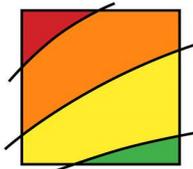


# Designing and leading an enterprise for accountable, creative adults

Adam Thompson  
Partner



THE WORKING JOURNEY

# Two common phrases

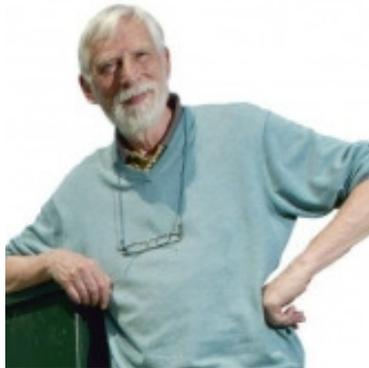
*What we need around here is more accountability*

*Our people just don't use their initiative, we need more innovation and creativity*

- I hear these two phrases in my work all the time. But intriguingly, not usually in the same discussion.
- What's the link? We want a workplace of people who **choose** accountability. Who **choose** to keep their promises and to make things better
- The thing is, people are already like this in their lives away from work! So there must be underlying forces in place that lead to the frustrating and frustrated workplace that is sadly normal.

# The Giants with the Shoulders

These aren't our ideas – what we do is bring it together into a organisational model that can be learned and applied practically. These ideas are based on the work of the four huge thinkers below (and many more). Look them up, they combine for over 150 years of hard core thinking, writing and doing.

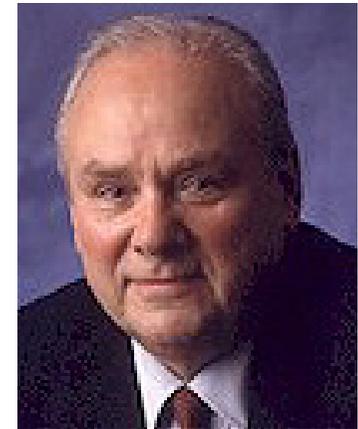


**Luc Hoebeke**

Expert in the how work systems layer and integrate to create efficient, viable and adaptable organisations

**Elliott Jaques**

Researcher and founder of a body of work known as Requisite Organisation which provides a full system designing and operating a managerial accountable hierarchy



**Gillian Stamp**

Global expert in how organisations make sense of complexity and change, now works with governments.



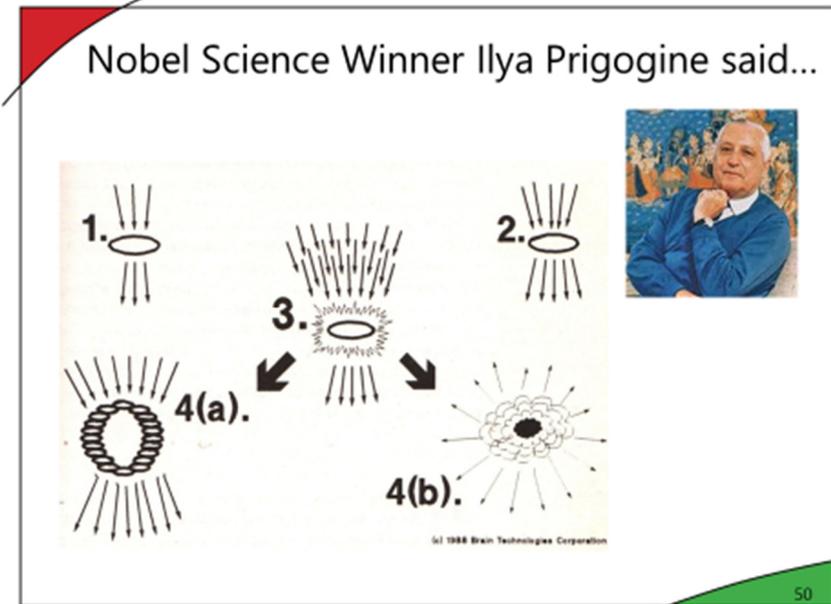
**Peter Block**

Consultant, author and community activist providing deep insight into the underlying messages sent by organisations and authorities to create or undermine attempts at true adult interaction



# We're Just Trying To Handle Variety

- The basic condition of an organisation's viability is to reject Neil Young's premise – that we EITHER burn out or fade away...we want neither!
- For any **ORG**anism, this requires the ability to handle the variety coming towards it
- Variety, or the currently fashionable term 'complexity' means a) how many balls in the air, b) how fast are they moving, c) can we see them?
- Practical example – if you're a goalkeeper, you will have more chance defending one player coming at you than five – one player has less possible **variety** to throw at you
- In the diagram on this page, we can see when we get to 3 there is a lot of energy going into the system. If we can move to 4(a) (a new form), we might be OK. If not....4(b).....BOOM
- Variety at work are the changing needs of stakeholders, the changing values of society, technology, the people in the organisation themselves....everything!
- And BOOM might be gradual things like service level drops, key staff leaving, customers leaving for competitors; or sometimes an actual BOOM!



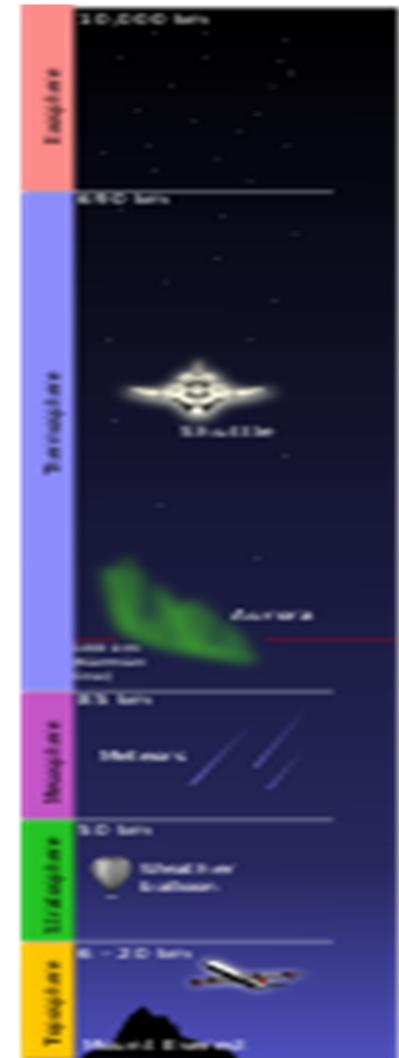
# Work is Transformation Using Judgement



