusing, helpless, and insecure times. According to the law of the transmission of affections, such instinctive security is transmitted to God the Father, an instinctive sheltering to the Blessed Virgin, and therefore back to God."

In cases where a person has never had a filial experience that has captured the subconscious, because they have never naturally experienced true fatherhood or motherhood, it is possible that later in life, by giving paternal or maternal love to spiritual or biological children, they may experience filiality vitally in these children. They experience a fatherhood and motherhood that awakens and immerses them in their unconscious life, and they also experience filiality in others. In this way, the filial instinct can be awakened in me and projected onto God. If I was previously only a child intellectually, now, through this complementary experience, instinctive filiality springs forth in me as a mature person. The Virgin Mary is the personification of openness to the divine: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38). She opens the way for us to become open to the divine, to supernatural values, to a healthy natural disposition.

### **World peace**

World peace is the result of our ability to connect with God and experience His loving presence in our lives. This promotes inner peace, love, forgiveness, compassion, community building, social integration, the golden rule, and the elimination of disturbing emotions.

World peace is the result of building our relationship with God, collaborating with His creation, transforming reality, and making it more beneficial to humanity through community building and social action.

Roy Weatherford<sup>7</sup> argues that peace is multifaceted. World peace begins as an ideal led by world religions that promote a human family.

Walter Sharp<sup>8</sup> focuses on the role of religions, which lead to world peace by promoting inner peace, love, forgiveness, compassion, community building, social integration, the golden rule, and the elimination of disturbing emotions.

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<sup>7</sup> Roy Weatherford, *World Peace and the Human Family*. (New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Walter Gary Sharp, *Democracy and Deterrence. Foundations for an Enduring World Peace* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 2008).

## Chapter 5

### **Building the relational dimension of our discernment; incorporating awareness and community in our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership requires relationships and community.**

This chapter introduces the fifth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the relational dimension, which involves making decisions that consider the impact on society.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our daily lives, we connect internally with ourselves and with others, foster relationships, build community, and cultivate social responsibility.

The pursuit of excellence that the Baldrige Excellence Framework promotes the fourth capacity of leadership: the power to create relationships, communities, and teams of leaders; to communicate effectively; to motivate; and to promote social commitment.

The values of the Baldrige Excellence Framework engage the community in several ways: organizational learning and agility, customer-driven excellence, valuing people, focus on social outcomes, ethical behavior, transparency, and focus on success.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework promotes integration, addressing performance requirements related to customers, products, markets, processes, action plans and objectives across the organization, as well as in process elements.

**Building relationships and communities, the organizational body of discernment**

Contemplation helps us build relationships because it enables us to perceive and connect with others, understand them, and cultivate feelings, emotions, and empathy.

In English, the word "consciousness" is synonymous with "mindfulness"; to be aware is to have our mind fully immersed in reality.

Phenomenology asserts that every act of consciousness we perform is always "consciousness of something" or "of other." Consciousness makes us relational, generating intersubjectivity, building relationships, integrating families, couples, and friendships, and helping people emerge from isolation, thereby promoting humanism, integration, and social harmony.

Each phenomenologist highlights how our consciousness leads us to create relationships and build community. Husserl provides tools to help people communicate perceptions, feelings, language, and symbols. Bouyer, Stein, and Buber seek to connect the person with others, fostering empathy, dialogue, and encounter. Von Hildebrandt stresses the central role of our heart. Heidegger and Gadamer study how we construct meanings and shared existential understanding. Scheler enhances the creation of higher values, goodness, beauty and justice. Wojtyla enhances the value of the person leading to social action. Fabro emphasizes how conscience leads to social transformation. Levinas posits ethics based on sensibility. Arendt shows how conscience leads to social integration, human harmony, and world peace.

We build a community when we share our lives as a journey to transcendence. We build community when we discover the value of

the person, when we share higher values. We build community when we live in the presence of God, which leads us to love our neighbor and collaborate with creation, building a better world for the common good. The Hindu dharma promotes a society based on spirituality, wisdom, duties, self-control, and harmony. Buddhist sangha promotes a social organization based on reading, meditation, monastic rule, and social roles. Taoism promotes harmony, connection with the universe, and human integration. Confucianism promotes relationship building. The Bible promotes a communal mission, summarized in Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:18-19, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication from our God; to comfort all who mourn." Christianity promotes the communitarian model of the Trinity.

Leaders need to build relationships, teams, and communities, communicate and share visions and missions, and promote leadership throughout the organization. Relationships and community help individuals find meaning in their lives, reduce suffering, deepen discernment, promote transformation, healing, and social action.

Belonging to a community and the creation of community are two key dimensions for building discernment. At the moment of making a decision, the relational dimension enriches and humanizes discernment. Knowing the people around us, including our families, friends, and clients, as well as understanding their realities, feelings, and needs, enhances our discernment. Knowing the teams that work

with us, their ideals, their values, and their religiosity builds our discernment.

### **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment is based on our relationality, which leads us to make decisions that consider the community, in line with the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Our discernment fosters relationships that help us build **intellectual capital**, including human capital and shared knowledge of the organization. These relationships also help us develop social capital, encompassing behaviors, institutions, commitment, trust, and the rule of law. They motivate us and enable us to build teams that innovate and execute operations, thereby creating renewal capital through transformative innovation and social action, as well as process capital by prioritizing what is best for society.

Our discernment promotes a **leadership culture**, sharing ideals, values, and decisions towards the common good, integrating and harmonizing society, better than individualistic and collectivist cultures.

**World peace** is the result of our relationships, feelings, values and love, promoting integration, commitment and social harmony. World peace is the result of economic, cultural, and environmental interdependence.

**First experiential learning. Coach Gary Gaines. Uniting and empowering a soccer team.**

As experiential learning, readers can watch an excerpt from the film *Friday Night Lights* at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on how coach Gary Gaines managed to unite and empower a team of young football players who had experienced interpersonal problems, by promoting human connection between the players, sensitivity, contact between their hearts, building social commitment:

"For me, being perfect is not about that scoreboard out there. It's not about winning. It's about you and your relationship with yourself and your family and your friends. Being perfect is about being able to look your friends in the eye and know that you didn't let them down because you told them the truth, and that truth is, you did everything you could, there was nothing else you could have done. Can you live that moment as best you can with clear eyes and love in your heart, with joy in your heart? If you can do that, gentlemen, then, you are perfect

I want you to take a moment and I want you to look into each other's eyes. I want you to hold each other in your hearts forever. Because forever is about to happen here in just a few minutes. Guys, my heart is full, my heart is full."

**Second experiential learning: epistemologies unite or divide society**

Let's imagine we are in an auditorium full of people. One shows an apple and asks the audience present, each one, what they see. An

economist might see an economic product as subject to supply and demand. A poet might see a slice of life. A philosopher a being with substance and accidents. A scientist a collection of tissues and molecules. A hungry person something to eat. We live in a diverse world. We can imagine what a mess it would be if one were to ask a more complex question.

So what is an apple after considering so many different perceptions?

Empiricism has no way of articulating perspectives that are not empirical. Subjective idealism, on the other hand, is incapable of capturing the richness of reality, as it cannot articulate chaotic information. Empiricism and idealism would condemn people to isolation, social disintegration, relativism, fanaticism, and conflict. Both impoverish people's points of view because they are based on a limited perception of the richness of reality.

Realism, enriched by phenomenology, understands that reality is multifaceted and manifests itself through various phenomena. Each person can perceive phenomena differently, so that some will perceive some aspects of reality better than others.

Phenomenology proposes mechanisms that enable people to integrate and harmonize their perceptions, thereby gaining knowledge of the truth. It establishes channels of communication between individuals, proposes means such as reflection, contemplation, meditation, intuition, symbols, metaphors, hermeneutics, analogies, affections, emotions, and empathy. Although we all have different ways of perceiving reality, we can find ways to reach a deeper understanding of it.

Phenomenology postulates that we can receive multiple pieces of information about the same object and view it from different perspectives. This gives rise to the different points of view that people can have of them. We perceive reality in different ways. However, these different phenomena refer to the same reality; a person can separate the essence from the accidents, integrate the different phenomena, and know the truth.

This creates collective knowledge and allows us to discover higher realities; it creates relationships and community; it produces transformation, healing, and social action.

This puts an end to the subjectivism and relativism of empiricism, and to the radicalism of subjective idealism that isolates and pits people against each other; it opens the door to universal truths, to the ability of people to communicate, create communities and share truths. The radicalization of the sciences led to the elimination of all non-factual or non-rational knowledge, such as values, meanings, emotions, affections and human subjectivity. Intuitions lead to discovering the essence of things; no matter who perceives the object, the essence is the same, eliminating all relativism. The irrelevant can be suppressed, discovering the essences and meanings, the good or the bad, the better or the worse.

### **Modern management relies on relationships**

The notion of "empathy", introduced by the phenomenologist Edith Stein, became part of modern management science, organizational behavioral science and organizational theories.

John Kotter explains how change management requires the role of teams, highlighting the importance of connecting teams with the environment, with people, building relationships, proposing a vision and strategies, communicating that vision, generating success and building a culture.

Jon Katzenbach talks about what makes a team successful: wealth of knowledge, responsibility and commitment.

In his famous book *Images of Organization*, Gareth Morgan explains how the old conception of organizations as machines - a mechanistic conception - evolved several decades ago to organizations as organisms, sensitive to the environment and capable of adapting, to organizations as networks capable of interacting with each other and working in coordination, and organizations as brains capable of creating ideas.

According to Morgan, the idea of organizations conceived as machines emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, because they were understood as an extension of manufacturing. Standardization of work, routines and knowledge created, at the top, vertical communications, which were the typical patterns of organization.

Organizations conceived as organisms responded to the humanization of management during the 1950s and then to the marketing orientation in the 1960s. Knowledge creation, improved communications, motivation and training were the recommendations.

Organizations understood as brains have become popular in recent decades based on the idea that once computers can do all the routine jobs, the organization will be able to create new knowledge, technologies and products.

## **Phenomenology promotes awareness and relationships, building discernment**

According to Sokolowski<sup>1</sup> "the central doctrine of phenomenology is the teaching that every act of consciousness we perform, every experience we have, is *intentional*: it is essentially *consciousness of or experience of* something or other; all our consciousness is directed towards objects, what we see, what we imagine, what we remember, what we judge, is correlated with an object."

The "contemplative" attitude is the core of phenomenology: any person can arrive at the truth, naturally, before any philosophical involvement; the arts and sciences can add valuable data, but in the end, the person relies on contemplation, on common sense.<sup>2</sup>

Cornelio Fabro introduces a phenomenological vision in epistemology. According to Fabro "The dominant function in cognitive life is perception, not sensation; because in perception flow sensibility, affectivity, intelligence according to the plastic convergence of the effective force of life, and according to the structure of our own psyche. Perception indicates the immediate apprehension of the existence of an act or of an object in the sphere of an internal or external experience."<sup>3</sup>

Perception can apprehend an entire object made up of multiple parts, their qualities, order and organization. Perception is not only

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*. (Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*. (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelio Fabro, *L'anima. Introduzione al problema dell' uomo*. (Roma, Italy: Editrice del Verbo Incarnato, 2005), p. 32.

pure sensation or pure thought; it is the exercise of human consciousness, producing a unified consciousness. As Fabro states, "it is the simplest hypothesis, passing gradually from scattered and insignificant elementary data, towards the construction of a whole endowed with structure and meaning".

Fabro introduces phenomenology into realism, and along with it, all human, personal, and community knowledge.

### **Phenomenology promotes discernment, creates awareness and relationships, and humanizes society**

Each phenomenologist<sup>4</sup> highlights how our consciousness leads us to build community.

Husserl provides tools to help people communicate perceptions, feelings, language, and symbols.

For Martin Buber<sup>5</sup>, we connect with each other through dialogue, communication and encounter; human relationships manifest a life and connection. The "I-Thou" relationship expresses an encounter between two people, a "dialogical relationship." Two subjects experiencing a mutually enriching human experience affirm each other individually and affirm the other as whole beings; both the "I"

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<sup>4</sup> David Detmer, *Phenomenology explained, from experience to insight*. (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 2013).

Sokolowski, Robert. Introduction to phenomenology. 1999. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. U.K.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Buber. *Ich und Du (I and Thou)*. 1923. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith. (Edinburgh: T \$ T Clark, 1937). [https://archive.org/stream/IAndThou\\_572/BuberMartin-i-and-thou\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/IAndThou_572/BuberMartin-i-and-thou_djvu.txt).

and the "you" grow in the relationship. The dialogical relationship enables a dynamic process of life.

For Martin Heidegger, we are members of a human community, sharing experiences and impacting one another in society through dialogue. People need to find meaning in their limited existence. As members belonging to a community that shares the same limitations, death anxieties, and states of mind, we are relational beings.<sup>6</sup> We are historical and social beings, beings in the world, sharing the experience of being, existing with others; we are involved and engaged with other lives. We are on a journey to find ourselves, to find truth.<sup>7</sup> This fosters a relational and tolerant attitude, a society in dialogue, which accepts differences as a journey to truth.

For Dietrich Von Hildebrand, the heart is the voice of the personal soul, the root of all affectivities, and empathy. Values are the unifying force that builds communities; they are the desire to give oneself to others, to seek their happiness, and to participate in their goodness. Love produces joy, delight, and vulnerability.<sup>8</sup> The truly affectionate person is concerned for the well-being of others. The lover wants to fill the heart of the loved one. The subjectivist is concerned only with himself. The objectivist has a utilitarian concept of affection.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://braungardt.trialectics.com/philosophy/20th-century/martin-heidegger-1889-1976/>

<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *What is metaphysics?* (Buenos Aires, Brazil: Siglo Veinte, 1970). Inaugural lecture of July 24, 1929 in the Aula of the University of Freiburg of Brisgovia, [https://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/110060/urrutia\\_c2.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/110060/urrutia_c2.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y).

