Chapter 14
Understand It or Destroy It: Why Every Leader Needs to Understand Meaningful Work

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Abstract In the past decades generating meaning for their employees has been seen as central to the role of the leader. Through inspirational speeches, vision and culture management, employees have often been treated as empty vessels waiting to be filled with meaning. Yet many leaders have experienced that such ways of managing meaning are complex and hard to sustain and can backfire. This chapter offers a Map of Meaning which makes Meaningful Work visible so that it can be taken into account in all decision-making. When it can be taken into account, all members of the organisation, including leaders, can create more of it and stop destroying it.

There are few things as frustrating as finding out that you have been producing the opposite result from what you intended. Yet this is the current situation for many leaders. Intending to motivate people, the reality is that leaders routinely destroy one of the single most important motivational factors in organisations—meaningful work (Amabile and Kramer 2012).

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And it's not their fault since at first glance it's difficult to see that meaningfulness has such a direct effect on the practical nature of work. Isn't it something only academics would be concerned about, something too big, abstract and vague to be useful in the day-to-day running of competitive organisations? If it is important, how are leaders going to get a handle on something so hard to grasp? How do they keep what matters most to employees visible when there seem to always be more pressing issues?

Even when leaders understand the significance of meaningful work, their focus is often fragmented because they try to "manage meaning" through a variety of initiatives that often seem disconnected to the employee such as management of engagement, culture management, motivation, leadership or teamwork training, empowerment or through developing corporate values and mission. Given the effort and resources that go into these initiatives, why doesn't employee enthusiasm last? What's not working?

The good news is that we've been trying to force something that will naturally occur if we understand and work *with* a primary human yearning for meaningful work.

Meaningful work (MFW) is not just another piece of the puzzle but is the key to long-term engagement and the success of organisations. Amabile and Kramer (2012, p. 2) found that people are "more creative, productive, committed and collegial" when work is meaningful to them. People yearn for meaning. It's the single most important factor that transforms them from time-servers turning up to collect a pay packet, complaining about work to colleagues, friends and family—into people are committed, thoughtful and responsible at work. Because concern for meaning is intrinsic to people, you find them talking about it every day at work.

But it often sounds like this:

> I don't see the point of this new initiative. We haven't even finished the last one. It makes all the work we've done irrelevant.
> I want to get my people on board, but they just don't seem to engage, sometimes I wonder why I bother.
> I'm sick of filling in forms all day, it just means that I can never get on with the real work.

Although the drive for meaning is natural, because it has been so hard to grasp, it has largely been experienced in an emotional way, as negative feelings, when meaning is lost as in the above examples. This has drained energy from both individuals and organisations and made meaning hard to address. It is therefore really important for leaders to have a clear understanding of the significance of meaningful work and to have a practical way of engaging with it. Better still, if *everyone* in the organisation can understand what meaningful work is and how it affects people and the organisation, everyone can take responsibility for it. Leaders can see their people fully engaged while their own role moves from "provider of meaning" to "remover of obstacles to meaning." But to make such a major shift, leaders need to know what they're doing and have a very clear rationale for why they are doing it.

Our research into MFW spans more than fifteen years. These findings were captured in a Map of Meaning. For the past 11 years, we have rigorously tested this map both through qualitative action research (Lips-Wiersma and Morris 2009, and quantitative research on a significant sample of people of a wide range of cultures and occupations (Lips-Wiersma and Wright 2012). We now offer a map that is tested, simple and effective to use.

Why Is It Important to Have a Map of Meaning?

In the past decades generating meaning for their employees has been seen as central to the role of the leader. Through inspirational speeches, vision and culture management, employees have often been treated as empty vessels waiting to be filled with meaning. Yet many leaders have experienced that such ways of managing meaning are complex and hard to sustain and can be emotive and backfire.

Employees are required to contribute to vision or mission statements or otherwise indicate what they care most about. Sometimes they lack the skills to do this, sometimes it feels unsafe to do it, and often employees feel that what they have contributed has been "taken over" by the organisation and used for its own ends. They are left feeling that something that was intrinsically valuable to them has been treated without respect. As a person in our research said: "at first I experienced the vision and culture management exercises as a relief, finally we could talk about our values, but it quickly became apparent that we were still not being heard and everyone became more cynical than before."

