

**Integrative Leadership: Building a Foundation for Personal,
Interpersonal and Organizational Success.**

Lillas M Hatala, M.C.Ed, CHRP

When you know what Integrative Leadership is all about, and commit to the Integrative Leadership path, you will find that illustrations of it can be found in all parts of your life. It never ceases to amaze me how it continues to enrich my life, and helps me learn about myself as a leader—and I would like to share a few stories from my recent life experiences that I believe communicate what Integrative Leadership is. The first story points to awareness of self and others and leading from the essence of who we truly are. The second story suggests that it is often in difficult situations that we are asked to stand for something, to accept who we are, and to communicate that with others. The third story speaks to the art and science of self-reflection. It is about cultivating the ability to see a situation as it is, not as we would like it to be, and then having the courage to shift perspectives to a higher level of awareness.

Afterwards, I will briefly share elements of the Integrative Leadership model, the processes that characterize the journey, and leave you with some self-reflective questions about your own personal leadership journey.

“Leadership is Awareness”

At a recent Integrative Leadership Program that Rick—my life and business partner and co-author of *“Integrative Leadership (2005)”*— and I facilitated in Canada, we opened by asking the participants: “Who are you and what do you want?” One senior participant whom we’ll call Peter, responded by sitting back in his chair, folding his arms and stating loudly so that all the participants would clearly hear: “I don’t know why I’m here. I was told to come here by my boss. I’m not sure what this program is about. But what I am sure is I don’t think I belong here.”

We both inwardly sighed. With all our years facilitating leaders on the path of becoming an Integrative Leader, we know that it is a journey that begins with an invitation, not an imposition. A participant being told to attend rarely works. Choosing and wanting to come almost always works.

So we had our doubts whether Peter would stay beyond the first day. And, if he chose to stay, whether the model and process of Integrative Leadership would work for him.

As the program progressed, we made an extra effort to engage him in the process. We invited him into the various exercises, dialogues and discussions, and, to our delight, Peter warmed and began to accept the invitations to dig a little deeper and discover who he truly was and what he wanted from his life.

In our engagements, we learned that Peter’s father was Ogala-Sioux and his mother was Métis. We learned he had an awakening experience in his youth that led him to

investigate his Sioux heritage, traditions, culture and spirituality. And he began to teach the youth and young adults within that community about their roots. Peter offered the aboriginal perspectives on the ancient truths within the Medicine Wheel that aligned with the four domains of intelligence (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) that we teach as the four foundations of our nature within the Integrative Leadership model. In those engagements, we began to look, not at our differences alone, but the similarities of our life and leadership journeys that emerged as common ground from which we all could grow.

Peter was the first to arrive each day and the last to leave, even when duty called him away to distant ceremonies and long evening events within his aboriginal community.

About halfway through the program, Peter said: “I am beginning to see that this is not a new approach to leadership, but is what our people have been teaching for 10,000 years.” I smiled and responded: “That is true. Our work is to bring out the common ground and truths we’ve found in all leadership psychologies, philosophies and wisdom traditions and reclaim them at this time within ourselves, our families, our organizations and our communities.”

At the end of the program, Peter shared a story with the group from his Sioux tradition.

Black Elk and Crazy Horse, Sioux leaders in the 19th Century, were being interviewed by a news reporter. The reporter asked them how they were able to so successfully lead tens of thousands of Sioux warriors when they themselves were rather small in physical stature and unimposing. Crazy Horse reflected for a moment and then responded. “My people follow because of my inner peace.” Black Elk smiled and said: “Awareness. It is awareness that allows me to lead.

Peter concluded, “I believe this is what you are trying to do in this Integrative Leadership program. It is to allow us to find our own awareness, our own inner peace that is the heart and soul of our own leadership, and then to have the courage to act like it in our world.”

Peter moved from being our most challenging participant, to becoming an asset for all involved with the program. Integrative Leadership is about awareness, about finding inner peace, and then choosing to resonate and act from that place of wholeness.

