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## Finding Civilization's Collaborative Center

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*By Robert Porter Lynch, 2019*



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Despite what appears to be a bleak future ahead for humankind, there can be hope to turn the tide, if we shift our thinking and take the right kinds of actions.

This paper outlines how civilizations rise and fall, and what certainly seems like a time of darkness and despair in our times.

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Note: This paper circumscribes the philosophical and spiritual foundations for the next set of more practical books on Collaborative Excellence, focusing on Collaborative Leadership, Collaborative Capitalism, Trust Building, and Collaborative Innovation.

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Author's Note: My original purpose was to understand the Greek innovation process and how they discovered the secrets of "synergy" and why the Roman Empire failed to produce the *level of innovation* of their Greek predecessors,

This exploration then led to a much deeper quest: to find some pathway for the future of civilization that makes sense for our Modern age with its chaos, complexity, human strife, and ability to shatter civilization with frightening technology.

This document is just a short overview of more works to come. It's important, not just because it represents a nearly fifty year search for solutions that started while amidst blasting guns in Vietnam, but also it represents both spiritual and practical themes that are universal to all humankind, giving us guidance about where we should go in the future.

Please Note: This is an abridged version and still in a DRAFT form, for comment only.

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Further Note: If there are still typos, grammatical errors, and lapses in logic which the reader may spot. Please forgive any such errors.

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## Part One: The Destructive Lessons of Fallen Civilizations

When the Iron Curtain fell in Eastern Europe in 1989, the world heaved a collective sigh of relief; we believed humanity had cast off the last vestiges of the dark clouds of a prior generation, when the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and other monsters wasted the planet. According to many accountings, nearly 200 million people were annihilated during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by psychopaths like this. The social and economic destruction created mental and fiscal scars that passed from one generation to the next.

By the 1990s we saw free trade blossom, and Europe, the battleground of so many wars, opted for a different future -- to unify. It seemed like civilization might be headed on an upward trajectory; perhaps there was hope for humankind. Women's rights were being respected, the environment was getting better.

But we know, a generation later, there seems to be a dark pall spreading across the planet -- a resurgence of evil leaders and polarizing forces spreading shadows and fears. Our technology is become so threatening, we simply cannot countenance a war. If civilization stays on this trajectory, the possible outcomes are simply unfathomable.

There is something that can be done. However, it's important first to understand what civilization is, how it rises, and how it falls.

### *Destruction, Deterioration, and then Darkness*

The lessons of the decline of the Roman Empire have been examined since the 1700s. Perhaps some fresh points of view might be valuable.

By the end of the 4th century, the Roman Empire was in a death spiral politically and spiritually.

A succession of merciless dictators cultivated deep fear and excessive greed into the roots of Roman society. Civil wars were frequent; the modus operandi of governance became merciless.

Similarly, while the Roman had adopted Christianity as the religion of the realm by 327 AD, by the end of that century, religious leaders mimicked more and more the cruel demeanor of their autocrats. Spiritually and intellectually the Church directed its energies inward: toward defense of faith and self-aggrandizement by a series of Popes who seemed less interested in the spiritual teaching of Christ and more interested in emulating the grandeur of a dictatorial Roman despots. Bishops were less interesting in learned minds, instead they became dedicated to cleansing their regencies of heretics under the guise of a heavenly religious fanaticism. Historian Kenneth Clark, who studied this period of time from a cultural perspective stated:

*St. Gregory himself is credited with having destroyed many volumes of classical literature, even whole libraries, lest they seduced men's minds away from the study of holy writ. And in this he was certainly not alone. What with prejudice and destruction, it's surprising that the literature of pre-Christian antiquity was preserved at all. And in fact it only just squeaked through.<sup>1</sup>*

*The early Christian Church had dissipated its strength by theological controversies, carried on for three centuries with incredible violence and ingenuity.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, Kenneth, Civilization, Harper Row, 1974, p 17

<sup>2</sup> Clark, *Ibid*, p 7

### *The Fall of Order*

Long before the barbarians, the Roman Empire's *will to live* had expired, running strictly on the momentum left from the inertial energy of its once glorious past. Roman citizens had lost their commitment and conviction. The social and political structure was riddled by greed, self-doubt and brutality, a hollow core poised to be overrun by tough but unenlightened invaders.

Confounded with an Empire of turmoil and a sea of troubles, as their domain began to implode, what remained of the ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and literature was salvaged by Irish monks who spirited the fragmented remains away to the remote safe haven of St. Patrick,<sup>3</sup> or to the struggling remains of the Empire at Constantinople.

The final chapter in the saga of tragedies was to happen with the fall of the Roman Empire – when libraries and learning became a thing of the past, and destroyed more by neglect than by barbarians. We then lost so much that will never be retrieved. The secrets of innovative thinking from the Greeks were not just lost to the Dark Ages, we lost one of the basic foundations of what distinguishes us from other animals -- learning, especially higher learning. Thomas Cahill, who explored this frightening period of time in his masterful work *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, writes:

*All the great continental libraries had vanished; even memory of them had been erased from the minds of those who lived in the emerging feudal societies of medieval Europe. The first three public libraries had been established in Rome under the reign of Augustus [25 BC-14 AD], and by the time of Constantine [326 AD] there were twenty eight.*

*By the end of the fourth century, if we are to believe one writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, who may be indulging in hyperbole, "The Libraries, like tombs, are closed forever."<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of the fifth century, no one could foresee the coming collapse.*

*Gregory of Tours wrote this sad epitaph on sixth century literacy: "In these times when the practice of letters declines, no, rather perishes in the cities of Gaul, there has been found no scholar trained in ordered composition to present in prose or verse a picture of the things which have befallen."<sup>5</sup>*

By the middle of the eighth century, a gruesome darkness had befallen the Western world, one that would last five hundred years – longer than the period the Greeks had to light the spirit of possibility. The Dark Ages, as we would later call this time, was named such because hope for the future had been extinguished. Cultural historian Kenneth Clark writes that during this dreary hole in time:

*It's a shock to realize that during all this time practically no lay person, from kings and emperors downwards could read or write. Charlemagne learnt to read, but he never could write.<sup>6</sup>*

Thus simple expression of one's thoughts could only be communicated verbally, and never recorded for the next generation to know and understand and to build upon.

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<sup>3</sup> See Cahill, Thomas; *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> "Bibliotecis sepulcrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis"

<sup>5</sup> Cahill, Thomas; *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, Anchor Books, 1995, pp 4, 181-183

<sup>6</sup> Clark, Kenneth, *Ibid*, p 17

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### *The Torpedo of Fear*

Civilization itself has tended to ebb and flow. The Greek civilization was one where clearly the tide was in great flow. The Roman period was the time between flow and ebb, while the Dark Ages were the ebb at its worst.<sup>7</sup>

While today we look at the fall of the Roman Empire askance with a measured indifference, we need to recognize what happened in more human terms – the realities from those moments in the past.

What are the enemies of civilization? What destroys it? What creates it? Again, cultural historian, Kenneth Clark in his brilliant, illuminating work *Civilization*, (also a PBS masterpiece) provides some lucid observations:

*Vigor, energy, vitality: all the great civilizations – or civilizing epochs – have a weight of energy behind them.*

*People sometimes think that civilization consists in fine sensibilities and good conversation and all that. These can be among the agreeable results of civilization, they are not what makes a civilization, and a society can have these amenities and yet be dead and rigid.<sup>8</sup>*

*To the [Greek] imagination, it is a world of light and confidence, in which the gods are like ourselves, only more beautiful, and descend to the earth to teach men reason and the laws of harmony....*

*At certain epochs man has felt conscious of something about himself – body and spirit – which was outside the day-to-day struggle for existence and the night-to-night struggle with fears; he has felt the need to develop these qualities of thought and feeling so that they might approach nearly as possible, to the ideal of perfection – reason, justice, physical beauty, all of them in equilibrium.*

*Western Europe [prior to the Dark Ages] inherited such an ideal. It had been invented in Greece in the fifth century before Christ, and was without doubt the most extraordinary creation of the whole of history, so complete, so convincing, so satisfying to the mind and eye, that it lasted practically unchanged for over six hundred years.<sup>9</sup>*

What destroyed this ideal? Clark continues:

*First of all fear – fear of war, fear of invasion, fear of plague and famine<sup>10</sup> that make it simply not worthwhile constructing things. And fears... that you dare not question anything or change anything ... that destroyed self-confidence.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Some scholars attempt to argue the Dark Ages were not so dark, after all. However, the absence of the rise of any great western civilization, the emergence of no great institutions, no great works of art, the abysmal lack of educational, and the dearth of thought leaders speaks for itself.

<sup>8</sup> Clark, *ibid*, p 4

<sup>9</sup> Clark, Kenneth; *Civilization*, Harper Row, 1974, p 2-3; Clark finishes this passage: “Of course, its art became stereotyped and conventional.”

<sup>10</sup> Author’s note: I’d add fear of others, one’s neighbors, one’s countrymen, people of different cultures and skin color, and certainly people from foreign lands. It’s easier to fear than to understand differences, or find similarities.



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*A world of fear and darkness [is] ready to inflict horrible punishment for the smallest infringement or taboo.*

*And then the exhaustion [that follows fear], the feeling of hopelessness which can overtake people, even with a high degree of material prosperity.*

*Civilization requires far more than material prosperity; it requires confidence – in the society in which one lives, belief in its philosophy,<sup>12</sup> belief in its laws, and confidence in its own mental powers .... building with an eye to the future.<sup>13</sup>*

*Civilized man ... must feel that he belongs somewhere in space and time; that he consciously looks forward and looks back.<sup>14</sup>*

We, as 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens of our nation and of the world, must come to grips with the harsh reality that we, too, are on that same threshold that separated the Roman Empire from the Dark Ages.

### ***The Power of Culture***

We are products not just of our own minds and will. This accounts for only 25-30% of why humans behave like we do. Behavior is based more on *beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions* than anything else; these come primarily from the culture in which we are raised. This is why the Dark Ages were dark: because leaders and the culture thought of their world as bleak, with no hopeful future. That's why in the Western world there were no great works of art, no great philosophers, no breakthroughs in science, and no new universities. A person's world was their village, everything beyond was foreign and feared.

We must always fight and grapple to search for the truth that will build a dynamic and trustworthy future. Freedom of choice is one of humanity's most prized treasures. The Spirit of our Civilization can be bright, static, or gloomy. It is our choice. If we choose poorly, the consequences can be tragic. In the words of Sophocles:

*He that once enters the tyrant's door  
Becomes a slave, 'though he were free before.*

The tyrant Sophocles speaks of is not just a person, but just as appropriately refers to a belief system or a community culture that usurps our freedom to explore or express ideas and ideals that open avenues to bring out the greatness in people.

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<sup>11</sup> Author's Note: The word confidence is from the Latin *con*: to join, and *fidere*: to trust. Please bear in mind that these words fundamentally mean the same and are used somewhat interchangeable. However, I tend to use the simple word: *Trust* because its meaning is less nuanced.

<sup>12</sup> Author's Note: In today's 21<sup>st</sup> century, we seem to have no philosophy for our culture. Christianity can and should provide some basis for a modern society to thrive upon. Later in this paper, I will present a complementary "philosophy" of *Collaborative Excellence* upon which we can build a solid foundation for building a future people can trust.

<sup>13</sup> Clark, *Ibid*, p 4

<sup>14</sup> Clark, *Ibid*, p 17

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### *The Unfulfilled Promise*

The promise that was Greece had been marginally transmuted to Rome – the symbols of Greece remained, but the soul of Greece had been pillaged. The vestiges of the old culture still held on in Athens and Alexandria, but even these were surrounded by a sea of despair and greed.

Reading through the tremendous volume of learned works of the Romans (see Varro as an example) one is taken by the failure of the Roman scholars, (all of whom studied, spoke, and cherished the Greek,) to imbed their learning into the political culture of the times, nor to turn their learning of science into innovative application. One cannot help to draw certain hypothesis as to why.

- Lack of Vision – to a Roman, making something *bigger* was best
- Political Turmoil & Oppression – Roman justice was Draconian
- Lack of Commitment – trust and honor among Romans was a thing of the past
- Learning for learning sake – where there was no wisdom and no character, knowledge was all that was left
- Insecurity<sup>15</sup> -- tremendous fear, doubt, instability, and distrust ruled the land

The innovations in all areas, science, mathematics, the arts, language, philosophy, and architecture diminished and dried up. The Greek knowledge was all taught in the Roman educational system, but not the drive, commitment, spirit, and vision failed to transfer over. While engineering grew, unlike the Greeks, the Romans produced no science, no philosophy, no moral authority. Rome seemed to see a great nation in terms of the strength and reach of its authority, not by the vision and vitality of the dream of a new, better, and more energizing future.

### *Harmony and the Unity of Diversity*

Mastering the interplay of harmonies and polarities is an essential skill in the creation of synergies. The Romans in their art were able to create harmonies with their Greek predecessors, but not the unique synergies.