A map which clearly portrays MFW guides people at all levels of the hierarchy in what matters most with regard to the personal motivation people bring to work and helps to take this into account in the thousands of big and little decisions that are made in organisations every day.

What makes work meaningful is personal, but our research shows that meaning does in fact has clear and commonly held dimensions. These dimensions are simple and instantly recognised by people. This is an important discovery because otherwise it is too easy to dismiss meaning as something too personal or subjective to work with. Yet now that it is clear that people, while having different worldviews, do in fact share what is meaningful to them. This has great potential to energise people individually and collectively. Having a map allows us to see, for the first time, the elements and dimensions that show the whole of what make work meaningful so that nothing can be unintentionally overlooked. The map makes the complex easy to see and thus simpler to work with without making a deep human yearning banal. It helps to work practically with meaningfulness in the midst of the day-to-day demands of an organisation.
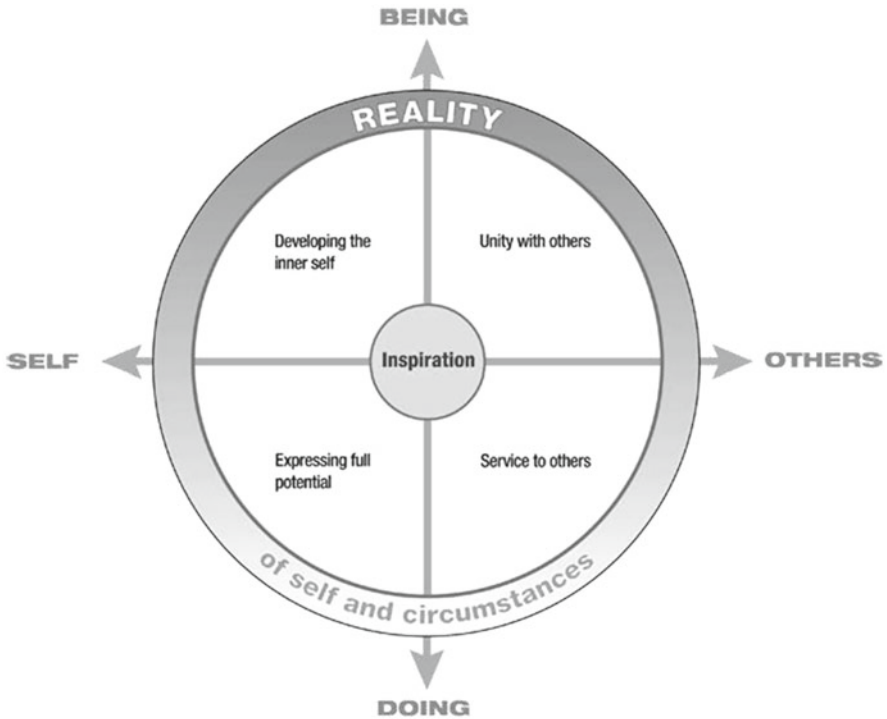
Fig. 14.1 The Map of Meaning

The Map of Meaning: What is it?

When we asked hundreds of people to identify what is meaningful about their work, they all came up with the same dimensions of meaning (Fig. 14.1). These are as old as humanity, familiar and universal. The Map of Meaning does not tell you what you should do but captures what human beings have always known is significant in their work. In the table below we describe each of the dimensions of the map and (a) give an example of how each of the dimensions of meaningful work appears in people's stories about their work and (b) how these themes are universal and (c) an example of ways in which the meaning gets lost.