“Love, Trust and Fairy Dust”

Several years ago while I was in the role of Faculty Director of Business and Leadership Programs at the University of Saskatchewan, I met with a Senior University Leader, let's call her Janet, to explore a potential collaboration to provide leadership development programs to our community. Our community included academic, business, government and not-for-profit organizations.

We had had numerous brief discussions previously, but this was our first face to face meeting to solely discuss collaborative programming. So there I was, sitting in her corner office at her meeting table. My intent in coming to the meeting was to share a vision, mission, passion and principles that would frame our efforts in building an ongoing collaborative relationship. Janet, on the other hand, wanted to discuss the structure, cost sharing, staffing and potential revenues that we would share in our joint programs. Who would lead the venture? How many people would attend? And, most importantly, how much money would we make?

Now I understood that both structural and visionary perspectives were important. However, my desire was to move from vision, to mission, to passion, to action, in a process that is inside out, or “involutionary”. Whereas Janet wanted to elaborate on the structures, systems, procedures and actions, and let the vision emerge in a process that is outside in, or what I would call, “evolutionary”.

In our meeting, I spoke. She ignored my ideas and thoughts. And then she spoke. I ignored her perspective. This continued until finally, visibly frustrated, she put down her pen, glared at me and said:

“Lillas, I am talking about practicalities and you are talking about visions. What is important are revenues and how many bums we can get in the seats.” She then paused, leaned forward, pointed a finger at my nose and stated, “It seems to me that your approach to leadership is all about Love, Trust and Fairy Dust.”

I sat back and was instantly offended. It was a trigger event that was visceral and I could feel it welling up inside as if someone had punched me in my stomach. I felt like I left the present moment and descended, immersing myself in the feeling of being hurt, disrespected, unfairly criticized, and misunderstood. And in my descent, I remembered all those other times I had been told to teach hard skills and not soft ones, to watch the fluff and touchy feely, and to get real rather than focusing on the ideal of a situation. I thought I had grown a thick enough skin, but not that morning.

What surprised me was having this kind of personal attack come from a female colleague where I had believed we held mutual respect for one another and our work. I took a moment, got quiet, and reflected on Janet’s comment, saying it over to myself internally: “Love, trust and fairy dust...?”

As I reflected, I began to smile, first inside and then I could feel myself smiling on the outside, as well. I became aware that Janet wasn’t just Janet anymore. With her seemingly thoughtless comment, she had transformed in my eyes into all those others who had judged me for advocating a new holistic approach to management and leadership practice. She became all those who had condemned me for being appreciative and looking for the good, rather than being critical and always looking for what was wrong in life and work. She became all those who disrespected my approach to living a reflective life, for in my mind and heart, any other kind of life was not worth living.

I then laughed out loud and began to see her comment not as a condemnation, but as a compliment. Finally, I said: “Thank you Janet for giving me the title of a book that I hope to write one day.” The meeting was over. Although I did not get what I expected, I did truly get what I needed on the path in that moment, and was grateful for having received it.

The whole “*love, trust and fairy dust*” trigger event took less than five minutes. Rather than reacting to life as I would have done in the past by taking Janet’s comments personally, withdrawing from our meeting in hurt and sadness, I engaged in the personal transformational journey of my own heart. I responded to her as if I was the highest, the best, and the noblest I could be—as my Ideal Self.

Afterwards, on further reflection and journaling, I concluded that I really do believe the path of Integrative Leadership is all about love, trust and fairy dust. Love is the essence of great leadership. It is the glue that binds us all together, for we must choose to love our life, ourselves, our family, our team, our clients, our work, our vocation, our organization. And if we do not, then we need to find a place in our life where we can serve and love, with passion and compassion.

I believe that trust is the essence of all relationships. Trust is built by being honest and truthful, keeping our word to ourselves and others, and following through on what we say we are willing to do. If we cannot trust ourselves, we cannot trust others, nor can we trust the Divine that is within us all.