Unlike the Greeks, who had begun to master harmonies and polarities in their art, geometry, and philosophy, Romans understood the harmonies but were puzzled the interplay of polarities. The Greek concept of *Unity in Diversity*<sup>16</sup> translated into the Latin culture as a more degenerated form, something akin to *Unity of Authority*.

The Greek experiments with both democratic and republican rule had their rocky spots – the formulations had to be worked out with greater exactness. The Romans thought they could make improvements on the Greek model. Essentially, they failed, the Roman Republic, which never had a written constitution, was dead before Caesar had taken the reign of power in 49 BC.

The momentum of Athenian free thought and innovation did not die immediately with the Roman conquest but continued another three hundred years. True, the center of Greek effort

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<sup>15</sup> *Insecurity* can be a spur to innovation. Romans always seemed to feel intellectually insecure in the face of the Greeks, but in this case it does not spur innovation; fear and distrust interfered. See Lynch & Prozonis, [\*How the Greeks created the First Age of Innovation\*](#).

<sup>16</sup> The motto of the United States “E Pluribus Unum” (Latin) can be translated literally as “Out of Many, One.” If this were stated in Greek, they would have said something akin to “Unity in the Diversity.” This concept is traced back to Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (c. 500 BC), who proposed that *from all things one, and from one all things*. Aristotle addressed the problem of holistic unity by introducing the concept of *synergy*, defining it as the *whole being greater than the sum of the parts*. *Synergy* comes from the Greek, literally meaning “joined energy” and implies working together or co-operating to create more.



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shifted from Athens to Alexandria, and the record shows that there is still a great deal of innovative and artistic output from Alexandria, but by 200 AD, the Greek influence on Rome had definitely waned, drained by oppression and opulence.

### *The Power of Expression of Ideas in Language*

The intellectual elite in Caesar's time were all educated in Athens; Greek was taught to all the educated patrician class. Figuratively speaking, the Romans "got the words, but not the music."

Why? The answer is a bit of a puzzle. The highly respected intellectual, scholar, and prolific author, Varro, was responsible for building the basis of the Latin language. However, as anyone who has ever studied the structure of the Greek and the Latin, even at a distance, knows the level of sophistication of the word structure and the nuances of Greek far exceeds Latin.

For example, take three words that play a central role in the Greek intellectual and innovation culture:

Philotimo (the Love of Honor),  
Metanoia (Shift the Heart of the Mind to a Higher Level), and  
Harmatia (to Miss the Mark).

None of these words migrate successfully into Latin; the first word: "philotimo" in Latin is "honor" (the passionate "love" component has been dropped); the second was transformed into "repentance" which implies a guilt trip and loses the visionary transcendent component, and the last is "sin" which again lacks any transcendent or redemptive quality.

Rome's failure to create a language as transcendent as the Greek continually limited the Latin mind in a multitude of affairs. Latin in so many circumstances, through it sounds erudite, is expressed the most basic form – the "vulgate."

Language determines much of the way we think. It can open or close the mind. As German philosopher Ludwig Wittenstein said:

*The limits of my language are the limits of my world.*

In matters of the heart, soul, and spirit, simplicity of word may not be an asset as it strips deep meaning away and leaves us with the version "for dummies." The Greek words were a rope to climbing out of a sea of storms.

In today's written word, people blast out vituperous tweets reflecting their vitriolic anger but seldom their love -- their narrow opinions but not their broad vision.

As we proceed into the future and look back on our recent past, we can take small solace in the invention of many new words for our science, but so very few for our spiritual and social relationships. The Greeks were masters at the creation of words to reflect the nature of the world they imagined for their future.

For example, rather than one word for *love*, they had five,<sup>17</sup> with clear distinctions between each. The point is, our society is far more articulate about fighting and conflict than about cooperation, love, or trust.

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<sup>17</sup> *Agape*: Love of God; *Philia*: Deep Friendship; *Ludus*: Playful Love; *Pragma*: Mature Love; *Storge*: Motherly or Family Love; *Eros*: Romantic Love.

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The Romans clearly were deficient in this skill, not because they lacked the intelligence, but because they lacked the divine inspiration and the will to carry it to fruition.

Creating a future for Civilization must include new words that reflect the renewed inspiration, the new vision and give meaning to life itself.

It is in our word structure that our minds conceptualize thinking, beliefs, and set the stage for action. Words express perceptions, possibilities, ideas and ideals. As a modern example, when linguists in the 1980s learned that the Russian language was devoid in certain words, like *cooperation*,<sup>18</sup> they began to create new words to anchor the construct in the mind.

In affairs of governance, the hallmark of excellence of any political process and adroit politician is to move forward in the face of opposition without the opposition feeling it was bulldozed or manipulated unfairly. Language is the essential foundation for mastering simple skills of persuasion, settling differences amicably, building trust, and mobilizing support across diverse interests.

Today, listen to how English is debased and perverted into its most vulgate form. It is evidence of a corrosion of the mind and a corruption of the soul.

Despite the eloquent oratory skills of many of those who served in office (and were highly trained in rhetoric), antagonism in the Roman Senate was gruesome and often deadly. This was further fueled by a military that had little or no respect for the civil government. Resolution of conflicting ideas in Rome, unlike Greece, always had the foulness of betrayal, manipulation, and deceit. More than 60 members of the Senate were engaged in the conspiracy to assassinate Caesar.

Disagreements were unlikely to be settled in the best interests of the Roman people; the deciding factor always weighed in favor of self-interest, personal aggrandizement, and power, which sacrificed the lives of thousands as the disagreements erupted into civil war. The ultimate demise of Rome was one of betrayal and self-centered greed in a cesspool of fear.

In our 21<sup>st</sup> century world, self-interest has again taken center stage, forcing the greater good of countries behind the curtain; incivility and profanity in the language of our leaders demonstrates their darkness of their souls and minds.

### ***Why did the Romans Fail to Propel the Greek Innovation Trajectory?***

One must then ask “Why did the Roman culture not continue to carry the Greek culture to a new level?” After all, the Roman intellectual elite, such as Cicero, were all schooled in Athens. Greek was the language of all the ruling class in Rome. We know that even the military commanders spoke Greek fluently. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon and when he was stabbed by Brutus, his words were Greek not Latin.

An insightful answer to this question is essential to our fundamental quest to understand how to propel the lead “cultural arrows” of social, spiritual, and scientific progress. Today we have a highly educated society, but neither an inspired citizenry, nor trustworthy leaders.

A recipe for disaster calls for gathering more and more knowledge without the wisdom of vision and devoid of moral character to build trust.

While Aristotle clearly built upon the shoulders of his mentors, Socrates and Plato, Aristotle none-the-less *challenged these giants at every intellectual crossroads*, building on them, but taking a different path if he felt either the evidence or the rationale justified it. What was remarkably missing in the Roman era is that relationship between mentor and student. The Romans

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<sup>18</sup> “Perestroika” – from a team of three horses pulling together – became the word for cooperation.

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venerated and emulated the Greeks, but failed to surpass them. How pathetic the minds that revered the Greek thinkers without understanding their nature: which was to push incessantly to new levels.

For example, over the next two thousand years, few if any scholars challenged Aristotle's scientific proclamations, (quite a few were proven wrong). From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC until the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD, the great Greek names in science -- Aristotle, Hippocrates, Euclid, Pythagoras -- went virtually unchallenged. Not until the likes of Newton, Bacon, and Descartes in the 1600s do we see the next set of breakthroughs in mathematical and scientific thinking.

What monumental force stopped this inner Greek hunger and compelling search for truth?

It would be easy to blame the Roman Catholic Church of the fourth century for effectively put a halt to this spiritual evolution by making only one mono-syllabic style of thinking acceptable, like having only one musical instrument that could play only one note -- not much for making a symphony. Diversity of Christian thinking was condemned, hence the need to wipe out any of the many sects who did not toe the doctrinaire line.

This conclusion, while correct, is incomplete and not fully adequate to explain the realities of stalled innovation in the Roman era. While it is true that the Romans became engineers building roads and bridges -- the very practical elements of technology -- there were no real breakthroughs in the sciences or the art that would compare with the Greeks. The Roman Empire had five hundred years before the rise in power of the Church to use its massive wealth to build an innovation engine that would rival the Greeks. But it failed. Why?

### ***The Invisible Force that Killed Roman Innovation***

The mysterious force that stopped innovation from materializing was invisible and enormously powerful. No, this invisible force was not a microbial germ or lead in the water pipes (those did cause problems but they didn't stop innovation).

What was this deadly force?

It was *Distrust* -- a lack of confidence in people, in government, -- the lack of faith that leaders and their institutions could solve the problems of the times and take concrete steps to build a great future for the citizenry. All the great structures of the Roman world were essentially a fraud, being symbols of power and glory, but they didn't represent the dignity of the human spirit. The Roman Coliseum is a perfect example. Unlike the Greek Olympics which were held to showcase the refinement of body, mind and spirit, the gladiatorial games epitomized cruelty and destruction.

This should not be lost on our modern world. How much of modern entertainment is ugly, mean spirited, violent, and debasing? How does today's culture impact the beliefs of our citizens, young and old, to see and expect the darkness and worst from humanity? Study after study shows our society's trust in itself and its institutions is dying rapidly.

The nature of people to question, to challenge, to debate, to propose something new is severely squelched in an atmosphere of distrust. The risk of having one's integrity challenged, of being falsely accused of a transgression that never happened, or being accused of a heresy against the accepted order makes innovation extremely difficult because social innovation carries the burden of death or assassination of one's character, position, and security. This forces innovators into technological fields, because social innovation is unsafe for any practitioner.

In an atmosphere of manic, prosecutorial, dysphoric distrust, innovation will be stillborn, or even worse, never conceived.

How true is this assertion that *distrust* is the trigger that shoots the bullet that kills civilization? Let's put the assertion through a trust paradigm to see how well the Greeks fare vis-

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a-vis the Romans. First, we will use the classical “FARTHEST” framework to judge both cultures.

- **F**airness & Reciprocity
- **A**ccountability & Integrity
- **R**espect & Caring
- **T**ruth & the Courage to tell it
- **H**onor & Honesty
- **E**thics & Standards of Excellence
- **S**afety & Security
- **T**ransparency & Openness

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Trust determines  
the Course of History,  
the Destiny of Nations,  
and the Fate of People.

Paul R. Lawrence, Harvard

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It doesn’t require a protracted analysis to draw some very clear and distinct conclusions. The Greek culture was one where there was a high degree of trust among its citizens, scientists, scholars, artists, and merchants.

For example, in Athens anyone who was not honorable or trustworthy would be ostracized. This was a process by which the citizens voted to kick a disreputable person out of town. If Athenians voted unfavorably by throwing the “ostrakon,” a large coin that signified disfavor. It was a quick way of ensuring Athens kept to the highest standards of trustworthy behavior.

Compare this to the despicable Roman practice of “proscription” which allowed a ruler to issue a writ of execution without a trial and then abscond with the wealth of any antagonist or political enemy.

### ***Knowledge is Not Vision Nor Wisdom Nor Creativity Nor Trust***

The Romans filled themselves with the knowledge of the Greeks, but never their wisdom, particularly the creative inquiry that produces breakthroughs. They mimed Aristotle, but no Roman accepted the challenge that Plato did with Socrates, or Aristotle with Plato – to build a new vision evolved from their mentor, but in doing so, challenge their mentor’s beliefs, accepting some, but generating the next level of thinking.<sup>19</sup>

If you read Plato’s or Aristotle’s writing today, you will see some brilliant thinking behind it. It’s rare to see anything from the Roman era that compares. (and when you do see it, more often than not, it’s emanating from a Greek<sup>20</sup> writing during the Roman era.

As we look around at our institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see so much of the Roman pattern happening now. Our institutional trust is at all-time lows.<sup>21</sup> How many leaders spend an ounce of energy building trust in their institutions? How many educators pump into young students enormous amounts of knowledge, but fail to provide the wisdom, and more importantly the sense of the passion and moral character that drove civilizations of the past to greatness.

The truth is never fully contained in knowledge, because knowledge is inherently devoid of the lively spirit of wisdom and strength of character that gives fullness and depth to the truth, the real truth, the whole truth, the essential truth.

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<sup>19</sup> See Russo, Lucian; *The Forgotten Revolution, How Science was born in 300 BC*, [then destroyed by the Romans] and *had to be Reborn* [during the Renaissance], Springer, 2003

<sup>20</sup> Galen and Plutarch are good examples.

<sup>21</sup> See Gallup Polls, *Trust in Institutions* surveys

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To fulfill our quest for the freedom truth will bring, we must also brace ourselves for the disturbing revelations that accompany new truths.

Real truth often undermines or even destroys old truths, and thus is tumultuous.

Often we use the term “Law and Order” as the symbolic way of addressing what makes for good, stable governance. After studying the Roman system, I have come to a different conclusion. The concept “Law and Order” came from a ruling class of people, wishing to impose the power of authority on their subordinate minions. Law and Order steps in when trust in social structures steps out. The average person only wants law and order if they have been experiencing a world of chaos and confusion.

Few recognize the impact of trust on keeping a social system healthy, flourishing, and vibrant. What people really want, and so seldom get from their government and other institutions is *trust, fairness, compassion, and justice*. If the people don’t receive *trust and fairness* from a government or judicial process, then they fall back on *law and order* as a poor substitute, like a starving man will gladly eat mere bread and water.