	(a) Example of what makes work meaningful?	(b) Quotes from the wisdom traditions, cultures and religions which have been concerned with this aspect of meaning	(c) Example of how meaning gets lost in today's workplace
What makes work meaningful?			
Unity with others	"I experience a bond with my colleagues."	"United we stand, Divided we fall." —*Greek fables, 660 BC*	"We have more admin but the same amount of patients. In our breaks everyone is now typing away in their offices. We never get to speak to or support each other anymore."
Expressing full potential	"When I put forward an idea and it gets taken up, it's a great feeling."	"All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence" —*Martin Luther King*	"We make so many changes that I am switched from project to project before it is completed. I feel no sense of ownership or achievement."
Service to others	"I know that others are better off because I do this work."	"Let us love not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" *(John 3:18)*	"I know that we have this useful purpose and great vision. But all we talk about is targets and efficiency gains."
Developing the inner self	"I am learning about who I am and how to stick to my values."	"Doest thou think thyself only a puny form when the universe is folded up within thee?'" —*The Imám 'Alí*	"We are incongruent with our organisational values. Not because we don't care, but because our superior tells us 'just get the job done, I don't care what it takes.'"
Balancing "being" and "doing"	"We went on a retreat together and it was great to spend time getting to know each other, having time to talk about questions that would normally be seen as too time consuming."	"When we do not hold the creative tension, action flies off into a frenzy and contemplation flies of into escapism" —*Parker Palmer*	"Sometimes we sit around talking without it going anywhere and other times we race around like crazy with no time to reflect at all. It all depends on what's driving the boss."
Balancing "self" and "other"	"I'm learning to put myself first sometimes at work."	"If I am not for myself, who will be for me, but if I am only for myself, who am I?" —*Rabbi Hillel*	"We have this service culture but it really means I don't get to have a moment to myself."
Relating to *both* inspiration and reality	"We can safely point out to our CEO and each other where we aren't meeting our goals, and once we've got over being defensive or depressed, we can work out what we need to do to get closer to them."	"With only inspiration we become arrogant. With only wretchedness, we lose our vision. Feeling inspired makes us realise how vast and wondrous the world is. Reality makes us humble, it becomes the ground for understanding others" —*Pema Chodron, contemporary Buddhist author*	"We fluctuate wildly between inspiration, where we're encouraged to have these grandiose goals, and reality where every time people make a suggestion in a meeting someone else will say 'but in reality,' or 'we need to get real here'. Inspiration is not grounded and reality kills our dreams and aspirations."

Leading: From Providing Meaning to Enabling Meaning and Removing Obstacles

Over the past decades there has been an intense focus on the need for leaders to motivate people. Charismatic, authentic, servant leadership all focus on the leader's ability to motivate. It was therefore surprising to find in our research how little spontaneous direct mention of the role of the leader occurred in relationship to meaningful work. So while it is vital to recognise the impact leaders have on their organisations "as conveyors of a symbolic as well as literal meaning that reinforces the vision or undermines it" (Hartman 1990), some leaders may feel challenged to let go of the role of guru. As Ralph Stayer of the Johnsonville Sausage Factory in Wisconsin said, "There's a lot of ego in saying 'I am the guy who has to make the decision because I know better'" (Hartman 1990). But as leaders who have the courage, insight and humility to make those changes have found, their role is more effective when they define it in terms of removing the barriers to what makes work meaningful for people. The workforce needs to be allowed to be adults and work from what is meaningful to them and top-down models are simply no longer effective (Carney and Getz 2009).

We can see how this works through a case study which, together with many other case studies, is in our book *The Map of Meaning* (Lips-Wiersma and Morris 2011).

Dave Burton has worked with the Map of Meaning in a variety of countries and contexts over the past 8 years. Dave was called in to work with Bill who is in his early thirties and managing the IT help desk for a large organisation. By definition Bill's job focuses on "service to others" as it is almost solely based on receiving and responding to customer calls and this is a task that never feels completed. The quality of Bill's work was suffering, his relationships with his family were suffering, he was getting frustrated and as a result doing his work less and less well.

Bill had already thought of some solutions to his situation: he wanted to put up a barrier between him and his clients, such as having an automated answering system or introducing web-based guidance that customers had to walk through before contacting him and of structuring down time when he was not available to respond to calls.

Dave helped Bill make visible what was going on for him by using the Map of Meaning. He asked the approximate percentage of time Bill spent in each quadrant of the Map. He spent 90–95% in "service to others" and the other 5–10% was spread across the other quadrants. Bill instantly saw that he was using his time in a seriously unbalanced way.

Dave asked Bill how he would approach his job if he was to bring to life all elements of what constitutes meaningful work. Bill immediately went to "unity with others" and identified that in order to experience unity he had to develop a relationship with his clients rather than just responding when they were having problems.

He decided to start here and met with clients individually and in groups. This meant the clients were no longer dealing with a faceless scapegoat on whom they could take out their frustrations. At the same time, Bill got to better understand their problems. Both led to a big increase in Bill experiencing meaningful work

through unity and having a sense that he could actually make more of a difference. He developed his full potential by using his skills to provide solutions. In taking charge, being proactive and listening carefully, he also developed his inner self. In our experience working with meaning is like this, if one dimension of meaningful work receives attention the others usually grow as well. Similarly as one dimension is lost, it negatively impacts on the others.