And fairy dust can represent whatever is needed in the relationship, team, organization or situation. If you are confused, the fairy dust is clarity. If you are lonely, the fairy dust is meaningful companionship. If you are in despair, the fairy dust is hope. If you are in anger, the fairy dust is peace. If you are hurt, the fairy dust is healing.

This is true leadership from the very best of who we are and the Ideal we are all hopefully striving to become.

So Janet taught me a little more about who I truly was. In moving forward with our relationship, I felt I needed to speak clearly and practically into her listening so that she would have a desire to in the future, speak into mine. And Janet was absolutely right. Integrative Leaders are all about love, trust and fairy dust. So what kind of fairy dust do you need in your life and leadership at this time?

“A Shift in Perspective”

In our work these past seven years, Rick and I had walked the path of Integrative Leadership personally, interpersonally, within our families, and into the teaching and facilitating marketplace. What we had not done was apply it within the very core and culture of an organization. In early 2005, we formed Integrative Energy Ltd which was our first experiment and experience to do just that.

Rick became the President & CEO of Integrative Energy, building on his 30 years' experience in all facets of the energy sector. From its inception in December 2000, and its activation in May 2005, Integrative Energy Ltd. (www.integrativeenergy.ca) evolved into a company based in Calgary and Houston whose mission was to “build a living organization (we call it organic), playing the mechanistic capitalistic game successfully, with a holistic intent”. The corporate strategy is to pursue high impact opportunities, apply leading edge technologies, and to fully live the integrative management and leadership philosophy each moment, every day. The intentional corporate structure was to initially build a thriving oil & natural gas energy business, then with the proceeds, conduct research and develop new energy technologies that were one paradigm beyond current alternative energies; co-create an Integrative Leadership and Learning Center where the deep inner work of life and leadership could take place for all our stakeholders (employees, shareholders, associates); and finally, build a Foundation that would allow us to give back to the communities in which we chose to operate.

We often say: “May life be your teacher, and may your Ideal be your guide”. The experience of attempting to build an organic, rather than a purely mechanistic capitalistic company within the energy sector, came with many problems, issues, and challenges that, in time, we saw as opportunities and lessons for our growth.

Initially, Rick drew on his 15 years' experience learning the energy business with Gulf Oil and his 15 years of building service, domestic and international oil and gas companies as the templates for Integrative Energy. All went well in the first year, raising millions from friends, family and business associates, integrating over 150 stakeholders into the company, and signing contracts for future financings to allow the company to thrive.

However, after over one year of operation, in August of 2006, everything that could go wrong, did go wrong, and the company was brought to its knees, financially, technically, operationally and in its internal and external relationships.

The image that came to Rick was that you could not put new wine into old wine skins. “I believed that my purpose was to raise capital to build a company, when in truth, it was to raise consciousness to build a community,” he shared with me late in the fall of 2006. “My old habits of how I had done it before would not work if consciousness raising was what we were essentially all about and our expressed intent.” So the old wine skins, the old structures, the old relationships—by early 2007, were completed. “I felt we needed to build the community, align it, allow each individual to transform and transcend from the mechanistic to the organic paradigm, believing that when the community was right, when the consciousness was right, the money would come.”

For over a year, from the fall of 2006 to the fall of 2007, Rick and the Integrative Energy team embarked on a program to visit major centers in North America and invite over 300 shareholders, unit holders and stakeholders to dialogue about the intent, thoughts, feelings and actions of the company, not only as a corporation, but as a living community. We sought input, and much of the dissension, much of the discord that was evident in 2006, became alignment and harmony in 2007.

“What was interesting is that lasting transformation took place one conversation, one discussion, one dialogue at a time,” Rick reflected and shared with me one evening. I responded by saying he is more like the “Chief Conversation Officer” of the community and not just the “Chief Executive Officer” of the company! For we have found that is how meaningful change happens: “First to the individual, then to the group, and then to the masses.”

