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Waking Up to the Power of Reflection to Unlock Transformation in People, Teams and Organizations

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Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

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Abstract

In our busy and frenetic world, leaders face overwhelm. Never before has there been so much change on so many fronts, demanding attention, squeezing out critical reflective time and thinking space. This is time and space to develop the personal capacities to lead with greater clarity, humanity and wisdom in order for transformation to occur, to learn how to reflect on experience, to sense what is needed and to lean into the futures' emerging potential, instead of problem solving based on habitual thinking and yesterday's logic. This chapter will give reflection and reflective learning a rebranding, propelling it from dusty classrooms to become centre stage in a leader's toolkit, and will show how to apply the findings of the authors' important new research in the workplace. The new leadership process "Reflect to *Create!*" with its seven human capacities for inspiring, creating and leading transformational change in today's VUCA world is introduced. The four core conditions and four key practices to embed the approach are also introduced.

Keywords: leadership, reflection, reflective learning, creativity, innovation, transformation

1. The bigger picture

1.1. Leadership today

Change and challenge is everywhere.

At no time in our human history has the human race faced so many changes on so many fronts. These seismic changes are challenging the very essence of who we are, how we think, how we relate and how we work. How leaders chose to live the questions as the waves of societal, economic, business, organizational, technological and ecological changes and uncertainty sweep through us, our families, our communities and our organizations will determine

the fates and well-being of many: shaping both our individual and collective ability to sink or swim in the tides of unceasing change and transformation.

Johansen [1] helpfully coined the acronym VUCA to describe today's world. VUCA is shorthand for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. While leaders have always worked in VUCA worlds what is new and different is the scale and intensity of the changes. It is this scale and intensity, which consigns predictive planning, yesterday's logic and linear thinking to the scrapheap.

Leaders everywhere have both a pivotal and a very privileged role and responsibility in creating the conditions that will help themselves and others to reflect and innovate: to make sense and meaning of all that is happening to inform wise actions which are in service of both the personal and the collective well-being.

1.2. The loneliness of leadership

A quick look at what the researchers are saying gives a feel for the scale of the challenges which leaders face whatever their role or place in the organization—both for themselves and within their organizations and communities. It also shows why leadership is lonely. The data also show that leaders and their teams face huge capability and capacity gaps to both survive and thrive in today's VUCA world.

As the data report:

- Only 15% of leaders sampled showed a consistent capacity to innovate and successfully transform their organizations [2].
- Only 30% of CEOs are confident that they have the talent needed to grow their businesses [3].
- 13% of employees are actively engaged (and twice that number would actively sabotage their employer) [4].
- 58% of new executives fail within 18 months of taking up post [5].
- Only 8–12% of those who attend formal training translate their new skills into measurable performance [6].
- 75% of organizations report that they struggle with overwhelmed employees [7].
- Constant distraction where people now check their cell phones almost 150 times a day with busy professionals focusing for only 7 minutes at a time [8].
- Where the poorest 40% of the world's population accounts for 5% of global income. The richest 20% accounts for 75% of the world's income [9].

and

- Where we are using 150% of our planet's capacity to sustain our current levels of consumption [10].

High profile scandals like the MP Business Expenses scandal in the United Kingdom in 2014, the Report on the Hillsborough Football Stadium Disaster (in 2016) [11], the NHS Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry (in 2013) [12] or business failures like the Lehman Brothers in USA, or British Home Stores in 2016 are showing a malaise at the heart of corporate decision-making. A report by? WHAT IF! in 2015 [13] reported that almost 72% of leaders admitted that their organization is too reliant on fading revenue streams, that 58% of teams were failing to lead for innovation, and that 28% of leaders believed that their current business model was not sustainable.

A recent IBM Global CEO Survey [14] noted that the great majority of CEOs expect that business complexity is going to increase and that more than half doubted their ability to manage it. Other studies [15] appear to consistently show that approximately only 5% of leaders in the West have the mental and emotional capacity needed to lead for transformation. This indicates that leading effectively for transformation in today's turbulent economic, political and social waters is beyond most leaders' experience and mental capacity.

1.3. Scoping the research inquiry

Revans [16] had devised the equation that in times of change learning needs to be equal to or greater than the rate of change.

I knew from my own experiences as a leader in complex political environments the importance and value of taking time out for reflection to create and to innovate: to find new ways around old problems. I also knew from my executive coaching practice that the pressures which require leaders to both capitalize on the potential and possibility held in the future, *whilst* also delivering on the day to day was requiring me and them to learn new post-conventional leadership capacities and capabilities to work effectively with the unknown. I was aware these new capacities, while they may be natural, can also be counter-intuitive and are not traditionally taught. I was also aware that conventional linear thinking, the accumulation of pure technical knowledge, theories or tools and yesterday's logic were no longer enough. For me, that learning to lead this way was necessarily a radical inner journey into every deepening self-awareness and consciousness to perceive, sense and create anew. I therefore turned to the literature to study what was already available.

As I noted in my research [17], Schon [18]—building and developing on the work of others like Dewey [19], Lewin [20] and Piaget [21]—had *“highlighted the value of reflection and reflective learning practices to professional learning and development.”* In my research [17], I noted *“that reflection could help professionals move beyond early technical competence to learn how to navigate the humanness, messiness, ambiguity and complexity of actual practice with clarity, courage and compassion.”* As Schon [18] wrote:

“In the varied topography of professional practice there is a high hard ground overlooking the swamp. On the high ground manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based theory & technique. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals and to society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. The practitioner

must choose. Shall he/she remain on the high ground where he/she can solve relatively unimportant problems according to prevailing standards or rigor or shall he descend into the swamp of important problems and non-rigorous inquiry?" [18]

Despite this pedigree, it still seemed that reflection was primarily confined to technical or clinical practice, for example, the legal, health, educational or therapeutic professions and much less in the leadership domain.

1.4. Framing the research question

My research study therefore sought to explore with a small sample of leaders their real-life experience of reflection in the workplace.

The research question was:

"What are leaders' experiences of reflection?"

I wanted to explore how they defined reflection and reflective practices, what their processes for reflection were, what helped or hindered their reflection, what benefits their experiences had generated for them as well as what this might mean for the development of future leaders.