<sup>8</sup> Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Art of Living*. (Steubenville, Ohio: Hildebrand Project, 2017).

For Edith Stein<sup>9</sup>, conscience fosters empathy and builds community. Suffering fosters compassion, enabling people to feel the pain of others in their vulnerability. Empathy is a social, ethical, and aesthetic phenomenon that leads people to experience the experiences of another subject to directly feel the pain of others, eliminating modern subjectivism and individualism. How is it possible to build a community? Although ego consciousness is isolated, it can form a community with other egos through empathy. A person can feel and understand the experiences of another person, getting to know them and joining in with their feelings.

Hannah Arendt introduces a new dimension of phenomenology: the public dimension as being born, being caught in the world, and the experience of the "between", the public. She was aware of how this public world can be manipulated by the government, by public organizations, by some people. Phenomenology, in her vision, leads to social integration. It promotes human relationships, a return to the world, towards a peaceful world. On the contrary, isolation and atomization lead, for her, to massification and totalitarianism.

According to Emmanuel Levinas, ethics is based on relationships, the human face, expression, human encounter, integration, sensitivity, and the pillars of the ethics of the other, including goodness, responsibility, and justice of the knowing subject, as well as the linguistic expression of personal identity. The face connects one per-

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<sup>9</sup> Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989).

Edith Stein, Letters. <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=568>

Edith Stein, *Edith Stein: Essential Writings*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), p.131.

son with another, expressing what the other needs, nakedness, and sensitivity.<sup>10</sup> This provokes the goodness of the knowing subject, his freedom, and his responsibility. This is the result of expression: it produces sensitivity and ethical behavior. It generates language; its different expressions express the differences, the points in common; language expresses what each person is, their essence, the essence of the world that each person communicates.

Karol Wojtyla suffered firsthand the Nazi and Soviet invasions in Poland, a time when he had to work hard in a quarry and in the Solvay chemical factory, where he suffered three accidents, was run over by a streetcar and trucks, hid and barely escaped while several thousand around him were killed. Jan Leopold Tyranowski, Wojtyla's friend and mentor, was a layman, an accountant by profession, who became a *staretz*, a spiritual guide. Tyranowski introduced Wojtyla to the deep spirituality of John of the Cross, rich in symbolism, phenomenological in nature. Wojtyla received a Thomistic formation. However, he followed a different journey, based on "the testimony of experience", as he writes in the introduction to the book *Faith according to St. John of the Cross*, where he traces his evolution as a thinker. Without using technical terminology, he relies exclusively on experience and practice,<sup>11</sup> has a mystical orientation. His formation led him to fuse Thomism with the phenomenology of Scheler and the spirituality of John of the Cross.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 199.

<sup>11</sup> Karol Wojtyla, *La fe según San Juan de la Cruz* (Madrid: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> George F. McLean, O.M.I., "Karol Wojtyla's Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness" in *Karol Wojtyla's Philoso-*

**Building discernment. The value of social reality.**

According to Luis María Etcheverry Boneo, social reality is that which arises in a person from their aptitude to live socially, from their inclination towards social life, and from their appetite for social interaction, from which a number of new realities emerge.

People know each other, love each other, bring their vocation, their capacity for service, and social action, creating groups, communities, and societies where each one collaborates with their respective functions.

The person develops better in society than as an individual. In the first place, because many virtues and many capacities are only exercised in social life. Secondly, because what each person has that is distinct, that is different, his personal vocation, his "participation" in the perfections of God, is only exercised when there is social life. Thirdly, for Christians, social life is a manifestation of a reality that exists in God, which is social.

The person in society develops better than individually: life in society perfects each individual, we cannot create our family if we do not have a partner; perfecting the outside world, nature.

**World peace**

World peace is the result of social capital, our relationships, feelings, values, and love, promoting integration, commitment, and social harmony.

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*phical Legacy*. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), p. 71.

Roy Weatherford<sup>13</sup> believes that world peace is promoted through interdependence. From this, discernment fosters connectivity, values, and relationships, which in turn generate:

- Economic interdependence, globalization, multinational companies, economic integration.
- Cultural interdependence, through global culture, the internationalization of English as a global language, global citizenship (music, food, clothing, cars, technology, and communication), knowledge exchange, global education, and social media.
- Environmental interdependence, global sustainability.

Sharp summarizes the liberal approach: “The existence of a basic harmony of interests and economic cooperation between nations would minimize the incidence of wars. One of the main principles of classical liberals was universal suffrage, as they believed that the people could remove any government with belligerent inclinations.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Roy Weatherford, *World Peace and the Human Family* (New York: Routledge, 2002.)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.



## Chapter 6

### **Building the personal dimension of our discernment; incorporating our interiority in our decisions**

**Introduction.** Great, excellent leadership requires us to get in touch with our inner self.

This chapter introduces the sixth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the personal dimension, which involves how we relate to others and make decisions while considering our inner selves and emotions.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our lives, it connects us with ourselves, with our own inner selves, our emotions, our personal history, our strengths and weaknesses, and the way we connect with others.

The quest for excellence outlined in the Baldrige Excellence Framework encompasses two dimensions.

The first is continuous improvement, which promotes: self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement; benchmarking to compare performance with that of other individuals or organizations; and a continuous improvement plan to address identified weaknesses and implement improvements based on the results of the assessment.

The second is integration, it invites to integrate processes, to coordinate approaches, strategies, to have a systemic vision of manage-

ment, promoting integration. The heart of a process organization is precisely integration, to achieve efficiency, agility, commitment, and communication. It fosters collaboration among all parts of an organization, working together as a team, to achieve excellence. It promotes the alignment of visions, missions, organizations, strategies, processes and metrics to analyze results.

These two dimensions invite us to incorporate our interiority.

First, to understand ourselves internally, we must analyze why we act as we do. This allows us to determine whether we make certain decisions in a healthy manner or as a compulsion, which invites us to know ourselves and ensure correct decision-making, a crucial part of discernment.

Second, to understand how we relate to others, to see ourselves in relation to them, and how our relationality influences our decision-making.

### **Knowing our interiority and our relationality helps us make decisions with discernment**

Who are we, and what drives us to make certain decisions, the best of us or our darker aspects?

When we make decisions, do we rely on our head, our reason, our mind, with the risk of disconnecting ourselves from reality? Do we rely on our heart, our emotions, our feelings, our affections, our friendships, our relationships, with the risk of living in ambiguity? Do we rely on our instincts, our gut, our impulses, our survival desire, and our desire to control, our power, with the risk of not seeking the common good in our decisions?

Are we really free to do good, or do our compulsions control us? What internal obstacles hinder our ability to make healthy decisions? How can we overcome the obstacles to discernment?

This chapter completes the discernment processes of the previous chapters. Knowledge and virtues must involve knowing ourselves internally, transcendence, values and religiosity must recognize our inner reality, our relationality is impacted by factors that impact our relationships.

Discernment helps us make decisions by incorporating the whole person, including our emotions.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola presents his Rules of Discernment as part of his Exercises, reflecting an elaborate and profound vision of discernment.

According to Saint Ignatius when we make a decision, we may feel good or bad, we may experience consolation or desolation. This state of mind can serve as a criterion for discernment.

Consolation is a positive, integrating feeling; it fills us internally, gives us life, connects us with others, gives us joy and peace. Desolation, on the other hand, is a negative feeling; it is disintegrating, causing confusion, anxiety, isolation from others, and hopelessness.

However, the reality is more complex: a good decision may not necessarily produce a good feeling, and a bad decision may make us feel better, which highlights the need to understand our emotions and ensure that we are making the right decision, even when our emotions may be confusing us.

## **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment promotes integration, self-assessment, and benchmarking against higher standards, as outlined in the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Our discernment helps build **intellectual capital**, which is **human capital** based on richer personal and community knowledge, **social capital** by making decisions that take into account the good of each person and the community, **renewal capital** that promotes transformations, and **process capital** that seeks to do everything as well as possible.

Our discernment, combined with self-awareness, enables us to realize how it impacts our decision-making processes, fosters a **leadership culture**, clarifies our vision for the future, and guides us in upholding our ideals. This, in turn, ensures that we act with the right values, build strong relationships, and employ a realistic and humane decision-making mechanism that promotes transformation, healing, and social action.

**World peace** begins in the human soul, starting with acknowledging our dark sides, in order to make decisions that bring consolation, a positive, inclusive feeling that fills us inwardly, gives us life, connects us with others, and brings us joy and peace, which in turn leads to world peace.

### **First experiential learning. Blind Bartimaeus performs a spiritual exercise, building discernment.**

St. Ignatius of Loyola explains discernment as a key component in decision-making, as part of his Spiritual Exercises. St. Ignatius de-

veloped his Spiritual Exercises as a way to exercise and grow our spirituality. Within the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, the Rules of Discernment emerge.

To understand the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, let's engage in a brief spiritual exercise. We will rely on the Gospel passage of blind Bartimaeus

Matthew 10:46-53. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you? He said to him, "Master, that I may see. Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has made you well. At once he began to see and followed him on the road.

The Spiritual Exercises invite us to enter the scene of the Gospel, to be part of it. To do so, it utilizes the imagination as a tool to access the spiritual and emotional reality, to experience the presence of God, and to encounter His love.

For Ignatius, imagination is necessary to deepen and enrich our spiritual experience. It helps to use the five senses in conjunction with the imagination, to become aware, to live emotionally, to experience, to observe expressions, and to feel what those who are part of the image feel. This allows our intuitions to involve not only intelligence but also the whole person, including feelings, empathy, and an emotional relationship with each participant, encompassing love, sadness, and joy. It helps us to contemplate, to enter the world of others.

I imagine myself on the floor begging for alms, burdened by my limitations, by my disability, be it emotional, social, labor, economic, whatever it may be. I meditate on myself today, when I feel limited

and vulnerable. I want to overcome my limitations, I want to be able to see, to hear, to feel. I imagine a group of people walking by.

There is Jesus, who passes through my life. I see him in the distance, and I am anguished that he is still far away. I imagine myself crying out in desperation, "Lord, have mercy on me," a universal cry of all humanity. We are, we were created fragile, and we beg God to have mercy on us. I look into Jesus' eyes as he lays his hands on me and heals me. I begin to see and decide to follow him on his way.

We can do this exercise with many biblical passages. What we have just experienced is an application of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and of the discernment that is part of the Spiritual Exercises.

## **The Spiritual Exercises**

In the same way that we exercise our body when we walk, run, or do gymnastics, we exercise our spirit when we execute the dimensions discussed in these chapters. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius<sup>1</sup> lead us to know ourselves, to know God, to love Him, and to orient our personal life in the pursuit of His will, ultimately leading to personal transformation.

The first week of the Exercises is an exercise in reflection on our lives, the episodes that have shaped them, our memories, our feel-

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<sup>1</sup> Loyola Press. <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/discernment-of-spirits>.

Jesus Arroyo, *La transformación del yo en la dinámica de los Ejercicios Espirituales: Etapas de un proceso*. Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos. Editado por Carlos Alemany, José Antonio García-Monge. (Bilbao, Spain: Editorial Sal Terrae, 1997.)

ings, the positive and painful experiences we have had, our strengths and limitations, the value of creation, our relationship with God, His presence in our lives, His gifts, His support, and His faithfulness. This is how blind Bartimaeus began his exercise, recognizing his reality, both his talents and limitations.

The second week teaches us to know and follow Jesus. Through contact with Jesus, we come to understand his mission, life, words, actions, and values. We reflect on the Scriptures to learn to recognize and love Jesus, which leads us to make decisions to change our lives. Blind Bartimaeus begins his journey to follow Jesus.

In the third week, we meditate on the Last Supper, the Passion, and the Death of Jesus, where we see His suffering and the gift of the Eucharist as the ultimate expression of God's love. This marks a shift from self-love to the whole love of God. We identify with the life and mission of Jesus and follow his call.

In the fourth week, we meditate on the resurrection of Jesus, His interactions with his disciples, and how He prepares us for mission. We walk with the risen Jesus and resolve to love and serve Him concretely in our lives, in the world. We arrive at the most extraordinary secret of the mystery of God, the "Contemplation to come to love", to the joy of loving, to enjoy with Jesus the new life obtained by faithful love.

### **Ignatian discernment in decision making**

What is discernment for St. Ignatius<sup>2</sup>?

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<sup>2</sup> Santiago Arzubialde, S.J., *Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio, Historia y Análisis*. (Bilbao, Spain: Ediciones Mensajero, Sal Terrae, 2009.)

Our life constantly presents us with choices between two paths: one leads to a whole and truly human life, and the other leads in a dehumanizing and destructive direction. Discernment is our ability to distinguish between these two paths.

When we make a decision, we may feel good or bad, consolation or desolation.

Consolation is an integrating feeling; it fills our soul, we feel more alive and connected with others, full of love, joy, and peace. Desolation is disintegrating; it fills us with doubts, worries, restlessness, and anxiety. We feel isolated from others in a dense darkness or confusion, plagued by doubt, disgust, and a lack of faith, hope, and love.

However, it is not that simple.

We can feel consolation even if we make a bad decision, and desolation even if we make a good decision. This raises the need to be able to discern which decision is the right one, regardless of our emotional state.