Where are we today? Is there any sense that, as a culture we are on the journey of progression? How about our children? Do they think their lives will be better than their parents?

### ***Culture’s Impact on Outcomes***

While invisible, culture is like radio waves, pervasive and everywhere. Culture tells people what is expected of them, what is valued by leaders, what beliefs they should hold, how people should interact, what they should achieve and protect, how they will be rewarded or punished, and what is important.

Culture, more than any other factor (including personality), will determine human behavior. And Leadership is the most influential factor in determining culture, and, by extrapolation, human behavior.

That’s why collaborative leadership is so vital to Collaborative Excellence and High Performance.

## Part Two: Our Tenuous Civilization – Where will the Centre Hold?

### *Duality of Humanity*

The central problem in humanity, and thus too in civilization, is the duality of the human animal. Our DNA and brain structure is assembled in such a way that we, as *homo-sapiens*, are simultaneously profane and profound, beastly and godly, vicious and magnanimous, dastardly and divine. This dichotomous nature has been written about for over two thousand years.

Good leaders attempt to bring out the best in us, and bad leaders try to exploit the worst.

The negative side to our duality has been the plague of our planet for thousands of years. The past 20<sup>th</sup> century was the worst, with more killing of humans than probably all the previous centuries combined.

While we won't see the genetic duality of humans disappear in the foreseeable future, we now have learned enough about human behavior and brain science to know how to design cultures, develop leaders, and predictively bring forth the best in humans.

Society contains the potentiality to produce hope or fear, glory or destruction, life or death. Too often, this fateful decision of destiny is left too much to chance, by a cast of the dice, rather than by conscious choice and careful consideration of the underlying design that can weigh the dice heavily in our favor.

Yes, we can beat the odds of chance, if we so choose. But a bold new destiny requires clarity of mission and purpose.

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Too much of civilization's destiny is left to chance.

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It's not a matter of intelligence. Over the last three thousand years, although circumstances and opportunities play a part, human intelligence seems to have remained fairly constant. With Artificial Intelligence invading every space of human existence, we'd better program our computers the right way or suffer dire consequences.

If we groom the right leaders and design the right cultures, we can minimize the hell on earth. Fortunately about 95% of humans fall into the realm where their DNA enables us to bring out their good side – with the right guidance, information, beliefs, language, mindsets and skillsets.

We call this *Collaborative Excellence*, which will be explored in more depth in the next section. First, let's look at the forces that seem to be gaining ground, the forces of destruction.

### *Fear and Courage*

At the core of any civilization's failure will be found two forces in opposition to each other: *Fear* and *Courage*. Aristotle said the latter was the most important quality one can have. When Rome finally fell, the leaders of Rome had no more will to fight the evil barbarians at their gate; instead they made a Faustian bargain, and ultimately sold whatever semblance of their souls to an evil even greater than they. Kenneth Clark remarks:

*A world of fear and darkness [is] ready to inflict horrible punishment for the smallest infringement of a taboo.*<sup>22</sup>

Fear sucks the vitality out of a person, an organization, a nation, and a civilization. Some respond with anger and revenge, others with despair and despondency.

*The best with courage, vision, and commitment.*

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<sup>22</sup> Clark, Ibid, p; 2



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*Thinking about the almost incredible epoch of the Roman Empire tells one something about the nature of civilization. It shows that however complex and solid it seems, it is actually quite fragile.*

*It can be destroyed. What are its enemies?*

*First of all fear – fear of war, fear of invasion, fear of plague and famine, [I might add fear of cruelty and injustice] that make it simply not worthwhile constructing things or planting trees or even planning next year's crops.<sup>23</sup>*

People want to be passionate, filled with intensity, we then know we are fully alive. What is so attractive about fear, and its derivatives such as vengeance and anger, is that fear *is filled with passion*. We know we are alive when filled with fear; it's exciting. That's why so many people love roller coaster rides or horror movies. Fear creates its own self-regenerative, self-propelling although negative, synergy.<sup>24</sup> Fear then drives us to formulate our own crazed view of the world, which, of course, results in erratic or demonic behavior, that, in turn generates more fears; "and the beat goes on....."

For a society to thrive takes more than the absence of fear, for some despot will always emerge who wants power to aggrandize himself.

Ultimately Civilization's success will depend on having the *courage* to create a future of hope based on the probability that people can and will work together, despite their differences.

This is the domain of Leadership, for they are the ones to create the culture of cooperation, the capacity to embrace differences, the courage [from the French word *Coeur: Heart*] to stand strong against forces that would tear down core values. It is from the energy of spirited leaders with deep beliefs in the capacity of humankind to that will keep civilization from a descent into Human Hell.

Any attempt at using fear as the source of spiritual authority will be doomed for the same reason the French Revolution failed or the Soviet Union failed or Mao Tse Tung failed.

"Reigns of Terror" cannot hold people in check forever. Fear will eventually burn itself out, but it can wreak a horrific toll, as the 175 million deaths in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from the guns and gas chambers of tyrants attests.

Hopefully we shall never forget to use courage to overcome fear: they are natural antagonists; and when trust and truth stand side by side with courage, fear and destruction are bound for extinction. This is where we shall find the antidote to improving the fate of humanity.

### ***The Fallacy and Delusion of War and Conflict***

In studying the fall of the Roman Empire, one is struck with the numerous civil wars throughout the empire: about one major civil war every generation. Similarly, in the early years of the Christian Church, civil war within factions of the church became not a tragedy but a normal routine. Today, Christian sects have given up war, but there are still intense rivalries within and between denominations – certainly there is no universal Christian "community."

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<sup>23</sup> Clark, Ibid, p 3-4

<sup>24</sup> See Corning, Peter, Holistic Darwin for detailed explanations of negative synergies. Cancer is a good example of a negative synergy where the biological interaction of cancer cells work synergistically with the human body to produce a death destroying effect.

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What is it about civilization that causes such a destructive malaise? Ever age has experienced not unity but dissention, and even constant revolt. Christianity with its promise of peace, justice, and love – all the elements missing in Rome – at first was so embraced by a society yearning for something else, then it became a battlefield.

Destruction, in and of itself, is only bad if it that which is destroyed fails to be replaced or renewed with something better. This is the principle of the seasons. The ideals of truth and freedom only seem important on the heels of ending brutal wars.

Neither the institutions of education nor religion ascended to intervene in this viral cycle. Prelates and professors expounded the virtues of truth and freedom, but, in reality, there was no commitment to such lofty values.

Kenneth Clark comments on a civilization's willingness to fight, stating:

*Fighting, fighting, fighting. ... Rome collapsed ... [because] it was exhausted. ... they created chaos; and into that chaos came real barbarians like the Huns, who were totally illiterate and destructively hostile to what they couldn't understand.*

*The early Christian Church had dissipated its strength by theological controversies, carried on for three centuries with incredible violence and ingenuity. In the middle of the seventh century there appeared a new force with faith, energy, a will to conquer and an alternative culture: Islam....In a miraculously short time – about fifty years – the classical world was overrun. Only its bleached bones stood out against the Mediterranean sky.*<sup>25</sup>

For Romans, the fight was always about power, dominance, and control, never about principles and ideals. A fight without purpose or meaning is meant only for fools and bullies; it's certainly not for those courageous enough to stand for their values and vision.

A nation that defines itself by neither its vision nor its values, but by its wars that were or are to be, will be lost. This is as true today as it was then.

### ***Suicide of the Soul and Revitalization***

Modern society finds too many ways for people to commit "suicide of the soul," which becomes the prelude to their own depression and even death. Suicide among teenagers is epidemic. Suicide of the soul is always a precursor to real death.

In my experience revitalizing deteriorating communities, the strategy was based on the word: *revitalization* – *to bring back life*. This is different from just rehabbing buildings, which was a part of the strategy. The first thing in turning the tide in declining neighborhoods is to create a mission that builds a future for the people, a sense of hope to cure the despondency that manifests after suicide of the soul.

### ***The "Centre" Cannot Hold?***

Kenneth Clark, in his final passage closing his work on *Civilization* quoted the prophetic words of William Butler Yeats written at the end of the First World War:

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,*

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<sup>25</sup> Clark, Kenneth, *Ibid*, p 18,4, 7

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*And everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction,  
While the worst are full of passionate intensity.*

This poem haunted me when I read it nearly fifty years ago, and it still does. Today we hear it quoted often. Clark then ended his book (written fifty years after Yeats) with the words:

*The trouble [with our world in 1969] is there is still no centre.*

*The moral and intellectual failure of Marxism [that had so passionately and fanatically overtaken the world in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century] has left us with no alternative to heroic materialism, and that isn't enough.*

*One may be optimistic, but one can't exactly be joyful at the prospect before us.* <sup>26</sup>

Yeats' words were disconcerting then, and are sadly more disturbing today. Little has changed in the intervening years since Yeats and Clark wrote those words. Failure to find the "centre" ends the story of humankind in tragic verse.

But these words need not be prophesy.

There is a pathway superseding Heroic Materialism as we shall explore.

The trajectory for the future must be propelled not simply with intellectual logic and more than emotional passion – the future needs a bold new vision for humanity, a deep inner commitment; and a powerful belief that a positive future can and will become a reality.

In generating *progressive power*, each who touches this bold new future vision must add something of value – making it better or broader or more universal or more accessible.

Yet we must first have something to believe in, something to frame our lives, something to be both a guiding star and an inner energy force; it starts with Trust, but then must continue generating enabling forces that take humanity to new heights.

America's Founding Fathers used the Greek collaborative core to build the vision of democratic governance in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They didn't try to replicate the Greeks, but built on their essence.

Similarly, for the 21<sup>st</sup> century we will drink from that wellspring, capturing its collaborative spirit, to create a 'centre' that can hold.

We will explore this in the next section.



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<sup>26</sup> Clark, Kenneth; Ibid, pp 346-47

### Part Three: The Quest for Collaborative Excellence – the “Centre Core”

#### *The Energy We Receive From Trust*

Trust is inextricably connected to the *Power of Progression* and *Collaborative Excellence*.

With trust, people see that such progress will be the inevitable in the struggle to overcome obstacles. Power and force can never overcome the anxiety generated by corrosive fear, corruption, and intensive divisiveness. Roman Emperors, like all despots who have followed in their footsteps, make pitiful demands for loyalty when they cannot fathom the nature of earning the trust of their citizens. A progression of psychopathic leaders, like Caligula or Nero wielded power with the unscrupulous proficiency of a rattlesnake.

Fear is the greatest destroyer of trust. Kenneth Clark observed:

*It is the lack of confidence [distrust], more than anything else that kills civilization.*

*We can destroy ourselves with cynicism and disillusion, just as effectively as bombs.<sup>27</sup>*

In the larger sense, the fall of Rome was a direct result of people not trusting their leaders, their government, nor its institutions nor their fellow man, nor their culture for its lack of vision and ideals. The same disturbing signs are evidence cross the world today.

Trust in institutions in the U.S. and Europe has eroded to precipitous levels. When less than a quarter of our citizens in America and Europe trust their government, the very foundations of democracy are in peril.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the most trusted institution is our military. Why? They are the last bastion of trust, safety, security, and honor.

Thankfully our military academies train its leaders to respect civilian authority. If this ever fails us, we will have another Roman Marius or Sulla<sup>28</sup> or a Latin American style dictator.

“Collaborative Excellence” aims at  
shaping a world people can trust.

#### *The Distinguishing Characteristics of Civilization:*

The autobiography of a great civilization is embraced not so much in its art nor literature nor edifices, but rather the humaneness of its:

- Learning & Knowledge,
- Wisdom & Innovation (both social and technical),
- Leadership, Vision & Values,
- Character & Courage,
- Quest for Truth & Beauty,

.... it is from these wellsprings pour forth the sweet waters that define the *spirit* and *future* of a civilization.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Clark, Ibid, p 4 & 347

<sup>28</sup> Marius and his successor, Sulla, usurped the Roman Republic in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, assuming dictatorial powers. Plutarch describes Marius as “driven by the winds of rage, an inordinate love of power, and insatiable greed.” He “usurped unprecedented power from the rest of the Republican governing structure and threatens [republican rule] with destruction.” This could be the description of every dictatorial leader since.

<sup>29</sup> The brilliant English architect and philosopher of the Victorian era, John Ruskin, said: *Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts: the book of their Deeds, the book of their Words, and the book of*

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*Learning* continues the progressive trajectory that enables a civilization to evolve, innovate, and adapt.

*Wisdom* integrates the knowledge from the learning into compassion and conscience that leads to trust, truth, and justice.

And *Leadership* ensures that our learning and wisdom is translated into inspired action that produces meaningful results. One can only truly know a leader's soul by the quality of the decisions they make, not the values they espouse.

Civilization should be the continuous upward journey seeking to bring out the best in humankind, in truth, in trust, collaboration, justice, beauty, and wisdom. Sadly this has been more a dream than a current reality.