1.5. Design of the research

1.5.1. Study participants

Seven leaders working at executive director, board or equivalent volunteered to participate in the study. They came from a wide range of different organizations with very different training, backgrounds, experiences and career trajectories. They were leaders who clearly saw themselves as leaders *and* who also saw themselves as engaging in some form of reflection.

1.5.2. Data collection

- Semi structured interviews were used to gather the data. The following questions were asked [22]:
- What is your definition of reflection?
- What are your processes of reflection? (when, where and how?)
- What triggers your processes of reflection?
- What helps and what hinders your processes of reflection?
- What – if any – were the benefits for you?
- What might your experiences mean for the development of future leaders?

The interviews were transcribed and interrogated using Grounded Theory Methodology [23]. I chose Grounded Theory Methodology because it is a constructivist research methodology, which allows meaning to naturally emerge from the data.

1.5.3. Data analysis

Sixty-one thousand words were transcribed and analyzed to create units of meaning or raw codes. On average about every eight words were grouped to create a new raw code, and 75% of these were coded in vivo to retain the richness of the data.

Alongside the creation of the raw codes, the simultaneous process of constant comparison enabled the grouping of the raw codes into different categories or families.

This process allowed meaning to emerge from the data and from which the meta-concept of “Reflect to Create” finally and very naturally surfaced.

2. What the research said and what it means for leaders

The findings from the research are now shared with a commentary about what these findings mean for leaders today.

The next section will offer the seven “Reflect to Create” leadership capacities with four core conditions and four core practices, which could make reflection mainstream as *the way* to learn, relate and work in any team or organization.

2.1. Defining reflection for today

What emerged from the data was that the leaders had experienced reflection as an intentional process of retreat, reflect and return. That this was a conversation with experience; as the participants said [22]:

“to stop the busyness and stand back”,

“finding space”

and

“taking time out to think”

Reflection was defined from the data as [22]:

“a different, particular and radical form of inquiry and thinking – which had a rigor and a process – and which enabled leaders to integrate their learning from their experiences and to develop new understandings to apply in the world.”

This flow of retreat, reflect and return enabled the leaders to journey through a process, which mapped against Schamer's Theory U model [10] for letting go, to sense and to presence in order to let come. It enabled leaders to stop habitual downloading and unconscious projection. They could then become open and receptive to what is wanting to emerge. In quantum physics, this is the zero-point field teaming with life, possibility and potential; it is from this deeply reflective space that new insights and choices can naturally emerge for wise action. This process is shown in **Figure 1**.

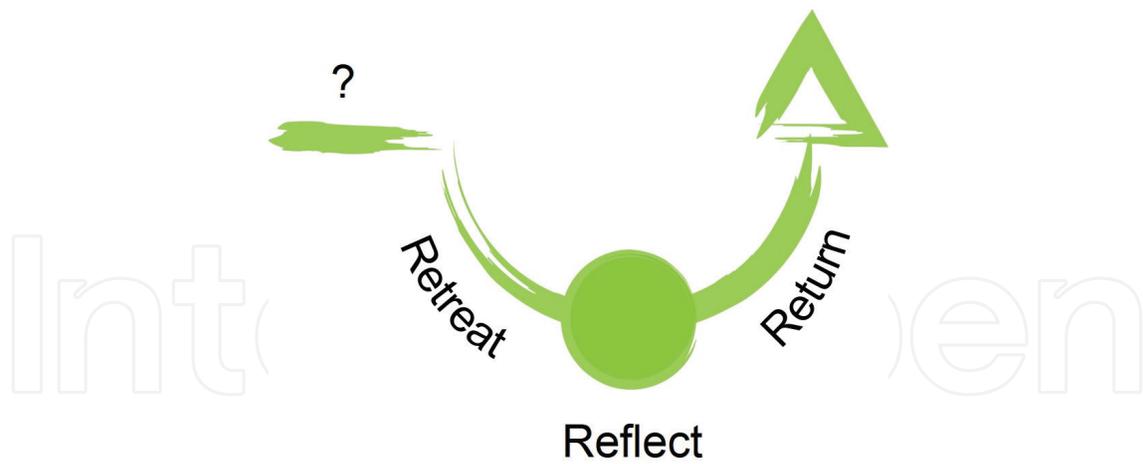


Figure 1. Reflections' flow process.

The leaders reported that they had developed their own questioning frameworks. But a generic format of questions for inquiry seemed to emerge which broadly included:

Retreat

- i. What is inviting me to stop?
- ii. What my current reality?
- iii. What is my inquiry?
- iv. What am I assuming and need to let go of in order to see afresh?

Reflect

- i. What am I sensing from my body and from the wider field?
- ii. Am I being fully present to what is wanting to emerge?
- iii. What am I learning?
- iv. What new perspectives and possibilities are emerging?

Return

- i. What new choices for decision-making and elegant action are now emerging?
- ii. How do these choices get tested?

One leader from the research [22] described it as:

“a fluid process of sense making to make meaning of making the unconscious conscious.”

Another said [22]:

“to learn from experience – good or bad – and to put it into practice.”

As I wrote [22]:

“Reflection was seen as a gateway into other lands; for BIGGER conversations within BIGGER landscapes of work and life, and which always impacted on the work. The depth and value of the process

appeared to depend on the extent to which all of their heart, mind, body and soulful intelligences rather than just the rational logical brain were engaged with the question”

2.2. When does “reflection” become “reflective practice”?

As my research showed [22] “*reflection had become reflective practice when a **consistent** discipline of reflection had become established.*” All seven leaders had evolved their own practices which worked for them and which were also developing and evolving all the time overtime as the benefits of their reflective practices became more and more apparent to them.

All felt that reflection was no longer just a tool but had now become an intrinsic part of who they were and their way of being and relating to the world. One leader said:

“Reflection has become a very natural and obvious thing to do” [22].

Another said:

“My reflective processes of sense making and making sense is applied all the time now to everything that I do” [22].

2.3. The transformational benefits of reflection

The leaders reported that reflection had served to support their personal development, growth and transformation as a person who is also a leader [17], which also had delivered material business benefits and outcomes.