The discernment proposed by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is a set of rules for interpreting which of our feelings lead to a whole life.

In the first week, St. Ignatius presents the first part of his "Rules of Discernment" to understand the will of God in our process of spiritual growth.

Blind Bartimaeus used his discernment to recognize his limitations and ask for help in his personal healing, enabling him to see not only physically but also spiritually.

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David Lonsdale, *Listening to the Music of the Spirit: The art of discernment* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1992).

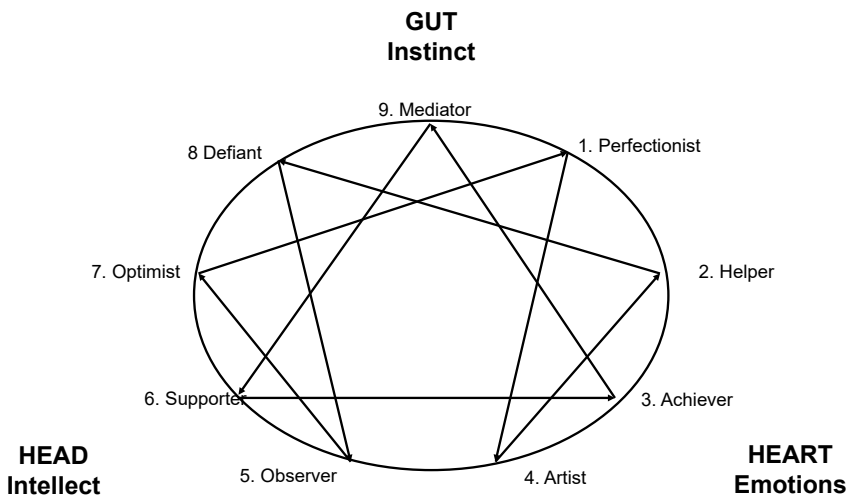
In the second week, St. Ignatius poses the second part of his "Rules of Discernment" that apply to weeks two, three, and four of the Spiritual Exercises, in our process of personal enlightenment: what is the best way to follow Jesus in his mission.

Blind Bartimaeus applied his discernment to decide to follow Jesus, again, to see also with his spirit.

For religious individuals, discernment involves our relationship with God, living in His presence, and seeking to build a relationship with Him by collaborating in the construction of a better world and a better society.

### The Enneagram as a tool for discernment in decision making

Several prestigious authors recommend using the Enneagram to help us in our discernment, to know if our decisions lead to a whole life or destruction. The Enneagram connects our self with others, with the world, with our spirituality, our conscience, our values, and our psychology.



It has its roots in Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism, and ancient Greek philosophy.

The Enneagram helps us recognize our virtues and passions; it enables us to free ourselves from our compulsions, shadows, limitations, and illusions; in short, the Enneagram helps us achieve freedom.

The Enneagram helps us discover our true self, who I am, and my false self, a mask I have created to live in the world, to connect with others, to please them. The Enneagram is like a mirror that shows me who I am.

The Enneagram teaches that throughout childhood, people experience different events that lead each one to move in different directions and to find answers, solutions, and various forms of shelter. Some people escape or find refuge in the heart (emotions), others in the stomach (instincts), others in the head (intellect).

The Enneagram helps us to understand how we make decisions: do we rely on our **head**, our reason, our mind, with the risk of disconnecting from reality? Or do we rely on our heart, our emotions, our feelings, our affections, our friendships, and our relationships, with the risk of living in ambiguity? Or do we rely on our **guts**, our stomach, our impulses, our survival instinct, our power, our desire to control, with the risk of not seeking the common good in our decisions

The Enneagram helps us identify our obstacles to discernment and guides us on how to overcome them.

It presents nine strategies for relating to oneself, others, and the world. Each strategy has a different pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting.

**Second experiential learning: Using the Enneagram to gain insight into myself, my personality, compulsions, and strategies for overcoming them.**

We will do an exercise to learn more about ourselves, identifying with some of the nine types of the Enneagram<sup>3</sup>. How our history led us to be who we are, our compulsions, how they affect our discernment, and how they affect our decision-making.

### **1. Identifying our personality type**

To begin this exercise, I analyze what my personality type is:

- Type 1 is the "Perfectionist". I feel my parents love me if I am perfect. If they criticize me, I become resentful and humorless. I learned to live up to the expectations of others.
- Type 2 is the "Helper". I feel that my parents love me if I help them and am responsive to their needs. I must adapt to meet

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<sup>3</sup> Eilis Bergin, and Eddie Fitzgerald. *An Enneagram Guide: A Spirituality of Love in Brokenness*. New England. Twenty Third Publications. 1995.

Richard Rohr. <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/the-enneagram-an-introduction/#Types>

Don Richard Riso, and Russ Hudson. *The Wisdom of the Enneagram: The Complete Guide to Psychological and Spiritual Growth for the Nine Personality*. New York. Bantam. 1999.

<https://cac.org/the-enneagram-an-introduction/#Types>

<https://theenneagraminbusiness.com/development/enneagram-styles-and-discernment/>

their needs and earn their approval. I am willing to make sacrifices to please others.

- Type 3 is the "Achiever". I feel that to gain my parents' attention, I must make them proud of me by having the best performance, success, and achievement so that they can identify with me.
- Type 4, is the "Artist". I have lost a parent or felt abandoned. I have little joy because people reject me and hurt me. I can't count on anyone, so I prefer to reject anyone. I prefer to live in a fantasy land.
- Type 5, is the "Observer". The loss of a parent, being abused, or intrusive parents forced me to withdraw into myself. My parents know everything about me, I feel ashamed and terrified of people. I prefer to live in the world of the mind, knowing everything, but getting lost in the crowd.
- Type 6, is the "Loyal". I feel my parents raised me with the ten commandments, what not to do, the boogeyman, with little encouragement to succeed, and low self-esteem. I learned to be obedient, conformist, conscientious, and alert to any danger.
- Type 7, is the "Enthusiast". A family crisis, such as my parents' unemployment or the family's poverty, led me to be cheerful, enthusiastic, extroverted, fun, and on the move, to escape from the miseries of my life. I only remember the good times to calm my pain and get closer to people.
- Type 8, is the "Defiant". Through yelling, anger, and vandalism, I learned to dominate my parents. I can be the boss and aggressively dictate the rules of the game. Since I imagine all

people are like me I feel no guilt. I don't care about other people's feelings. I will never say "I'm sorry", nor will I apologize. I am ready to exploit any weakness or get into a fight.

- Type 9, is the "Mediator". I feel that my parents didn't care about me, they preferred my brothers or sisters. I wasn't important enough to be loved, I wasn't worth it. I compensated by engaging in excessive TV, eating, and reading. I became placid, carefree, and did not bother anyone.

## **2. The compulsions of each personality type**

Every personality has its compulsions, unconscious patterns and fears that drive them, which shape our behavior.

- The perfectionist feels compelled to follow high standards, is afraid of failing, which leads him to resent not achieving those standards, and to be critical of himself and others.
- The helper has pride and demands the return of favors. He is afraid of not being liked. He needs to feel that people need him and want him, even if that means going out of his way for others, even at the cost of being neglectful of himself.
- The achiever may feel vainglorious and use unethical mechanisms to succeed. They may feel that their value depends on success, fearing that they will be despised if they fail.
- The artist will feel envy for having had a sadder life, feeling different, inferior to others, afraid of being rejected, and despised.

- The observer will be hungry for information, always seeking more knowledge and wisdom. They may be disconnected from life, their feelings, and their emotions.
- The loyalist will live in fear of not belonging, not being aligned with the external social world.
- The enthusiast will be hungry for experiences, always trying to plan new ones to avoid pain, have more fun, and be around more people.
- The defiant person lives with a need to be strong, to have more power and control, and does not accept their own or others' weaknesses.
- The mediator is lazy, seeks peace, avoids conflicts, and postpones problem solving.

### **3. Obstacles to discernment in each personality**

Our discernment can be compromised by our compulsions. It is key to understand this to make the right decisions.

- The perfectionist may be rigid, inflexible, or adaptable, intolerant, with difficulty in discernment.
- The helper may focus too much on the needs of others, on seeking the approval of others, without being aware of their own needs, neglecting themselves, their ideas, and intuitions, which can impede discernment.
- The achiever may focus on personal success objectives, without considering higher values, which prevents proper discernment.

- The artist may make decisions based on emotions, feelings, and not on reasons or values, leading to incorrect decisions.
- The observer may tend to intellectualize, to disconnect from personal or other people's emotions, to make decisions with the head and not with the heart, which prevents them from seeing reality in its totality, hindering complete discernment.
- The loyalist may privilege the opinion of the authority, of the organization, and may be afraid to express his own opinions, blocking his discernment.
- The enthusiast can make decisions while avoiding connecting with pain, ignoring the truth, ignoring the consequences of their decisions.
- The defiant may base his decisions on his need for power, to accumulate it, without taking into account the needs and opinions of others, and without considering the impact of his decisions on the vulnerabilities of others, thereby impoverishing his discernment.
- The mediator avoids facing problems, conflicts, leading him not to solve, not to make decisions.

#### **4. How the Enneagram helps to overcome our obstacles to discernment**

Each personality type requires a personal effort to recognize our compulsions and overcome the obstacles to achieving discernment. By becoming aware of them, and understanding their origins, we can make healthier decisions.

- The perfectionist must learn to live in an imperfect world, to accept his own imperfections, to be more tolerant with himself and with others, to relax his rigidity, to accept making mistakes as part of a learning and growth process, to accept a certain degree of ambiguity and uncertainty as part of life, as part of belonging to organizations with diversity.
- The helper must develop his own differentiation, become independent from others, value himself, raise his own self-esteem, value his ideas, stop looking for external approval, and consider his own feelings and needs.
- The achiever must recognize his value, regardless of successes or failures, regardless of the approval of others, regardless of his limitations; he must learn from his failures as part of learning and growth.
- The artist must learn to strengthen his emotionality, to enjoy his reality, to live in the present, and not in a sad past, or in a future that seems unattainable, to see that everyone has their sadness and vulnerabilities.
- The observer needs to develop more connections within and with the outside world, connecting his intellect, intuitions, and emotions.
- The loyalist must live in the present to reduce anxieties about the future, must develop self-confidence and self-assurance, must be more courageous, accept risks, to trust himself, to trust the processes.
- The enthusiast must live in the present, accepting pain, developing his capacity for reflection, inner peace, serenity, he must live in accordance with his values.

- The defiant must learn to develop empathy, to value others, to incorporate their judgments, to trust them, not to want to control them.
- The mediator must value himself, to take responsibility, to be more assertive, to confront problems and conflicts actively,

## **World peace**

Knowing ourselves, understanding the motivations behind our decisions, and understanding our dark sides help us relate to others in a constructive way, which leads to peace. It enables us to make decisions that bring consolation, ultimately leading to peace.

The Dalai Lama summarizes the view that peace begins in the human soul:

When we wake up in the morning and listen to the radio or read the newspaper, we are confronted with the same sad news: violence, crime, wars and disasters. I can't remember a single day when there isn't a news story about something terrible that has happened somewhere.

I am sure that many people share my concern about the current global moral crisis and will join me in calling on all humanists and religious practitioners who also share this concern to help make our societies more compassionate, just and equitable. From this perspective, I share with you my personal point of view:

1. Universal humanitarianism is essential to solve global problems;
2. Compassion is the pillar of world peace;

3. All the world's religions are already in favor of world peace in this sense, as are all humanists of any ideology;
4. Each individual has a universal responsibility to shape institutions to serve human needs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dalai Lama. *A Human Approach to World Peace*, <https://www.dalailama.com/messages/world-peace/a-human-approach-to-world-peace>.

## Chapter 7

### **Building the existential dimension of our discernment; incorporating the meaning of life in our decisions**

**Introduction.** Great, excellent leadership requires a sense of our existence

This chapter introduces the seventh dimension of discernment in decision-making: the existential dimension, which is the meaning of our life and how we face suffering.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our daily lives, we incorporate our history and our future, who we are, and what meaning our existence has. We become aware of the difficulties of our existence, our sufferings, their origins, and how to transform them.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework proposes a series of values that give meaning to an organization's existence: visionary leadership, customer-oriented excellence, valuing people, a focus on social results, ethical behavior, management for innovation, results orientation and value creation, transparency, and a focus on success.

This chapter examines the costs, effort, sacrifices, risks, and failures that an organization may incur: the reality of suffering.

## **Constructing the meaning of our existence and our discernment**

Our lives may require efforts, sacrifices, risks, and failures, which produce suffering for a higher purpose, as the price we pay for a better reality. It can be bearable if we appreciate its positive results; it can enrich us, elevate our dignity, show our inner worth, legitimize us and our ways, and make us proud of who we are.

Suffering is a key component of discernment, enabling us to understand the consolation and desolation that our decisions can generate. Discernment can lead us to make decisions that can produce suffering, the price we pay for accessing a better reality; the practice of virtues can generate suffering, effort and sacrifice; the search for transcendence requires effort, sacrifice, suffering; the search for and defense of higher values, relationships and love may imply suffering; discernment can generate desolation; transformation, healing, social action, social change can generate suffering.

Suffering can enrich us: it can generate richer knowledge, awareness, and wisdom; it can be the first step on a journey to transcendence; it can lead us to a deeper presence, values, and love; it can foster a deeper relationship with God and others; it can lead us to a connection with our deeper interiority, to more powerful transformation, healing, and social action.

