

The Role of Source in Organizations

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Source

1. any thing or place from which something comes, arises, or is obtained.
2. the beginning or place of origin of a stream or river.
3. a book, statement, person, etc., supplying information.

Any enterprise, project or event always goes back to a single source; the person who gave the spark of life to an idea and had a compelling vision that wanted to be realized.

In instances where one might feel that “we” had the idea together; closer investigation of the path of creation will always lead back to one particular person. This person who has the role of source has an energetic connection to the endeavour quite unlike any other member of the organization or team. The source has an intuitive knowing about what the next steps are and will have strong reactions, sometimes viscerally, if these insights are not honoured. For the source, the “Gestalt” of the idea can be sensed, even if others can at times have more accurate language to describe it. The effects of the importance of source can be observed, whether or not the source is acknowledged – if only in the power struggles that emerge when the true source of an initiative is not acknowledged. The recognition of source will lead to an ease of flow in processes and decrease the potential for conflict.

The Field and The Source

If an idea, a project or an organization were an individual we could attempt to trace back how this being first came into existence. At the beginning of the individual’s life, there was the act of creation. Just as a child has a mother and a father, ideas do as well. Let’s assume there is a field or a dimension in which all ideas and all creations exist; the field of limitless potential. This field as the masculine or “father” connects with a

carrier, the feminine or the “mother” who brings life into existence as the “source”. As with carrying a child, a person having “received” an idea that came from the field of limitless potential may indeed feel as if he or she is “going pregnant” with the idea for a while prior to it’s birth.

Even after the “baby” (i.e. the idea or project) is born, it’s connection to the field and the source is very strong. The field and the source are the genetic “parents” of this baby and regardless of who will help to raise the child to be an independent person – the biological parents will always have a special importance.

For the success of the child in life, it seems to be vital that this primary connection is recognized and honoured, even if other people bear a bulk of the childrearing work and even if another parent adopts the child. Likewise, the connection of the source to the project or idea will remain, even if others take it upon themselves to realize the sources’ vision.

The Role of Helpers

The role of others as supporters and helpers for the success of a project envisioned by the source is paramount. As in the metaphor of the child, a single parent would never be able to do as good a job raising the child as a whole community could. As they say: It takes a village...

The bigger the original vision the source brings into existence, the more likely the source relies on others for realization of this vision. The helpers can take on all kinds of different roles; from translating the idea into concepts or tasks, to taking on roles as “sub-sources” with full responsibility for a sub-project that feeds into the larger source.

The more connected the helpers feel energetically to the idea/vision and the more they are able to honour the special role of the source, the more momentum the endeavour will gather.



Each helper can form his or her special connection to the project and become a central figure in the growth process – but the source as the point of origin must be recognized. If anyone unrightfully claims ownership of the idea, the balance in the system is disturbed and will suffer a multitude of consequences.

The Source of Organizations

Every organization has a point of origin, the moment when

the idea was conceived and someone gave shape to what was previously shapeless. This idea of source in organizations is especially observable in family owned businesses. However, it is important to note that identifying the source may not always be as obvious as it might appear at first sight. Often, the founding of the company is attributed to one person (for example the patriarch), but the driving force behind the endeavour is in fact someone else (for example the matriarch of the family). It is therefore essential to examine closely who was the original life force behind the organization before drawing premature conclusions about the source.

The role of source can be inherited or passed on from one person to another. The passing on of the source is not a legal but an energetic act. Even if due diligence has been done to ensure that all the right contracts are in place, the source can remain with the original founder and the transmission has not occurred. If this is the case, the new leader/CEO, and subsequently the organization, will be weakened. Succession can only occur if the person passing it over and the person receiving it are conscious and open to the process. Without full transmission of the source, a struggle for dominance and recognition ensues.

A few of the tell-tale signs for the source not having been transferred (or not transferred fully) can be that a newly appointed leader

- feels disconnected from the business,
- is unsure about next steps, has no vision,
- cannot feel what his or her place or purpose in the endeavour is,
- has no execution even though has all the legal power,
- experiences power struggles with other people in the organization,
- is not accepted by others in the organization as the new leader.

It is important to consider that only one person can fulfil the role of source. The ownership structure of an organization or the distribution of profits are not tied to being source, but the final say about strategic decisions is.

In family run businesses, it is not unusual that the passing of the source skips one generation. If the source remained with a grandparent that has already passed, the transfer might be accomplished through a personal ritual of initiation that honours the vision and importance of the source, before the new CEO steps fully into his or her new responsibility as the new source of the organization. If the person fulfilling the role of source is still alive, this is a ritual that can and should be conducted in person.

The Role of Source in Leadership

In any organization, there are numerous sources for numerous projects, the more complex the organization, the more sources there are. The importance of accepting that the source will “sense” more strongly than anyone else involved what has to be done should not be underestimated. If the leader is the source, this is often more readily accepted than if another employee is the source for a particular thought or project. Regardless of the position of the source in the hierarchy, the source needs to be recognized in order to function as the channel through which information flows from the field of potential into the organization. A lack of recognition of source is often felt by members of the system and experienced as unfair, unjust or out of integrity. If leadership does not correct the injustice, trust in the leaders and or the organization as a whole is diminished. Acceptance of source creates harmony and trust.

Non-recognition of source often results either in a dictatorial approach to running the company (“I am the new boss now and you will do as I say!”) or in a spineless egalitarianism (“We are really all the same and we all have equal say!”). The first leads to organizations with a high number of sick days and a work morale weakened by fear whereas the latter leads to inefficiency and a culture that values comradeship over performance. Both will bleed the organization of talent since intelligent and self-responsible individuals will neither choose to work for an organization in which submission to an authoritarian leader is required, nor an organization in which every process is stalled because no one ever feels empowered to take a decision.

The Power of Love

The power of Source is grounded in a kind of “Gelassenheit”, a form of “serenity or stillness in listening” which allows Source to serve Life or the nature of Being itself. The movement of Source is a movement of power or actualization in the world, but this is fragile. It is all too easy for that Source to become disconnected from the deep listening that gave rise to insight in the first instance and sustains it going forward; at which point it morphs from intrinsic power or authority into transmuted forms of extrinsic control. That attempt to control - to own rather than to steward - leads to what we ordinarily consider power struggles and a failure engage in Gelassenheit by both Source and Helpers. The reactivity in Source is in-

dicative of this move to extrinsic control and bespeaks a completed move away from the natural authority that grows from the connected work of Gelassenheit.

This abdication is fundamentally a failure of connection. It is in this dance of Power (the move to actualization) and Love (the move to connection) around the point of stillness that health can be found. Martin Luther King speaks to this so well in his famous quote: “Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

So long as Source (power) is in service of Help (love) it is truly empowered and things are likely to work out reasonably well. As soon as they part ways, suffering begins in earnest. The key is for both Source and Help to listen with an open will to the field in which they both exist. ■

This article was written by Nadjeschda Taranczewski and is based on the ideas of Peter Koenig who has researched the role of “source” in organizations for many years. Matthew Wesley kindly added the last and beautiful paragraph on the power of love.



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Nadjeschda studied Art and Psychology in Germany, the UK and the US. She is passionate about her family and friends and enjoys cooking as much as eating. She is a big film fan, is fascinated by hard Science Fiction, addicted to TED talks, and she adds adventure to her life by home exchanging with people from across the globe. She is currently working on her first book about consciousness development.