The leaders reported that they saw that learning to lead was actually first and foremost a radical act of learning to know and lead themselves. They realized that by first learning how to connect with themselves, they could better connect with others and the world and discover what was needed from them in their roles. This was experienced as a deep and profound alignment between “WHO you are” and “HOW you lead”: an awareness of how a leader's inner world is expressed in their acts of leadership. This is because leadership is relational – it is all about the relationships that a leader creates – and means that leadership is fundamentally when the masks and trappings have been stripped away mentally – when a creative expression of self. This interrelationship is shown below **Figure 2**:

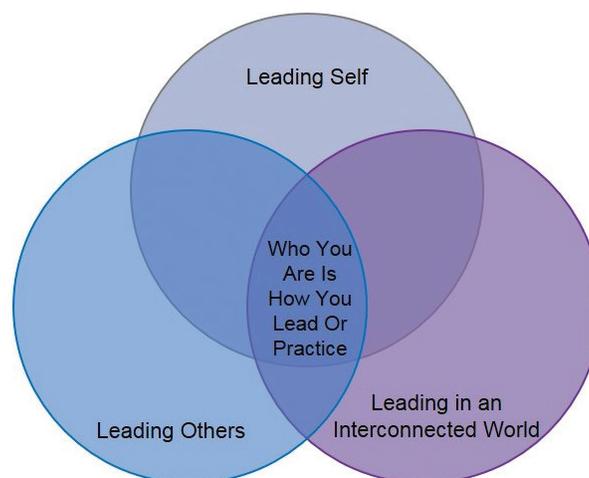


Figure 2. Relationships with self, other and the world.

As Bennis [24] writes:

“Leadership is first being, then doing. Everything the leader does reflects what he or she is.”

Technical knowledge and expertise are important but not enough. As Murdoch [25] writes:

“My experience is that operating alongside all of our professional trainings, our thinking, tools and models, is the personhood of the practitioner – our humanity matters, as does our maturity, our open-heartedness and our generosity of spirit.”

Owen [26] reinforces this point when he writes:

“People cannot be molded to be the same. Becoming a leader (or people professional) is an individual process and fundamental to the process is ‘learning’. However, the learning is not through ‘training’ alone, but through personal experience and learning from that experience. When learning from experience occurs, it involves looking inwards at who we are. It means a deep awareness of who we are and the sort of human being we want to become. Once we know this, it can be expressed in our relationships and actions at work” [25].

Thinking of the quality offered leaders a potential challenge this assumptions, mindsets and pre-existing frames of reference, which were no longer serving.

Six high-level categories of benefits emerged for these leaders, which supported the deepening development of new capacities, capabilities and insights across a range of leadership competencies.

What appeared new was that the reported benefits included not only building self-awareness and authenticity, which might be typically associated with reflection, but also how reflection helped the leaders to develop new capacities for working more creatively with emergence, possibility and the unknown. These were, as shown in **Figure 3**, to:

- think differently (25%)
- create differently (20%)
- be different (16%); relate differently (15%)
- act differently (15%)

and

- feel differently (9%)

As I reported [22] leaders

“used stories of their successes to help illustrate how reflection had helped them restructure their businesses. For example: how their reflection had helped one leader set a new strategic direction for their organization in response to negative press; how two leaders had used reflection to steer a way through a merger and a change in company ownership. All of them had used reflection to develop a more powerfully authentic leadership presence, manage career moves, or to rebrand. Each of them attributed improvements in their wellbeing, resilience and work success to their reflective practices.”

The degree of benefit [22] from each act of reflection was

“contextual depending on where each leader was in their own journey, their degree of engagement with the process, the depth of their exploration and the relative importance of the issue. But the benefits did

appear to be cumulative and mutually reinforcing, creating a new body of personal knowledge or narrative about themselves and their place in the world over time."

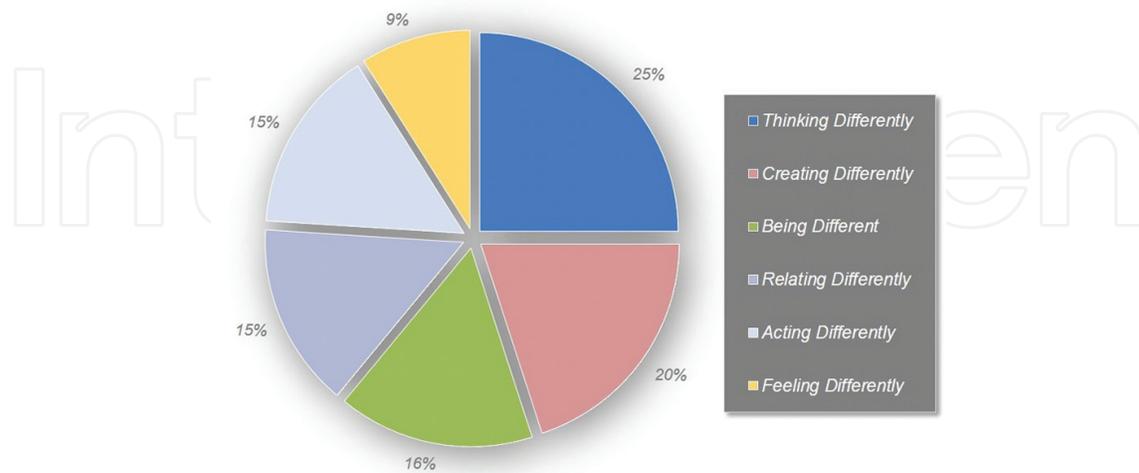


Figure 3. Transformational benefits of reflection.

As one leader said:

"reflection has helped me to grow all of who I am."

Another said:

"it has helped me to develop as a human being who is also a leader to do more, be more and contribute more."

The leaders had all arrived at a point where they all felt a personal need and a corporate responsibility to continually challenge and develop themselves, from the inside out. In this way, they explored their gifts and their blocks (where they also had the greatest leverage for change) and expanded their self-awareness and consciousness. This enabled each of them to develop the new insights and new capacities to lead well, because as Brown [27] states transformational leaders:

"take the time to see into their own processes, to disclose their feelings and thinking, to be honest about themselves, their train of thought, their thinking, their reservations, their struggles.... With that courage the transformational leader invites all of the human talents of us all and the result is a new and necessary richness in our world of work, as sense of being at home, ourselves in the workplace.... And that starting point is their own reflection."