### ***Renewal, Passion, and Regeneration***

Renewal and regeneration requires a grindstone to keep the edge of innovation and conviction sharp. Alfred North Whitehead said it well:

*The vitality of thought is an adventure. Ideas won't keep.  
Something must be done about them.  
When an idea is new, its custodians have fervor,  
live for it, and, if need be, die for it.*<sup>30</sup>

He then went on to say that

*"a culture is in its finest flower before it  
begins to analyze itself."*

### ***Decoding the DNA of the Greek Culture***

One characteristic that distinguished the classical Greeks from the Romans was how they addressed differentials in thinking and culture.

From the time of Heraclitus in 500 BC, and then later epitomized with Socrates, the Greeks danced with "differential energy," seeing polarities and diversity as part of the great majesty of unity and synergy.

When Alexander the Great conquered a country, they embraced its culture. This is best illustrated by the conquering of Egypt, and then building the Library of Alexandria.

Rome never mastered this art of differential energy, and never seemed to want to. For the Romans, differences were a contest of wills, a winner and a loser, a time for the conqueror to vanquish and subjugate for might always made right.

What's important today is to recognize three critical points:

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We are products not just of our own minds and will.

This accounts for only 25-30% of why humans behave like we do.

Behavior is based more on beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions than anything else; these come primarily from the culture in which we are raised.

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*their Art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last."* This commentary always disturbed me, for I think he missed the mark on this one.

<sup>30</sup> Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead, 1953, p 16

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- Culture is the #1 determinant of Human Behavior
  - No, it's not personality, which accounts for perhaps 25-30% of behavior.
  - Culture forms the way our minds and hearts perceive, believe, and act. To prove this, just look at the Dark Ages.
    - People were no less intelligent than the Greeks, but the culture did not let a multitude of minds flourish, thus there were few thought leaders who emerged from this dark five hundred year period.
  - Similarly, the German people are not inherently evil, but they did behave in horrific ways during Hitler's regime. Why?
    - Because Hitler used cultural influences, including propaganda, symbols, books, and the law to bring out the dark side of humanity, not the divine.
- Leadership is the #1 determinant of Culture
  - More than any other force, leaders decide what will be the language, the thoughts, the measures, and the rewards for humans.
  - These leaders are not always people. Leaders can be the media, news, advertisers, movies, music, social media, friends or parents. One must be careful what is let into the mind from these sources, for they will change the way you see life, what you believe to be true, and what is valued.
- There are Three Fundamental forms of Culture (and hence Leadership and Economics), each of which carries strong belief systems which are translated into every day actions:
  - **Adversarial Culture**
    - Gain Advantage at every turn
    - Manipulation of people & perceptions
    - Win-Lose is the only way to play the game
    - Survival of Fittest - it's a dog eat dog world
    - Might makes Right, he who has the gold rules
    - People are Liabilities and must be loyal
  - **Transactional Culture**
    - Everything's a "Deal"
    - Quid Pro Quo & Bargaining
    - Trade means Buy Low - Sell High
    - Self Interest is Paramount
    - People are Replaceable Parts
  - **Collaborative Culture**
    - Teamwork & Trust
    - Synergy & Unity



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- Value Differences because People are Potential Innovation Engines
- Balance Mutual Benefit with Self Interest

Think of these three frameworks as “primary colors,” like red, blue, and yellow. As an artist mixes these three colors, they create virtually every hue in the rainbow. So too can cultures be designed.

It is the *Collaborative Culture* that has produced the best in humankind, and thus in civilization throughout the last twenty-five centuries.

This is the focus of *Collaborative Excellence*, which can be the center that will hold under the pressures of chaos and complexity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

### ***Building the Collaborative “Centre”***

This of course can be said of the Greek culture, which was in a perpetual state of inventing itself, questioning what it did, always starting a new experiment, regenerating the energy of the culture.

In his brilliant analysis of the Greek culture that surrounded Plato, Jerry Dell Ehrlich notes:

*This passionate love to ‘know all,’ to ‘know it perfectly’ led to achievements in every field of knowledge which created mankind's way of thinking. In short, the Greeks taught us how to think, and gave birth to modern man. Edith Hamilton said:*

*“None of the great civilizations that preceded them and surrounded them serve them as model. With them something new came into the world. They were the first Westerners; the Spirit of the West, the modern spirit, it's a Greek discovery.”*

Commenting on the knowledge the Greeks learned from the Babylonians, John Burnet observed that the Greeks drove more deeply with a multitude of questions no Babylonian had ever dreamt of:

*“It was their great curiosity and wonder of all things both natural and created by man that drove them on to such knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world around. No sooner did an Ionian philosopher learned half a dozen geometrical propositions, and that the phenomena of the heavens reoccur in cycles, that he then he set to work to look for law everywhere in nature.*

*“This passionate love of knowledge was pursued by disciplined and logical reason, for without it life was empty and one could not know God or the source of life in this universe.”*

Again, Kenneth Clark makes some astute observations:

*At certain epochs man felt conscious of something about himself – body and spirit – which was outside the day-to-day struggle for existence and the night-to-night struggle with fear; he has felt the need to develop these qualities of thought and feeling so that they might approach as nearly as possible to the ideal of perfection – reason, justice, physical beauty, all of them in equilibrium.*

It was the rediscovery of this energy and enthusiasm in the late 1400s that spurred the Renaissance – the rebirth of intellectual and spiritual discovery. The Renaissance then birthed the Age of Enlightenment that gave rise to the vision of America’s Founding Fathers to create a new nation dedicated to democratic ideals. This energy was reflected in the Greek architecture in our buildings in the Capitol.

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*Western Europe inherited such an ideal. It had been invented in Greece in the fifth century before Christ and was without doubt the most extraordinary creation in the whole of history, so complete, so convincing, so satisfying to the mind and eye, that it lasted practically unchanged for over six hundred years. .. [then] of course, its art became stereotyped and conventional.*<sup>31</sup>

The power and vision of the Greek ideal was based on intellectual rationality, moral ethics, and spiritual enthusiasm as its dynamic driving forces. Their culture could be described as a “quest” to discover the inner realities - the *logos*, the essence of truth from God’s authority.

What the Greeks created was no less than an engine that ran on human energy, a fuel composed of vision and vitality, and supported by a system of trust that prevented it from running amuck.

Today, how would we rate our 21<sup>st</sup> century chaos against this standard of societal excellence? Perhaps grappling with the question makes us uncomfortable because of the inadequacy of the answer. Humanity once had an answer, two thousand years ago.

What must we do to regenerate a sustainable commitment to a bold new future?

What was the essence of the Greek culture that enabled collaboration that can be used today?

How can we harness and transform this collaborative essence to reenergize our institutions?

### ***The Power of Progression***

We see the power of progression in many ways. In today’s companies, we see it when Apple introduces an *iPod*, then in rapid succession launches an *iPhone* and then an *iPad*. Remember the fanfare when, every eighteen months, Intel would announce a *286 chip*, then obsolete it with a *386* that would run at twice the speed and half the cost per byte, then make it seem slow and sluggish with a hyper-speed *486*. In the 1920s and 30s, people would revel in knowing that at any moment some daredevil would push an airplane to its outer limits and break the speed or altitude record.

The power of progression inspires and personifies vitality – life itself.

The Greeks were the first masters of the power of progression. Dell Ehrlich captures the unique spiritual nature of the Greek quest for wisdom that gave the culture its vibrancy:

We seem to revel in the power of progression in technology, but shy away from it in humanity.

*2000 years ago,.... why would Romans, who were the imperial masters of the Mediterranean world, seek out Greek culture, learn the Greek language, and study Greek philosophy, instead of preferring their own ways.*

*The answer is simple. The Greeks ....penetrated the wholeness, the wonder, and the beauty of life with far more enthusiasm and joy than any other people before them.*

*They were deeply inquisitive to know what things in life really were, why they were, how they were, and that it could not be otherwise.*

*In all aspects of life they pursued perfection and excellence. Their brilliance simply overpowered and charmed all the people with whom they came into contact.*

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<sup>31</sup> Clark, Kenneth, Ibid, p 3.

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*The Greeks themselves knew they were very special among men, not because of race or power, but because of their desire to know and to perfect that portion of the cosmos that was given into their hands by the Craftsman and the Father of the universe.*

*The wisest man cannot turn away from the search, but loves it passionately, and cannot be fulfilled.*

*Plato does not let his fellow Greeks forget this, stating that they must be compelled to continue the long-held desire among the Greeks for wisdom that they might obtain as much as possible through dialogue, education, discovery and all forms of the learning process, for the Greek culture has "a native supreme authority and is equal to the learning of the highest and noblest truth."*

*It was their quest to improve everything and every thought that they receive from others. They even attempted to worship borrowed gods better than the people from whom they borrowed them. Confident that they could improve and bring perfection even the mental images of other people's deities, they borrowed and improved and sought to perfect that which was divine and holy, helps men in their effort to know him and worship him in the most beautiful and honorable ways.<sup>32</sup>*

Reflecting on this commentary, it is clear the Romans lacked this same sense of Power of Progression. Like an auto maker who's lost its way and can think of nothing to do for next year's model but put a bigger engine in it and a splash it with flasher paint job. Similarly, Rome's vision was more land, bigger buildings, stronger fortresses – symbols of power, but no substance to advance humanity.

### ***The Essence of the Greek Culture that Created a Solid Collaborative "Centre"***

The glory and spirit that was Greece was embedded in its culture. We searched in depth to find this essence, and firmly believe we have found the answers that can be transferred into today's 21<sup>st</sup> century culture.<sup>33</sup>

We identified six essential words that epitomized the underlying value structure of the Greek culture:

1. Arete (Virtue)
2. Philotimo (Love of Honor)
3. Sophia (Wisdom)
4. Koinonia (Spiritual Community)
5. Historia (Deep Inquiry)
6. Metanoia (Mind Shifting)

These six words embody the nature of *Collaborative Excellence* in ancient times. It's essential to modern

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<sup>32</sup> Dell Erhlich, Ibid, p 1-2

<sup>33</sup> This research began in 2003, and has continued since. During the research, we were able to find many 20<sup>th</sup> century examples of how the Greek cultural values had created *Collaborative Excellence* in the modern world. The details of this exploration are in the paper: [How the Greeks created the First Age of Innovation](#) written with Ninon Prozonic.

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What was the over-arching theme and central core of the Greek Culture? Most academics get the pieces right – emphasizing the *intellectual* and *spiritual* basis of the culture.

But they miss the "collaborative core" that

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It's essential for modern man to understand what has been lost over the last two millennium to understand what's missing and how to create our "Renaissance" – our 21<sup>st</sup> century rebirth by the rediscovery of the essential ingredient to a wholesome civilization.

This journey was halted in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Age of Enlightenment gave way to the Industrial Age.

It's time to put humanity back on an elevated trajectory, or suffer the dire consequences of darkness and destruction.

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humanity to understand the richness and sophistication of these words, for they set the foundation and course of action to pull modern man from the dissolution of what remains of a potent culture.

When the combined force of aligned human energy was released with the core values embodied in these six essential words, a burst of co-creative synergy was let loose, much like a lightning bolt discharges when the energy potential reaches a flash point. The power of these values can be seen in modern times, but to a lesser extent because our value structure is much looser, less rich (flatter), vaguer, more politicized, and more confused and conflictive.

Also, it's vital to understand that the ideals embodied in "philosophy" were far important to Grecian society than "philosophy" is to ours. Back then, philosophy was discussed, debated, honored, and idealized. The idea of creation, beauty, and truth manifested and embodied itself all aspects of society: in architecture, art, sciences, and social discourse. These were powerful reflections of the philosophic values of the Greek culture.

The key six values described below we believe were the "core" values (listed in no particular priority order – each was central and symbiotically important to the synergy process as the other) that contributed specifically to the Collaborative Excellence that manifested in so many innovations.

One of the great faults of modern civilization is to take elevate one of the six core values above the rest, and focus all attribution for excellence on that one value. This is a common mistake with sad and sometimes tragic consequences. It would just as foolish to try to attribute the functionality of the human body to just one organ, such as the brain. The miracle of humanity manifests when cross-functional integration of all the components creates a synergistic whole.

### 1. Arête (Virtue):

Arête, known in Latin and English as virtue (or moral excellence<sup>34</sup>), was a pivotal value the co-creative spirit in ancient Greece. It meant to do the right thing, the best thing, to be the best person. One could not perfect one's soul unless virtue was a continual pursuit.<sup>35</sup>

Virtue was dependent upon one's commitment to act in accordance with the dictates of the higher soul, and not forsake oneself to the more prurient, lower level vices such as lust, greed, anger, or revenge. While no one then, nor today, could be expected to be perfect at the practice of virtue, holding this standard as a goal enabled higher order teamwork, intellectual interaction, and co-creativity to take place.

Socrates and Plato introduced the concept of the soul in a profound manner to the Greeks. The soul became a

A wonderful Greek commentary embodies the spirit of Arête speaking to youth.