Integrative Energy appears poised for success in 2008 with many chapters of its story written, but the book being far from over. It was Rick and the Integrative Energy team’s shift in perspective to a higher level of awareness that took them from simply “raising capital to build a company” to “raising consciousness to build a community” that is making all the difference.

What is Integrative Leadership?

Integrative Leadership is a holistic, reflective and responsive approach to leading oneself, leading others, and leading in the organization. It is based on our book *Integrative Leadership: Building a Foundation for Personal, Interpersonal and Organizational Success* (2005) and the *Integrative Leadership Self Study Guide* (in press 2008). Rick and I have been speaking, writing, facilitating, coaching, and living Integrative Leadership since 2000. Our current challenges and learning edge is the application of Integrative Leadership organizationally within Integrative Energy Ltd., as well as professionally and interpersonally in the consulting, coaching and facilitating work of Integrative Leadership International (www.integrativeleadership.ca).

The Integrative Framework involves eight universal principles that form the matrix in which we live, work and play. The Integrative Leadership Model is who we are as participants within this framework. We call it simply the 4-3-2-1 model which is shorthand for: the four energies or domains of intelligence; three levels of awareness; two choices that we face in each situation; and the oneness or integration that we feel when all domains, all levels are aligned with a higher intent in service to ourselves and others.

The four domains include awakening and development of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual intelligences, personally, interpersonally and organizationally.

The three levels of awareness psychologically would be our conscious (Who am I as personality?); subconscious (Who am I as character?); and supraconscious (Who am I as my Ideal or True Self?). These three levels of awareness express themselves culturally as mechanistic (things), organic (people), and holistic (principles) in nature. We are observing a collective shift in awareness that seems to involve consciously moving our global-social-economic framework from the mechanistic to the organic paradigm.

The two refers to the power of choice in the moment, answering the question: “Will I react as I always have from habits, traditions, customs or turbulent emotional states?”

OR “Will I reflect and then choose to respond to the situation in accord with the highest, noblest and best I can envision and embody as my Ideal Self?”

Oneness is the integration of our intent, thoughts, feelings and actions in alignment with a higher intent that leads to a state of flow psychologically, and a state of grace spiritually.

The path of integration involves transactional (mechanistic), transformational (organic) and transcendent (holistic) change processes that intertwine and weave their way into the fabric of our life.

The journey or process of integration begins with the individual. As Warren Bennis states: “The process of becoming a leader is not much different from the process of becoming an integrated human being.” In our research, each time we scratched the surface of a leader, we found a human being. We found that if the human being is not right, then the leader will not be right, and neither will the team, organization or community that they serve.

Great leaders, and the people who stand behind that role, have developed their three levels of awareness by being competent, compassionate and conscious in their life and work. Great leaders take the time to strengthen their inner relationships with themselves and the outer relationships that form the circle of influence that make up their lives. And we have found that it is from self awareness and self management, other awareness and other management, that great leadership emerges.

Edgar Schein suggests “leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.” The organization takes on the character of its leaders, and the leaders, that of the organization.

So Integrative Leadership is the process of discovering what is unconsciously motivating us and making it conscious in terms of the principles and intentions that Integrative Leaders choose to stand for, the purpose and mission they choose to hold, the passion and motivations from which they act; and the performance that is the visible result of those actions.

In the past seven years, Integrative Leadership has become for us simultaneously a calling and a way of life. We believe our work is on the leading edge of leadership development. It is an approach to personal and professional leadership that goes beyond humanistic, traditional, or transactional change processes alone, and embraces the transformational and transcendent processes that are symbolic, mythic, mystical and spiritual in nature. We have found that the greatest leverage to becoming a better leader is awakening and developing a connection between our mind and body with our heart and soul, and then allowing that connection to influence our roles as leaders in all aspects of our lives.