- The map is not the terrain – the model we talk about here is a **useful way to make sense** of organisations. It is not **the** way. We like it because it helps us to understand what's going on and what to do. Like a map.
- The trick is to see all work as a **transformation**, with that transformation requiring people to exercise **judgement and discretion** in order to contribute toward the output
- Think coffee – on the most here-and-now level, we transform the inputs of a need for coffee, the ingredients, the equipment, the barista makes continual judgements and adjustments....and out of all of this we get a medium takeaway skinny flat white with one sugar.
- **Inputs – Transform – Output.** But don't worry, this isn't about making people into machines. As you'll see, it's the human judgement aspect, usually working together, that is the key to a successful transformation

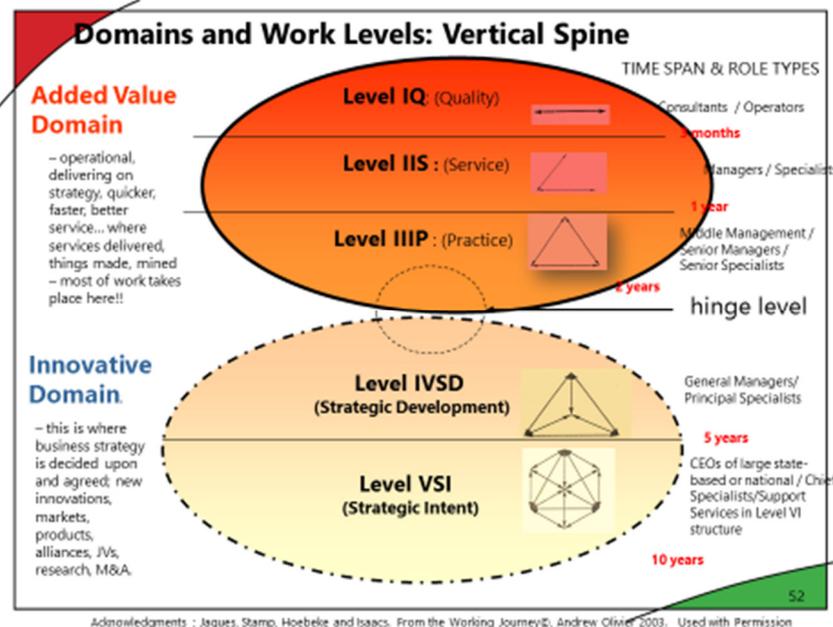
# The Work Levels Concept

- These transformations we speak of occur at different levels that **can be identified**
- We can call the differing 'process levels', or 'work levels', or 'strata', and we can identify them just like scientists can identify different layers in the atmosphere
- BUT, we need get rid of the idea RIGHT NOW that because someone does work on, say, the frontline, that they therefore cannot or should not contribute to higher work levels. That's called being an elitist.
- No layer of the atmosphere is any more or less important. They all need to be there and functional for us to viable.
- This is such a key point, I'm saying it again – all the necessary levels need to be in place for viability over the short and long-term, and **there is no rule that says a given person only contributes to one level.**
- If you come across any interpretation of the concepts in this paper that sound like they are creating an elitist separation of thinking and doing...tell 'em they're dreaming!



# Work Domains

- Before we talk work levels, I want to talk **Work Domains**.
- Luc Hoebeke identified four, and I want to focus on two of them, the domains of Added-Value, and the domain of Innovation
- The **Added-Value Domain** consists of all work that is about meeting the expectations of clients. From an assistant handing you an apple to an entire international distribution system which makes the apple appear in the shop....this is the work of this domain. We look for quality, timeliness, volumes, and all of this done within resources so the 'price' (money or otherwise) is reasonable. Improvements, rewiring, finding 'better' ways, looking for 'what else' could we do.....all that stuff is in here too. This is the work of most of the world.



- The **Innovation Domain** is when we get into something that is properly new. The work here is about sensing what's changing in the values\* of the community and wider society and eventually making a decision to make a clean break with what we used to do....and start something new (or decide not do!). It's about feasibility here.
- These two domains cross-over each other at the highest level in the Added-Value Domain and the lower level in the Innovation Domain, it's called the 'hinge level' and it's where we try experiments and ideas about potential new stuff that we might get serious about (notice the recent influx of 'innovation' specialists – this is about the natural work that occurs in this level)
- Here's the thing – a small organisation doesn't need specific roles in the Innovation Domain. Think of a small burger chain that connects its stores digitally via the cloud. As long as it can stay aware of what is 'out there' and choose the right moments, it can respond to changes so what it offers in the Added-Value Domain is still.....valued!

\* The 'values' domain is in fact the next domain after innovation, that's where the possibilities for the innovation domain come from. The one after that is the spiritual domain....but that one requires some late night discussions!

# Work Levels – Added Value Domain

- Work levels. We refer to the different nature of the work as it increases in variety.
- Remember, these are not about roles, they are about the transformation process that occurs. And we follow Gillian Stamp's names for levels rather than numbers because, as the insecure vulnerable humans that we are...we can't resist a ranking system, which goes against the reality that all levels are equally needed.
- Lets look at the Added-Value Domain. The trick here is to see that each work level creates the **conditions of viability** for the work level 'below' it. It sets up what is required so that level can then set about doing it.
- The first work level is **Quality** – where we **transform the inputs into actual outputs according to known specifications**. In other words, we deliver what is expected, each time. How can we tell if a given piece of work is at Quality level? Using timespan – if the total time of a transformation from start to finish is less than 3 months...this work will usually be of the nature of a Quality piece of work.\*
- The next work level is **Service** – where we **set the specifications** for what needs to be produced so clients will find the work to be valuable. This work includes specialist advice (as commonly offered by OD Business Partners), requires taking on of information, consideration, then suggesting a course of action. Timespan – if we can't tell whether the specifications or advice worked for between 3 and 12 months – we find ourselves involved in a Service level piece of work. (This is why managers traditionally have 12 month targets....and are given 3 months to fix things if it's not looking good!)