Because the sources of meaning are shared and can be talked about in ordinary language, it is easier to get others on board. In this case, Bill had little trouble getting not only clients on board but also his superior who simply had to enable him by shifting a minimum of resources to support the required changes.

There were three consequences to Bill's actions. First, his health, attitude and sense of purpose improved immediately and he regained a sense of being in charge of himself and the situation. Second, the number of calls coming to the centre dropped, and thirdly the company received higher quality feedback at no extra costs so that it could continuously improve. And all Bill's superior had to do was support him.

Increasing Organisational Responsiveness Through Meaningful Work

Once people become responsible for actively shaping MFW, they become more grounded, discerning, energetic, committed and more playful. As a result, the organisations in which they work become more responsive. Once we have a solution to a problem like the one above, it can seem simple, as if it was a natural next step to take. However, the first solution we think about may not be the simplest one. In fact, we often fall back on putting more control and more systems into place.

Bill finds meaning in unity, in helping people, but if he'd gone along with his first idea and put in more systems, it would have made him less responsive to client needs and further distanced him. It would have reduced meaning, not only for Bill but also for his clients, miring the organisation in increasing complexity.

What we have found is that, just like Bill, once people can see what is meaningful for them, they actually know what to do, in a very simple and practical way. The Map of Meaning integrates task and motivation so people solve their own practical problems while sorting out their motivational issues. It is a natural way of working which provides practical, quick, creative and grounded insights. And once people get in touch with what is meaningful to them, they don't dither, but act quickly, because working meaningfully releases energy.

Constructive Cocreation and Reduction of Blame Through Meaningful Work

Many motivational practices, including career, organisational culture and vision management, are focused on the needs of the organisation and rightly so. However, while this is happening, most individuals still have the question "but what about me?"

going on and rightly so too. When people are able to attend to what is personally meaningful to them and feel nourished through this process they bring peace to organisational processes and a richness and depth to their contributions, they make the connection between their natural yearning for meaning and how they are useful to the organisation which is energising and recommits them to their work.

Because people have common sources of meaning, it helps them to connect the personal to the organisational and the organisational to the personal. It makes it easy to cocreate the practical expression of goals and plans because people are already engaged and aligned, just as in the case study where Bill created solutions with his clients creating a collegial way of working in that part of the organisation.

In another case study in our book, Anglican ministers who were described by a bishop as "pissed off and passed over" were invited to a week-long retreat to help them identify the wisdom and gifts they've gathered and to think creatively about what they could do with these in the organisation. The retreat began with the Map of Meaning and at the end of a week; these priests, who had previously been beset by career crisis, midlife crisis and faith crisis arrived banging on their bishop's doors saying "You're not using us properly. Here are the things we want to do for the church, for you and for us, so use us."

Attending to the Whole of What Makes Work Meaningful

Often "service to others" is a key focus of the whole organisation and leaders rightly point out, "Working for this organisation IS meaningful. We serve our clients and we do so in a way that is responsible to the planet and the communities in which we operate."

While it is true that work is devoid of meaning if it makes no difference, it is equally true that, over the past decade, we have seen a significant loss of meaning occurs in occupations that have always made a difference, such as teaching and nursing. Just because an organisation has a focus on service, this alone does not make work meaningful.

Work is meaningful when all parts of being human can be brought to life. Too much focus on only one dimension over too long a period of time destroys meaning. So, while serving others is a vital part of what makes work meaningful, if your people (and you) do not have time or skills to reflect and be in touch with the inner self, they cannot evaluate how they are feeling. As a result they become disconnected from themselves and become inauthentic which can lead to thoughtless action and compromised values. If people do not have time or skills to be in unity, they waste enormous amounts of time and energy backbiting, keeping information to themselves and competing with each other. If people do not develop their full potential, they are bored, uncreative, spend too much time on non-essential activities and underachieve.