Discernment implies understanding suffering, which can be bearable if we appreciate its positive outcomes; it can enrich us, elevate our dignity, reveal our inner worth, legitimize our actions and decisions, and make us feel fulfilled.

## **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment, the struggle to overcome or transform suffering, can promote a great leadership, in line with the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Our discernment helps to give meaning to our existence, it can build **intellectual capital**: it can build **human capital**, helping us to understand suffering and build knowledge and wisdom to overcome it; it can build **social capital**, greater sensitivity, shared feelings, empathy, relationships, new behaviors, social engagement, suffering with the person who suffers, fosters social engagement, relationships with people with a shared sensitivity; it can build **renewal capital**, innovation to help overcome suffering, transform lives, healing and social action; it can build **process capital**, producing the best to help society.

Our discernment helps give meaning to our existence, building a **leadership culture**. The search for meaning and the desire to transform suffering illuminate our vision of the future, inspiring, enlightening, and energizing us to create a mission and values oriented toward transforming our suffering. They help us create relationships and a community united in this sense, serving as engines of transformation and social action.

An extraordinary woman once expressed one of the traumas of her life: she was sexually abused. For many years, she suffered, she felt resented with God, until one day she realized that having the personal experience of descending into the hell of sexual abuse and walk out allowed her to help other women who suffered the same trauma, descending with them into the hell of their sexual abuse and help

them get out of it. This led her to make sense of her suffering, to heal, to transform herself, and to become an agent of social action, helping other suffering women.

Finding the meaning of life and suffering has a fundamental impact on modern political economy and decision-making. Supply and demand curves, pillars of all branches of modern economics, are derived from indifference curves, linked to utility curves, which are the product of utilitarianism, the moral philosophy that promotes maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, Milton Friedman's corporate social responsibility that postulates maximizing shareholder value, the utilitarian business ethics, a product of utilitarianism. The moment suffering can find meaning or be transformed and overcome, this entire intellectual edifice becomes questionable.

**World peace** is the result of seeking meaning in our existence, on a journey shared with the rest of society, seeking the good of all.

**Experiential learning. Nelson Mandela. Transforming personal suffering led him to transform a culture and unify a nation.**

As an experiential learning, the reader can watch an excerpt of the film "Invictus" at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on how Nelson Mandela's suffering played a crucial role in shaping his values, which enabled him to build leadership and transform a culture, ultimately changing a nation: how that transformation led society to build intellectual capital (human, social, renewal, and process capital), which led the nation to promote well-being, peace, and social harmony.

This video shows how Nelson Mandela was able to draw on the suffering of years of unjust imprisonment to transform the culture of

a nation, unify it, and banish Apartheid, what Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu called "Apart-hate".

"Tell me Francois, what is your philosophy on leadership? How do you inspire your team to do their best?

By example. I have always thought of leading by example, sir.

That's right. Exactly. But how do you get them to be better than they think they can be? That's very hard to find. Inspiration. Maybe.

How do we inspire ourselves to achieve greatness when we can do nothing else? How do we inspire everyone around us? Sometimes I think simply by using the work of others.

On Robben Island, when things got really bad, I found inspiration in a poem, a poem, a Victorian poem. Just words. But they helped me stand, when all I wanted to do was lie down.

We need inspiration Francois. Because to build our nation, we must all exceed our own expectations."

### **The Epic of Gilgamesh. Suffering transforms our decisions**

Can suffering have any benefit? 3000 years before Christ, the Epic of Gilgamesh describes how a spiritual journey helps us to overcome suffering.

Gilgamesh, a demigod, at first felt powerful and invulnerable and consequently was insensitive to others, selfish, and cruel. It was not until he experienced suffering through the sickness and death of his best friend that he realized the truth: "How can I rest? How can I be at peace? Despair is in my heart. What my brother is now, that will I be when I am dead."

There, he begins a personal quest to find the meaning of suffering. He discovers that we all suffer, fall ill, and die. This discovery led Gilgamesh to become more sensitive, more human, and a better person.

Suffering initiates spiritual journeys, the search for meaning, for God, leads to wisdom and salvation, and generates virtues.

### **The asceticism of the Greeks. Discernment: accepting suffering to strengthen us.**

Suffering is part of asceticism, to grow spiritually and physically.

Asceticism is a discipline that requires effort to strengthen the spiritual journey, eliminate bad habits, control passions, organize daily life, practice virtues, undergo inner purification, and face the sacrifices of life, such as work, responsibilities, and suffering.

For the ancient Greeks, asceticism referred to the methodical physical training of athletes and soldiers to develop their willpower, the intellectual discipline of philosophers, and the practice of piety and religion by priests. Philosophical awakening requires asceticism.

Suffering seems inevitable: a mother suffers in childbirth, parents suffer for their children, students suffer when they study, athletes suffer when they train, and we suffer when we work. Suffering is the price we pay for a better reality.

### **Buddhism. Our decisions generate suffering.**

What is the origin of suffering?

Five hundred years before Christ, Prince Siddhartha confronted suffering, marking the beginning of his journey of spiritual growth.

Meditating, he attained his "enlightenment", becoming a Buddha ("The Awakened One").

In his Four Noble Truths, he expresses that suffering is the result of our desires, and to eliminate suffering, we must eliminate our desires.

The Four Noble Truths: 1. All existence is dukkha, suffering, anguish, pain, and dissatisfaction. 2. The cause of dukkha is desire. 3. The cessation of dukkha comes with the cessation of desire. 4. There is one way to overcome dukkha: the Eightfold Path.

He realized that eliminating desire was impossible; asceticism does not eliminate suffering. He proposed a balanced middle path, introducing meditation into our lives, which leads to a full life, with full awareness and wisdom. Meditation leads to the Eightfold Path: 1. Right view, a balanced life; 2. Right intention; 3. Right speech; 4. The right morality to build a reasonable lifestyle for the whole community; 5. Right livelihood, with mindfulness and compassion; 6. Right effort, guided by reason rather than passions; 7. Right mindfulness, with a view of life that integrates everyone and the community; 8. An integrated life full of wisdom.

### **The Bible. Suffering for a higher purpose.**

Several parts of the Bible show the meaning of suffering for a higher purpose.

- **The Old Testament: suffering as part of a spiritual journey**

For Jews and Christians, in the Old Testament, suffering was very present, to be faithful to God, has a cost, demands a sacrifice. Suffering is the price we pay for a better reality.

Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17:7-8 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and puts his trust in him! He is like a tree planted by the waters' edge, spreading out its roots toward the stream; it does not fear when the heat comes and its foliage remains luxuriant; it does not fret in a year of drought and never ceases to bear fruit; they show God's support in difficult times."

Ecle. 2:1-11. "Son, if you are determined to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for trial. Make your heart straight, be steadfast, and do not fret in time of trouble. Unite yourself to the Lord and do not be separated, so that at the end of your days you may be exalted. Accept willingly all that happens to you, and be patient in the vicissitudes of your humiliation. For gold is purified in the fire, and those who please God, in the crucible of humiliation. Trust in him, and he will come to your help; make your ways straight and wait for him. Let those who fear the Lord wait for his mercy, and do not stray, lest they fall. Let those who fear the Lord have confidence in him, and they will not lack their reward. Let those who fear the Lord hope for his benefits, for lasting joy and mercy. Look at past generations and see: Who trusted in the Lord and was confounded? Who persevered in his fear and was forsaken? Who called upon him and was not heeded? For the Lord is merciful and compassionate, forgiving sins and saving in time of affliction."

Genesis shows us multiple testimonies of suffering: Eve (giving birth in pain), Adam (earning bread with sweat), Abraham (sacrificing his son), Jacob (exile), and Joseph (prison).

The Exodus shows the suffering of the Israelite people, led by Moses, involved a hard journey to the promised land. Job is presented as a model of the righteous who suffered without understanding why: his wisdom and trust overcame the suffering. The exile to Babylon brought with it great suffering that bore fruit as liberation from external bondage and the discovery of life and love within the soul. In Jeremiah, we see the suffering almost to death caused by the mission to transform the hearts of the people. And the list is long: Joshua (persecution), David (persecution), Hezekiah (invasion), Tobit (blindness), Elijah (crossing the desert), Elisha (exile), Micaiah (prison), Daniel (lion's den), Hananiah and his brothers (fiery furnace), Haman (persecution), Judas Maccabeus and his brothers (tortured and killed), Eleazar (martyred), Jonah (in the belly of a whale). To be faithful to God has a cost, it demands a sacrifice.

- **The New Testament: suffering for a higher purpose**

The New Testament presents a missionary sense of suffering, aimed at building the Kingdom of God.

In the Beatitudes, suffering for an ideal will be compensated: Matthew 5:6-11 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you [falsely] for my sake. Rejoice and be glad,

for your reward will be great in heaven. So, they persecuted the prophets before you."

There are several episodes in the New Testament that show the role of suffering for a higher purpose:

- The Holy Family (exile to Egypt)
- The Beatitudes: suffering precedes beatitude. The Beatitudes are preceded by suffering, but end in spiritual fulfillment.
- The rich young man, leaving everything to follow Jesus. In the passage of the Rich Young Man, Jesus says, "If you want to be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."
- Jesus instructs us in suffering: "Whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple".
- The Passion and Death of Jesus.
- The apostles had experiences full of affliction and paid for their faith with painful deaths.

Joseph Kentenick shows how the Virgin Mary gave her "yes" at the Annunciation, confessed and acknowledged that she was the servant of the Lord, served the Lord selflessly in his work, excluding any concern for herself: she accompanied him in his ministry, even to the cross, when a sword pierced her heart, faithful to the end. She placed herself in Christ's hands, allowed herself to be formed and educated, renouncing herself.

To help the sick and understand their feelings, we must be able to detach ourselves from ourselves, be free within, and cleanse and clarify our subconscious life. The higher our spiritual maturity, the

more spiritual our thinking must be, and the warmer our hearts must be so as not to give in to fatigue and to do things with greatness.

According to Keternich: “Even if we have to walk through dark nights, even if hard blows from a hammer seek to shape and mold our being more strongly, the new man and the new community must be able to face current difficulties head on. They must be formed according to the image of Christ hanging on the cross and the image of the Virgin at the foot of the cross with a seven-edged sword in her heart.”

### **Christianity. Suffering as part of our life.**

For the Neoplatonists, suffering was an integral part of the spiritual journey, leading to purification, illumination, and union. For Dionysius the Areopagite, suffering is an essential part of our spiritual journey, encompassing purification, illumination, and union, a spirituality of rest, contemplation, silence, and simplicity. For St. Augustine, the absence of God impels us to advance towards Him on our journey of transformation and leads us to struggle against our limitations, prepares us for union with God.

St. Anthony began a monastic life in the desert that, for centuries, thousands followed. He abandoned his life in Egypt after hearing the episode of the rich young man, went to the desert and lived alone for 20 years. This life of faith and constant prayer was marked by struggles with demons, as he sought to achieve perfect mastery over himself and the world. When his friends tore down the fort where he lived, they found him in perfect physical and emotional condition.

For St. Francis, the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit is to accept suffering for the love of God: "Above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives to His friends, there is that of overcoming oneself and gladly bearing, for love of Jesus Christ, pains, insults, reproaches, and discomforts. In the cross of tribulation and affliction we may glory, for this is ours; wherefore the Apostle says: I will not glory except in the cross of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

For St. Thomas Aquinas, the story of Job illustrates that we have a limited capacity to understand the origins of suffering, stemming from our inability to grasp reality and perceive God's power. Even if we do not understand why we suffer, suffering is an invitation to humility, allowing God to speak to us in our interiority and to strengthen us in our weakness.

For St. John of the Cross, suffering is part of our spiritual journey towards the love of God. In the *Spiritual Canticle*, for St. John of the Cross, the suffering of living in the absence of God propels us on a spiritual journey towards the love of God. From stanza 16 to the end, the *Canticle* presents an extraordinary dynamic, where many stanzas depict our falling in love with God, while other stanzas reveal our inner battle to become better and purify our inner selves.

In another poem, "The Dark Night," St. John describes our spiritual journey. The first two stanzas describe the purgative way, which involves the purification of the senses and our spirituality. The next two stanzas describe the illuminative way, and the last stanzas describe the unitive way, the union, and the love of God. The night describes our solitude, in an effort of purification, with doubts about the existence of an invisible God.

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<sup>1</sup> Little Flowers of St. Francis, Chapter 8.

Thomas Merton had a personal wilderness experience of psychological distress, anxiety, depression, withdrawal, loneliness, alienation, and despair, which led him to discover his true self. The desert is the place to connect with our inner life, with others, and to build authenticity.

### **Modernity. The meaning and transformation of suffering.**

For Martin Heidegger, people need to find meaning in their existence. We are historical and social beings, beings in the world, who share the experience of being; we exist with others, we are members of a human community, we have an impact on others, and we are affected by their plans and actions. We are involved and committed to other lives. We are on a journey to find ourselves, to find the truth: "The greatness of man is measured according to what he seeks and according to the urgency with which he remains a seeker".<sup>2</sup>

For Viktor Frankl, how we cope with suffering defines who we are. We can do so with dignity and generosity, finding meaning even in suffering, deprivation, and death. Or we can conceive of it as a bitter struggle. We can make sense of our life, our responsibility to our loved ones, and the value of our work. Love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire: a man who has nothing left in this world can know bliss in the contemplation of his beloved.