*I have taken note of your character during the time of your education. Therefore I hope that, if you take the road that leads to me, you will turn out a right good doer of high and noble deeds, and I shall be yet more highly honoured and more illustrious for the blessings I bestow.*

*But I will not deceive you by a pleasant prelude: I will rather tell you truly the things that are, as the gods have ordained. For of all things good \par and fair, the gods give nothing to man without toil and effort.*

*If you want the favour of the gods, you must worship the gods: if you desire the love of friends, you must do good to your friends: if you covet honour from a city, you must aid that city: if you are fain to win the admiration of all Grecians for virtue, you must strive to do good to Grecians: if you want land to yield you fruits in abundance, you must cultivate that land: if you are resolved to gain wealth from flocks, you must care for those flocks: if you aspire to grow great through war and want power to libera*

*who know them and must practice their right use: and if you want your body to be strong, you must accustom your body to be the servant of your mind, and train it with toil and sweat.*

<sup>34</sup> Strong's Concordance cites Arête as meaning moral excellence, virtue, goodness, a gracious act, uprightness which is *displayed* to enrich life.

<sup>35</sup> Arete was personified as a goddess representing the spirit (*daimon*) of virtue, excellence, goodness and valour. She was depicted as a fair woman of high bearing, dressed in white, much like a guardian angel.<sup>e</sup>

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universal connection between people, enabling the sparks of creative energy to flow between individuals without the fear or concern of betrayal<sup>36</sup>, who got the credit, or loss of self-esteem. Ideas were owned collectively and thus shared and built upon by a group, who cherished the value of regenerative energy. Yet no one lost their individuality within the whole.

Virtue was thus more than just moral character. *Arête* could never be achieved unless one practiced honor, sought wisdom, and built community; as Ninon Prozonon observes:

*"Arête (virtue) was not a moral virtue only, but it was also a deep aspiration and endowment of qualities that would result in practical efficiency and public fame. Most young Athenians wanted virtue more than anything."*

In today's world of teams, communities, and alliances, virtue should not be neglected as both a price of admission and as a standard of excellence. Differences in opinions can be handled virtuously with compassion, understanding, and acceptance, or, conversely, arrogantly with condemnation, derision, and denial.

### 2. Philotimo (Love of Honor)

*Philotimo* was a core element in understanding the human collaborative foundation. Literally it means the "love of honor," and carries a very special sense for honoring, respecting, and elevating the dignity of the human spirit in every person, regardless of differences in opinion or status. Unfortunately, neither the word nor the idea has any English equivalent, and thus the concept has been largely lost in our culture.

It was considered as an *"extremely sensitive region of men's souls that gives forth gallantry, nobility and moral pride; it is the sense of honor and dignity,"* states Prozonon.

Alexander Makedon describes the ancient complex meaning of *Philotimo* and its essential part in the functioning of the culture:

*"In ancient times, there was great public pressure to behave uprightly. It would be unthinkable that someone without integrity (honesty, justice, truthfulness) is admired..."*

*"This emphasis on goodness is perfectly encapsulated in the ancient inscription 'kalos k' agathos' on numerous Greek artifacts<sup>37</sup> [which] means, literally, 'good and good,' with one 'goodness' referring to the [outward] social and personal 'beauty' of the person.... with a strong sense of social responsibility and the other to his [inner] moral and humanitarian excellence. One is inwardly looking to personal improvement, the other outwardly to the quality of his social relations... [but not] for 'show' purposes, but a psychologically internalized yardstick of goodness."*

*"The purpose of education was the formation of character" to build a good and virtuous person – kalos k'agathos anthropos"*

As my colleague Ninon Prozonon says:

*"The worst thing that could happen to a man was to be disgraced ... men were judged for their moral traits.. and lost their civic rights when they betrayed the standards of honor"*

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<sup>36</sup> See: *Mordred Factor & Machiavelli Maneuver* by Robert Porter Lynch

<sup>37</sup> Kalos k' agathos has a number of connotations, including being noble and ethically courageous, and in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC carried implications of "dutiful citizenship."



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*and virtue. .... They were thrown out of Athens and had no rights.. They did not have to be caught killing, or stealing to be branded to be dishonorable.....*

*"Moral values during that era were far more important than today. From a spiritual stand point, to live a superior 'level' of virtue and honour, they believed would give them happiness."*

### **Union of Virtue and Love of Honor**

When Virtue (Arête) was joined with Love of Honor (Philotimo), the union created a powerful foundation for a close melding of the "heart of the mind," (*nous* in Greek) generating trust, innovation, and an intense focus on the "greater good." This enabled people to have a sense not only of themselves, but a sense of what the other person was thinking, expecting, and perceiving. The union of Arête and Philotimo was the principle source of trust that enabled the group to overcome their fear of betrayal, their fear that one person's unscrupulous or selfish desire would supersede the greater good of the whole.

As any modern high performance team knows, trust spurs creativity and innovation by taking away the fear of betrayal, the uncertainty of response, and the doubt of judgement, thus letting the mind expand into imaginative realms.

Similarly, by focusing on the "greater good," a team is able to supersede ego, greed, and self-interest with the faith that all will benefit. With trust, attaining "Reason" was less constrained because compulsion, passion, old habits, chance, and "destructive" desire were channeled into constructive achievement.

The implications of this idea/ideal on any community, team, or alliance today are profound. Those who play by the rules of virtue and honor will cherish the greater good – all for one, one for all – thus being released from the bondage of fear of betrayal, released to explore the unknown together.

Love of Honor was not ego-centric – it meant not only protecting one's personal honor, but respecting and protecting the honor of others. Only the morally corrupt could be dishonored.

These first two values focused primarily on the individual. The next two values center on integrating ideas with action for the betterment of the greater good of the whole.

### **3. Sophia (Love of Wisdom)**

Wisdom was so vital to the Greeks that it was not embraced by just a word, but honored in the highest manner by dedicating a god to it. The Greeks knew Wisdom as Sophia, a Goddess who brought Truth. The distinction the Greek made between knowledge (gnosis) and wisdom (Sophia) is important.

An active mind could bring deep knowledge. But knowledge alone is often empty of deep understanding, and can carry with it much deceit, narrowness, data deluge, and even evil. Knowledge existed in answers, wisdom in questions and in revelations, uniting ideas with action. Knowledge is intrinsically self-fulfilling, while wisdom creates higher order purposes, new destinies, and a realization there is always much more. No wise person ever believes they are wise because wisdom is humbling. The pursuit of wisdom created the challenge to grow upward with a spiritual yearning. Wisdom, thus was sacred. As written in the *Wisdom of Solomon* from the Middle Testament, known as the *Apocrypha* (circa 200 BC):



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*"Wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, undefiled, distinct, beyond harm, loving the good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, philanthropic, firm, sure, free from care, all powerful, all seeing, and interpenetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion, and she penetrates and permeates everything, because she is so pure; for she is the breath of the power of God...." <sup>38</sup>*

It is this sacred journey that so excited and empowered the Greeks. Wisdom combined knowledge with spiritual transcendence and human compassion and passionate action.<sup>39</sup> Wisdom was not dry like knowledge, but it was dynamic, engaging, vital, and soulful. As Ninon Prozonc pointed out:

*"Athenians were always delighted when a sophist (teacher of wisdom, such as Socrates) would visit Athens so that they could learn those qualities which were a requisite of Arête – to be virtuous, one must also be wise."*

By holding wisdom as a sacred ideal, it unified groups to search, to inquire, to explore, to be open to new ideals. This approach is diametrically different from the arrogance of those who found prideful pleasure in knowing more than someone else, who put others down for some perceived weakness, or treasured a condemnation for lack of superficial wealth or status. (Interestingly, some of the most revered wise men in Greece -- Socrates, Homer, and Aesop -- were actually quite poor; and Epictetus was a slave.)

### 4. Koinonia (Community) – the Centrepiece of Collaborative Excellence

To unify and manifest these three ideals required a forum for group action; without it, the values would be simply abstract and irrelevant concepts. Joint action required a powerful framework for a group of people to produce unique and potent results.

#### ***The Birth of Synergy***

Today's idea of community and teamwork had a deeper meaning for Greeks. For this, the idea of *synergy* came into being, which means:

*The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects -- cooperative interaction among groups, that creates an enhanced combined effect.*

The word itself is derived from the Greek *sunergi*, meaning *cooperative work or unified energy*, and from *sunergos*, meaning *working together in fellowship*. In effect, for the ancient Greek, simply

**Synergy, not peace, is the deepest quest of the human soul.**

So often, humankind has failed in the synergistic quest because we think the elusive synergy will arise miraculously through magical combinations of elements.

This may happen in chemistry, but living organisms demonstrate that synergies are most likely to manifest in *collaborative* cultures, and are least likely in *adversarial* environments that demean or kill the dignity of the human spirit, forcing humans into the other side of their duality, bringing forth our darkest side, triggering the survival of the fittest strategy for minimal existence.

This is what made the Dark Ages so demoralizing. It can and has happened in the Modern age, with the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and the North Korean Kim family.

<sup>38</sup> Later versions of the Apocrypha became embodied in the Catholic Church's Bible (but omitted in the Protestant version). Because gods and goddesses were clearly a pagan belief, the early Christian church struck out the references to "Sophia" from the Wisdom of Solomon, and renaming her as the "Holy Spirit" in her place, still retaining the sacredness of Wisdom. See John 14:16-17 for more details on this connection.

<sup>39</sup> The Greeks did not write obituaries. Instead they asked the question: "Did he live a life of passion?"

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working together would produce an effect far greater than the sum of the individuals. This is a critical meaning, because it transcends issues of conflict, dissention, and factionalism, and rises above traditional mathematics.

Did the Greeks believe that when a group adopts the values of honor, virtue, and wisdom, a synergistic effect occurs?

Were the Greeks that naïve? Or did they understand something we have lost?

### ***The Essence of Collaborative Excellence***<sup>40</sup>

To answer these questions it's valuable to understand the ideas and nature behind *Koinonia*.

The word has such a multitude of meanings that no single English word is adequate to express its depth and richness.<sup>41</sup> *Koinonia*, is a complex, rich, and thoroughly fascinating Greek approach to building community, collaboration, and teamwork.

Because Virtue (*Arête*) and Love of Honor (*Philotimo*) were conjoined, their union produced a strong commitment to *Kalos k' agathos* -- "good and good," -- the *inner* goodness of virtue, and an *outer* goodness in social relationships. This laid the foundation to embrace *joint participation* in something in the expanded realm of a community, or team or an alliance or joint venture.

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<sup>40</sup> Author's Note: In writing this description, I'm convinced I've not really captured the nature of *Koinonia* in words. This has been made more difficult mainly because few people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have captured the real energy force the Greeks must have experienced in the peak moments of *Koinonia*. The best I can do to describe this reality is to compare it to a great hockey or basketball game when the team is just "in the groove," flowing and intersecting each other, knowing where the puck or ball is going to be way before the shot or pass is let loose. It's a sixth sense champion ballroom dancers and Olympic figure skaters get. It can also be seen in the spontaneous interaction of a jazz band. There is a new quantum shift in energy and insight when the group hits this peak. Csikszentmihalyi, in his book *Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990) attempts to address this enhanced energy, but somewhat misses the mark because he views the experience from an individual, psychological experience, overlooking the role of culture and friendship to trigger synergy, instead aiming at man's search for order, harmony, and peace, while overlooking dynamic differential energy, co-creativity, and the joy of spontaneous interaction. In my own experience, there is a special jump in energy - a rapture - and almost effortless sense of euphoria that is bespeaks of timelessness when entering this state of unified creationship. There is a feeling of knowing and understanding in the presence of certain friends and partners that is euphoric and energizing - something academic analysis just can't capture. Perhaps a passage from St. Augustine (c 390 AD) describes it best, using dance as the metaphor for friendship:

*I praise dance, for it frees people from the heaviness of matter and binds the isolated to community.*

*I praise the dance, which demands everything: health and a clear spirit and a buoyant soul.*

*Dance is a transformation of space, of time, of people, who are in constant danger of becoming all brain, will, or feeling.*

*Dancing demands a whole person; firmly anchored in the center of his life; not obsessed by lust for people and things and the demon of isolation in his own ego.*

*Dancing demands a freed person, one who vibrates with the balance of all his powers.*

*I praise the dance. O man, learn to dance! or else the angels in heaven will not know what to do with you.*

<sup>41</sup> It is a derivative of *koinos*, the word for "Common," which has two different meanings in the Greek and English. It can refer to that which is jointly held by a large group, such as the "town commons." It can also mean something that is commonplace and vulgar (as contrasted with that which is precious and uniquely distinguished. The former meaning is implied here.

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*Koinonia* is a very expansive and meaningful term, for which no single word in the English dictionary can describe. In the larger view, it creates a brethren bond which builds trust and, especially when combined with the prior other three values, overcomes two of humanity's deepest fears and insecurities: being betrayed and being demeaned.

Whereas Virtue (*Arête*) connoted *moral excellence*, *Koinonia* connoted *collaborative excellence*.