Our research shows that all aspects of meaningful work are important and that if any one aspect is underdeveloped for too long, people change jobs, become stressed out, switch off or shift all their energy to meaningful activities outside work. All

aspects of meaning are also important to organisational performance as an organisation that does not serve others, not have unity and not create conditions for people to stay in touch with their inner self and which does not provide opportunity to develop full potential clearly cannot function effectively.

The Map of Meaning allows people to see particular patterns in relation to the whole, so when it is used to diagnose a problem, the solution is holistic and sustainable.

One leader who found herself overwhelmed by the endless stream of leadership fads began to use the map as the basis for thinking about decision-making:

> When I came across the Map of Meaning in a workshop it was as if I came home to something deep in myself that I already knew. Instead of reading about the latest way to be a leader and feeling inadequate yet again, I began to explore the four pathways and base my leadership in that. Service to Others obviously links with Servant Leadership, and also extends to how our organisation serves the community, how I serve my people because it meets a human need in me, and how the people in my organisation need to have the conditions to be able to fully meet the needs of our customers. Unity with Others helped me to realise my own need for collegial support, so I joined a group of other local leaders that meets once a month, but it also helps me be aware of the need to share values with other people inside the organisation. Expressing Full Potential challenged me to examine my lack of creativity and wonder what that might look like in leadership. I'm still waiting on that one. Developing the Inner Self made me take stock of just how demanding this role is, how I need time to reflect on who I am becoming in my role and make choices about this, rather than end up someone I don't like or someone who just performs a role without being connected to it anymore. So I asked the Board for funding for a mentor. Most of all I notice that I am more peaceful. The Map has helped me take leadership back into my own hands, and at the same time never lets me be complacent about my role as it always asks what matters most.

Engage Openly with the Gap Between Vision and Aspiration and the Current Reality

New visions can and should create a buzz of excitement, "but reality always intrudes" (Ready and Conger 2008), and when it does, the vision often disappears.

Human life takes place somewhere between heaven and earth, between grace and gravity and between hope and disillusionment. Within our personal and organisational lives, we often swing wildly between the two. On the one hand we hear too much or even say too much, "let's be real here," "nice idea but in the *real* world…," or "we can't even consider these ideas within the current budget constraints." "Reality" here is the graveyard of aspiration. On the other hand we've all been to meetings and listened to people whose ideas are off the planet or sat through (or even given) a motivational speech knowing all the time that the vision is never going to happen because of office politics or lack of resources. If we consistently portray the organisation as being without flaws and if this is inconsistent with the employee experience of organisational, interpersonal or personal reality, it also creates a sense of meaninglessness.

We can see the importance of chairing meetings between heaven and earth in boom times, when the temptation is to go for the limitless vision and not be aware of the long-term implications or the possibility of future downturns as in the case of financial forecasters in recent years. And also now, when reality is so punishing for many organisations and many strategic plans seem to be no more inspiring than simply keeping afloat.

It's the same when the leader focuses so strongly on cost-cutting that they kill meaning for their people. You can drive down costs, but also drive out your best people. Instead, using the map as a way to think through the organisational challenges can be a way to keep both reality—that is, "we have to reduce costs"—and inspiration alive. We can ask such questions as, "How would unity with others help us cut costs and also increase a sense of meaning?" One organisation we know worked out that they weren't the only people in their situation and decided to pool knowledge and resources with noncompetitors. First, they brought in members from other organisations into their board so that there was alliance at the top level. Next, the CEOs kept in constant touch working together to support a new marketing initiative in the community. This saved costs and gave greater strength to the marketing message.

Having an external reminder of the gap between inspiration and reality also helps leaders monitor the reality of their own performance. In a small, pithy article called "Why Leaders Fail," Sternberg (2008) argues that unrealistic optimism, egocentrism, omniscience, omnipotence, invulnerability and moral disengagement are six cognitive fallacies failed leaders commit. To avoid them, there are three things leaders can do: be a reflective practitioner, actively seek honest 360 degree feedback and look at and evaluate the result of your decisions. All of these are easier if a leader can see both the vision and is willing to look at the reality of themselves and circumstances at the same time. The map helps with this.

As a CEO put it,

> Having this present in a very matter of fact way, so without judging has been very helpful in my communication with middle managers. They sometimes swing wildly between 'I'm competent and can do anything I put my mind to' and 'I'm overwhelmed, what difference can I really make?' In working with keeping a balance between and amongst different drivers I can now see that both of these statements are true in some way and seeing that, we can move more steadily towards what we are trying to achieve. Support each other better where needed and be more tolerant with each other.