Reflection had become a foundational way of being and relating. As one leader said from the research:

"Reflection is foundational and fundamental to me living and working deliberately."

2.4. "Reflect to Create"

Defining reflection as an *Act of Creation*

My study concluded [17] that

“at a meta level the overarching value of reflection was that it was an ACT of CREATION: that it could be a process for bringing forth something new into the world – be it an idea, a connection, a feeling, an act, a relationship, service, a product or a solution – instead of leader merely repeating past habits or patterns.”

The leaders saw reflection as a key enabler to leading well, as the gateway and the means for *“aligning personal fulfillment and professional development”* [22]

As Einstein [28] said:

“Problems cannot be solved from the consciousness which created them.”

As one leader said:

“reflection was the gateway to possibilities.”

Another leader said that:

“I know work in an emergent FUTURE domain which has its presence now.”

2.5. Reflections’ poor image

When leaders described their own experiences of the benefits of reflection they said [22]:

“that is was alive, fluid and full of movement”;

“I love finding the ‘aha’ moment – it is a bit like a dopamine hit”;

“I love to find the link between things”;

or

“I really value having the personal space to think to carry be forward into the next phase.”

However, they were also aware that reflection was still more commonly seen as almost *“a dirty word”* and *“counter culture”* in business. It was often seen as *“something woolly”* and *“off-putting”*; that it was *“dull and static”*; and that it was their *“guilty secret”* and a *“guilty luxury, something I do in private away from the office.”* Or as something which is associated with blame or failure when things do wrong. One leader said that the bosses of the organization had put *“comfy sofas around the building but people were scared to use them for fear of being seen as having lots of space time or not being seen as busy enough”* [22].

2.6. The costs of not reflecting

As Brown [27] states:

“tinkering with the after effects of events has much less impact And yet many people do just that. With their attention captured by events, their calendars jammed with activity, they are unable to place their attention at the level within themselves where real transformation can begin” [27].

The research found that the costs attributable to not reflecting had potentially big personal and corporate implications [22]. These were quantified as:

- a loss of understanding (22%)
- a loss of creativity (20%)

- poor decision-making (17%)
- a loss of energy (17%)
and
- downstream a loss of productivity (6%).

This is shown below (**Figure 4**):

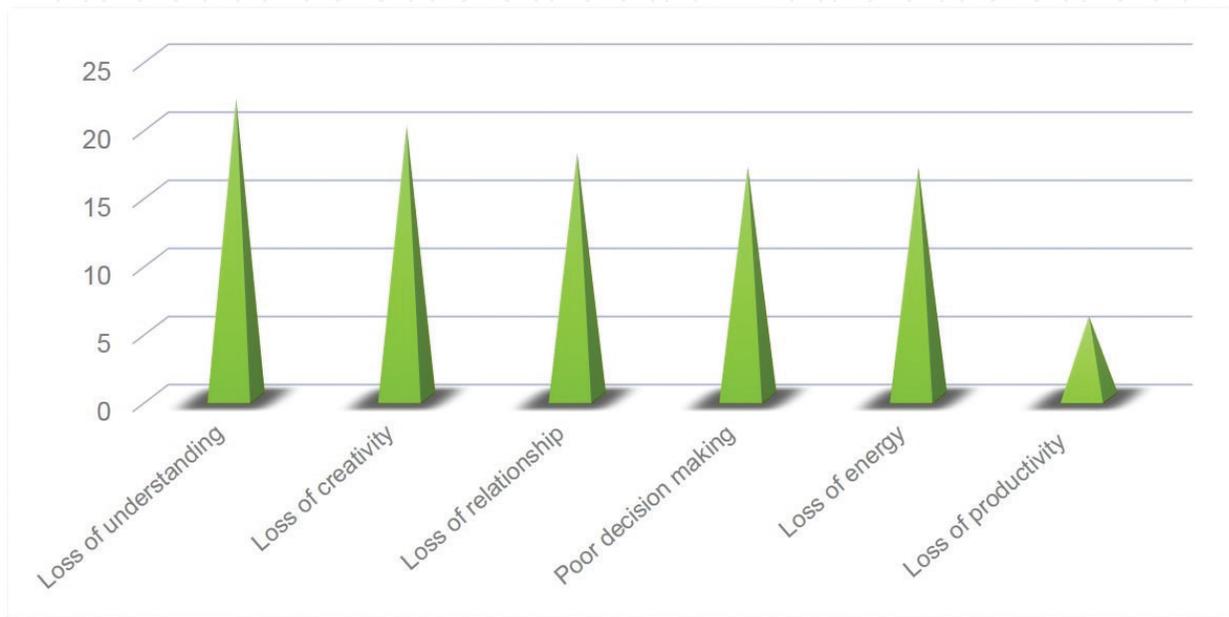


Figure 4. Costs of not reflecting.

2.7. Other headlines from the research

Other key findings have been published elsewhere [17], but to help to understand how to create the practices for a “Reflect to *Create*” leader, the key headlines are summarized below.

2.7.1. Triggers for reflection

The leaders reported that triggers for reflection were predominately from an embodied awareness of something that was new, surprising or troubling. Work issues nearly always returned to the personal.

2.7.2. The “How” of reflection

Reflection predominately took place on their own, sometimes in a facilitated conversation with a thinking partner or coach or (and much less frequently) within a larger group. Reflective journaling was the most frequently used mode of reflecting.

2.7.3. The “Where” of reflection

The leaders reported that reflection predominately took place away from their workplaces because of the busyness of the office. But there was a sense that reflecting is also actually accessible to them anywhere at any time.

2.7.4. What helps reflection?

Reflection emerged as a personal choice. The leaders had chosen to make the time and space in their busy schedules to reflect and learn from experience because they understood its benefits. As the research discovered [22], other mechanisms like

“a supportive organizational culture, being ‘taught’ the tools for reflection, the requirements of a course or training program to write learning logs, working with a thinking partner (like a coach or supervisor) or the support of others were seen as helpful but secondary to this very personal commitment.”

One said that

“I learnt the value of having personal thinking space.”