Those who have studied the word find there is always an implication of action included in its meaning. The definition of the word is quite rich in that there are many connotations because the word is used in a variety of related contexts:

### **Community<sup>42</sup>**

The idea of community denotes a "common unity" of purpose and interests. By engaging in this united relationship a new level of consciousness and conscience emerges that spurs the group to higher order thinking and action, thus empowering and encouraging its members to exist in a mutually beneficial relationship. Thus community and family become closely intertwined in the constructs of *koinonia*, because aiming at a common unity strives to overcome brokenness, divisiveness, and, ultimately gaining wholeness with each of the members, with their environment, and with God. By giving mutual support, friendship and family merge. Both fellowship and community imply an inner and outer unity (*kalos k'agathos*). Nowhere in the framework of community is there an implied hierarchy of command and control. While there is leadership, the leader's task is to focus energy, and align interests, not impose control.

### **Generous Sharing**

*Koinonos* means 'a sharer' as in to share with one another in a possession held in common. It implies the spirit of generous sharing or the act of giving as contrasted with selfish getting. When *koinonia* is present, the spirit of sharing and giving becomes tangible. In most contexts, generosity is not an abstract ideal, but a demonstrable action resulting in a tangible and realistic expression of giving. What is shared, received or given becomes the common ground through which *Koinonia* becomes real.<sup>43</sup>

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The Greeks seemed to have known: "[Sharing Expands, Hoarding Contracts.](#)"

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### **Partnership**

"*Koinonos*" in classical Greek means a companion, a partner or a joint-owner. Therefore, *koinonia* can imply an association, common effort, or a partnership in common." The common ground by which the two parties are joined together creates an aligned relationship, such as a 'fellowship' or 'partnership.' In a papyrus announcement a man speaks of his brother "with whom I have no *koinonia*", meaning no business connection or common interest. In the New Testament, (Luke 5:10) James, John, and Simon are called "partners" (*koinonia*). The joint participation was a shared fishing business.

### **Marriage**

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<sup>42</sup> Definition: from Latin *communitas*, *fellowship*, from *communis*, *common*; **a.** A group of people having common interests. **b.** A group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society. **c.** Similarity or identity: a community of interests. **d.** Sharing, participation, and fellowship.

<sup>43</sup> In classical Greek, *koinonein* means "to have a share in a thing," as when two or more people hold all things in common. It can mean "going shares" with others, thereby having "business dealings," such as joint ownership of a ship. It can also imply "sharing an opinion" with someone, and therefore agreeing with him, or disagreeing in a congenial way. Participation is vital because vital as the members are sharing in what others have.

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Two people may enter into marriage in order to have "*koinonia of life*", that is to say, to live together a life in which everything is shared. *Koinonia* was used to refer to the marriage bond, and it suggested a powerful common interest that could hold two or more persons together.

### ***Spiritual Relationship***

In this sense, the meaning is something that is held and shared jointly with others for God, speaking to man's "relationship with God". The early Christian community saw this as a relationship with the Holy Spirit. In this context, *koinonia* highlights a higher purpose or mission that benefits the greater good of the members as a whole. The term *enthusiasm* is connected to this meaning of *koinonia* for it signifies "God in Us,"<sup>44</sup> or one's participation in the Divine. Today, this is probably the foremost recognized association with the word.

### ***Fellowship,<sup>45</sup> Family & Friendship***

To create a bond between comrades is the meaning of *koinonia* when people share their joy and pains together, and are united because of their common experiences, interests and goals. Fellowship, Family and Friendship creates a mutual bond which overrides each individual's pride, vanity, and individualism, fulfilling the human yearning with fraternity, belonging, and companionship. This meaning of *koinonia* accounts for the ease by which sharing and generosity flow. When combined with the spiritual implications of *koinonia*, fellowship provides a joint participation in God's graces and denotes that common possession of spiritual values.

### ***Linking Ethics to Friendship***

The entire concept of "Brotherly/Sisterly Love" (*philio*) was closely intertwined with *koinonia*. What will surprise the modern reader is that the idea of ethics and morality was interwoven within the edifice of friendship, which was the concrete manifestation which grounded one's moral compass in reality. In other words, cold, self-righteousness people, unable to develop warm, caring friendships were neither demonstrating love (*philio*) nor collaborative excellence (*koinonia*).

The Greek realization that there was a special *synergy* between personal relationships and virtuous moral behavior (*arête*) gives our age a new insight that elevates the dignity of the human spirit far above the weighty and often dry perspective we hold today about ethics. Because moral behavior was more embodied in the concepts of virtue (*arête*), the pathway was open to realize the concrete aspects of collaborative excellence (*koinonia*) inside the most fundamental of all relationships – friendship (*philio*). Lorraine Smith Pangle provides us a fresh insight into Aristotle's viewpoint, which is as inspiring as elucidating:

*The phenomenon of friendship, with its richness and complexity, its ability to support (but also at times undercut virtue), and the promise it holds to bring together -- in one happy union -- so much of what is highest and so much of what is sweetest in life, formed a fruitful topic of philosophic inquiry for the ancients.*

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<sup>44</sup> Definition: The source of the word is the Greek *enthousiasmos*, which ultimately comes from the adjective *entheos*, "having the god within," formed from *en*, "in, within," and *theos*, "god." "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm," said the very quotable Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<sup>45</sup> Definition: Fellow is from the Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse 'felagi', comrade or partner.. 'Ship' is a suffix indicating state or condition. Fellowship is a state in which we share as fellows, that is as partners or peers. Fellowship addresses the relationship between people, not between material objects. One doesn't have a fellowship with a house, a companionship with a tree, or a comradeship with a bed. It relates to a state or condition in which such persons interact, thus we speak of friendship, partnership, and fellowship.

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*By far the fullest and most probing classical study of friendship is to be found in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, which devotes more space to friendship than to any of the moral virtues, and which presents friendship as a bridge between moral virtues and the highest life of philosophy [love of wisdom].*

*The study of friendship in the classical authors is in many ways a study of human love altogether....[embracing] all bonds of affection, from the closest erotic and familial ties to political loyalties, humanitarian sympathies, business partnerships, and even love for inanimate things.....*

*In the friendships of mature and virtuous individuals we see human love not only at its most revealing, but also at its richest and highest...*

However, as the Greek constructs fell prey to their Roman successors, the union of friendship as the essence of social order began eroding, and was ultimately decoupled, surprisingly, with rise of Christianity.<sup>46</sup>

*With the coming of the Christian world, however, friendship fell into eclipse....[with] Christianity's emphasis on humility, chastity<sup>47</sup> .... [while] elevating one particular human bond, that of family, which had received special sanction in the Scriptures....*

Later, in a cruel philosophic twist of fate, beginning with Thomas Hobbes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, trust and relationships became permanently dissociated from ethics, politics and social order, as the focus of philosophy shifted to political engagement and democratic governance juxtaposed against a backdrop of the tyrannical abuses emanating from the illegitimate assertion of the divine right of kings. Pangle tells us:

*This devaluation of friendship is the result of a decisive new turn in [18<sup>th</sup> century] philosophy ...[that] reinterpreted human nature as directed neither to friendship nor virtue, [arguing] that man is by nature solitary, and his .. true condition is one of serious, potentially deadly, competition with other human beings for all that we most need and want....*

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<sup>46</sup> This decoupling of friendship (*philio*) from fellowship (*koinonia*) can also be explained in the context of the times. Contextual culture is something everyone knows and understands, but does not need to talk about. Culture encapsulates a system of behavior and thinking that is just "known" among the participants and seldom discussed. Thus, as Carl Gustave Jung observed, the "collective unconscious" becomes "invisible." And, because it is invisible, it can easily become lost, foreign, and inaccessible. As the Christian Church became more "Romanized" and Latin became the lingua franca of the religion, the influence of the Greek culture gradually faded away. By the time of the fall of the Roman Empire, many of the central principles of the Greek influence were lost in the rituals of religion. It's certainly not too late to revitalize the concepts of Collaborative Excellence we are missing from the Greek influence.

<sup>47</sup> Pope Gregory released his list of seven deadly sins in 590 AD at the time of the Roman Empire's collapse, the seven virtues became identified as *chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, and humility*. Practicing them was believed to protect one against the evils of the seven deadly sins. The Greek concepts of love (particularly *agape, storge, philio, and ludus*) didn't make the cut, thus codifying more individualistic virtues *into* Christianity, while *excluding* the more community building collaborative values reflected in the Greek origins of the Church. In retrospect, the wisdom of pitting one's individual virtues against the evils of mankind without the shield of collaborative resistance, seems foolhardy.



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Philosophy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was, in many dimensions, a reaction to the egregious power and cruel divine right of despotic kings. Democratic social ideals, the rights and liberties of the individual, protection from abuses of power by authoritarian despots, and human rights became preeminent, while diminishing the value of the ideals of community and the qualities personal relationships. With the advocacy of individual rights and democratic constitutional governance, inadvertently humanity was seen more as independent agents, whose *rights* became foremost, while our *responsibilities* to our fellow man were placed far out of the focal plane of intellectual thought. Ultimately, the *responsibilities* to build community drifted into the bureaucratic hands of government, while the ideals of collaborative excellence embodied in the richness of koinonia narrowed down to a limited view within Christianity centered solely on “fellowship.” Pangle states:

*Friendship virtually disappeared as a theme of philosophical discourse...*

*Modern moral philosophy...has conceived of men's most important claims upon one another to lie outside the realm of friendship.... understanding each individual's relations to his fellows to be rooted in self-interest, and taught that these relations could be regulated by sensible laws and appeals to rational self-interest. <sup>48</sup>*

The cleaving of relationships and collaborative excellence from ethics left us with a cold, analytical, convoluted, and sometimes diabolical husk, devoid of kernels of clarity, soul, trust, and compassion – which the Greeks never intended. For example, we teach courses in ethics and law in college, but never do we teach trust and friendship

Today, the sham of social media “friendships” is as hollow as it is shallow, flipped on and off like a switch, gauged by how many “likes” you may garner. This technologically mechanized demonstration of “connectedness” masquerades for the intimate art of building relationships capable of sustaining truly collaborative communities emboldened with a positive power of progression for our social order. Instead, social media has become the Trojan horse of regression.

Aristotle was clear and emphatic that moral virtue may lead to a dignified life of justice for the greater good, but it certainly does not equate to happiness and the experience of a joyful, creative life. As Aristotle declared: *Friendship are Partnerships* – the vital alliances that form the bridge spanning and uniting morality and happiness; the bridge is a higher summit than the two land masses it connects, as Pangle explains Aristotle’s insight:

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The erosion of *Collaborative Excellence* (koinonia) gives rise to transactional, hierarchical institutions in government, business, education, and religion; bureaucratic structures hold dominion over our society.

Transactional, bureaucratic thinking is not benign; it often turns adversarial, and certainly spawns misguided leaders who advocate unwholesome ideas like Rational Self Interest in Economics, Agency Theory in Business that claims corporations only serve the financial interests of investors, Polarized Adversarial Politics, Educational “philosophy” that drops Wisdom, Character Building and social sciences from its curriculum leading to intense depression and even suicide in schools, and ultimately a Lack of Trust in Institutions that lost touch with its people.

Turning our backs on Collaborative Excellence is precisely the wrong progression to enlighten our Modern Age.

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<sup>48</sup> Pangle, Lorraine S.; *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p 1-3



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*Friendship ...goes beyond justice, or even renders justice unnecessary. The goodness shown in noble friendship seems higher than justice, not only because its object is so worthy, but because it is entirely dependent on one's own character and choice and is not defined and compelled by law.*

*Paradoxically, acts of friendship seem both more truly generous and more conducive to one's own happiness than acts done strictly because they are moral.....*

*Spontaneous acts of friendship tend to be more pleasant than impersonal acts of virtue for the doer as well as for the recipient. ...*

*Aristotle encourages the hope that in friendship one may find all the nobility of virtuous action at its best without the ultimate sacrifice of happiness, and at least a partial answer to the question of what ...the best life should be.<sup>49</sup>*

Thus friendship becomes a defining characteristic and connective sinew linking the individual from the larger family of humanity, and ensuring that humans could find meaning and purpose in life, as Aristotle also pointed out:

*Without friends no one would choose to live, although he possessed all material wealth.*

Aristotle also warned that friendships based primarily on personal advantage, not on character, really didn't qualify to be called friendships and would likely falter due to distrust.

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*The Greeks were enlightened realists, whereas the Romans were material realists. That difference changed the course of human destiny*

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### **From Aristotle to Darwin**

When Charles Darwin wrote his famous (or infamous, depending your perspective) book *Origin of the Species* (1859), he never said or implied the notion of "survival of the species"<sup>50</sup> and certainly did not think it applied to human existence.

Darwin recognized a serious flaw in his theory of natural selection as it applied to humans. In *Origin of the Species*, Darwin was seeking a unified universal theory that explained both plant and animal evolution over the eons of time. Natural selection – adaptation by variations (what we now know as genetic structure) -- explained it. But Darwin was troubled with this explanation because evolution moved slower than a glacier. While natural selection may cause the evolution of flowers and plants, or insects and mammals, it certainly did not shed light on the much more rapid evolution of the human species.