Understand Your Organisation from the Perspective of an Ordinary Individual Employee

Amabile and Kramer (2012) argue that for a meaning not to be destroyed, it is important that leaders make sure that the view from the top matches the view on the ground so that they can accurately assess the effect of their actions on their employees. As Ralph Stayer says, "I discovered that people watched my every action to see if it supported or undermined our vision. They wanted to see if I practiced what I preached" (Hartman 1990).

Being a leader gives you a different perspective, the view from the bridge. Understanding MFW helps you to keep connected to what matters to each employee. And thus not only to connect every employee to the organisation but also to connect the organisation to every employee. Because the sources of meaning are universal, what's important to employees is also, at a human level, important to leaders. Using the Map of Meaning gives an insight into everyone in the organisation. It's a practical way of connecting directly, of finding yourself on the same wavelength and of removing the "them" and "us" so prevalent in organisations.

From this position, it is easier to be authentic and to say and do the things that truly do inspire and make a difference:

> One of the key things I've found since working with the Map is that I can easily relate to anybody at any level, in any situation. Of course we are different and have different roles, but I now can speak directly to them and not in a way that is patronising or "acting authentic." I enquire whether a certain decision or action from me creates more or less unity, more or less opportunity to develop inner self, full potential or to make a difference. We share inspirational quotes and take turns. The truth is that I need that moment to reconnect with what is inspirational just as much as they do.

And this humble leadership is effective. Joseph Badaracco writes in his book *Leading Quietly,* "[w]hat usually matters are careful, thoughtful, small, practical efforts by people working far from the limelight. In short, quiet leadership is what moves and changes the world (2002, p. 9)". But this quietness is much more easily achieved by people who can grasp and remain grounded in the whole of themselves as the Map of Meaning helps leaders to do.

Meaningful Work Simplifies and Integrates

Meaning is destroyed when systems are fragmented. Leaders regularly get caught between vision, bureaucratic needs and client demands, and employees experience organisations as a series of disconnected, competing and conflicting activities, practices and rules. For both groups, this fragmented focus leaves them feeling that they can never get on top of things.

Because meaningful work is so foundational to human well-being, it permeates and is relevant to all areas of the organisation. At the same time since the sources of meaning are consistent and enduring, the Map of Meaning offers a unifying framework that can reduce fragmentation.

When meaningful work is taken into account in every decision, it helps tremendously in integrating organisational practices. Take, for example, three practices which are all standard part of organising:

- Weekly meetings
- Performance reviews
- Strategic direction

In meetings we tend to be focused on the immediate agenda, often based around results, which while relevant to leaders unwittingly can destroy any sense of mean-

ing for others. We have found that when the Map of Meaning is understood and put on the wall of the meeting room, people start pointing to it asking, "How does this decision affect unity?" "How does it affect the ability of our employees to develop their full potential?" "Have we spent enough time considering the inspiration behind this and have we tested our vision enough against our current reality?" And if we do want to focus on results, we can still shape questions around meaning, such as "If we were to focus on increasing unity with our clients, how might this affect results?" In this way human motivation is naturally taken into consideration in all decision-making.

For example, one organisation keeps a big poster of the map in their board room. When they talked about the extent to which they wanted to engage with the union and were well into a discussion about how this would be efficient or inconvenient, someone pointed to unity with others on the map and asked, "What would the question look like from that perspective?" It shifted the discussion and later they welcomed the union onto their premises and have worked very constructively with them ever since. They used the map in other organisational quandaries such as restructuring, looking at leasing a fleet of new cars and used other questions from the map to open up new ways of thinking about decisions, all of which provided constructive outcomes.

Similarly we can evaluate performance reviews and even strategic planning through the Map of Meaning and quickly scan for how they contribute to unity, service, inspiration, etc.

Performance reviews although they were designed to be motivational are often seen as just another hoop to jump through. To make them purposeful one CEO put forward questions around the elements of the Map of Meaning for his people to think over before the interview, such things as "What do you think you did this year that increased unity in the team, in the organisation? Were there actions you took that decreased unity at any time? Do you feel that this year you were more creative than usual? Or less? What made the difference? What this year has made it easier for you to be more true to yourself?" While these were not the only questions asked, they opened up the review to a much richer and more rewarding dialogue. One thing that became apparent was that a focus on deadlines in sales targets got in the way of "developing the inner self", so the team decided to move to more flexible targets and found that by putting less pressure on customers, the organisation gained a better reputation.