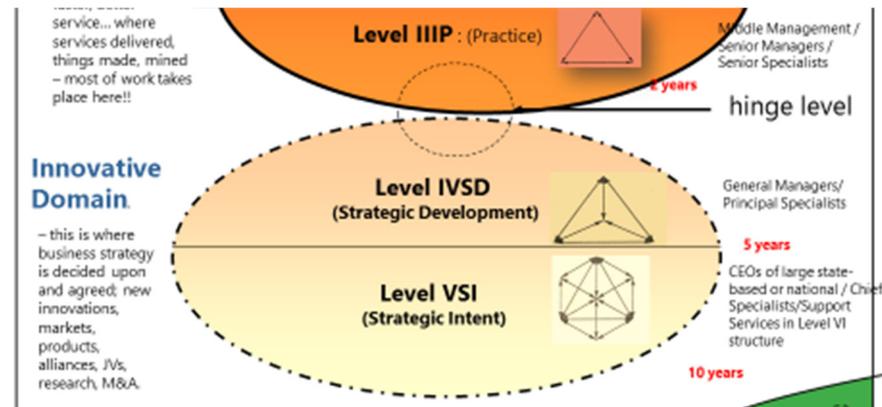


- The third level in the Domain is **Practice**, where we combine stakeholders, relationships, resources and put them together into **a full work system** that can be valued by all (not just clients, suppliers too, bankers etc.). Work that requires more than one year up to two years to see fruition is generally work in the Practice work level.
- (Think about: A corner shop won't have a 'Practice Level' role, but it will be a part of (contributor to) a wider Practice Level work system involving dairies, delivery trucks, many companies etc.)

\* Nifty hey!!! Elliott Jaques did over 50 years of research where it was discovered and shown again and again that we can use timespan as a way to 'measure' the work level of a given piece of work.

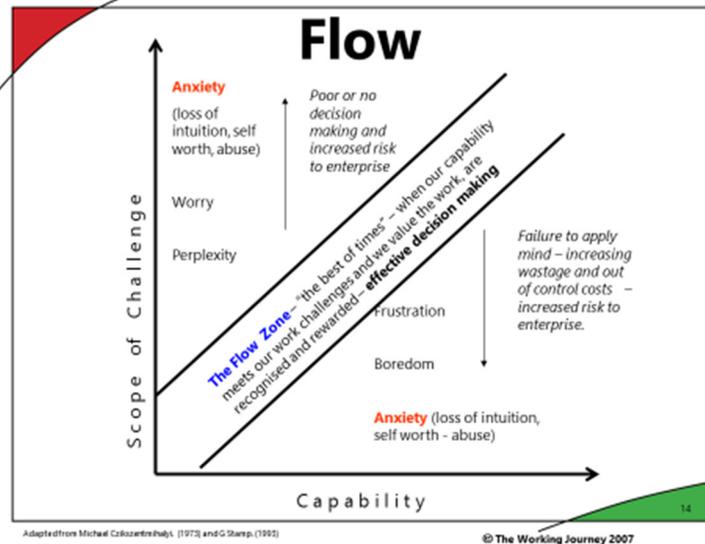
# Work Levels – Innovation Domain

- You'll notice in the cropped diagram on this page we have the top-end of the Practice work level as well the 'hinge level'. This is because the work that occurs in the Innovation Domain tests it's feasibility and eventually is implemented in the Added-Value Domain. Remember, these all refer to the **work process**, they are not role-specific
- The first work level in the Innovation Domain is actually Practice again!. The work here is about **making the wide-scale changes** need to either test or bring in very different ways of doing things for different groups....but without upsetting what needs to happen today to stay in business. Significant 'change' is implemented here, again with the timespan of 1-2 years\*.
- The next work level is **Strategic Development** – where **possible new stakeholders and emerging opportunities** that come from the changes of value systems in society itself are converted into first experiments and pilots to test feasibility and desirability, then into decisions on investment to change the very nature of what the Added-Value Domain does. Work that will take more than 2 years and up to 5 tends to be of this order, and this is true Executive work (and might not sound like what your Executives do....this is likely due to work level issues in the Added-Value Domain)



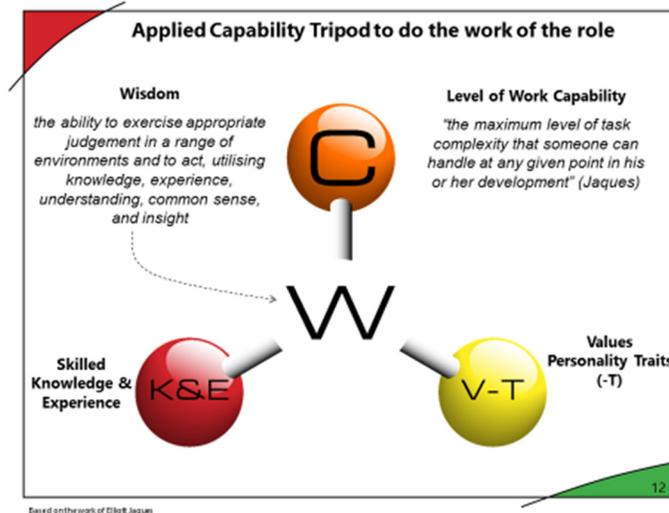
- The top level in the Domain is **Strategic Intent**, where the various societal influences of technology, stakeholders, people practices, financial arrangements are all **weaved together to create a large work system (organisation) that can respond to it's environment**. This is through both a strong Added-Value Domain and Strategic Development work intertwining to allow both value today and set-up for value in the future. Real CEO work here.
- Consider this: Many Executives spend their time in the Added-Value Domain ensuring today's delivery is occurring as expected and integrating different Added-Value Domain work systems. The rise of the innovation consultant is a direct response to the sense that not enough true Strategic Work is happening!*

# Work Levels Correspond to Natural Capability



- Each person generally has a particular level of work where they find the most flow – the type of decision-making involved suits their natural way of processing information at this point in their career
- The diagram on the left depicts the situation of 'flow' – when the challenge of the role (shown by the vertical axis) matches the challenge in complexity the person is suited to at this point (horizontal axis)
- When the challenge and capability misalign – we find either stress or boredom – both are conditions that lead to feeling devalued
- (Capability is something we often help clients to understand and appreciate to diagnose issues and to manage talent)

- **Capability** to handle the challenge is but one factor, however. Look at it like natural lung capacity for a cyclist – we want them in a race not too easy, but not one where they feel hopeless
- We also need **knowledge, skill and experience** – we have to know how to ride a bike
- And we need to find **Value**, or a sense of duty in the work – actually enjoy riding a bike
- And the rug that ties the room together\* is **Wisdom** – understanding how people and the world works so a difference can be made. This is about getting along with teammates, the peloton, and just 'getting' the sport so all the other factors can come into play



\* Lebowski fans...