### **Humans Required a Special Theory of Evolution**

To provide the answer, Darwin relied on further developing the concept of sexual and cultural selection and its relationship to the uniqueness of the

Love is not solely attributable to humans. Darwin quipped:

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*Dog is the only species on the planet that loves his master more than himself.*

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<sup>49</sup> Pangle, Ibid, P 10

<sup>50</sup> The idea of survival of the species was the brainchild of Herbert Spencer, an Englishman looking for a scientific explanation of evolution. Spencer, and later Andrew Carnegie and Adolph Hitler latched on to Darwin to promote everything from robber-baron capitalism to genocide.

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human species, along with the development of social capabilities. Essentially Darwin, in book *Descent of Man* (1871) was emphatic and concurred with what the Greeks and Aristotle observed twenty two hundred years prior:

### Intellectual Qualities of Humans

- **Reason & Attention:** Of all the faculties of the human mind, Reason stands at the summit. Hardly any faculty is more important for the intellectual progress of man than Attention.
- **Imagination:** Without the higher powers of the imagination and reason, no eminent success can be gained.

### Social Qualities of Humans

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As the Roman Empire's social conscience dissipated,  
it's fate traveled the pathway to perdition.

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- **Conscience:** Of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the *Moral Sense of Conscience is by far the most important*. It has rightful supremacy over every other principle of human action.... The moral faculties are generally and justly esteemed as of higher value than the intellectual powers.
- **Golden Rule:** "As you would have men to unto you, do you unto them likewise;" ...is the foundation stone of morality.
- **Fellowship:** Man is a social being... Endowed with social instincts take pleasure in one another's company, [humans] warn one another of danger, defend and aid one another in many ways.... these instincts are highly beneficial to the species.
- **Courage** is the most noble of all the attributes of man, leading him without a moment's hesitation to risk his life for that of a fellow creature; or ... to sacrifice it for some great cause. " No man can be useful or faithful to his tribe without courage. This quality has been universally placed in the highest rank.

### Competition versus Collaboration

- **Teamwork in Competition:** When tribes come into competition, the tribe with the greater number of courageous, sympathetic, and faithful members... will succeed better and conquer the other.
- **Sympathy:** Is of high importance to ...aid & defend one another. [It is].... one of the most important elements of the social instincts. A man who possesses no trace of sympathy and social instincts [is] an unnatural monster.
- **Law of Honour** [is] the law of the opinion of our equals. Man can generally and readily distinguish between the higher and lower moral rules. The higher are founded on social instincts, and relate to the welfare of others. The lower rules ... relate chiefly to self.
- **Self Interest:** Selfish and contentious people will not cohere, and without coherence nothing can be effected

Inherently Darwin was echoing the Greek principles of *Collaborative Excellence*. However, perverse and manipulative leaders during the intervening century and a half have peddled fraudulent pronouncements falsely attributed to Darwin's *survival of the fittest*. This false premise/belief about human behavior is the primary reason we have such a hard time ridding organizations of overly *transactional* and *adversarial* interactions.

## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

The idea that human excellence will be consistently dependent upon *survival of the fittest* is not only wrong, but unsubstantiated by any systematic empirical evidence. Successful sports teams and hundreds of scientific experiments have consistently supported Darwin's premise – *civilizations acting honorably and collaboratively outperform civilizations that are selfish, greedy, and domineering*.

We realize today that, as mammals, we are endowed with the DNA for collaborative interaction. It's natural for humans, as well as dolphins, elephants, or wolves to work together, to build communities, and to protect each other. What makes the human species truly special is our ability to create together, organize together, and thrive together when we use our moral and collaborative excellence. When we have used these talents, humanity has progressed, and regressed when we fall back on our reptilian reactions.

Understanding Aristotle's exaltations of friendship lets us traverse the bridge between happiness and virtue, but also ascend to a new level where we can have profound *transcendent* and *metamorphic* impact. It gives us the critical insights to open our understanding of how the Greeks created the synergies that enabled an unparalleled power of progression in the human spirit.

Later we will look at how those friendships, using more of the Greek methods, actually become something more elevated; what we will call *Creationships*. (see Figure 1: Friendships & Creationships)

The Greeks, in the first four frameworks of Virtue, Love of Honor, Wisdom, and Collaborative Excellence, created a "system of trust" unexcelled in history of humankind.

Both Aristotle in Greece (384 -322 BC) and Mencius in China (372-289 BC) said

"Friendship is one mind in two bodies."

Today, we take this to another level beyond friendship. We call it a "*Creationship*," which is four minds in two bodies.

- My mind
- Your mind
- The creative differential between our minds`
- the potential of the collective unconscious.

Figure 1: Friendships & Creationships

### Aligning Forces of Greek Innovation System

In total, Aristotle's magnum opus thinking<sup>51</sup> became a unifying mindset for *collaborative excellence*, paving the way for a golden age of innovation, and collaborative creation. The first four values laid down the foundation for the next two values that empowered an innovation system into "perpetual motion."

Through *moral and collaborative excellence* the civilization of ancient Greece shared common experiences of joys, fears, tears, and divine glory. In this manner, people believed their true wealth

<sup>51</sup> While Aristotle did not have a corner on all the intellectual thinking of the times, and the collective thinking of Greece at the time was intense and profound, Aristotle's architecture of collaboration was a massive breakthrough in thinking, especially considering that there was no precedent for anything anywhere in the world he could readily access.

Why has it been so difficult for the "centre to hold" in Yeats prophetic poem?

In the passage of the ages from the Greek to the Modern, we lost our compass.

The shift from the collaborative excellence of the Greeks to the individual and the rights attached to personal liberties has created distrust and much of the fear that swirls in our world today. The opposite swing of the pendulum into the dark realms of collectivism and dictatorship, are, of course, far worse.

Collaborative excellence is strongly embedded in our human DNA; dormant but still with a breath of life. If our leaders and culture nurture it back to life. The future of humanity and our planet has a fighting chance. It's our best course of action to bring more than hope to our next generations.

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## The Future of Civilization

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and value lay not solely in what they had, but also in what they gave to others, and what they created together. *Collaborative excellence* is never passive; it is always linked to action, not just being together, but also doing together. With this comes a close and intimate relationship embracing ideas, communication, and frankness, as in a true, blessed inter-dependent friendship among multiple group members.

Whether working collectively or individually, those of ancient Greece aimed at working for the greater good of the whole – to propel their community forward, to share their understanding with others so that all ships would rise on a rising tide. Thus loftier goals and dreams are more easily manifested first in the mind and then achieved in reality.

### 5. *Historia* (Deep Inquiry)

In the world of the ancient Greek, the idea of *historia* was certainly not merely the process of chronicling events; it meant a deep exploration of cause and effect, the character of the main players, and forces at play.

The father of this deep inquiry ('*h'istoria*<sup>52</sup>) was Herodotus (484-425 BC),<sup>53</sup> who travelled in every direction systematically asking questions, making inquiries, always asking “why” and “how.” He travelled to Egypt asking how many forms of mummification they used, or in Babylon what sought out the healing methods used by doctors. He was curious about how other cultures lived differently, what practices were forbidden, and why. The rigor of this disciplined procedure made him as much of a scientist as a lover of wisdom.

A good practitioner of *historia* is objective, analytical, seeks root causes, asking numerous questions about the reports he receives, compares the details with other people’s views about the same event, critically analyzing and challenging the data, comparing opposing positions, then using logic and other the best sources to find as much truth about the event and circumstances as possible.

The next generation produced Thucydides (460-395 BC), who improved greatly on existing methods. Known today as the father of “scientific inquiry,” his methodical approach and strict standards of evidence-gathering and cause-effect analysis is admired to this day. Military schools still study his history of the Peloponnesian wars. He also pioneered the exploration of human behavior in times of stress, wars, and plagues.

Socrates (469-399BC), a contemporary of Thucydides, was equally disciplined in his approach to inquiry, known as the Socratic Method, which is still used today. There is perhaps no other thinker in the history of the human race that was so filled with deep questions as Socrates. His dialogues, as recorded by Plato, were among some of the most challenging interactive questionings ever recorded. It is reasonable to assume, while Socrates had obviously mastered this method, others had also become quite adroit at inquiry, which enabled them to dig deep into the depths of scientific investigation.

#### ***Collaboration is not Collectivism***

In Collectivism, the individual is subjugated to the whole of the group.

In Collaborative Excellence, the individual is actually enlarged as they create synergy with the group. The “I” becomes a part of the “1 + 1 ≥ 3” formulation.

To use a sports analogy, “there is no ‘I’ in ‘TEAMWORK,’” but there are many players who may play starring roles at various times during the season.

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<sup>52</sup> The origins of the English word *history* stems from the Greek word *to inquire*.

<sup>53</sup> He produced a large volume called *The Inquiries* which detailed his travels and observations.

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## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

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Fundamentally, inquiry is more than just a process of asking questions. For the Greeks, it was an awe-inspiring journey of discovery that commenced from *wonder* as the first step. This was a somewhat playful, even child-like experience that embraced genesis (creativity), synthesis (system thinking), analysis (observing components), and sympathesis (relating).

When one reads Hippocrates, for example, one is immediately impressed by his level of insight, investigation, and analysis. Similarly, Socrates' best student, Plato, and subsequently his student, Aristotle, were all masterfully disciplined at the art of inquiry, which propelled them to become thought leaders.

Were it not for having access to the Greek historian, Polybius' detailed inquiry and analysis of monarchies, democracies, and dictatorships during the early Roman era, the American Founding Fathers would have been severely limited in their thinking about the design of our contemporary republic.

One can read Ptolemy's<sup>54</sup> scientific inquiry into the nature of the universe and see the tremendous integration of sophisticated observations, trigonometric calculations, and analytical deductions. While Ptolemy's thesis (position) that the world was the center of the universe (and later proven wrong), other Greeks, using the method of deep inquiry, proposed their opposing thesis (antithesis), that the sun was central. This form of debate, called "dialectic," with supporting and opposing modes of inquiry is central to any community of learning dedicated to producing the power of progression.

The idea of dialectic debate was not for one side to "beat" the other or show its superior intellectual prowess, but to illuminate everyone, to reveal fundamental truths, and expose inherent weaknesses in thinking, thus allowing all participants to engage in "metanoia" – the co-creation of a new order of thinking that came closer to the truth – today we call this a "paradigm shift."

The commitment to exploration and inquiry is an essential component of successful innovation and breakthrough.

### 6. Metanoia (Mind/Paradigm Shifting)

If one looks up the word *Metanoia* in a modern dictionary, the definition is typically overly simplistic: *beyond the mind*. Unfortunately, like so much of the richness and depth of real meaning that was embodied in the Greek, the word has been mercilessly "flattened" in the English language.

More properly *metanoia* meant:

*shift the "heart of the mind" to a higher/transcendent order of conscious understanding.*

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<sup>54</sup> Ptolemy was a Greek Egyptian operating outside of Alexandria writing about 100 AD. Using centuries of accumulated data, he had carefully plotted the course of the stars and the planets, and, erroneously concluded that the sun and the planets had revolved around the earth. Without the benefit of telescopes, the Greeks had pondered and debated whether the sun or the earth was central in the solar system. In the late 1400's, Copernicus, studying under a Greek scholar in Padua, learned of the theories of early Greeks, such as Aristarchus of Samos, Heraclides Ponticus, and Philolaus who proposed the first models of a heliocentric solar system: the Earth and all other planets revolving around the Sun, the Earth rotating around its axis daily, the Moon in turn revolving around the Earth once a month. Because those works have not survived (but Ptolemy's have) Copernicus is rightly credited with having proven the sun is central to the solar system. During the early 1500's, Copernicus disproved the theory of an earth-centric universe, and proved the sun was the center of the solar system. (All calculations by Copernicus were made without the aid of a telescope, which was not invented until early in the 1600's and then improved upon by Galileo.)



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## The Future of Civilization

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In this sense, *metanoia* sought to move the level of perception from a more mundane experience to a spiritual one where the perceptions of reality embrace the role of God as creator and maker of the highest and deepest truth.

The word is made of two parts:

*Meta* = beyond, in the sense of outside the normal realm of perception, above, shifting to a higher plane, higher than what the birds that fly might see.  
Modern English words like meta-principles, metamorphosis, metaphysical, etc embrace this notion.

*Nous* = the highest good, beyond normal being, the “first cause” where the soul and mind intersect to come to a far greater understanding.  
When one reaches the level of “nous,” everything becomes natural, obstacles cease to exist, life opens, and one’s soul and mind marvelously unite – giving access to a transcendent universe of “first source,” or “fundamental truth,” referring with reverence to the deepest meaning of life.

When Greeks referred to the soul’s ability to ‘see’ beyond, the process enabled the ‘mind’ transcended to “the heart of the mind,”<sup>55</sup> which is more expansive, more powerful, more peaceful, more natural because it operated above and beyond people’s normal experience and expectations – functioning at the level of *divine expectations*.<sup>56</sup>

As one shifts to a higher view of life, the relinquishing of the old point of view left one to regret the old framework or paradigm, which has been revealed to be fallacious, incorrect, or regrettable. We then can relate to the world and to others in a fresh, innovative new way.

