

# THE REGENERATIVE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Carol Sanford Institute



## LEVELS OF ENERGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DECISION MAKING, BEHAVIOR, AND LEADERSHIP

Through experiencing ourselves we can see that we operate with different energies at different times. We can also experience, as members of organized wholes, that organizations exhibit different levels and types of energy at different times. These different levels and natures of energies reflect themselves in both different natures of behaviors and also in different decision-making processes. The energies take a hierarchical form such that as organizations or people move downward in the hierarchy, the qualities we aspire to increasingly drop out. As we move upward in the hierarchy we increasingly are aroused to live by the right values and to do things that are of benefit to the whole.

In this write up we seek to identify the energies that make up this hierarchy and the nature of process related to decision making that accompanies each level. The verification of the hierarchy, its accompanying behaviors and decision-making processes are verifiable by comparing them to your own experience.

The energy hierarchy reflects tendencies and is not absolute. We are not controlled by this hierarchy and through self will have the capability to transcend the hierarchy. We then engage in will-driven activity which is described in the next handout, where we transcend the normal tendencies of organizational energies.

### **Vital Energy**

The organization is concerned about its capacity to remain vital and the internal energy speaks to its loss of previous vitality. The energy of people gets diverted from their normal tasks and instead focuses on whether or not they or

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whom will be considered vital to the organization. Work is no longer of a primary concern. Energy is focused on who and what will be dropped and on who and what will remain.

The decision processes of the organization become polarized. Those things and people that deal with the indirect and the long term are devalued. Those things and people that relate to the short term and direct become increased in value. Polarized behavior results from this shifting value.

The behavior of people becomes more assertive and often divisive. People are increasingly ordered or directed in regard to what functions they must engage in, bounded by their functional sense of themselves and how they must carry them out their function. The will of the organization is much more excitable than it is under less taxing circumstances. Accountability is seen as externally driven and managed.

Leadership from this level of energy often sounds like exhortation, pep talks or even threats and castigation depending on the state of the person offering leadership, at that moment. What is needed, using conscious mental energy, is initiation of pathways and approaches to make a difference working as a collaborative. Not as problem solving but as creating alternative pathways to a better state, from which the people individually and together can create effective ends. It is about establishing higher motives to which people can attach their motivation.

## **Automatic Energy**

An organization operating to the level of automatic energy expects that everything is in place and things should automatically be done. In such an organization, procedure prevails over people. In experiencing the energy of the organization, one gains a sense of a machine-like state with a lack of personality.

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The decision processes of the organization are focused on variances and their correction. These variances may be in the behavior of people, in the value adding process or in the product offering. People are experienced as a constraining force to the organization in regard to how it wants to do things and have things done. The expectation of organization members is that they will respond immediately to the variance. In addition to this they are expected to inform the hierarchy in regard to how they reacted and to reach reconciliation with them on the appropriateness of their reaction.

Behaviorally people in the organization are very responsive to any functional requirement. They largely seem to have left their being or concern about their state of being behind. Being is kept out of being a part of "business interactions" of the organization. The will of people is engaged in performing and engaging in desired maneuvers such as meetings, visits, etc. Only at an informed level is there an expression of care, concern, and friendliness. Accountability is managed through standardized processes to ensure uniformity and their clarity.

Leadership from an automatic state is often generic rather than specific: Using traditional means of incentives and rewards, role modeling and punishment on a selective basis to set the tone. These are all tied to performance improvement. These actions may be accompanied with large meetings with the tone of rallies or celebrations.

What is needed is disruptive processes for the entire community relative to principles, practices, and aims based on strategy of the business. The establishment of reflection processes that are structured, recurring with set timing and genuine in the work put in. The structure is with frameworks relative to a strategic corporate direction and management principles. Avoid open ended questions. The structure is using a framework(s) based set of developed questions that indicate how things are moving and evolving towards ends sought and

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avoidance of polarized evaluation. E.g. ask, “what have we advanced since (time specified)... and then what do we need to take on next?”—for personal, team and organizational levels. The recurrence is in longer or shorter windows at points of transition. Beginning of events, middle between phases and closing of a set of work. A common is looking at fluctuation of levels of energy.

