



Cutts Consulting, LLC & Vision Quest Retreats
Professional Training & Development
Transforming People & Organizations for Success

Embodied Leadership: Increasing influence, power and flexibility through Yoga

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Introduction:

This experiential session draws on somatic coaching techniques: utilizing theory and practice from Ashtanga Yoga, neuroleadership, cognitive psychology, and leadership best practices to help participants learn how to fully embody their leadership presence and catalyze their followership.

Objectives:

- ❖ Build a more powerful leadership presence that is able to stay open, present, flexible and connected under difficult conditions such as stress, complexity, and ambiguity
- ❖ Develop deep self-awareness and increase emotional intelligence by accessing the intelligence of the mind/body system
- ❖ Learn somatic practices you can use for your continued leadership development and the development of others.

Additional benefits of participating in this session include learning methodology and tools to:

- ✓ Reduce stress and increase resilience
- ✓ Increase your influencing skills and ability to motivate and engage others
- ✓ Focus your talents into purposeful action, creating the capacity to produce even more valuable results
- ✓ Increase your self-confidence in new ways, e.g. greater balance, endurance, strength, agility, and flexibility

What is Embodied Leadership?

To be an embodied leader means your ability to lead comes from deep inside you. It also means literally staying fully connected to your body and centered on your core values and truest self even during times of pressure.

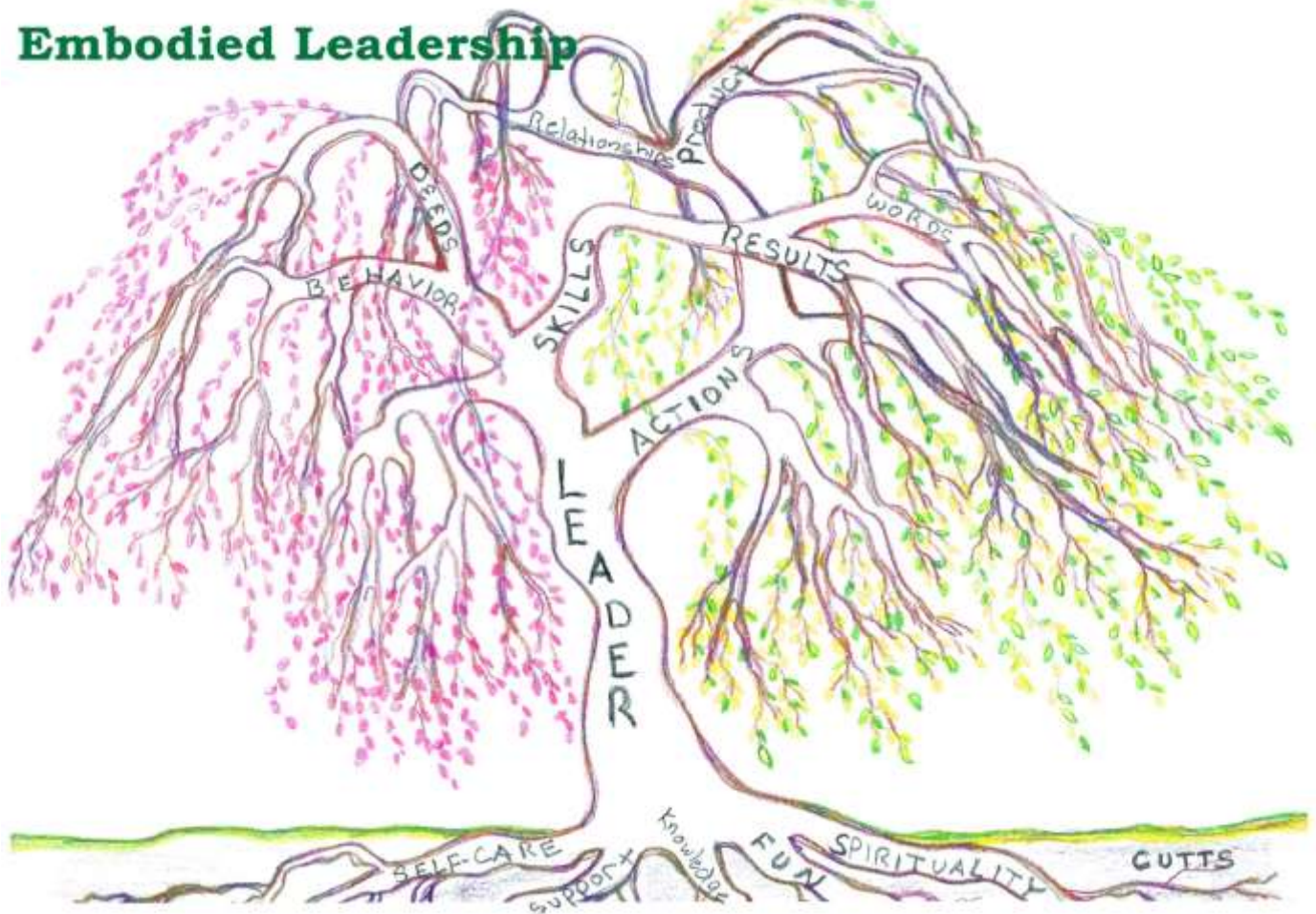
According to Pete Hamill, author of *Embodied Leadership* (2013), “The concept of embodied leadership, derived from somatic coaching, brings the body forward as an advocate in creating a place for change and transformation.” And, “Embodied learning is a level of learning where you can learn to do something differently, consistently and when under pressure.”