Another said:

“I learnt a framework for thinking which was new.”

All seven leaders also felt that their participation on either leadership or personal development courses had helped to remind them or fine-tune their own reflective practices. They also felt that there was no one best way to “do” reflection: that this emerges as a result of personal experimentation, choice and preferences so as to:

“remove its threat and mystique” [22].

2.7.5. What hinders reflection?

The biggest factors inhibiting reflection was where their more senior leadership—and/or the leadership culture around them—did not invest in reflection, did not role model reflective learning or did not believe in the benefits of reflection. There were also worries about trust and safety, possible breaches of confidentiality and the personal and business risks of sharing personal vulnerabilities.

3. Reflection as a transformational way of being and leading

Reflection has the potential to unlock creativity, innovation and transformation. Leaders cannot command people to be more reflective or creative, but they can create the conditions to liberate fresh thinking and innovation.

Ancient philosophers and thinkers have long understood the power of reflection, but in today's busyness, this powerfully transformative learning methodology has become overlooked. Kolb's [29] stage of reflective observation in the learning cycle is often ignored or short-circuited as shown in **Figure 5**. But the good news is that human beings are all naturally reflective. Human beings we are natural storytellers and meaning makers.

This section takes the learning from the research and describes the HOW to make reflection come alive in the workplace by exploring:

- What are the qualities and behaviors which leaders need to role model in themselves and for others, which support reflection and reflective learning?

- How do leaders consciously create the conditions for reflection for themselves and for others?
- How can leaders develop their own practices, which enable reflection to become a way of learning, relating and working?

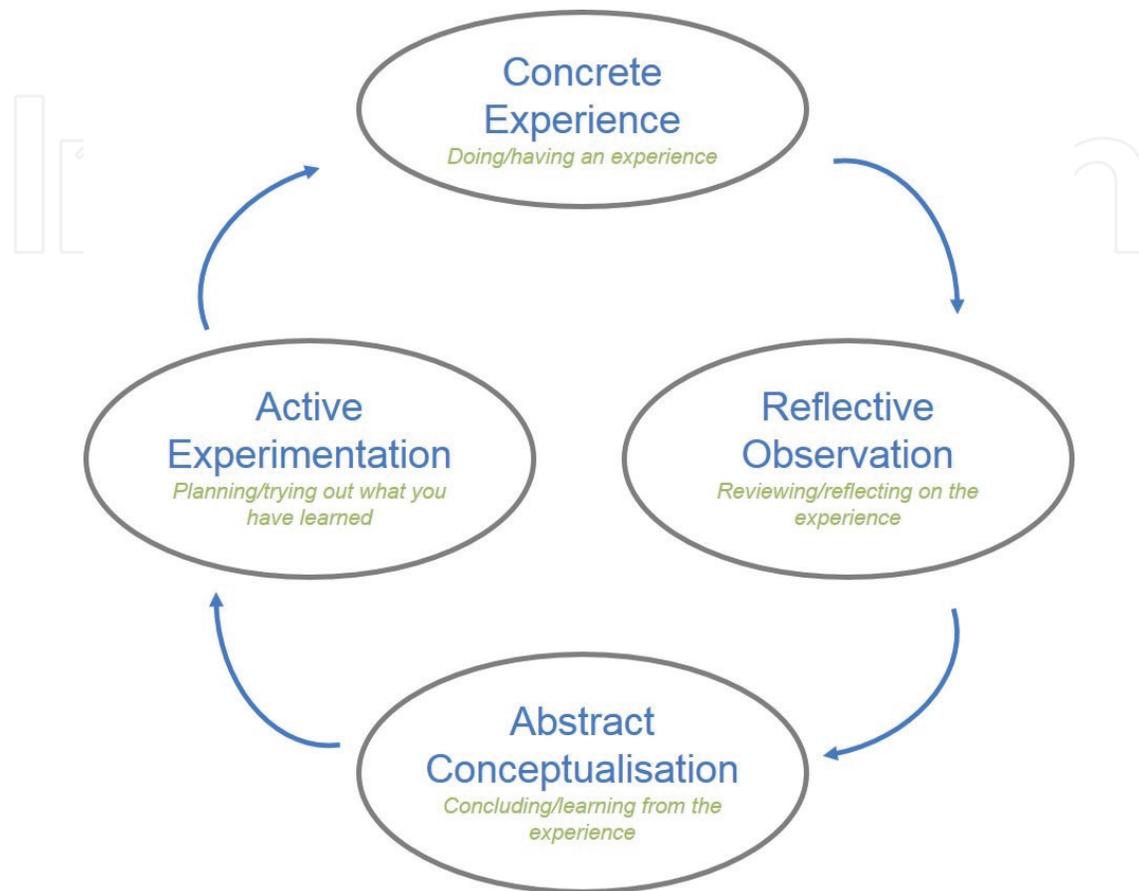


Figure 5. Kolb's learning cycle.

These will be explored through the “Reflect to *Create*” 7Cs leadership capacities map, the four core conditions which facilitate and support reflective learning and the four core practices which underpin reflective practice.

3.1. The “Reflect to *Create*” 7C's leadership capacities map

The 7Cs seek to define the seven foundational human capacities for leaders (and people practitioners everywhere) to lead and work well. These are the capacities, which are more likely to facilitate change and transformation.

The 7Cs have been developed through observed practice of delivering over 3,000 hours of executive coaching and supervision practice, through extensive reading, writing and research, and by applying and testing the findings of the research.

The 7Cs uniquely focus on the inside out vertical learning needed to develop the foundational human capacities for inspiring and leading deep change rather than just the more traditional focus on outside in horizontal learning for capability and competence development. Both are needed, but the emphasis needs to shift.

Capacity is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary [30] as:

“the power of containing, receiving, experiencing or producing”

It is the space and spaciousness that leaders can learn to create within themselves to side step ego, default behaviors, assumptions and narrow Preconceived mindsets. Because it is these which fearfully want to maintain the status quo, seek control and impose rapid fire solutions. Capacity complements capability, which the OED defines as:

“the power of action, of acting.”

The 7C's map therefore focuses on the being of the leader in order to complement, inform and shape their doing. Capacities shape the source and being of the leader and are the energy, which shapes how their capabilities are enacted. Because “WHO you are is HOW you lead” (**Figure 6**).