# This Is Why We Have Hierarchy

- The evolution of work levels, each creating the conditions that allow the one below it to be viable is why we tend to organise ourselves in a hierarchy....it's natural! ***It's our expression of the ways in which we process the world***
- What is not natural is treating the work levels as 'boxes', with the people in that level being restricted to one level.
- Example: a group of call centres operators might find time to come off the line and review overall data about the call centre's performance. Through that review and discussion, they might identify changes. Some might be trial and error changes we can see success in a week (example of Quality work level). And they might identify fundamental changes to how things work that they might pilot for a month, review, pilot for a further two months, and if successful – roll-out to the whole call centre over the next 6 months. This would be working in the Service level.
- So why do we have managers? To make sure the above happens! And to contribute. And decide if necessary.
- What we want to avoid is the idea that only Managers and Specialists do the Service level (or higher) work. In other words, we avoid two confusions:

## The Two Classic Hierarchy Mistakes

### **Confusing the role with the work level**

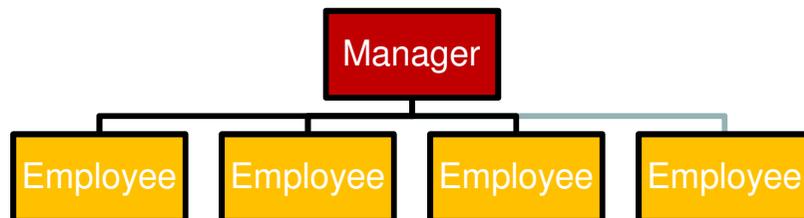
Just because a person occupies a role at certain 'work level' on an org chart, this does not mean their contribution is only to that work level.

### **Confusing accountability for a work level with who contributes to that work level**

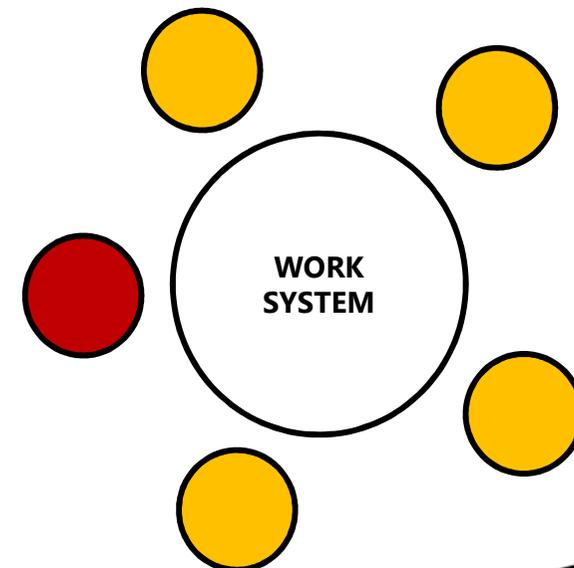
While a role might be accountable for ensuring the outputs of a certain work level occur (e.g. Manager is there to ensure Service level work happens), this does not mean that this person is the sole contributor to the decisions required on that work level

# Then What Are Managers For?

- So what do we do with the concept of work levels? We use it to design a 'starting point' vertical structure that gives us the best chance to liberate people's natural creativity.
- Do we need bosses? The answer is yes....but for purposes of value-add and contribution.
- And what Elliott Jaques found in over 50 years of research was, that if people are going to have a manager, then the optimal situation is that the manager's role sits in the next work level to those in the team
- **And**...that the manager is comfortable in working at the level of work that the role requires.
- This sets up the manager to make a **valuable contribution** to the team. Provides that wider perspective that helps things make sense, but without getting in the way of the group and being a restrictor.



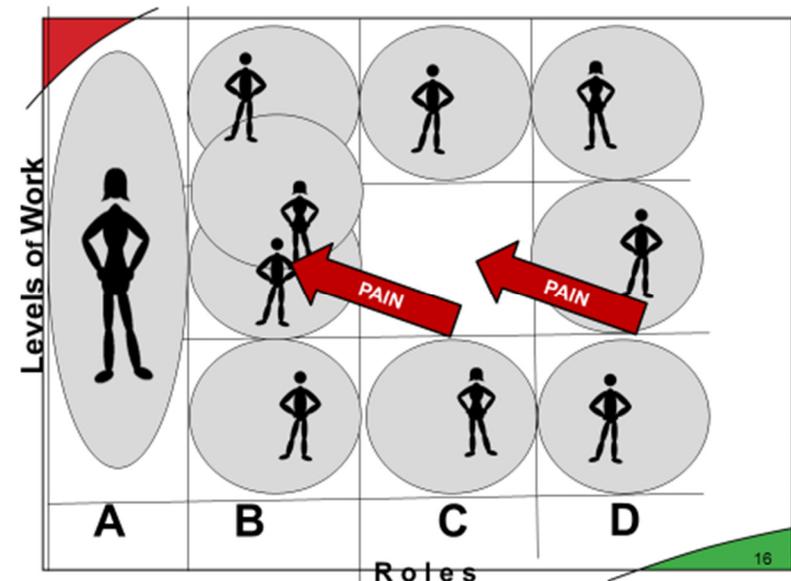
- If you think of the favourite bosses you've had over your own career – it's likely the above conditions were being met (plus they actually knew the job and were a decent human)
- Take the two diagrams below. Neither are reality (the map is not the terrain). But one suggests a separated group, all working individually, with an overlord. The other suggests all working together, with their own contributions to a joint work system
- It's just a mental model change, but it's fundamental. Contribution.



# Using Work Levels For A Better Org Design

- We can use work levels to give ourselves the maximum chance of managers being able to make a valuable contribution rather than feel they are either police or carers.
- The diagram on this page shows three work levels on the vertical axis, with the bubbles and people corresponding to the work levels they are significantly involved in.
- In addition, where bubbles are in a vertical relationship, see that as a reporting relationship – manager/employee
- *(These diagrams come from doing a levels of work analysis where we see what levels of work are or are not occurring in an organisation. We use it as a diagnosis tool for a group to see what levels are overlapping or missing so they can adjust their work practices accordingly)*