## **Sensitive Energy**

In an organization operating at a level of sensitive energy behavior becomes a central focus. There is an expectation that people, their origins, and their gender will be paid attention to. There is a level of awareness and caring in such an organization that does not exist in an organization operating at the level of automatic energy. But there is also often a focus on feedback, openness of inner unexamined, undeveloped, thoughts in regard to behavior of others.

The decision processes of a company operating at a sensitive level of energy are expected to be carried out while maintaining identified standards of behavior and conduct. These standards vary in accordance with the nature of activity involved in the decision. Each decision is made against the grounds indicating the need of a decision and also against a clear articulation of the goals involved in making the decision. Generally speaking the members of the organization are carefully schooled in the guidelines expected of members of the organization in the decision-making process. And there are conversations designed to course correct when needed. The use of sharing of personal information and experience without the structures that create growth coming from a conscious energy. These are sourced from a humanistic paradigm rather than a living systems worldview and can consumer an organization without producing a more systemic change that is possible.

People in an organization operating at a sensitive level of energy have as their behavioral attributes and intentions:

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- That of addressing their will to be of service,
- in terms of their being they are expected to exhibit qualities appropriate to the activity they are involved in and group they work with
- And they address their functionally oriented behavior toward maintaining desired standards of performance.

Accountability is managed situationally with the intention of fairness across the system.

Leadership at this level concerns themselves with psychological safety and coaching behavior from a beneficial and/or authority role and seeking to avoid introductions of negatives. What is needed is a move away from role to role engagements (boss to subordinate) to self-to-self (me and you), where the work is the focus and what is needed as a team, partner or collective to do that, guided by managing principles serves as a guide for reflection as seen above. There is very of sharing of personal feelings, lower energy experiences, and expectations of others. This is replaced by increased self-reflection bases on developmental principles. Self-reflection for internal self-determination are substituted for behavioral and humanistic approaches which seek to manage others and do good things for them, all externally offered.

## **Conscious Energy**

In an organization operating at a conscious level of energy there is a recognition that each entity and person has as "way of being in the world" and identity of their own which is consistent with their essence. There is a recognition that existence is a stratified phenomenon and the persons and organizations both seek to reach higher strata or higher orders of existence. Generally speaking they seek to provide products and perform functions that are a pattern for higher order existence. They seek to have the will to love and care

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and to create a world of social and ecological harmony. They see living as a means of providing redeeming values to the future.

The decision-making processes of the organization are based on providing or achieving new strata of existence. Intrinsicly they see this requiring of themselves the seeking of higher order ableness and greater understanding of the working of reality. Extrinsicly they see this as requiring the ability to generate operational images and patterns of operating toward what is better and to do things out of conscience and conscientiousness.

The behavior of conscious organizations is in ALL work to produce something of higher value and to provide all members of the organization with the ability to engage in meaningful work. They tend to the people and events with equanimity and acceptance. They have the character or will that seeks to redeem the earth and the life upon it for the future. Accountability is seen as intrinsicly evoked toward that which matters and is life-giving. It is sourced through-time and in-time reflection and personal development as the primary means of awakening inner will to contribute to greater wholes of which we are a part.

Leadership aspiring to work from conscious mental energy is considering how to make *everything* developmental. They make development the foreground of work knowing performance arising from this nature of action. That means they are invoking a systemic framework such as the 7 First Principles of Regeneration/Living Systems and other implicate frameworks that serve as references for consciousness. They ask us to see a gap, and therefore developmental opportunity. They ask what capability is needed. How can this be done so it demands so much of us, that is so meaningful and significant, that new development is core and required and compelling? They build and support capability building, community and culture evolution along with connection to

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consciousness evoking processes. E.g. structured reflection, work with living systems frameworks, strategic corporate direction and hundreds more are familiar and valued.