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *What is metaphysics?* Buenos Aires. Siglo Veinte. 1970. Inaugural lecture of July 24, 1929 in the Aula of the University of Freiburg of Brisgovia, [https://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/110060/urruvia\\_c2.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/110060/urruvia_c2.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y).

For Edward Schillebeeckx, a true consolation to suffering is the knowledge that God suffers with and for us when we suffer:

- Matthew 25:35-40: I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger [...], I was naked [...], I was sick [...], I was in prison.
- Acts 9:4-8: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.

We suffer with Christ when we share His mission, helping the suffering, the sick, and taking up His Cross; Jesus shared His suffering.

God can transform suffering into redemption, into new life, wisdom, transformation, and the presence of God. God created the world knowing that we would suffer, and that He would suffer with us, sending His Son to suffer and redeem us. If we have children, we will suffer for them, as God suffers for us. If we want to build, we will suffer, as He suffers.

For Peter Kreeft, suffering brings us closer to God. Suffering is part of the struggle against evil. The core of the Christian response to suffering is that it brings believers closer to the person of Jesus. Jesus did three things to solve and resolve the problem of suffering. He came and suffered with us and wept. 2. By becoming man, he transformed the meaning of our suffering. It is now part of his work of redemption. Our death pangs become birth pangs for heaven, not only for us, but also for those we love. 3. He died and rose again. Dying, he paid the price for sin and opened heaven to us; rising, he

transformed death from a hole into a door, from an end into a beginning.

Ronald Rolheiser offers examples of the value of suffering for a higher purpose, such as a firefighter entering a burning building to save a child's life, risking his own. Our spirituality takes us through multiple deaths: the death of one's youth, the fullness of dreams, the honeymoon, and concrete ideas. The mourning and blessings associated with these deaths are also part of the process. From these deaths, new rebirths arise.

For Harold Kushner, an American rabbi, it is more important to have a good response to suffering than to find out its cause; the point of suffering is not to understand its causes, but what we do about it, the way we respond. Suffering can enrich our spirituality, generate wisdom, transcendence, values, religiosity, community, discernment, transformation, healing, and social action.

Karol Wojtyla endured the Nazi and Soviet invasions of Poland. Through his spirituality and experiencing the mysticism of John of the Cross, he transformed his suffering, becoming an agent of social transformation, changing Poland and the whole world. Suffering can be a great source of healing, transformation, and social action.



## Chapter 8

### **Building the transforming dimension of our discernment; incorporating our power to create, recreate, and transform into our decisions**

**Introduction.** Great, excellent leadership requires transformational power.

This chapter introduces the eighth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the transformational dimension.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our daily lives, we build transcendence, values, religiosity, community, meaning in our lives, interiority, and engines of transformation: to create, recreate, perfect, reform, purify, and enlighten toward a better world.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework is transformational: visionary leadership that seeks a better world, organizational learning and continuous improvement, the constant pursuit of customer-oriented excellence, valuing people and focusing on social results, promoting constant transformation, ethical behavior, managing for innovation, systemic perspective, results orientation and value creation, transparency, and focus on success.

#### **Building transformational power, a pillar of our discernment**

The previous chapters lead us through a process of transformation, encouraging us to create, recreate, perfect, reform, purify,

and illuminate knowledge, virtues, conscience, transcendence, values, religiosity, relationships, and the meaning of our lives. As a result, we become more committed, more interested in the welfare of others, and more willing to change our behaviors, generating processes of transformation.

Religions promote transformations in our behaviors. They foster values such as compassion and generosity, to build community. They foster our concern for others, our sympathy, respect, and love. They also inspire our tolerance for suffering, as they enable us to manifest our values despite the suffering they may generate. Religions lead us to transcendence, traveling through life as a journey to goodness, beauty, truth, and love.

For Eastern religions, consciousness fights against ignorance, and meditation and detachment are ways to a happy life. Connection with oneself and others leads to harmony, integration, cooperation, and peace, which leads to purification, knowledge, and love.

For Judeo-Christians, the Bible invites us to participate in a process of transformation, summarized in Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:18-19, "to bring good news to the afflicted, to heal the brokenhearted, to set at liberty those who are in prison, and to comfort those who mourn."

Becoming aware of our power of transformation enriches our discernment.

It provides us with confidence, faith, hope, and energy, which enlighten, inspire, and strengthen our lives, promoting transcendence. They lead us to undertake journeys of transformation from and towards God's love, in which we participate in His community mission and promote our values, purpose, identity, and commitment, our

role in society. Relying on our power of transformation, we promote social commitment, which is manifested in the construction of teams or work groups willing to transform communities. We build ethics, virtues, and behaviors that are community-oriented and that foster cooperation, compassion, solidarity, and social action.

Making decisions based on discernment implies knowing our transformative potential, our capacity to change reality, our capacity to create, recreate, perfect, reform, purify and illuminate.

### **Results: our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment is transformational, seeking to improve reality, in line with the Baldrige Excellence Framework.

Our discernment is transformational; it builds **intellectual capital**; it builds **human capital**, personal and organizational knowledge, illuminating transformation; it builds **social capital**, working together to transform society; it builds **renewal capital**, innovation based on our transformational power; it builds **process capital**, continuous improvement based on our transformational power.

Our discernment is transformational, promotes a **leadership culture**, gives us the confidence, faith, hope and energy that illuminate, inspire and energize our lives; our transformational capacity inspires our vision of the future, drives our leadership, inspires, strengthens and energizes our mission, builds relationships with other transformational leaders and with those who need our transformational capacity, facilitates and illuminates our decision making, drives our actions.

**World peace** is the result of being aware of our power to transform, which comes from being connected with our inner selves. We unite with others on our path to transcendence, energized by our higher values and our desire to build a better world based on our religiosity. With a social commitment that is the fruit of our relationships and a transformative will that is the fruit of our sense of purpose in life, we become agents of transformation, promoting the good of society.

**Experiential learning. Steve Jobs. Overcoming the odds, transforming the world.**

As an experiential learning, the reader can watch these two videos by Steve Jobs at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on the struggle against adversity, which led him to transform the world.

In his first video, his 2005 Stanford University commencement speech entitled “Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish,” Jobs shared three stories from his life that encourage us to be transformational leaders, pursue our passions, and accept difficulties as a natural part of life. His struggle against adversity led him to transform the world.:

" After six months (of college), I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes

that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting..

I was lucky, I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees. We had just released our finest creation, the Macintosh, a year earlier, and I had just turned 30. And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down, that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me, I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: "If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right." It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself:

"If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?" And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything, all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure, these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."

The second video promotes transformational leadership throughout the organization, fostering a culture of innovation, shared passion, and clear vision, based on Apple's values: excellence, creativity, and simplicity. Job inspires his employees to think differently, accept challenges, and strive for perfection.

"To me marketing is about values, but the best example of all. And one of the best marketing jobs the universe has ever seen is Nike. When you think of Nike, you feel something different than a shoe company. But they honor great athletes and they honor great athletics. That's who they are.

And the question we asked ourselves was that our customers want to know who Apple is and what we stand for. Where do we fit in this world? Apple at its core, its core value is that we believe that people with passion can change the world for the better. That's what we believe. And we believe that, in this world, people can change it for the better.

And that those people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who actually do. The theme of the campaign is to think differently by honoring the people who think differently and move this world forward.

*Here's to the crazies! The misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They are not of the world and don't respect the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify them or vilify them. But the one thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things. They move humanity forward.*

*And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see geniuses. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do."*

## **Strategic management and transformation**

What is the driving force behind a transformation? Modern strategic management provides several tools to understand it.

As we saw in the previous book, several tools for analyzing the environment show the need for change. These models are: the economic value creation model applied to all strategies, SWOT, PESTLE, life cycle, BCG portfolio matrix, GE/McKinsey portfolio matrix, Miles and Snow typology. These models lead to a rethinking of strategies and resources.

John Kotter proposes an 8-Step Change Model, which explains that for change to be successful, you must start by becoming aware of the need for change, and that need arises from the models just mentioned, leading to: Creating a sense of urgency, 2. Forming a

guiding coalition, 3. Developing a vision and strategy, 4. Communicating the vision, 5. Empowering action, 6. Generating short-term wins, 7. Consolidating gains and producing further change, 8. Anchoring the new approaches in the culture. In essence, transformation is an organizational process that starts with the need for change, communicating it generates leadership, which drives the transformation.

Kurt Lewin proposes a model for understanding organizational change, based on a metaphor: to transform a block of ice, you must first thaw it, transform it and then refreeze it. The change process begins with understanding the need for change.

The previous book introduced the Stackelberg model, which concludes that innovation is risky, and that it requires resources to be successful. Baghai, Coley and White (1996) of McKinsey, confirm the conclusions of Stackelberg's model. In their paper "Staircases to Growth", they state that, in order to have a successful growth and innovation strategy, the company needs unique and inimitable resources; resources help the company not only to grow, but also to be unique and competitive.

According to McKinsey, there is a learning process involved as part of growth and innovation. Growth must be done progressively, and during that process, create new knowledge and relationships. This requires growth in three stages, or horizons:

- Horizon 3: Create viable options. Companies should start by developing options, creating new medium-term alternatives that provide the company with new options for future growth. Options are small steps, small investments in new ventures, pilot experiments

and field studies. If an option, an experiment, is successful, the company can move on to the next horizon.

- Horizon 2: Create emerging businesses. The business option that was successful in horizon 3 is moved to horizon 2. Businesses that are successful can move to the first horizon.
- Horizon 1: Expand and defend the core business. The business has now succeeded and has become a full-fledged new company. The growth strategy has proven its effectiveness and the company can now fully invest in it.

McKinsey's three horizons are a mechanism to develop learning, to create intellectual capital, managing the high risk that all growth, innovation and transformation entail.

### **Our spirituality, an engine of transformation**

Kees Waaijman states that our spirituality creates, recreates, reforms, enlightens, generates love, and generates union. Spirituality is an integral part of people's lives, operating as a silent force, an inspiration, and an orientation. A person has a relationship with a transcendent being, a higher being with God. That relationship drives a process of transformation: discovery, development, path, elevation.

For Kenneth I. Pargament spirituality fosters a process of transformation that involves three steps. First, discovery: as children or adults people discover something sacred that becomes a central organizing force for their lives. Second, conservation: people strive to

maintain a relationship with the sacred. And third, transformation: change is often necessary, on the way to a better reality.

For Wayne Teasdale, spirituality transforms entire lives. Through it, a person can find his or her true self, build a morality based on love and compassion, free himself or herself from the false self, and love others, and integrate into humanity and creation, developing wisdom and sensitivity.

For Alan Jones, meditation and contemplation lead us on a journey of transformation, enabling us to feel admiration and love for creation, to love others, to experience happiness and peace, to acknowledge our limitations with humility and honesty, to cultivate non-attachment, and to learn from the difficulties that arise.

Religions promote transformations in our ethics, fostering values such as compassion and generosity to build community. They foster our concern for others, our sympathy, respect, and love. They arouse our tolerance for suffering because they allow us to execute our values despite the suffering they may generate. Religions encourage transcendence, which allows us to journey through life as a journey to goodness, beauty, truth and love.

For Eastern religions, consciousness fights against ignorance; meditation and detachment are ways to a happy life. Connection with oneself and others leads to harmony, integration, cooperation and peace, which leads to purification, knowledge and love.

For Hinduism, spiritual transformation is a healing process based on contemplation. It is the result of experiencing deeper levels of consciousness that help people connect with reality, lead to discovering our true self and our true identity, to fight against the igno-

rance of not admitting that the absolute self is the source of all being and becoming.

For Buddhism, meditation and detachment transform us, they are ways to a happy life.

For Taoism connections lead to harmony, integration, cooperation and peace. Taoist meditation pays special attention to the universal elements air, water, earth and fire, leading to a peaceful meditation in connection with the universe that leads to harmony, integration, cooperation and peace.

For Islam the Five Pillars lead to purification, knowledge and love, seeking a personal experience with God, deeper knowledge, love in His presence, purifying hearts from worldly attachments, abandoning personal will and trusting completely in God.

The Bible takes us on a journey of transformation from and toward God's love, in which we participate in his communal mission, summarized in Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:18-19: "Give good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, set the captives free, set the prisoners at liberty, comfort all who mourn," in Jeremiah 31:31,33: "I will write my law on their hearts," and in Ezekiel 36:26: "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. "

In numerous places, the Bible leads to personal and social transformation. Genesis shows how God formed man and breathed into his face the breath of life, the Holy Spirit, Creator.

The Holy Spirit recreates, as the passage in Ezekiel states, where God gives life to dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14). "Thus saith the Lord God, Come, O Spirit, from the four winds, and breathe upon these dead, and cause them to live again. And the spirit entered into them,

and they lived; and they stood up, an exceeding great host, I will have put my spirit in you, and ye shall live."

The Holy Spirit creates, Genesis shows how God formed man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: Genesis 2:7. "Then the Lord God fashioned man out of clay from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus the man became a living being."

Multiple other passages in the Bible refer to the transforming Holy Spirit: He heals, cleanses, fills our hearts, sets us free, gives us power, energy and strength. The Holy Spirit was with Joseph, Moses, Samson, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, at the conception of Jesus, and with Jesus, and in Acts.

Anthony Thiselton explains how the Holy Spirit was present at creation, giving life and continuing to give it: Genesis 1:2: "The Spirit of God moved upon the waters". Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the clay of the ground, and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Ezekiel 37:5: "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Listen! I will cause breath to enter into you, that you may come to life.'"