Embodied leadership is the optimal leadership presence. It combines power and strength with flexibility and ambition with humility. It increases your ability to be influential, flexible (adaptable) and resilient.



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Embodied Leadership



The Willow Tree: A Metaphor for How Leadership is Embodied

- ❖ **Flexible:** Adaptable to change, yielding, open, agile, empathetic.
- ❖ **Resilient:** Bends yet doesn't break, fast growing, stays standing when others fall, able to withstand pressure while maintaining balance.
- ❖ **Strong:** Its flexibility is its strength; it supports the weight of others, provides shelter and protection.
- ❖ **Deep Roots:** It's far-reaching roots also give it resilience. It is via these roots that the willow nourishes itself with food such as self-care, healthy habits, support from others, knowledge, constant learning, fun, spirituality and love.

Self-Reflection Question: What can you do to become more like the willow tree?



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The Connection Between Emotional Intelligence, Brain & Body

Emotional Intelligence:

A simple and familiar framework from which we can understand the importance of being an embodied leader is the concept of emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to understand one’s own state of mind and one’s capabilities, to manage oneself to respond constructively to situations and to engage successfully with other people. Emotional Intelligence is not necessarily about what to do, but **HOW** to do it.

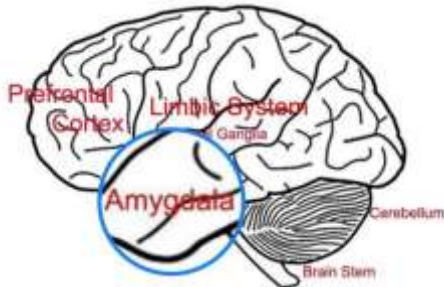
A considerable body of research suggests that a person’s ability to perceive, identify, and manage his or her emotional response provides the basis for the kinds of social competencies that are important for success in almost any job – and particularly in leadership positions. In fact, the ability to leverage your EQ may be the biggest differentiator among those performing in leadership positions!

The Emotional Intelligence Framework

	PERSONAL COMPETENCE With Self:	SOCIAL COMPETENCE With Others:
WHAT I SEE	Self-Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Self-awareness • Accurate Self-assessment • Self-confidence 	Social Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Organizational Awareness • Service Orientation • Political Savvy
WHAT I DO	Self-Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control • Trustworthiness • Conscientiousness • Adaptability • Achievement Orientation • Initiative 	Relationship Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visionary Leadership • Influence • Developing Others • Communication • Change Catalyst • Conflict Management • Building Bonds • Teamwork & Collaboration



The Human Brain



suppress urges that, if not suppressed, could lead to socially unacceptable outcomes).

Prefrontal Cortex: The most typical term for functions carried out by the prefrontal cortex area is executive function. Executive function relates to abilities to differentiate among conflicting thoughts, determine good and bad, same and different, future consequences of current activities, working toward a defined goal, prediction of outcomes, expectation based on actions, and social "control" (the ability to

Limbic System: The limbic system supports a variety of functions including emotion, behavior, motivation, long-term memory, and olfaction. Emotional life is largely housed in the limbic system, and it has a great deal to do with the formation of memories.

Amygdala (plural: amygdalae): When you think of the amygdala, you should think of one word, *Fear*. The amygdala is the reason we are afraid of things outside our control. It also controls the way we react to certain *stimuli*, or an event that causes an emotion, that we see as potentially threatening or dangerous. [part of limbic system]

They perform a primary role in the processing of memory, decision-making, and emotional reactions. The amygdala is like an early-warning system, with the motto "safety first"—it puts your safety plans into effect before consulting the executive brain (the neo cortex). [The amygdalae are two almond-shaped groups of nuclei located deep and medially within the temporal lobes of the brain.]

Cerebellum: It is extremely important for being able to perform everyday *voluntary* (done with purpose and intent) tasks such as walking and writing.

Triune Brain Theory

Lizard Brain	Mammal Brain	Human Brain
Brain stem & cerebellum	Limbic System	Neocortex
Fight or flight	Emotions, memories, habits	Language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness
Autopilot	Decisions	Reasons, rationalizes



The Triune Brain in Evolution, Paul MacLean, 1960

Triune Brain Theory- a model of the evolution of the vertebrate forebrain and behavior, proposed by the American physician and neuroscientist Paul D. MacLean. As a theory of evolution this model has been largely debunked but it still offers a decent model for understanding the functions of these three areas of the brain. The exception is that fight or flight a collaboration between limbic and brain stem.