The 7Cs are Care, Curiosity, Courage, Compassion, Connection, Contemplation and Creativity© and are shown in **Figure 7**.

Each of the 7Cs is defined and described in turn and will be illustrated by a few core questions to bring each capacity alive.

Capacity 1: Care

Caring is at the heart of being and at the heart of our humanity. Passion is overrated and cannot always be sustained. What, who and how we care defines us.

Caring (and taking care) with people, issues, choices and decisions is a fundamental expression of our deeper purpose, meaning, values and integrity in action. It also shows up in how we are experienced by others.

Caring sets the compass for authentic, ethical and compassionate leadership. Leadership is relational. Leading is about relationships. Leaders earn trust; it is not given. As Cashman [31] writes:

“Leadership is not simply something we do. It comes from somewhere inside us. Leadership is a process, an intimate expression of who we are. It is our being in action.”

Core questions to explore this capacity are:

- a. What do you care about?
- b. Why do you choose to lead?
- c. Do you care enough about this?
- d. Is this decision ethical?

Capacity 2: Curiosity

Curiosity drives inquiry, questioning and learning. Curiosity keeps leaders open and receptive. The human brain loves questions. Curiosity keeps leaders awake, alerts to their blind spots, avoids complacency, questions the status quo and drives creativity and innovation.

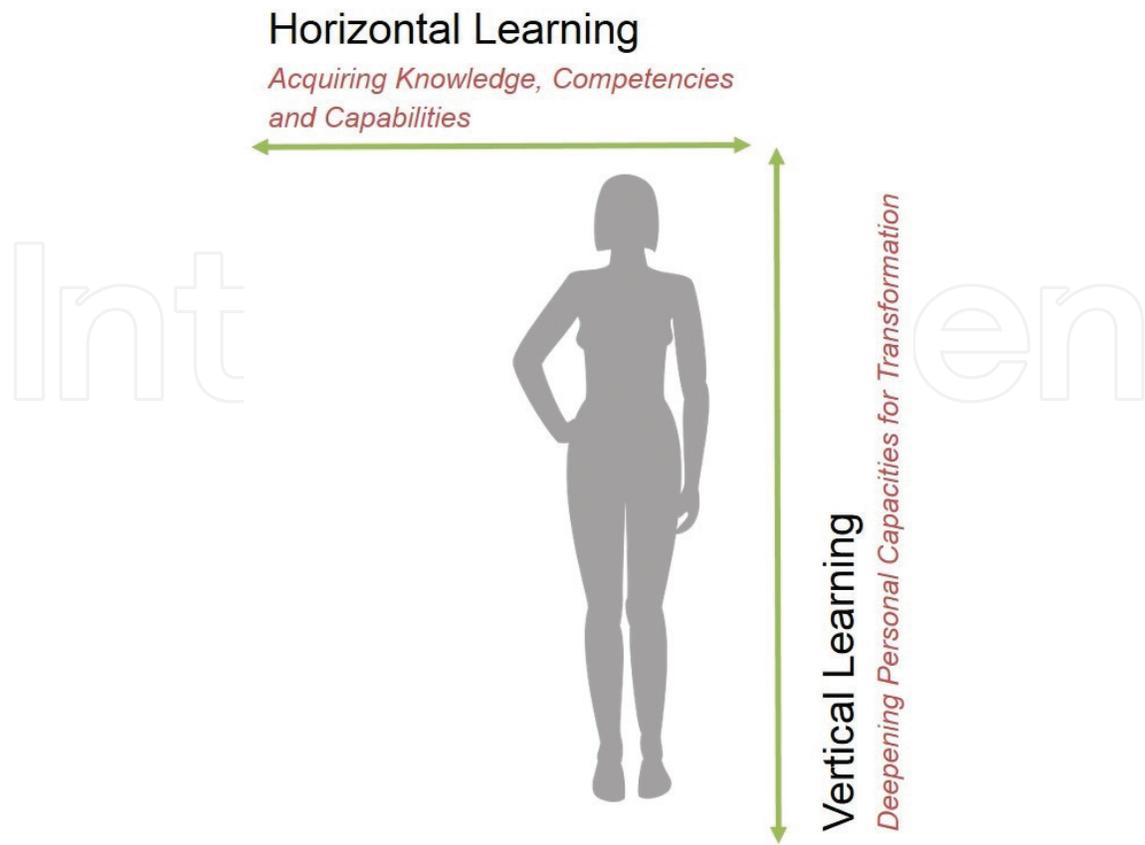


Figure 6. Difference between horizontal learning for knowledge and capability development and vertical learning for personal capacities for transformation.