Maurizio De Sanctis presents the symbol of water to express how the Spirit gives life. Isaiah 44:3-4: For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry land. And they shall spring up among the grasses, as the willows by the running waters. John 3:3-5: He who is not born again of water and the Holy Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God. John 4:13-14: Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The Sermon on the Mount is transformative. The Beatitudes express how love, compassion, humility, meekness, gentleness, cleanness of heart, peacemaking, striving for justice, lead to happiness.

For St. Anthony, the desert is a place to fight against demons, to gain a deeper awareness, freedom, and spiritual fatherhood. St. Anthony chose to live in the desert to bring about his spiritual transformation. They began to break down and tear off the door by force. Anthony, as if from a sanctuary, came out, initiated into the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God.

For John Cassian, unceasing prayer helps us to attain the presence of God, purity of heart, virtues, love, and a foretaste of heaven. According to Matthew 5:8, the pure of heart are promised a vision of God, based on the purifying activity of their formula of unceasing prayer.

For the Desert Fathers, continuous prayer is a tool to transform depression, limitations, brokenness, vulnerabilities, failures, disconnection from the inner self, disconnection from others, a lack of meaning in life, a lack of values, and a lack of virtues into peace and happiness.

Dionysius the Areopagite proposes a path consisting of three stages: purification, illumination, and union, which ultimately lead to rest, contemplation, silence, and simplicity.

For St. Augustine, it is through contemplation, knowledge, virtues, and interior rest that one enters into the divine light and can be entirely immersed in God.

For St. Gregory the Great, transformation comes through continual prayer and conversion. For St. Gregory, continual prayer and conversion are key to transformation. We need a continuous conver-

sion, a constant struggle, a movement from exteriority to interiority, from the false values of the world, to God, to joy and peace, a process in which we transform suffering into growth. Continuous conversion requires a desire to change our hearts in which the Spirit of God takes hold of us, fills us with charity.

For St. Bernard, a contemplative lifestyle leads to a process of transformation towards perfection based on love that restores the image of God in us.

For William of Saint Thierry, it is cognition and affection for God that drive our transformation, restoring our likeness to God, leading us towards the Trinity.

For St. Francis, the key to transformation is to seek and embrace poverty as a profound spiritual journey. Francis' transformation followed a dream in which he pledged his fidelity to Lady Poverty, a noble, rich, swift, and wise lady, after which, in the words of St. Francis, "I felt impelled by the Lord to go to the lepers and to care for them mercifully. When I left him, what seemed bitter to me was changed in me into sweetness of spirit and body."

For St. John of the Cross, it is through participation in the reality of God that the person is born anew in their being, in their affective life, in their conscience, and in their spiritual receptivity. The person rediscovers reality as flowing from the love of God and learns to see reality from the eyes of God. The senses and the spirit are purified, and spiritual illumination and union with God through love take place. This transformation is a transition from the senses to the Spirit in order to be receptive to God's revelation, to contemplate Him, and to strengthen our love towards union with God.

For Karol Wojtyla, transformation has to do with the adoption of a common-sense morality.

For Joseph Ratzinger, transformation occurs in the relationship with God in human history, which heals and transforms both the individual and society.

John Main explains how the mantra is like a compass needle always pointing in the right direction. We cannot meditate every day and continue with a policy of deceit, of self-interest, of revenge. As our moral integrity develops, our actions will begin to change.



## Chapter 9

### **Building the healing dimension of our discernment; incorporating our capacity to heal the spirit, mind, and body in our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership requires healing power.**

This chapter introduces the ninth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the healing dimension.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our daily lives, we develop each of the dimensions analyzed in the previous chapters, which leads to physical, emotional, and spiritual healing, as well as a better world.

The Baldrige Framework for Excellence is radically transformational and therefore promotes healing. This chapter builds upon the previous one, which promotes transformation and continuous improvement, while this chapter focuses on promoting healing.

#### **Building healing power, a pillar of our discernment**

Contemplation helps us heal because it enables us to connect internally with our consciousness, discover our true selves, and integrate the person. It also helps us unload our unconscious, reduces anxiety by promoting a present-centered approach, and provides us with peace, a refuge to navigate the complexities of our existence.

Furthermore, contemplation promotes wisdom, virtues, better behavior, a healthier lifestyle, and overall well-being.

Louis Bouyer<sup>1</sup> asserts that consciousness produces connectivity, which connects the person internally, with others, and with the world, thereby integrating spirituality with psychology and morality. The concept of “intentionality” in phenomenology states that our conscience connects the person with themselves, with others, and with the world, thereby promoting harmony, virtues, and happiness.

Walking toward transcendence heals us; discovering, enjoying, and building transcendence gives meaning to our lives, reduces existential anxiety and depression linked to the past and the future, and helps us actively accept reality.

Building higher values heals us; having a purpose, identity, love, relationships, and social commitment to build a better world gives meaning to our lives, providing energy, vitality, and the will to heal.

Living in the presence of God and building our relationship with Him heals us, connects us to a higher reality, a God who loves us, invites us to participate in God's community mission, collaborating in the creation of a better world, ultimately giving us inner peace, serenity, freedom, and harmony.

Integrating ourselves with others, living in community, sharing life, and maintaining contact heals us, gives us life, health, and happiness.

Giving meaning to our lives heals us, helping us to transform suffering, building transformative power, energy, vitality, and the will to heal.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1961).

Contemplation helps us discover our true selves, something central to most psychotherapies, especially cognitive therapy. It is key in Bowen Family System Therapy, which teaches us to be mature, happy, to differentiate ourselves, and to live life as a journey toward goodness, beauty, truth, and love. It is central to the Enneagram, a tool that helps us build relationships and overcome our shadow zones. It enables us to find meaning, a core principle of logotherapy. It helps us transform our behaviors, which is crucial in behavior modification therapies. It plays a central role in the Twelve Steps, the most widely used therapy for healing addictions.

Becoming aware of our healing power enriches our discernment, giving us confidence, faith, hope, and energy that illuminate, inspire, and strengthen our lives, ultimately promoting healing.

We rely on our healing power to build teams, working groups, and individuals willing to heal communities that reach out to communities in need of healing, promoting cooperation, compassion, solidarity, and social action.

There is scientific evidence of the positive emotional effects of spirituality (contemplation, transcendence, and values), which have been shown to lead to reduced anxiety, addiction, disease, improved self-control, lower stress levels, more regulated emotions, fewer cases of ADHD, lower rates of HIV, fewer illnesses, better behavior, increased well-being and health, and decreased depression.

There is scientific evidence of the positive emotional effects of religion on health: longer life, more social life, less depression, shorter hospital stays, better health behaviors, less drug abuse, well-being, life satisfaction, less hostility, less suicide, and greater tolerance for pain.

## **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment is healing, in line with the Baldrige Framework for Excellence: continuous improvement, organizational learning, management for innovation, seeking a positive impact on the community, customer-focused excellence, valuing people, focus on social outcomes, ethical behavior, and focus on success.

Our discernment is healing, building **intellectual capital**: promotes **human capital** by building knowledge and health, promotes **social capital**, social commitment between health professionals and people in need of healing, promotes **renewal capital** by innovating to improve health, promotes **process capital** by doing what is best for the health of society.

Our discernment is healing, building a **leadership culture** that inspires our vision of the future by promoting health. It illuminates, strengthens, and energizes our health-oriented mission and values, fosters relationships with other leaders, healers, and those who need our healing capacity, facilitates informed decision-making based on our healing power, and promotes social action toward health.

**World peace** is the result of our physical, emotional, and spiritual healing and our role in helping others in their healing.

## **Experiential learning. Mahatma Gandhi. Transforming a nation**

As an experiential learning, the reader can watch a video of Mahatma Gandhian at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and reflect on how his spirituality enabled him to build leadership and transform a culture, ultimately changing a nation: how that transformation led society to build intellectual capital (human, social, re-

newal, and process capital), which led the nation to promote well-being, peace, and social harmony.

"Back in India, Gandhi founded an ashram, a self-sufficient community, and sat at a wooden spinning wheel every day, making thread for dhoti as he turned cotton into yarn. He taught Indians that, instead of sending their cotton to England to be made into cloth, they could make it themselves. Soon, people all over India were learning to spin and weave.

He organized peaceful protests, voluntarily went to jail and even organized hunger strikes against laws he considered unjust. One such law prohibited Indians from making their own salt. Gandhi decided to walk 240 miles to the coast to protest the law, along with 78 followers. Soon they numbered 1,000. Upon reaching the sea, Gandhi bent down and picked up a few grains of salt.

He had broken the law all over the country. The Indians did the same. They boiled salt water to extract salt. They also boycotted British goods. 50,000 people were sent to prison. But the demonstrators did not commit violent acts. Gandhi became world famous and the British began to lose control of India."

### **The cognitive dimension of our discernment is healing**

Contemplation helps us to live in the present, it brings clarity to our ideas and enriches our knowledge. It helps us to discover our true self, something central in most psychotherapies, especially in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, because it clarifies our ideas, it helps us to discover our true self.

It plays a central role in the construction of wisdom, prudence, moderation, virtues.

For Balfour M. Mount<sup>2</sup>, meditation is a journey to personal and social healing. He and Pat Boston "conducted a qualitative research study with people experiencing life-threatening illnesses to see if there are common themes whose insights differentiate those who heal from those who do not."

They found five common themes in both situations:

1. A sense of isolation and disconnection versus a sense of connection.
2. A crisis of meaning, an existential void that does not allow us to find comfort or peace in anything, as opposed to experiencing meaning in the context of illness and suffering.
3. Anxious preoccupation with the future or continual rumination on the past versus the ability to enter into the present moment and find peace in it.
4. A feeling of victimization versus the experience of sympathetic connection with their suffering.
5. The need to be in control versus openness to potential, with the ability to choose a response to their extreme situation.

For Daniel De Pablo Maroto<sup>3</sup>, living in the presence of God, building a meaningful relationship with a higher reality, working for

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<sup>2</sup> Balfour M. Mount, *Journey to personal and social transformation*. John Main, the expanded vision. Norwich, Ohio: Canterbury Press, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel De Pablo Maroto, *Los místicos cristianos, creadores de la paz*. Salmanticensis 51 (2004) 5-41. Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca.

a better world, are extraordinary sources of health and happiness. Maroto describes how religiosity produces inner peace: "Mystical experiences of God generate peace, tranquility, tranquility, rest, calm, serenity, they have a therapeutic function, a sedative for the agitated world of human instincts and passions."

### **The transcendental dimension of our discernment is healing**

Enjoying beauty, goodness and truth, and walking towards transcendence, are healing, they give meaning to our lives.

As Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy<sup>4</sup> shows, giving meaning to our life is therapeutic. Our ability to direct our lives towards goodness, beauty, truth gives us the will to live, the will to heal, helping us to reduce our existential anguish and depression. It gives us a refuge to survive the complexities of our existence.

### **The axiological dimension of our discernment is healing**

Our higher values, our motivation, our capacity to love, our commitment to society, are healing, promoting healthy behaviors and a healthy lifestyle, integrated into reality, to the community, promoting general wellbeing.

For Murchadh O Madagain<sup>5</sup>, meditation heals emotional wounds because it allows us to discover in silence who we are and

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<sup>4</sup> Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning. An Introduction to Logotherapy*. Washington Square Press Publication (New York: Pocket Books, 1959), p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> Murchadh O Madagain, *Centering prayer and the healing of the unconscious*. Lantern books. New York. 2007.

our true value. O Madagain explains how we develop a false self: "Daddy loves you if you eat your vegetables," and therefore, to be loved, we need to perform certain actions. We are not loved for who we are, but for what we do. "Hi, my name is Juan, I am an accountant." We believe that what we do is what makes us lovable. What others think of us is vital to our happiness. Meditation produces deep peace in our soul; we will not do anything against our true self. During the day, we will stand firm to defend our values, not to break that peace.

### **The religious dimension of our discernment is healing**

Our religiosity is healing; living in the presence of God, building a meaningful relationship with a higher reality, and working for a better world are extraordinary sources of health and happiness.

Thomas Keating<sup>6</sup> points out that meditation and contemplation lead to emotional healing, to the unloading of the unconscious. Through the events of childhood and life, the unconscious is formed, and the false self develops. Through silent meditation, these events begin to leave the unconscious as if emptying a garbage can. It is psychological purification that allows us to get rid of fear, anxiety, anger, and emotional agitation. A restructuring of the unconscious takes place; we discover in silence who we are, our worth. We experience the struggle as part of our inner reality. We see the characters of the Scriptures as if we were in each of those passages, as if they were our experiences, our lives; we use the symbols as part of our reality.

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<sup>6</sup> Patricia Lefevere, "Berrigan and Keating: Alike yet Different; the Two Believe Prayer Is the Key." *National Catholic Reporter*, December 16, 2005.

John R. Finney and H. Newton Malony<sup>7</sup> assert that contemplative prayer has a positive impact on our psychology. When contemplative prayer is used as an adjunct to psychotherapy, therapeutic benefits such as the reduction of anxiety are likely to occur. Contemplative prayer leads to the presence of the divine, which provides a religious sense of reality.

Religiosity plays a central role in the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the most widely used therapy to cure addictions.

Step 1. We admit our helplessness in the face of addiction.

Step 2. A higher power can restore us to sanity.

Step 3. We place our lives in God's care.

Step 5. We admit our defects before God.

Step 6. We let God set us free.

Step 7. Through prayer and meditation, improve our conscious contact with God.