The Body

Somatics is a field within bodywork and movement studies as well as psychology which emphasizes internal physical perception and experience. The term is used in movement therapy to signify approaches based on the soma, or "the body as perceived from within."

Somatic practices offer us a way to intervene with our integrated, mind/body system in ways that can't be addressed by cognitive processes alone. These practices yield insight and control of our embodied patterns of perception, emotion, and action that result in how we lead.



Research and practice related to emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and NeuroLeadership (Rock, 2007) also point to an undeniably important connection between mind, body, motivation, influence and one's ability to be an effective leader.

As Pete Hamill, the author of Embodied Leadership puts it, "Leaders don't just need to know about leadership -- leaders need to embody the capacity to lead in the midst of ambiguity and complexity" (2013).



The concept of embodied leadership, derived from Strozzi-Heckler's school of somatic coaching, brings together action, feeling and meaning and is based on the idea that the mind and body are inextricably linked.

Exercises:

These are some exercises we will do to experience the use of yoga as a somatic practice.

1. Invigorating/Relaxation Breathing
2. Mountain Pose
3. Tree Pose (modified)
4. Warrior Pose
5. Sun Salutation (modified)





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Influencing the Neuroleadership Way

Use Your Brain to Influence their Brain:

SCARF is an acronym for: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness. David Rock's research into neuroleadership shows the above five factors as the constants in human motivation. When organizations and leaders get these factors right, they can lead to a state of high motivation. But when they get them wrong, they can be the root cause of demotivation. For each of the five factors organizations and leaders can create a 'reward state' that enhances motivation, often dramatically, whereas they can also create a 'threat state' that can have an even greater impact in demotivating employees.



Status – This relates to people's position in relation to others such as their peers, their colleagues, their manager, their friends and associates. It can be affected by public recognition, public criticism, job title, salary and softer factors like having an office versus having a cube, being invited to key meetings and so on.

Certainty – The more certainty people have the more the threat caused by uncertainty reduces. This is why managing change has been one of the most challenging skills that leaders have had to learn in the modern workplace. Change creates uncertainty and therefore, is perceived as a threat which in turn can lead to demotivation and a lack of productivity. It follows that the more certainty a leader can create for staff, the greater the reduction in people's threat levels that is caused by perceived uncertainty.

Autonomy – People generally find the freedom to make their own choices as motivational. The less control people have over their own destiny, the higher their level of demotivation. Even giving people control over how they plan their day or manage their workload can have a dramatic effect on motivation levels.

Relatedness – The quality of people's interactions with others has a direct effect on their level of motivation. This can include someone's relationship with their boss, with other team members, with other people within the organization and those within the supply chain as well as their social relationships.

Fairness – From an early age our sense of fairness is developed and honed. One just has to look at sibling rivalry to see this sense of fairness played out in the social world. At work, people's sense of whether they are being treated fairly has a direct effect on their level of motivation. Moreover, if a staff member perceives they are being treated unfairly it is likely to have a significant demotivational impact.

Self-Reflection Questions: Do you create more of a "reward state" or a "threat state"?

2. What could you do create more of a "reward state"?



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Resilience



Resilient leaders recognize the need for balance to function most effectively, and engage in self-care so they can survive and thrive in the face of challenging circumstances such as:

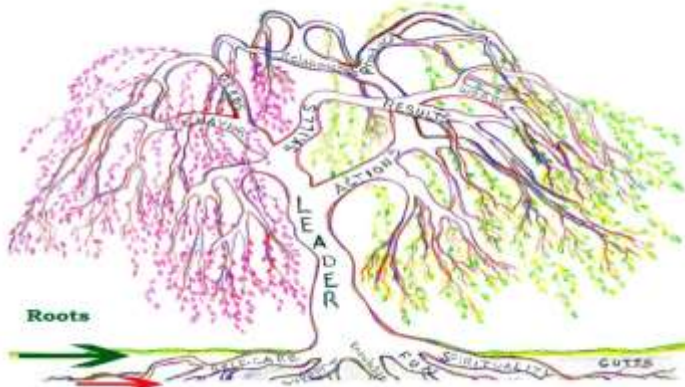
- Heavy work loads
- Constant change
- Difficult bosses and subordinates
- Juggling demands of work & family

Balance Requires Self-Care

Honoring your **mind**, **body** and **spirit** by attending to the well-being of *all* three components.



Roots = Resilience



Your roots are nourished by such things as:

- ❖ **Self-care:** exercise, nutrition, rest etc.
- ❖ **Support:** from others such as friends, family and co-workers
- ❖ **Knowledge:** continuous learning, challenging work, trying new things, broadening horizons
- ❖ **Fun:** it's important to just have fun, laugh, maintain a youthful curiosity
- ❖ **Spirituality:** many people are nourished by religion, faith and spiritual practices



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Self-Reflection Questions

1. What are you feeding your roots?
2. From where do you get nourishment?
3. Do you engage in enough self-care?
4. In what forms to you engage in self-care?
5. If you don't engage in self-care, why not?
6. What are your impediments to self-care and what might you do to remove them?
7. What actions will you take to become a more embodied leader?