One measure of success in developing the body of work that is Integrative Leadership is how well the framework, model and processes reflect back to participants and readers their own lives and leadership journeys. Often participants after workshop or conference

presentations or readers of our book will ask us something like: “Are you and Rick Taoist?” “Why do you ask?” we would say. And they would reply, “Because the principles and practices that you teach are the very foundations of Taoism.” Then we would both look at each other, smile, and say that in that sense we were indeed Taoists! This same conversation occurred time and time again with Hindu, Yogic, Confucist, Muslim, Sufi, Christian, Jewish, Baha’i and many other wisdom philosophies and traditions.

So in that sense, the integrative framework, model, principles, processes and practices seem to become a mirror for people to examine their own life story and their own leadership story, and infuse it with meaning and purpose and help formulate their own Integrative Leadership theory of practice.

“The Essence of Integrative Leadership”

I would like to conclude by sharing an experience I had this past January in Regina—a city named after Queen Victoria—in Saskatchewan, Canada where I was facilitating several emotional intelligence workshops called “Leading with Influence”.

One of my integral practices is to meditate each morning. After I have sat in the silence and the deep inner peace, I contemplate the possibilities, activities, and entertain ideas for the coming day. It is in this quiet time that I often receive insights, intuitions or inspirations that help me to serve myself and others more fully and completely.

In the early morning of the first day of the workshops in Regina, the insight I clearly received was that the workshop was all about the participant’s experience. It was not necessarily about getting through all the material, teaching them techniques, ensuring that we covered all the power point slides, infusing them with theory, but rather about holding a space for them to experience who they truly were. And to infuse that space with love and trust so that they would allow themselves to be that truth. Just like me, I felt that love was what they and the people in their lives needed the most and having an experience of that love would bring a deeper understanding of the ideas associated with leading with influence.

Armed with my early morning insight, and prepared to relax and help co-create that loving space, I stepped out of my hotel into the minus 30 degree below zero Canadian winter, prepared to walk the three blocks to the training facility. As I walked, pulling my office on wheels on the sidewalk behind me, I noticed that there were hundreds of 8-1/2” x 11” papers strewn here and there along the path I walked by an earlier riser than me. Curious, I stopped, picked one up and read it. Someone had taken the time to write out in black marker on each of the hundreds of pages on that path: “THERE IS NO LOVE IN THIS WORLD!”

My heart sank, feeling in that moment the loneliness, isolation and heart-break of the one who took the time to write that message out for me that morning. Mother Theresa said it well when she spoke in New York City years ago and observed that she had seen poverty

and desolation all over the world, but none as deep as the spiritual poverty she felt in North America. There is no love in this world!

I sent a prayer to the writer and shared this experience at the opening of the emotional intelligence workshop that morning. There is no love in this world...

My ever-growing understanding is that the essence of Integrative Leadership is Love. Not simply a love of the body or the ideas within our minds, but a love and fellowship that is of the heart and soul. It is about loving the Divine with all four domains and levels of awareness, and then choosing to love the Divine within ourselves and others. Love is a choice that we make each moment of each day.

And the choice, inspired by the golden rule, is that if you want friends, be friendly. If you want hope, be hopeful. If you want love, be loving to yourself and others.

So what do you most want for your world? What do you want for your family, your team, your organization? And once you know what you want, have the courage to act like it and in that way, give it away. By taking this small step, we will begin to build, line by line, brick by brick, principle upon principle, the foundation for our personal, interpersonal and organizational success.

***About the author:** Lillas Hatala is a leadership development author, speaker, facilitator, coach and consultant. With over 25 years experience she has pioneered start up operations and spearheaded leading edge programs, taught post secondary level leadership courses, most recently as Faculty Director of Business and Leadership Programs at the University of Saskatchewan. She holds a Masters Degree in Continuing Education, is a Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP), a Certified Facilitator of the MBTI, a Professional Member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers, and a part time teacher of yoga and meditation. Her interest in the 'whole or integrative person' and human wellness has included studies at the Integral Institute, the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, the Center for Timeless Being, the Shambala Authentic Leader Program and with Geshe Michael Roach (Diamond Mountain University), among others. Lillas may be reached at lillasmarie@shaw.ca , www.integrativeleadership.ca*