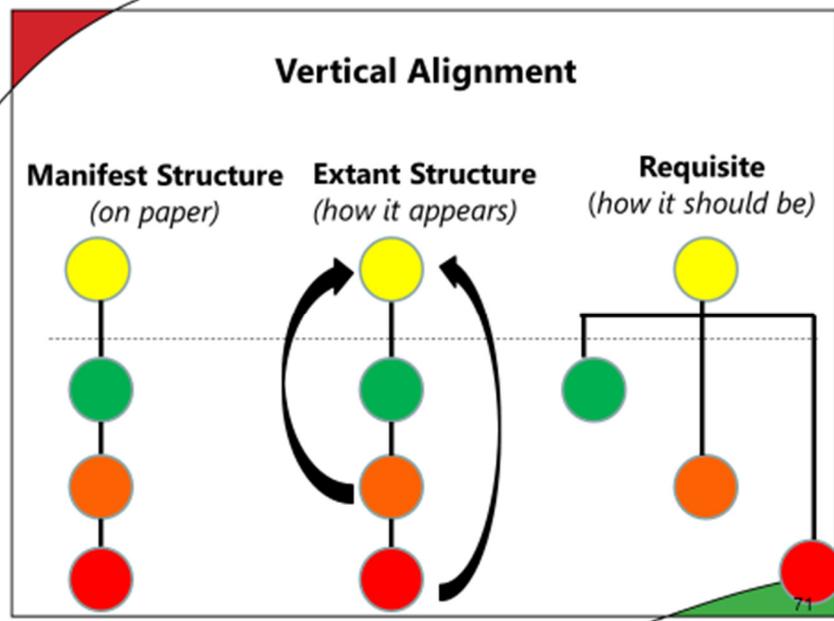
- A. Situation A** – a startup business will see the one person covering multiple work levels – answering phones, organising specifications and 'how-to', all while organising a full supplier network, finance, systems....the works. BUSY!
- B. Situation B** is what we call '**compression**', as we have two people in a reporting relationship accountable for the same level of work. We'll hear 'I'm being micromanaged' from one, and 'They should stop complaining and just get on with it' from the other!
- C. Situation C** is what we call '**gap**'. We'll hear 'My manager isn't any use, they're in the clouds', and from the other end 'They aren't a self-starter, I have to explain everything'.
- D. Situation D** is where we find an effective area that can deliver today and move toward tomorrow



- **Key point** Situation A and Situation D are **both** examples of necessary conditions for short and long-term viability – all the required levels of work are happening. The point is to make sure all the levels are there, not to automatically create D. (Organisations of greater than 30 people generally have the resources to create D.)

# What Do I Do With This?

- A situation of compression (whether caused by the role or by the capability of the person) does not automatically mean redundancy....the frustration is not the work that is happening, it is coming from the fact that there is a **reporting relationship that is frustrating the natural work levels that are occurring**.
- What's the solution? It's very elegant, to the point where it is somewhat hard to believe.
- In addition, it may add to the workload of some managers, while bruising egos of others, both of which require genuine reflection on each individual as to whether they truly see the organisation as at least equal in importance to themselves.
- (The dotted line represents where the work levels demarcation line was found to lie after analysis)



- The term 'requisite' refers to 'as the work naturally requires'. That is, using the ideas we've been talking about to create a design that doesn't frustrate
- The move from the extant (what's really going on) is simply one of changing reporting relationships
- All three people who are now in yellow's team **continue to do the work they were previously**.
- Now Orange and Red no longer have to 'go around' Green to find the contribution they need....the hierarchy has become more natural

# Let's Catch A Breath Here

OK, so going back over our journey so far:

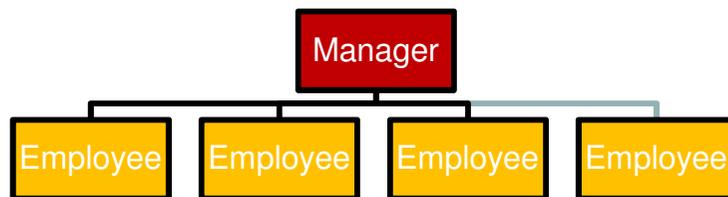
1. We want creative, accountable adults, and the reason we want them is so our organisation can handle variety
2. Luc Hoebeke, Gillian Stamp, Elliott Jaques and Peter Block are four giants we are using to make a map of the terrain
3. Work is about making decisions to transform somethings into something else for someone
4. Work can be found to exist in different levels, just like the atmosphere has different levels
5. We can group the work levels into four domains, we use two primarily – Added-Value and Innovation
6. Added-Value Domain is about producing the work of the world today, tomorrow, and doing it well so it's valued, and this domain consists of **Quality** (produce it), **Service** (organise and specify it), **Practice** (a full system that can deliver it)
7. Innovation Domain is about sensing the changes in society to make decisions about new ways to make value, and this domain consists of **Practice** again (try it and move to the new), **Strategic Development** (test and pull the trigger on major change), **Strategic Intent** (weave everything together)
8. People in the organisation can contribute to multiple work levels, don't see roles as restrictions to work levels
9. People have a natural capability which allows them to find the most flow in a given work level
10. So hierarchy exists as a natural expression of capability and the organisation of work.
11. Managers can add much value to the team if they can provide perspective from a higher work level
12. We can use the work levels concept to avoid the frustration of '**compression**' or '**gap**' in our organisational structures...one of the major causes of people tuning out of the workplace and just phoning it in

**How are you doing? If it seems both simple and a bit of a brain-bender at the same time....  
then you're right on track!**

**We use work levels as one of the key 'maps' to help set up an organisational design that won't frustrate natural accountability and creativity. But setting up is not enough, we also need to run the organisation. This is where we see how the leadership practices we adopt are also crucial to whether people choose accountability and creativity**

# Manager Relationships Trigger Some Weird Stuff!

- OK, so we've identified how many work levels we need, we've put people into roles to make sure we've got them all covered, and we've told them to 'be free, creative and deliver'. Should work great right? Not quite.
- There's a body of work by Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin and Powell known as Circle of Security which identified that children look to explore the world, then return to a 'safe haven' of protection and comfort from where they have a 'secure base' to go again.
- Their research has shown the more these needs for explore and return can be attended to, the better the emotional outcomes.
- Starting from our parents, we then have a series of authority figures – teachers, coaches, principals, and our first bosses as 'juniors'.....which we will naturally model on a parent/child relationship.
- Then we become adults....but we're still left with the hangover of these initial power relationships (to varying degrees depending on each of our experiences. The chance of no hangover I would put at virtually nil!)
- Look at the typical org chart we used earlier – the depiction is clear – there is a leader who is 'above' us, and we all individually look up to them for direction and advice
- This allows us to easily let two inner needs to come out:
  - In us all is a need for **dependence**...to be protected, to be comforted by those who have power over us. To be safe. We learn the patterns, to play along, and we even learn 'rebellion', which is dependence in another form as it still demands a reaction from the power figure
  - And at the same time, we play out our need for **dominance**, to be in control, to be the one in charge. Because this also makes the world safer for us. Don't just think of dominance as authoritarian – it is more often seen in the 'caring' manager who gently makes sure that their people end up doing what is required with a genuine belief that it is good for them. Change management anyone?