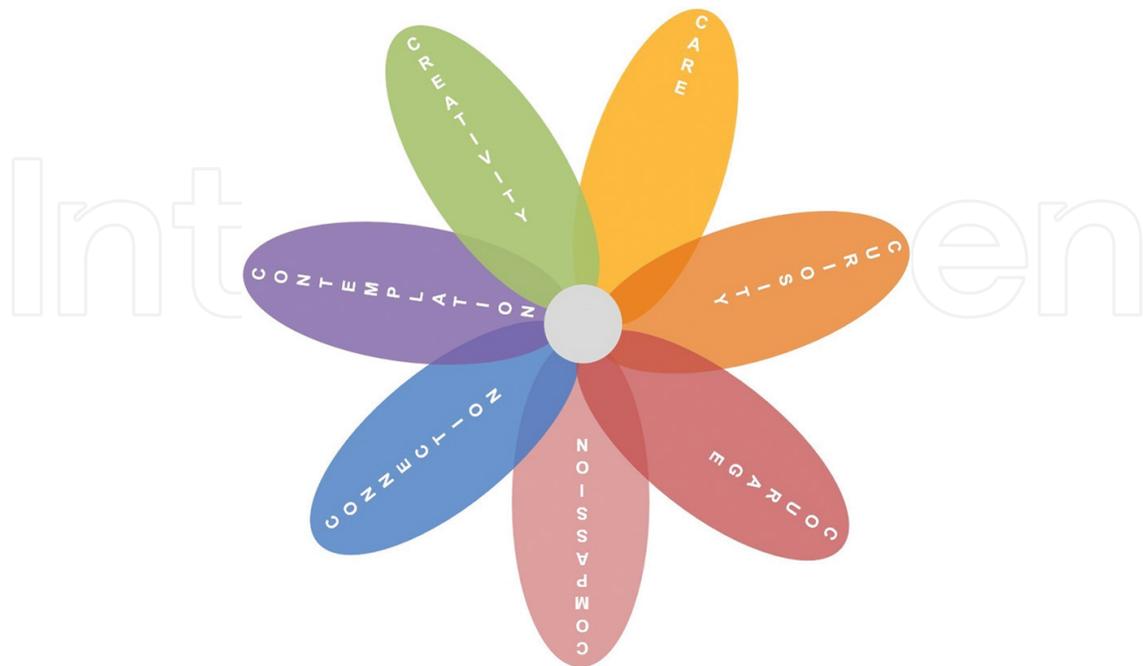


Figure 7. 7Cs "Reflect to Create" leadership capacities map©.

Curiosity's questioning puts leaders and their teams at the edge of their learning, challenging the known, assumed and expert in order to explore other possibilities, perspectives and potential. It enables leaders to sense and lean into what is wanting and needing to emerge. As Einstein [32] wrote:

"The important thing is to not stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality."

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. What are you curious about?
- b. When was the last time you were truly surprised or discovered something new?
- c. Where are your blocks or blind spots?
- d. What is emerging?
- e. Who can give you honest feedback?

Capacity 3: Courage

Courage in English is derived from "Coeur", which means "heart" in French. Courage comes from the intelligence of the heart to be brave, bold and fearless for wise action.

Courage enables leaders to move forward whilst also being aware of their vulnerabilities, fears and risks. Leaders with courage feel the future and act upon it, comfortable to prototype and test and to learn. According to Coco Chanel [33]:

"The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud."

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. What are you called to do?
- b. What are you here for?
- c. What do you really want to create in your life?
- d. What is needed right now?

Capacity 4: Compassion

Compassion is the capacity to connect to yourself, to others and to be aware of our shared humanity.

Compassion is not just empathy. Compassion is the capacity to be with and to connect to the feelings of others whilst also staying centered and connected to self.

Compassion is the awareness of the inter-relatedness of everything. People exist in relationship. Compassion is the capacity to embrace all of what it means to be fully human: the vulnerabilities, the joys, the losses and the celebrations, which accompany an everyday life. As the poet John Donne [34] wrote:

*"No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee."*

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. How do you show your compassion?
- b. How, who and what do you judge?
- c. What touched you most today?
- d. How honest are you about your own vulnerabilities and how they show up in your work?

Capacity 5: Connection

Connection is the capacity to see the deeper underlying and universal inter-connections in and between all of life. Connection is the capacity to appreciate, value and work our intimate interconnections with all living things across the dimensions of past, present and future.

Connection gives us a bigger perspective, purpose and sense of belonging within the world and the work we do. It also bestows an awareness of how our actions can affect others and our planet. As Einstein [35] wrote:

"A human being is part of the whole, called by us the 'universe', a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and his feelings, as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical illusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free to ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. When, how and why did you last feel a deep connection with someone or something?
- b. What did this connection feel like?
- c. What happened?

- d. How did your perspective alter?
- e. How would you describe your connection with your team/organization?

Capacity 6: Contemplation

Contemplation is the capacity to learn to turn away from the endless busyness, rush and noise of everyday living to tune into ourselves, to be with ourselves and hear ourselves think.

Contemplation is the capacity to listen deeply to ourselves, to sit with and to be with issues, trusting that in time—and *with* time—that our own inner wisdom and knowing will surface. It is the capacity to be fully and mindfully present in the moment. This stills the ego and our strategic minds in order that we can listen to all of our other and perhaps quieter bodily, heart-based and soulful intelligences. As Parker Palmer [36] describes the soul as like a wild animal, he writes:

“The soul is like a wild animal... whilst tough, resilient and resourceful, savvy and self-sufficient it is also shy.. and will only come out when it is safe to do so...”

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. Do you create the time and space to tune into yourself?
- b. How do you listen to yourself think?
- c. What are you holding onto that you need to let go off to see afresh?

Capacity 7: Creativity

Creativity is the capacity to break old patterns and habitual ways of being, seeing, relating, learning and working to create anew. Creativity is the capacity to bring the new into the world—be it a new product, idea, insight or way of working—while also being deeply respectful of past efforts, which have brought the individual or team to the point of a new creative breakthrough.

As George Lois an American Art Director [37] said:

“Creativity can solve any problem. The creative act, the defeat of habit by originality, overcomes everything.”

Creativity thrives where there is time and space for care, curiosity, courage, compassion, connection and contemplation to blend and work its magic.

Core questions to explore this capacity are as follows:

- a. What inspires you?
- b. What are the seeds of the future in the present here and now?
- c. How can you bring more light and playfulness into your work to enable creativity to flourish?

3.2. The four core conditions for “Reflect to Create”

The four core pillars or environmental conditions for reflection to flourish are creating relationships and cultures built on: trust, safety, support and challenge.

The four pillars are mutually dependent and interdependent reinforcing each other to create thriving learning cultures where leaders can continually apply, deepen and test their capacities for transformational leadership in the real world of work.

The conditions weave together for the following reasons:

- *Trust* because leadership is relational, and without trust there is no relationship.
- *Safety* because leaders and their teams need to feel that they are being safely held in their experimentation and risk taking.
- *Challenge* because questioning and feedback are critical to innovation, exploration, accountability and staying on track.
- *Support* because working in this way is demanding, lonely, exciting and exhausting, and leaders need to be continually resourced for the long haul.

These conditions hold the work as shown in **Figure 8**.