### **The relational dimension of our discernment is healing**

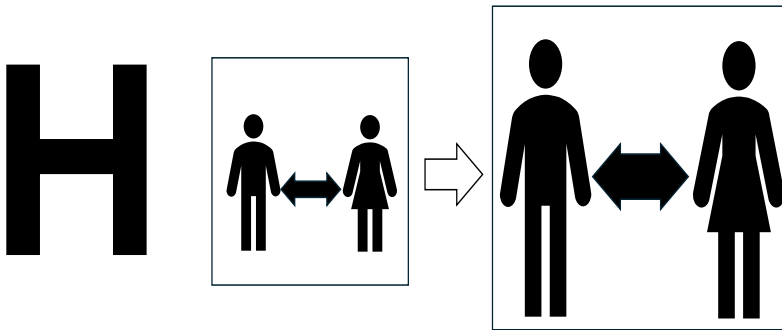
Living in community, sharing life, and being in contact gives us life, health, and happiness.

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<sup>7</sup> John R. Finney, and H. Newton Malony. "Contemplative Prayer and Its Use in Psychotherapy: A Theoretical Model". *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 1985, Vol. 13, No. 3, 172-181. Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, 0091-6471/4107-3000.

Bowen Family System<sup>8</sup> therapy teaches us that healthy interpersonal relationships occur when members are differentiated, mature, and happy.

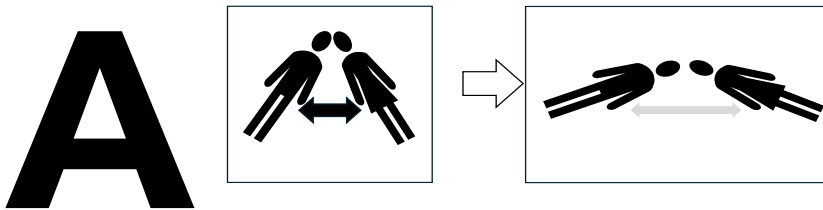
Differentiated individuals can separate their feelings and thoughts, allowing them to hold different opinions and values from others, while remaining emotionally connected to them. Differentiated people tend to have lower anxiety and develop stronger emotional and interpersonal connections because the emotional bond between people is balanced.



In a healthy and differentiated couple, each person stands on their own two feet, like a capital "H"; each person is mature and has a whole, happy life. The horizontal stick, the relationship, the channel of interaction, communication, exchange, becomes a channel that leads to positive things, happiness, knowledge, wisdom, transcendence, values, religiosity, friendship, discernment, sense of life, capacity for transformation and social action, which enriches more each one and the relationship.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael P Nichols, and Richard C. Schwartz, *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*. <http://www.psychpage.com/learning/library/counseling/bowen.html>



An undifferentiated relationship is like capital "A", each person needs the other not to fall, and that produces a mutual dependence that generates anxiety in what the other does, which leads to constant recriminations and fights. The horizontal line of the "A" becomes a channel for a negative exchange of insults, ultimately leading to mutual damage, collapse, and the demise of the relationship, leaving both people feeling unwell.

The Enneagram helps us heal our relationships by changing the messages that were produced during our childhood, creating dark zones; it also helps us build relationships to overcome our shadow zones. Each personality type proposes a healing message.

### **The decisional dimension of our discernment is healing**

Making decisions with discernment is healing; it helps us deal with the effects of our decisions on our emotions. It gives us consolation, an integrative feeling, it fills our soul, we feel more alive and connected with others, full of love, joy, peace.

It helps us deal with desolation, disintegration, filled with doubts, worries, concerns, restlessness, anxiety, isolation from others, dense darkness, confusion, disgust, and a lack of faith, hope, and love.

### **The existential dimension of our discernment is healing**

The meaning of our lives, our capacity to transform suffering, helps us to reduce existential anxiety. Our spirituality gives us a refuge to reduce suffering. Giving meaning to suffering, or transforming it, is healing.

Zorka Hereford<sup>9</sup> recommends "being connected to God, Nature, others and the deepest part of ourselves." "Take time for yourself, rejuvenate your spirit and nourish yourself by listening to soothing music, read inspirational literature; help those who need your help; practice gratitude; practice mindfulness, become aware of your environment, yourself, enjoy the colors and smells of nature around you, enjoy the feeling of the rain falling on your face and the wind blowing on your body; express yourself, in artistic or expressive activities, dance, sing, play a musical instrument or take art classes."

For Maya Spencer<sup>10</sup>, spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes: love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom, and truth, with the knowledge that some people, such as saints or enlightened people, have reached and manifested higher levels of development than the average person.

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<sup>9</sup> Zorka Hereford, *What is Spirituality?* <https://www.essentiallife-skills.net/what-is-spirituality.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Maya Spencer, *What is spirituality? A personal exploration*. [https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/sigs/spirituality-spsig/what-is-spirituality-maya-spencer-x.pdf?sfvrsn=f28df052\\_2\\_](https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/sigs/spirituality-spsig/what-is-spirituality-maya-spencer-x.pdf?sfvrsn=f28df052_2_)

**Scientific evidence confirms the healing power of spirituality**

There is scientific evidence of the positive effects of spirituality on health, including reduced anxiety, addiction, illness, improved personal control, lower stress levels, regulated emotions, better behavior, increased well-being and health, and decreased depression. Increased awareness of stress factors. Lower blood pressure, headaches, respiratory problems, sleep disorders, gastrointestinal problems, and depression. Better ability to regulate emotions and allow healthy responses. Reduction of attention deficit and hyperactivity.

**Scientific evidence confirms the healing power of religiosity**

There is scientific evidence of the positive effects of religion on health: longer life span, more social life, less depression, shorter hospital stays, better health behaviors, less drug abuse, well-being, satisfaction with life, less hostility, less suicide, and greater tolerance to pain.

Reduction of diseases and depression. Longer life expectancy, better health indicators, better postoperative outcomes, better healing, and better sense of well-being. Healthier lifestyle, fewer addictions, fewer risky behaviors.

**World peace**

Antony Adolf believes that meeting personal needs drives global peace: bodily peace is supported by better education, healthcare, sanitation, and nutrition; socioeconomic peace is based on reducing wealth disparities, discrimination, and unemployment; and “sanctu-

ary” peace is based on minimal harm to nature, the state, whether structural or interpersonal.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Antony Adolf, *Peace. A World History*. (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2009.)

## Chapter 10

# **Building the social dimension of our discernment; incorporating our capacity to promote and execute social actions in our decisions**

**Introduction. Great, excellent leadership requires the ability to execute social actions.**

This chapter introduces the tenth dimension of discernment in decision-making: the promotion and execution of social actions, the social dimension.

When we introduce the habit of contemplation into our daily lives, we develop each of the dimensions we analyzed in the previous chapters, leading us to seek the common good of the whole society.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework incorporates the social role of the organization, customer orientation, valuing people, focus on social results, and ethical behavior.

### **Building capacity to execute social actions, a pillar of our discernment**

Each chapter leads us to social action, impacting our discernment. There are multiple social responsibility initiatives, and multiple ethical approaches that underpin social responsibility. However, what can drive a person to commit to social action?

Consciousness, transcendence, the ability to connect, values, and relationships lead us to social action because they enable us to be connected to our inner selves and to others, thereby creating empathy, compassion, and an awareness of others' needs.

Becoming aware of our power to perform social actions enriches our discernment. It provides us with confidence, faith, hope and energy, which enlightens, inspires and strengthens our lives, promoting social action.

We rely on our power to execute social actions to build teams, work groups and people willing to promote cooperation, compassion, solidarity and social action.

### **Our discernment has a positive impact on society**

Our discernment promotes social action, maximizing the **intellectual capital** of nations and organizations: it builds **human capital**, knowledge necessary to execute social actions, promotes **social capital**, social commitment, promotes **renewal capital**, new initiatives of social promotion, promotes **process capital**, the best execution of social actions.

Our discernment promotes social action, the engine of a **leadership culture**. The power to take social action and promote the common good inspires our vision of the future, illuminates and strengthens our mission and values, fosters relationships with other social leaders and with those who need our capacity for social action, and facilitates our decision-making by promoting the common good.

The social action dimension promotes the common good, integrating and harmonizing society, building a leadership culture superior to individualistic and collectivist cultures.

**World peace** is the result of our social action, which connects us internally and with others, alerting us to the need for compassion. Social action values and serves the community, leading us to engage in the complexities of modern life. It promotes a missionary lifestyle, going out to meet people.

### **Experiential learning. Two examples of social action.**

As experiential learning, readers can watch two videos at <https://www.juanpablostegmann.net/> and ask themselves: Do I care about others? Do I have any motivation to help those who are disadvantaged? Why should I get involved?

Two good friends, Narciso and Malena Muñoz, along with their friends, families, and volunteers, periodically walk the streets to help the homeless. They provide assistance and support to homeless individuals and families, helping them regain their dignity and place in society, and find a home for every homeless person. In three years, they have assisted nearly 5,000 people off the streets.

A very dear friend, Héctor María Armelin, and a group of volunteers in a poor neighborhood in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, established an Integral Development Center to provide assistance and promote human development for people and families in situations of extreme need.

The Center provides free food, education, job training, housing improvement support, medical, psychological, and employment assistance, community development, and accompaniment to over 500 children and their families in vulnerable situations.

**Building discernment: ethics and social action**

What is the driving force that led Narciso, Malena and Hector, like many people, to social action?

These intuitions introduce us to the world of ethics, which, as referred to in the Encyclopedia Britannica, refers to the philosophical study of the concepts of morality and immorality, to philosophical theories of what is morally right and wrong or morally good and bad, and to any system or code of moral rules, principles or values. The latter may be associated with religions, cultures, professions or virtually any other group characterized, at least in part, by its moral outlook.

**Empiricist ethics: utilitarianism, ethics based on consequences (teleology)**

Empiricist ethics, specifically utilitarianism, is probably the ethical approach that people use most frequently, almost intuitively; even animals use it, as it is rooted in the senses and experience. Utilitarianism considers an action to be right or wrong according to the goodness or pleasure it produces, as opposed to the badness or pain it produces, i.e., its consequences.

Several thinkers contributed to utilitarianism: Francis Bacon (the principle of a utilitarian morality: generation, fruit and comfort), Thomas Hobbes (pleasure, delight, is the sense of good; morality is based on reason: man's life is solitary, poor, unpleasant, brutish, the need for peace leads to a social contract), David Hume (morality based on moral feelings of love or hate, approval or disapproval, praise or blame, esteem or contempt, pleasure and pain; personal

self-interest can produce the best possible outcome for the community), Jeremy Bentham (utility is the criterion for making moral decisions, based on pleasure and pain), John Stuart Mill (morality is based on feelings, maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, generated by personal conscience, social feelings, feelings for other subjects, as part of our psychology, feelings of justice).

Utilitarianism generates consequentialism, which leads humanity to be serious and responsible; it promotes practicality and utility, allowing us to analyze decisions in economic terms. However, self-interest can harm the community and promote social Darwinism. Utility can disregard health, happiness, life, freedom, and equality. The absence of community values weakens the social fabric and leads to poverty, marginality, crime, corruption, and populism. Global financial speculation produces millions of homeless, unemployed people.

### **Subjective idealistic ethics: Ethics based on norms (deontology)**

Subjective idealist ethics believes that basic moral principles are known a priori, are self-evident, are based on reason, and are independent of experience, regardless of their consequences, the benefits they produce, or their utility or pleasure. Ethics is a battle for moral perfection, intellectual, normative, and voluntarist.

Several thinkers contributed to rule-based ethics: René Descartes (ethics based on personal reason represents it as good or bad, necessary for the acquisition of all virtues), Baruch Spinoza (intellectual pleasure/pain: a passive state in which the mind passes to greater/lesser perfection), Immanuel Kant (morality based on reason, moral principles a priori, universal, Categorical Imperative as

fundamental moral law, the only valid virtue is the good will to fulfill the moral law, rights ethics), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (morality starts from subjectivity and connects with the universal will, collective ethics, rights).

Idealist ethics overcomes the skepticism of empiricist approaches, especially the threat of hedonism. Idealistic ethics is rational, valid for any society, non-relativistic, focusing on the morality of duties. It has essential benefits for humanity that are part of modern culture, which have become the heritage of mankind: human rights, the dignity of the person, justice are prerequisites for peace, freedom, equality, non-discrimination, cooperation, the rule of law, prosperity for all, security, and religious pluralism, striving to build a perfect ideal world.

However, idealistic subjective ethics denies reality, ignores selfish or destructive human behaviors, despises the happiness of the person, allows opportunism, promotes collectivization, a woke culture, totalitarianism, oppression, the elimination of personal freedoms, confrontations, violence, wars.

Norms can generate a minimalist, voluntarist and legalistic ethic, divorced from human happiness and reality. This lack of realism can generate norms that can be bypassed if agents have no values.

Kant's categorical imperative, "I must never act except in such a way that I may also want my maxim to become a universal law," is only one criterion; many other criteria can be applied, such as common sense, values, consequences of actions, maximization of utility, maximization of happiness, the four causes of actions according to Aristotle.

**Realistic ethics: virtues and values lead to social action**

For Aristotle, the supreme good is human happiness, the primary goal of all; all other goods are means to happiness. External goods do not produce happiness: happiness is produced by the daily activity of each individual, by the vegetative life that each shares with plants, or the sensitive life that each shares with animals, but above all, by a life based on virtues. Happiness is the result of living with virtues, with prudence, justice, moderation, and fortitude.

The German philosopher Joseph Pieper considers that virtues transform the person, making the human being a good person; it is not only a Kantian duty centered on "acting well," but also that of becoming good, seeking happiness through the contemplation of goodness. For example, temperance helps to value, appreciate, and enjoy goodness and beauty.