# Full Accountability is Full On!

- There's a very simple reason for the inner need for dominance and dependence. As Sheldon Kopp\* beautifully puts it
  - Childhood is a nightmare
  - But it is **so very hard** to be an on-your-own, take-care-of-yourself-cause-there-is-no-one-else-to-do-it-for-you grown-up.
- In other words, it's natural to not want it be our fault, to expect to able to either be protected or to be able to control as necessary. Because full accountability is really confronting....

*I chose to be here. The actions I took, or didn't take were all mine. Whatever happens that I'm involved in, it was my choice*

## FULL ACCOUNTABILITY

**The idea that we are actually accountable for our own situation, by the very act that we have free will...is a startling concept. And easy to naturally reject, because it's an unbearable burden to wear all the time.**

**At the same time, it is exactly what we are looking for from our organisations – people that stand up and say 'that was me', followed by another saying 'that was me', and another, and another. Then saying 'I choose to make this better', and another, and another.**

# The Choice of Adults

- So what does adult behaviour in an organisation look like? What do grown-ups do? They....
  - ❑ Choose to be accountable (as opposed to arguing why, technically, it wasn't them)
  - ❑ Promise what they can deliver, then deliver their promises (because why would they not do either)
  - ❑ They take accountability for solving problems and bring others in to do the same (because why shouldn't they if it's their organisation?)
  - ❑ They actively look for new methods or opportunities in the business and have conversations with others around these ideas
- In other words, they have gotten over their need for protection and control and make choices based on what's best for the organisation **they have chosen to work in.**
- In other words, they don't think like owners.....they think like co-owners or business partners.

The list above sounds great? Who wouldn't want to work in a place where this was normal?

And we've heard the 'act like owners' thing before.

Which raises the question – why doesn't this stuff happen?

The answer is somewhat startling.

**Because the organisation sends the exact opposite message through it's leadership and people practices!**

## How Organisations Reinforce Parenting and Reduce Partnership

- A healthy working relationship is between business **partners** – treating each other respect as full adults in the world who have a valid view worth listening to.
- An unhealthy working relationship (if we are seeking creative, accountable adult behaviour) is **parenting** – where the manager or organisation extends the hand of protection to employees (often well-meaning), and this is gladly accepted by employees as the need in all of us for safety and dependence is triggered
- Some examples? Here are but six. Be ready to be surprised. You'll want to reject these...

### **Mandating Development**

When the organisation decides what's best for an adult to learn in order to do their job, rather than the adult getting to decide. There is nothing wrong with stipulating what is required to be delivered....but mandating (versus suggesting) what development is required to get there....that's parenting.

### **Defining Values or Behaviours**

We each find our own value in our work. An organisation can require civil behaviour as per any member of society and can stipulate what is required to be delivered, but to determine what 'values' a person should hold is colonisation. The cynicism about coffee cups and lanyards is a testament to this.

### **Support Area Authority**

Support areas such as HR and Finance seek more authority to implement their changes...and the business complains...then does what they are told. A mutually beneficial arrangement as now neither party is fully accountable for the results of the organisation while being able to confidently assert pseudo-ownership

### **Executive Privilege**

Any policies and practices not based on work requirements but on position (e.g. car parks) fulfils the idea of a sovereign class that knows what's best for others. Which is gladly accepted as it reserves both the right to complain without the need to do anything about it

### **Staff Surveys**

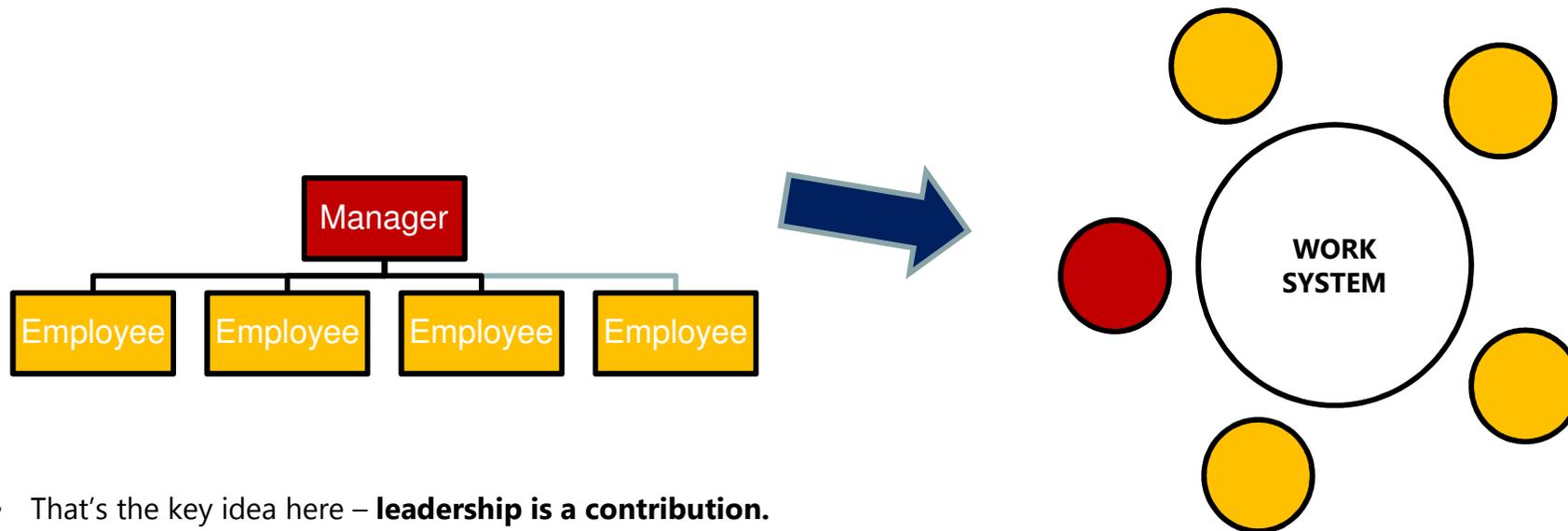
Employees are not customers of the organisation, they *are* the organisation...they are citizens. Staff surveys ensure that 'the buck stops over there' by allowing both employees and management to identify the other as 'the problem'. Hence results don't change much.