Strategic review is another organisational event that can be transformed by simply evaluating the organisational strategy through the elements of the map and one organisation we know is designing their new business through questions based on the Map of Meaning. Others use the map to ask questions like, "What opportunities are there for increasing creativity as a core focus of the organisation in the next year?" or "How would increasing balance for our people shift our strategic focus?"

Again the map provides a new perspective. In one example, routine questions about "stakeholder relations" were changed to "What could we do to make a difference to our stakeholders and ourselves and between our stakeholders and ourselves?" Since the organisation is a Health Board in New Zealand where the indigenous Maori population have a more systemic and holistic world view in which relationships are

highly valued, framing the question this way transformed the conversation. Everyone engaged with real passion and decided that all marketing and communication materials needed to enhance the feeling that the health board is part of the community. It opened up new insights into what the hospital could provide to patients and ways they could do this (such as encouraging family members to stay and to bring food that is familiar to the patients, offering spiritual support), as well as extending to what the hospital needed from the patients for the new approaches to work (greater understanding of what the hospital could and couldn't offer).

In this way meaningful work becomes part of the actions and decisions that are taken, from the everyday right through to the strategic, because the people aspect of such decisions is now easy to grasp. As a result meaning, and with it the motivational effects of meaning, can be integrated throughout the organisational systems. We can see how the focus on different dimensions of meaning in the previous examples transformed a sales team and altered community relations and a marketing strategy. The focus remains the same—how does paying attention to unity with others shine light on our current situation—the questions are simple but need to be thoughtfully framed and asked with real intent. As we said at the beginning, MFW links to what is held deeply in people and requires honest and creative engagement.

Meaningful Work Is Already Strongly Related to Corporate Responsibility Activities and Strengthens Them

Often companies in addressing corporate responsibility (CR) spawn more mini-bureaucracies which become peripheral and have little connection to the company's main operating systems (Paine 2004). Thus, while a CR focus holds great promise for meaningful work, here too, it is often unwittingly destroyed. When MFW is integrated in the internal systems of the organisation, it also naturally flows into the external systems and supports CR practices.

The Map of Meaning naturally integrates internal practices with ethical and stakeholder practices. The skills and insights obtained in unity with others within the system naturally flows into unity with stakeholders, and vice versa. For example, in the previous example of the Health Board in New Zealand, the focus on making a difference with the stakeholders began to feedback into the organisation when they noticed that what mattered to the patients might also matter to the employees. This led to greater awareness of cultural needs and a more accepted inclusion of the spiritual at work, for example, beginning some meetings with a prayer. Developing full potential naturally flows into the innovation required to support the planet and communities. Developing the inner self naturally flows into the reflectiveness required to be ethical in business, and service to others naturally extends to serve humanity. The human need for balance contributes to creating sustainable work practices which in turn support healthy communities. In responsible organisations inspiration is derived from a positive and hopeful view of humanity and the planet,

and reality is seen as a vaccination against complacency and used to develop the humility to be self-critical about the inevitable gap between espoused values and actual practice.

Meaning Is Natural and Simple to Work with and It Requires Skill, Understanding and Mindfulness

Meaningful work is not a technique or tool imposed on another person, but rather a journey that we take together. No one person, not those in charge, can claim to know more about how to live meaningfully than another. It is a collective human quest. Focusing on meaningful work is effective and simplifies practice. At the same time it is deep work. It takes time for individuals and organisations to build up the skills to see where and how meaning is created and lost in everyday actions and decisions. As a leader your ability to understand and work with the human need for meaning at work can enrich your own work life as well as create real benefits for your people and your organisation.

Meaningful work is not simplistic. All the dimensions of meaningful work are in constant and dynamic movement. The Map of Meaning allows us to frequently and simply reconnect with the current state of meaningfulness for people and therefore within the organisation. Over the years, we have learned how to work with meaning in a way that is inclusive and effective. We have captured many cases, reflections and exercises and useful references in our book "The Map of Meaning" by Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Lani Morris (2011).

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