Alisdair MacIntyre argues that the exercise of heroic virtues requires both a particular type of human being and a social structure. Society inculcates virtues in individuals through cultural transmission and by presenting heroic examples.

Social ethics defends a set of principles: 1. Human dignity, the value of the person, the inviolability of human life, and human rights; 2. The dignity and promotion of the family, community, and participation; 3. The dignity of work and respect for workers; 4. Solidarity, social justice, the pursuit of the common good, the role of government in ensuring the common good; 5. Subsidiarity, intermediate organizations; 6. Care for the environment.

Business ethics focuses on how a company should act in the face of ethical dilemmas, based on different ethical approaches. Profits

are a means to satisfy human needs, not ends in themselves; wealth and private property have a social function, and the pursuit of profit must be carried out within a framework of seeking the common good. Economic and market freedom must be exercised at a fair price and with a fair wage. Public authorities can intervene to ensure the common good.

### **Building discernment: social responsibility**

Social responsibility holds that individuals, companies, and organizations should act in ways that benefit society as a whole, beyond the pursuit of personal profit or gain. It involves taking actions that contribute to the well-being of the community, the environment, and the welfare of future generations.

For individuals, it can mean making ethical choices, volunteering, or supporting causes that promote social good. For companies, social responsibility encompasses practices such as reducing environmental impact, treating employees fairly, supporting local communities, and maintaining transparency in operations.

In general, social responsibility seeks to strike a balance between profit-making and the positive impact that organizations and individuals can have on the world around them.

### **Empiricist social responsibility: the shareholder's view**

Empiricist corporate social responsibility advocates the shareholder view, which promotes the creation of economic value for society.

The maximization of economic value is a natural phenomenon that applies to any living entity: a person, an animal, or a plant. All use resources to produce a good. With similar resources, some produce more than others and, consequently, will be selected by their stakeholders. If a politician, a professional, a religious leader, or a friend consumes similar resources and does better than others, society will select him as its favorite politician, professional, leader, or friend.

The opportunity cost automatically arises when we use our resources, time, talent, money, knowledge, and relationships in a way that produces the best result. This phenomenon is known as value creation, which involves managing resources more effectively than alternative managers.

The Shareholder Value Theory, also called Fiduciary Capitalism, has been advocated by the 1976 Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences, Milton Friedman; in his book "Capitalism and Freedom" he argues that companies are responsible only for creating shareholder value and, in doing so, create value for the entire community.

Strengths. It generates clear social benefits such as greater human development, longer and healthier life, better quality of life, and knowledge.

Weaknesses. Allows abuse of market power, human and natural resources, financial speculation, and social inequality.

### **Subjective idealist social responsibility: normative social responsibility**

According to the Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility, "Normative corporate responsibility holds that corporate actors

have a general responsibility to (a) provide the means for human subsistence and (b) foster the quality of human life. This more general requirement also implies that companies need to legitimize their actions to a broader set of stakeholders, including shareholders and others such as customers, suppliers, as well as the general public."

One way to ensure this approach is through external controls, government regulations, laws, and public policies.

**Strengths.** Normative C.S.R., Corporate Governance, focuses on mechanisms to control, provide transparency, produce economic alignment between principals and agents, uphold shareholder rights, declare financial responsibility of managers, empower auditors, promote social auditing and accountability. It can lead companies to act ethically, generate a strong signal throughout the organization that certain actions will not be approved, establish clear limits, promote control, transparency, and ethically clear limits, and encourage community-oriented behaviors.

**Weaknesses.** Their effects may be limited, controls may be too liberal or restrictive, rules may be disconnected from reality, may not incentivize wealth creation, may harm the company or other stakeholders, may trigger opportunistic behavior that blocks or distorts the results of initiatives, enforcement may be circumvented, may not solve some central problems: the pervasive need to maximize economic value leading to abuses of market power, of natural and human resources, as well as financial speculation, which a standard cannot easily control.

**Realist social responsibility: a leadership culture promotes the well-being of the community**

A leadership culture leads all stakeholders (not only companies) to develop maximum capital for society, as investors, customers, citizens, and government agents. Maximizing social responsibility is everyone's responsibility. The different proposals for social responsibility are enhanced if each member of the community has social leadership. Moreover, it is very difficult, and in many cases impossible, for a person or organization to exercise social leadership if others do not.

A realist corporate social responsibility focuses on how organizations actively engage and interact with communities to improve the quality of life and the environment, initiatives to improve the environment, reduce waste, reduce their impact on global warming and other similar initiatives; worker welfare in hospital clinics, canteens, profit sharing, recreational facilities, housing; consumer-based social responsibility, better product information, support; Edward Freeman presents Stakeholder Theory, a systemic approach in which organizations make decisions taking into account the impact on stakeholders; fiduciary management considers that managers must assume ethical obligations, as they act based on public trust, must be efficient, socially responsible and ethical; corporate citizenship, the company administers the social, political and civil rights of the citizenry; Schwartz and Carroll present a three-domain approach: Economic (responsibility for the global economy), Legal (responsibility for shareholders) and Ethical (responsibility for stakeholders), a holistic approach to corporate social responsibility; Corporate Social Performance, promoting processes oriented to corporate social re-

sponsibility, and measuring results of corporate behaviors; Ioannis Ioannou and George Serafeim measure three dimensions of corporate social performance: Environmental Performance, Social Performance; socially responsible investment tends to minimize the conflict between maximizing economic value and specific values; corporate philanthropy in financial support, time and resources.

A realist social responsibility promotes initiatives such as social innovation, social entrepreneurship, business with social impact, microfinance, sustainability, social policy, education and healthcare for underserved populations, stakeholder social responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate social performance in three domains, corporate social responsiveness, social venture capital, socially responsible investing, social work, community development, promoting worker welfare, non-profit organizations.

The company benefits from strengthening its links with all stakeholders through legal institutions, political institutions, labor market institutions, and capital market institutions.

### **The Bible promotes social action**

The Bible contains multiple passages that reflect the centrality of loving one's neighbor from the First Commandment of love for God and neighbor to defining the mission of the Messiah in both the Old and New Testament, oriented to the neighbor.

Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor."

Micah 6:8: "I will teach thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee: To do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk circumspectly with thy God."

Matthew 22:36-40 "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The passage of the rich young man marks a new morality, based not only on the fulfillment of moral norms, but also on seeking perfection, on giving everything to help those in need. The highest way of life is to follow Christ, holding to His person and embracing His way of love.

The parable of the Good Samaritan emphasizes the importance of social action.

Jesus asked, "Which of these three, in your opinion, was a neighbor to the victim of the robbery? He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy. Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise".

A contemplative attitude enabled the Good Samaritan to perceive the situation of the dying man, who had been attacked by robbers, to be sensitive to his plight, and to have the will to help him.

Jesus gives a clear guideline of the criteria that define who goes to heaven and who does not, based on social action.

"Come, you blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink."

Jesus even says that He was the one who was hungry and thirsty, meaning that we showed mercy to Him. Medieval Christianity promoted social action as a requirement of spirituality.

**Christianity promotes social action**

For Maximus the Confessor, contemplation without action is akin to fantasy without real substance, while action uninformed by contemplation is sterile and rigid.

According to John Cassian, the active life is a preparation for the contemplative life. Silent prayer makes us aware of the need for compassionate action by opening the eyes of the heart and developing sensitivity to the needs of others.

St. Basil the Great promoted the need for social justice, first by serving through possessions and then through word and Spirit, fulfilling mercy, sharing what they had, as imitators of God's goodness and God's mercy, showing mercy, giving and sharing.

Gregory Nazianzen: "To be rich without helping the poor is not a viable Christian option". We must share what we have in order to sanctify the possession of goods. He considered that a sublime contemplation and a more sublime action are necessary. Action is a path of contemplation.

For St. Augustine, action and contemplation should not be separated. No one should be so idle as not to think, in that idleness, of the interests of their neighbor, nor so active as not to feel the need for contemplation of God.

For St. Benedict, the center is love of Christ, from which flows charity to the neighbor, the poor, the sick, and the guest. Love tops Benedict's list of tools for good works. The Benedictine life is, above all, a response to God's amazing love for humanity. A love expressed in the gift of God's beloved Son, Jesus.

For St. Bernard, faith and contemplation, without works, are dead. It is challenging to live contemplation and action simultaneously. It is an effort to try to live both lives simultaneously.

For Gregory the Great, the contemplative life required total concentration on loving God and one's neighbor. Jesus worked miracles and prayed on the mountain.

The Rule of St. Francis encourages all members of the Order to be servants and to have the Spirit of the Lord. Poverty makes the followers of St. Francis available to others. Those who value poverty embrace the poor, realizing in their own lives the joy of having nothing but God.

For St. Ignatius of Loyola, the context of contemplation was not the monastery, but the companions of Christ sent to serve their fellow men. Discernment promotes social action. The Spiritual Exercises promote the primacy of the love that the Spirit writes in the heart of each person. The Exercises help us to know Jesus in depth. They lead us to choose to share His mission to build a civilization based on love.

For Teresa of Avila, during silent prayer, the will is united to God, leaving the other faculties free to serve God.

For Luther and Calvin, the life of God breaks into this reality, opening a new life for us, a new dawn, a new glory. The presence of the Lord provides a quiet space that illuminates our lives, giving us the energy to engage with the world and promote social action.

For Thomas Keating, spirituality is a prerequisite for social action; we cannot address social reality without first achieving a contemplative state of mind.

For Thomas Merton, spirituality enables us to value human community. It helps us to develop love, spiritual life, and experiencing the presence of God leads us to connect with others and serve the community. Contemplation does not mean isolation, withdrawal, introversion, emptiness, or unconsciousness. This represents a failure of the spiritual life. Our inner self helps us to perceive the world from a richer perspective in which we value the human community that completes us. It helps us to develop love as brothers and sisters of Christ. What is important in contemplation is not gratification and rest, but awareness, life, creativity, and freedom.

### **Modern spirituality promotes social action**

For Kees Waaijman<sup>1</sup>, spirituality has changed. Mystical theology focused on purification, enlightenment, and union. The two world wars brought down this perfectionism, which was replaced by personal spiritual experience, existentialism, spirituality from below, involved in the complexities of modern life, suffering, work, justice, liberation, change, sexuality, anger, and violence.

Social spirituality, also known as lay spirituality, leads us to connect with the soul of the person. Social spirituality is found and cultivated in the social fields of education, health, work, bringing our availability, trying to create a personal relationship with empathy, mutual vulnerability and personal dedication. The attempt to find meaning in suffering by reinforcing the dignity of the patient.

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<sup>1</sup> Frans Maas, and Kees Waaijman, "Social spirituality and the quest for soul," *Studies in spirituality*. Netherlands: Peeters, 2016.

Spirituality is increasingly important as a counterbalance to rationalism, technocracy, market orientation, and consumerism. In a world that has become more competitive and unpredictable, spirituality manifests itself in organizations that define human values, in employees who are oriented towards a more profound spirituality.

For Don Edwards<sup>2</sup>, in modernity, there is an effort to reunify contemplation and action.

For Dorothy Day<sup>3</sup>, spirituality and social action are not separate issues. Her spirituality included prayer, work, social, and political activity. Her contemplative lifestyle provided her with a spirituality directed toward social action. Recognizing the person of Christ in each person, as seen in Matthew 25, was a guiding principle for her.

For Thich Nhat Hanh<sup>4</sup>, a Zen Buddhist monk, meditation has led him to a spirituality committed to people who share his being and nurtures his compassion and sense of justice. Meditation provokes a personal involvement in alleviating the suffering of others.

Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize and many other awards for her humanitarian work. The Missionaries of Charity work worldwide in the poorest neighborhoods, helping the destitute, the sick, and the hungry. "If you don't live for others, life has no meaning. I am God's pencil. A piece of pencil with which He writes what He wants. He who does not live to serve, does not serve to live. The rev-

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<sup>2</sup> Don Edwards, "Practical Mysticism. Seeking to Unite Contemplation and Action," *Pacifica* 15 (June 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Susan Rakoczy, "What does mysticism have to do with social justice?" *Scriptura* 112 (2013:1), pp. 1-16 <http://scriptura.journals.ac.za>

<sup>4</sup> Janet W. Parachin, *Educating for an Engaged Spirituality: Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh as Spiritual Exemplars*. Phillips Theological Seminary. Religious Education. Vol. 95 No. 3 (Summer 2000).

olution of love begins with a smile. Sometimes we feel that what we do is just a drop in the sea, but the sea would be less if it lacked a drop."

Pedro Arrupe,<sup>5</sup> superior general of the Jesuits, survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. He led the Jesuits after the Second Vatican Council, focusing on addressing the needs of the poor and promoting justice. He considered the kind of person the Church and the world need today: one who is a person for others. The Jesuits' orientation toward the needs of the poor and their work for the promotion of justice reflects a conception of faith that manifests itself on the streets.

The discernment exercised by Jorge Bergoglio is a driving force for social action: "Faithful to Christ, faithful to the Church, going out to meet people on the margins, in mud, in boots."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pedro Arrupe S.J., "Presentation to Jesuit delegates to the Order's thirty second General Congregation, 1974". As quoted at: *Inside the Jesuits. How Pope Francis is changing the Church and the world.* Robert Klair Kaiser (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2014), p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> George Cardinal Pell. "Interview La Stampa," As quoted by Robert Klair Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits.* New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis. "Homily May 22, 2013."