### **Not sharing information**

Not sharing information that is not nuclear launch codes simply treats employees like children that cannot be trusted. "You can't handle the truth" is bellowed, while management then expects employees respond exactly as if they know the same truth they do!

# So How Do We Move From Parent to Partner?

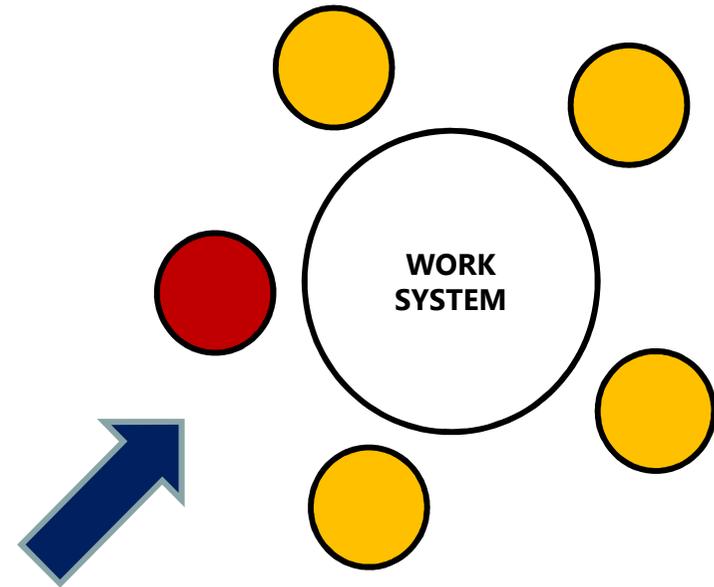
- The starting point to move more toward partnership from parenting is to use the two diagrams below to start a discussion about co-ownership and each person's contribution
- The intention of the 'circle' diagram is to show that each person makes a contribution to the work system. There is not one 'owner' of the team. We'll make the manager 'accountable' for the work of the team, meaning it's their job to make sure things get addressed, but that's just one of the **contributions** the manager makes.



- That's the key idea here – **leadership is a contribution.**
- These discussions toward co-ownership are not comfortable....it is naïve to think all people will gladly take co-ownership of a team when in the past they were part of an implicit arrangement that gave them protection from the reality of the team's performance
- It's also naïve to think all managers will gladly give up sole ownership of the team and move to one of being a partner. But...reassure them with this....**they are the 51% owner.** So they get the final call. But treat the others in the team like they are actually your business partners. Not your children. Which means actually asking them things. And listening!
- Why bother? **Because we want accountable, creative adults, not rebellious dependent children.**

# What Do Managers Do As 'Co-Owners'?

- Let's be clear – we're not advocating a no hierarchy set-up. Remember from earlier – we need all the work levels happening, with a variety of people contributing for both success today **and** tomorrow.
- So we still need bosses. And we're going to hopefully appoint them because we're confident they can make contributions from the next work level up
- What we want to change is the idea of 'the manager decrees' to 'the manager makes sure promises are clear'.
- That's what creates an adult relationship – two people actually discussing what is possible, and what is not, as if they both matter



- **So this is what managers do under an adult set-up**

- They 'name the game' – who we serve, by doing what, and why they value it
  - They **set the requirements** – what the team needs to deliver to 'earn our keep'. This includes any limits to actions and decisions – it's the limits that create freedom!
  - They make sure there is clarity on what each person's promised contribution is to the team
  - They convene and name the conversation that has to happen as required. Weekly tracking of results, problems, opportunities. Anyone might do this stuff, but the manager contributes by making sure it happens (this might include shining a light on performance)
  - They act as a banker and broker on behalf of the team for the rest of the organisation
  - And....they contribute! Provide their knowledge, wisdom, advice, experience into the mix so better decisions are made. That contribution might sometimes be deciding.
- This is the stuff that allows the manager to make a powerful contribution, while at the same time, relieving themselves of the crushing burden of being the sole person responsible for the team

## Two Powerful Managerial Questions

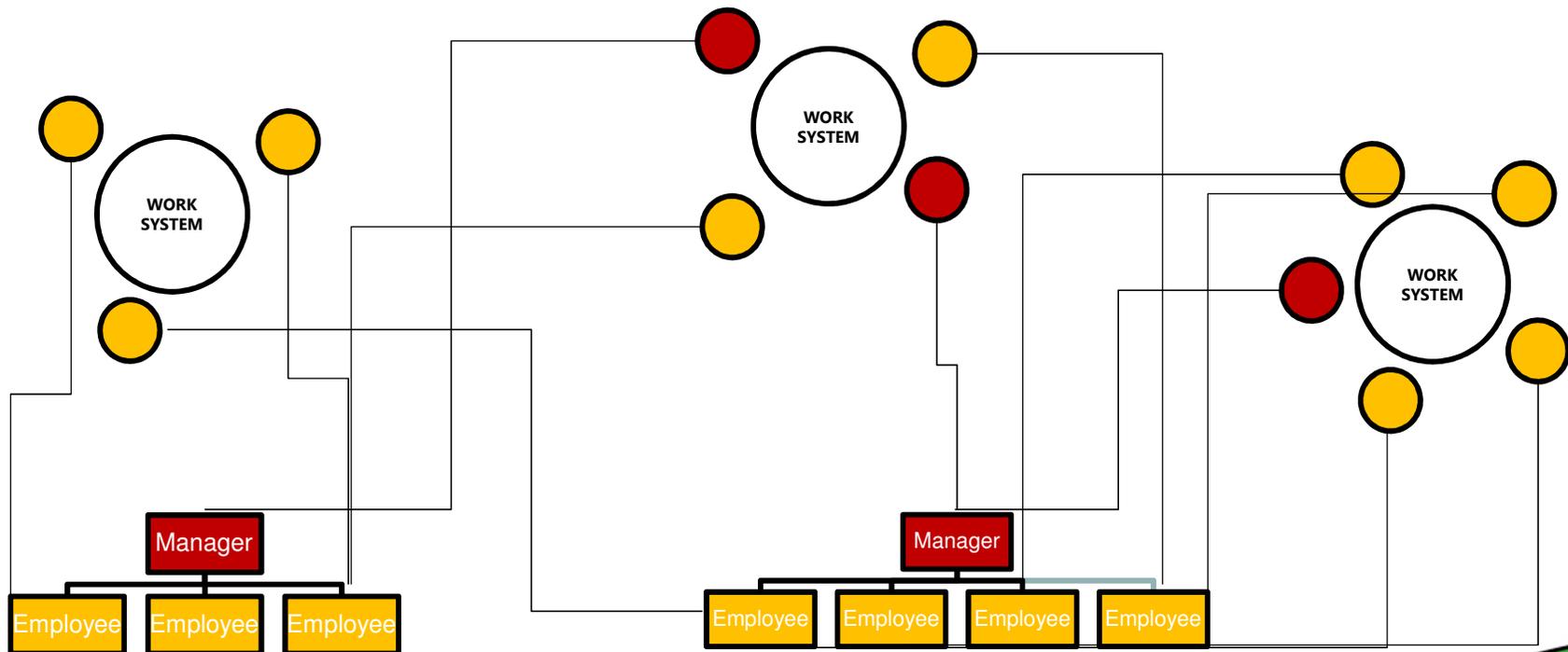
*"Can you promise that?  
No is OK, we can talk  
more, tell me why"*