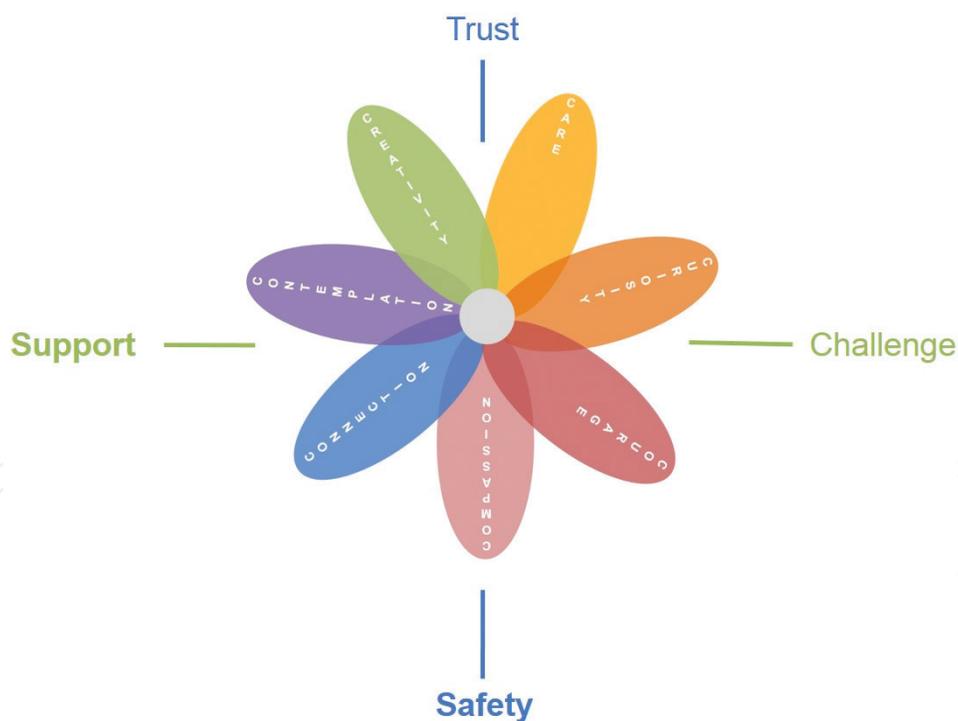


Figure 8. Four conditions for “Reflect to Create.”

3.3. The four core practices for “Reflect to Create”

The four core practices are the personal practices that nourish the deepening of the seven foundational capacities. These are a beginner's mindset, building foundations and scaffolding, developing a mindfulness practice and making the commitment as shown and described below.

1. Starting with a beginner's mindset

Assume nothing, play with openness, wonder, spontaneity, generosity and abundance, finding inspiration from unexpected sources.

2. Building the foundations and the scaffolding for reflection

Find and/or design your places, spaces, times, ways, processes, people, inspirations, structures, places and spaces that work for you.

3. Developing a mindfulness practice(s)

There are many to choose from including centering exercises, meditation, yoga, t'ai chi, walking, art, music, reading or writing/journaling – these sidestep the ego, foster stillness and nurture heart, mind, body and soul.

4. Making the commitment

Make the time and decision to invest in living and working in this way **Figure 9**.

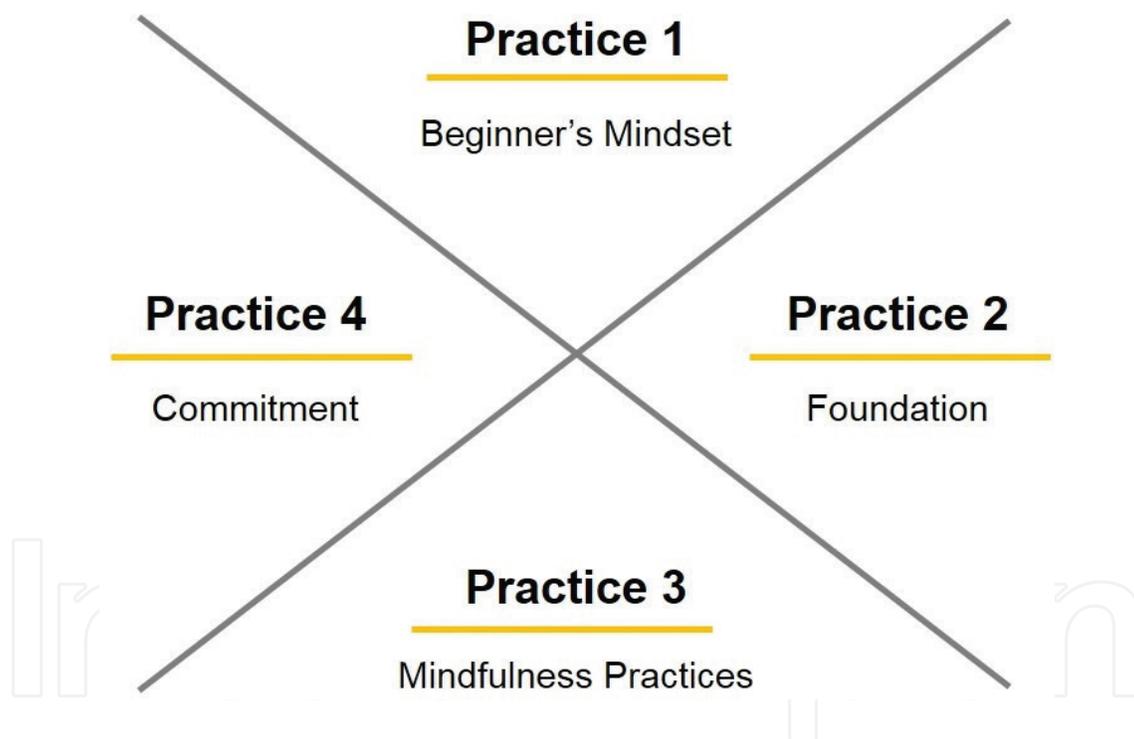


Figure 9. Four practices of “Reflect to Create.”

4. The complete “Reflect to Create” leadership map

Figure 10 pulls together the “Reflect to Create” leadership map showing how all the elements of the approach come together.



Figure 10. "Reflect to Create" leadership map©.

5. Summary

At the heart of "Reflect to Create," leadership map is an opportunity and an invitation to transform how leaders and their teams can develop new ways of leading, thinking and relating in today's VUCA world. The vast changes required will not be solved by yesterdays' logic but by rediscovering how, as human beings, we can best learn from all of our experiences—and the experiences of others—to innovate and create.

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