*"What do you need  
from me?"*

- These two questions, whenever allocating, assigning or agreeing work are crucial as they shift the relationship from one of sovereign/parental decree to one of two adults sorting out what's going to be done.
- The first one recognises the other person as a full adult....they must always have the right to say 'no'. (They might not get what they want, but they must have the right to discuss)
- The second question emphasises the two-way nature of the relationship. Again, everyone might not get what they want, but refusal to discuss lays the pathway for unaccountable behaviour.
- (And if someone is not able to say eventually say 'yes' to what is needed then this is not a performance issue, it's a willingness to do the role issue. This will find it's own conclusion as the person will then have to find employment where their offers are sufficient.)

# The Simple Change To A More Adaptive Org Design

- A simple addition can adjust the mental model people have in the organisation
- Write at the top of the org chart, before the words 'org chart' either the word '**Starting**', or '**Home-Base**'
- The point we are making is that the org chart is no more real when the game starts than the names written on a team sheet in any sport. Once the whistle blows, people don't stand in their spot. They contribute what needs to be done.
- And...they don't just contribute in just one area. Again, the traditional org chart creates a mental model that this is the case. The change to 'Home-Base' Org Chart (and keep it written on there manually) creates a better idea.
- Draw up a messy picture like the below to further make the point – we meet at 'home-base' at 2pm on Fridays to talk stuff over, but the rest of the time, you're out there contributing in a variety of work systems/teams.



# Let Me Breathe!

You made it! We're at the end. To recap:

1. The first half was about how we need the work levels in place to make sure we can handle the variety in the environment
2. If we set up a design with compression or gap, we're already crushing out creativity and accountability as people won't be able to get near 'flow' in terms of their work
3. Levels of work analysis can help us to see if we have all the levels in place and functioning, and any changes to design or capability to assist
4. But...work design isn't enough for accountable and creativity to be chosen – we need to ensure we are not setting up a workplace that parents the employees into dependent children
5. We all have a need for safety – which we gain from seeking dependence (protection) or dominance (control)
6. Either way, we aren't choosing true accountability which is to face the world and say "I chose this", which is understandable, because doing so is.....really hard
7. Organisations accidentally have numerous practices which emphasise a parent/child relationship rather than business partners, staff surveys and mandated development among them
8. The move toward partnering comes through difficult discussion to change the mental model people are working with, along with managers taking on adjusted set of contributions to the team
9. And emphasising that the traditional org chart is nothing more than a 'starting position', in combination with moving people toward a partnering relationship, can start the movement toward a more adaptive, responsive organisations

**We're here! If you've got just a little more capacity, the next page gives you some actions to ponder. Then I'll provide some resources to further your pondering**

# What Do I Actually Do Then?

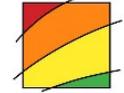
OK. Providing steps is not always helpful....fundamentally real knowledge comes from trying ourselves. But a guide can be handy, so here goes....

1. Consider **what your organisation could do** for the community and what it would be like to work there if it was a truly creative, accountable enterprise. Write that down. There's our goal.
2. **Start the conversation** about the concept of work domains and the need for them to be present, without compression, and without leadership that parents. (I'm happy to do **one hour presentations** to get the ball rolling, I enjoy this stuff because it changes workplaces. We offer a 2.5 day full immersion workshop if you want the whole system)
3. For an area with a significant need, or one that is just interested in getting better, the next step is a **levels of work analysis** to see if the required work levels are present and who is involved. This is then worked through as a group to find ways to improve the area (like looking at an X-Ray to find which breaks to address).
4. **Clarify the various 'work systems'** and those contributing to each, looking for people that are finding 'flow', and those that are overextended or underutilised (this can be done through team discussion, which is supported by **capability appreciations** to provide an indication of where each person might find flow)
5. Teach, discuss and implement through dialogue and system change the principles of **partnering leadership practices**. This is actually the hard road, as showing people their own choices to be dependent and/dominant requires significant emotional work.
6. **Review people practices and policies** through the lens of partnership or parent and make adjustments. One-by-one as they arise. Each is an opportunity to change the message.

The above steps are designed to show you some possible ways forward. They are not a prescription, the very point is take the knowledge and apply it to the continual review to structures, org designs, people systems, leadership, change, innovation and everything else that never ends. Start small. Help interested people to learn more and apply.

We use this stuff because it's solid. As new trends come and go we find the same underlying principles keep coming through. That's why we use it. Because it just works and it doesn't feel trendy.

# Interested in More?



THE WORKING JOURNEY

My blog is **zenorganisations.com**. You can subscribe there. Or connect with me on LinkedIn

You can learn our stuff on design, leadership and capability online through our e-learning company at **developleadersonline.com.au**

Our company website is **theworkingjourney.com**, our services are there. We train, accredit and advise.

And of course, if you'd like me to present this work for an hour at your place or just want to bounce some things off me or me to send you more stuff, it's [adam@theworkingjourney.com](mailto:adam@theworkingjourney.com) and **0413 859 392**.

I'm based in Adelaide, our offices are in **Adelaide** and in **Sydney**, we're a very niche consultancy but we work with organisations from 20 to 16,000 people across the southern hemisphere!

## The Big Guns – Read These

***Making Work Systems Better*** by Luc Hoebeke (search online or email me for the pdf – Luc made it available on the net)

***Stewardship*** by Peter Block

Any of these by Gillian Stamp, but ***Value Appreciation*** and ***Contexts for Change***: <http://bioss.com/gillian-stamp/>

***Social Power and the CEO*** by Elliott Jaques

***Human Capability*** by Elliott Jaques and Kathryn Cason

***Organisational Design – What Your University Forgot To Teach You*** by Andrew Olivier (Our Managing Partner)