Thus *metanoia* connoted a regenerative force. By exercising forgiveness, whether it be self-forgiveness, or with others, the effect is cathartic, cleansing the mind and the soul to enable a blossoming as one figuratively leaves a dark winter to enter a flowering of spring. By shedding the old husk, the human spirit is released from the bondage of anguish, pain, pettiness, and bitterness

Albert Einstein was well acquainted with these concepts and where such thinking could take humanity when he said:

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*Creativity is More Important than Knowledge,*

*We Cannot Solve Today’s Problems  
with the Same Level of Thinking that Created the Problem.*

Seek the Inner Design Architecture, for  
*God Does Not Play Dice with the Universe*

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<sup>55</sup> Another commonly referred to reference on this concept is in the Old Testament *Book of Proverbs*: “As a man *thinketh in his heart*, so shall he be.”

<sup>56</sup> In the ancient writings, the words *repentance* and *forgiveness* are often closely linked to *metanoia*. While this seems strange to the modern reader today, it must be understood that the word *repent* originally meant to “shift or change one’s mind to a higher order of thinking.” When a person had acknowledged this shift in the mind, they had “repented.” Similarly forgiveness meant to shift from the moribund thinking of anger, hatred, revenge, and vindictiveness, and upward to releasing the pain and hurt one holds within. Forgiveness first heals the forgiver. Christ’s admonition: “Judge and ye shall be judged, condemn and ye shall be condemned, forgive and ye shall be forgiven” is a perfect example of such a framework of thought.



and reborn anew at a higher level.<sup>57</sup>

This idea was the central to the emergence of the “Renaissance” – the Rebirth – as Europeans rediscovered the deepest meaning of what little remained of the ancient Greek writings.

Similarly, *metanoia* often required “courage,” a word meaning *a heartfelt conviction*, by which the courageous person puts their ideals ahead of their fears, or taking the less comfortable path to stand for what’s right, despite the consequences. In the world of the twenty-first century, the rich Greek meaning of *courage* is used nearly synonymously with the Latin word “valor,” meaning fearlessness or bravery, blurring the distinction between how fear is dealt with.

By shifting the mind to a higher plane, *metanoia* became a fundamental learning process through which “discovery” (Latin: to uncover) or “*anacalipto*” (Greek: to uncover that which is hidden) was an important theme.<sup>58</sup>

Socrates is credited with using dyads to juxtapose one idea against another to seek the truth – dialectics. He postulated that one idea would represent “thesis” and an opposing idea would be “antithesis.” Debating the merits of each would then enable the creation of “synthesis” (the joining or aligning of ideas in a *new* form.

What seems to be missed today in our understanding of the ancient Greek system was that *metanoia* was engaged to enable the *shift to synthesis*, thus preventing debilitating argument and rancor, such as that which lawyers do in court, often obfuscating the real truth. This process was integral to the prevention of the fruitless polarization we experience in the Modern age.

We must use the Greek idea/ideal of *metanoia* (*shifting the “heart of the mind” to a higher level*), creating a *meta-quest*, in our lives, individually and collectively.

### ***Greek Engine of Innovation***

One extraordinary outcome of the six core values was an incredible “engine of innovation” in every field from arts and music to physics and astronomy. The first breakthroughs in science were generated by the Greeks. According to Lucian Russo:

*For the first time – anywhere in the world – is the appearance of science as we understand it now; not an accumulation of facts or philosophically based speculation, but an organized effort to model nature and apply such models, or scientific theories in a precise manner to the solution of practical problems and to a growing understanding of nature. We owe this new approach to scientist such as Archimedes, Pythagoras, Euclid, Eratosthenes and many others less familiar today but no less remarkable.*

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<sup>57</sup> This process of renewal was intimately interwoven with *Anaptesis* (to take flight, to rise above as on the wings of a bird, such as a phoenix rising from the ashes). The Latin word “revival” (to re-live or bring back to life) was not nearly as fulfilling as its Greek counter-part, which, despite its nearly impenetrable pronunciation, embodies the whole idea of transcendence and transformation lacking in the Latin version.

<sup>58</sup> Much like Michelangelo, who, after unveiling the Pieta, said he didn’t really carve the statue, but simply revealed that which was already in the stone, so *metanoia* became not a process invention, but a discovery, an unveiling of that which has been hidden. This idea was also expressed by the Wright Brothers on the evening after their first flight in 1903 when Orville Wright said: “Isn’t amazing how all these secrets of flight have been hidden for so many years just so we can discover [uncover] them.” The Wrights did not “invent” the airplane, they simply uncovered that which was hidden.

## The Future of Civilization

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*The rise of the scientific method ... was a conscious act [engrained] in the creation of culture..... Not only do we see physicians conducting controlled experiments, scientists using mathematics and mechanics to build better weapons, painters applying geometry to their art, but even the notion of language changes: poetry becomes a playground for experimentation, while words are consciously assigned precise new meanings in technical fields, a procedure that would not become familiar again until the nineteenth century.*

*Yet, not long after this golden period, much of this extraordinary development had been reversed. Rome borrowed what it was practical from the Greeks and kept it for a little while, yet created very little science of their own. Europe was soon smothered in the obscurantism and stasis that blocked most avenues of intellectual development for a thousand years, until the rediscovery of ancient culture in its fullness paved the way for the Modern age.<sup>59</sup>*

This engine of innovation was resurrected on both the human and scientific sides of the equation starting roughly in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. While the scientific innovations have continued unabated and have accelerated to a bewildering pace, the social side of the humanity equation has seemingly bogged down. As Yeats proclaimed in 1920: “the centre will not hold.” Later that decade, the Modern age’s most prolific inventor, Thomas Edison made a similar plea:

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<sup>59</sup> Russo, Lucio; *The Forgotten Revolution, How Science was Born in 300 BC and Why it had to be Reborn*, Springer, 2003, pp 1-2

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## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

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In 1928, Thomas Edison was being honored with a number awards as he neared the end of his life. His observation about society nearly 100 years ago is illuminating:

*Somehow I have not achieved the success I have wanted. Tomorrow the world will be our children's. It's a troubled world -- full of doubt and uncertainty.*

*You say men of science have been helping it.*

*Are those children, and their children, going to approve of what we've done? Or are they going to discover, too late, that science was trusted too much? So that it has turned into a monster whose final triumph is man's own destruction?*

*Some of us are beginning to feel that danger. But it can be avoided. I once had two dynamos generating electricity that ran wildly out of control and needed regulating. It was a problem of balance and adjustment. I feel that the confusion in the world today presents much the same problem.*

*The dynamo of man's God given ingenuity is running away  
from the dynamo of his equally God-given humanity.*

*I am too old now to do much more than to say: Put those dynamos in balance, make them work in harmony as the Great Designer intended they should.*

*It can be done; what man's mind can [conceive], man's [character] can [achieve].*

*Man must learn that.*

*Then we need not be afraid of tomorrow. And man will go forward toward more light.*

From the movie: *Thomas Edison, The Man*, starring Spencer Tracey, 1940

- What can we do to align the dynamo of man's God given ingenuity with the dynamo of his equally God-given humanity?
- Are the lessons of the Greeks still relevant, or has modern man rendered them obsolete?
- Can we find a “centre” that will hold under the excessive pressure of constant change, accelerating speed, unbridled polarization, and compounding complexity?

The next section will bring the good news. But we must *replace* the fear, the emptiness, and the distrust with a *commitment to a higher value or destiny*. Yes, we can beat the odds of chance, if we so choose. But destiny requires clarity of mission and purpose. Heraclitus said five hundred years ago:

**“Character Becomes Destiny.”**

In that simple phrase he embodied the nature of the insightful solution – those who create real trust in their world have the personal potential to design a powerful, bold future for themselves based on a soulful vision and belief that they (along with everyone on the planet) have a higher reason or meaningful purpose or even a noble mission; and it is each individual’s personal quest to identify that destiny. In the simplest sense, there are three distinctly different destiny paths: Greek, Roman, and Dark.

Today, we are at a Cross-Road in this Planet’s Destiny.

*The path we choose will make all the difference.*

## Part Four: Finding the Collaborative Centre for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### *The Power of a Quest*

The idea of seeing the world, its history and its future, in terms of a “quest” is important.

Societies with direction have a “quest.”

- The Greek quest could be called a “meta-quest” meaning they were seeking something “above and beyond.”
- The Roman quest was clearly a “conquest,” often also plagued with an accompanying “inquest.”
- In America in the 1800s, that quest was named “manifest destiny” to signify our dream for the United States to own the territories from Atlantic to Pacific.

This is linked with the Power of Progression. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the Civil War, there was a euphoric sense that humanity was on an inexorable march of progress in many fields. From the American Revolution through the 1840s, the momentum of the Age of Enlightenment carried a grand dream of possibility.

Perhaps it was two steps forward, and one back, yet nevertheless net forward. The Enlightenment sought the balance and alignment that Thomas Edison was advising us about.

But the Age of the Industrial Revolution was changing the face and mindset of America. Labor became a commodity, people became replaceable parts in factories. Karl Marx conceived of a revolution of laborers against capitalists; the streets of Europe were awash in riots in 1848. Any dream of a collaborative world had been dashed. The Civil War killed what remained of the hope of Enlightenment. In Europe, the Franco-Prussian war and the struggles in their colonies. A more transactional and adversarial culture became preeminent. The “centre” was shriveling.

While there was a brief moment in time during Teddy Roosevelt’s presidency when he fought for the spirit of enlightened thinking. There was a sense perhaps we were getting back on track.

Tragically the Great War of 1914, followed by the Great Depression, the Second World War, and then the Cold War froze that dream, which has never been successfully resurrected.

Most don’t even understand that the “centre” is Collaborative Excellence. It can be resurrected because we know it lies hidden in our DNA. We know from the unique pockets of examples around the world, that it can be jump started.

### *A Renewed Age of ReEnlightenment*

Over the last three thousand years, although circumstances and opportunities play a part, human intelligence seems to have remained fairly constant.

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*Homo Sapiens in Latin means "wise man" because of his presumed ability to act with good judgment, the mental facility that is considered a facility above intelligence. Making decisions about complex life or social decisions is a hallmark of being wise which was intended to emphasize man's uniqueness and separation from the rest of the animal kingdom.*

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*The end of the Age of the Enlightenment was the last time humans as a species, placed wisdom above knowledge. If we are to find our “centre,” it’s essential to return to our roots as “wisdom seekers.”*

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*Building creative, trusting relationships that guide people to deeper understandings, higher insights, and broader horizons will be the hallmark of the Age of ReEnlightenment.*

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## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

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Human society contains the potentiality to produce hope or fear, glory or destruction, life or death. Too often, this fateful decision of destiny is left too much to chance, by a cast of the dice, rather than by conscious choice and careful consideration of the underlying design that can weigh the dice heavily in our favor.

We must consider a renewed effort to engage in a ReEnlightenment (see link: [Creating the Age of ReEnlightenment](#)).

### ***Adaptive Reuse***

We are quite adept today at repurposing an old but elegant building from a past century while retaining its character. For example, the exquisite beaux arts D'Orsay train station in Paris was reused for an elegant museum housing Impressionist art.

The same can be done with the ancient Greek social architecture. It was first repurposed for a modern age during the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The same repurposing can be done in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to rediscover our "centre" that is sustainable and will hold against the harsh forces of today's world.

### ***Collaborative Excellence – Leadership for the 21 century***

The marvelous creation of the Greeks can be transfigured into a Modern age model without too much difficulty. Virtually all of elements have been tried and tested in a wide variety of environments, including strategic alliances, high performance teams, collaborative innovation networks, and employee owned companies.

A White Paper, such as this is designed to focus primarily on two things: Why? and What? The Action Plan is more fully described in [Collaborative Leadership Excellence](#), which places an emphasis on how leaders will implement Collaborative Excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The architectures of Collaborative Excellence are summarized here, briefly:

### **Six Core Architectures of Collaborative Excellence**

We need a solid, dependable *Architecture of Collaboration*, that's simple enough at its core, logical, easy to comprehend, and elegant to use – otherwise no one will remember it.

This enables the architecture to be built-out with new ideas continually improving it, plus an effective means of teaching & learning it, thus transmitting it to thousands of people.

The Architecture of Collaboration contains six core elements; however these are not the same as the six Greek values discussed earlier. Rather they extract the essence of the six Greek values, but transfigure them in a way that retains the original impact, but puts

### ***Great Architecture has critical elements that make it powerful:***

There is a fulfilling magnetism to well-conceived design architecture; it's powerfully:

- **Actionable** – Essential Principles, Fundamental Rules, and Best Practices can be used universally to create similar results.
- **Learnable** – it can be taught enabling it to multiply.
- **Replicable** – it will work in a variety of circumstances
- **Reliable** – has inherent stability, safety, and certainty.
- **Scaleable** – it will work in large organizations as well as small scale situations.

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them into a modern perspective that we know from experience can be leveraged, multiplied, and measured.

The design of the six core architectures (see Figure 2) came from work in the field implementing collaborative relationships in corporate alliances in scores of industries across the globe, engaging with hundreds of alliance practitioners, the examination of hundreds of success and failure case studies, and the advice of experienced leaders in business, communities, and government who shared their insights and wisdom --differentiating victory from defeat.

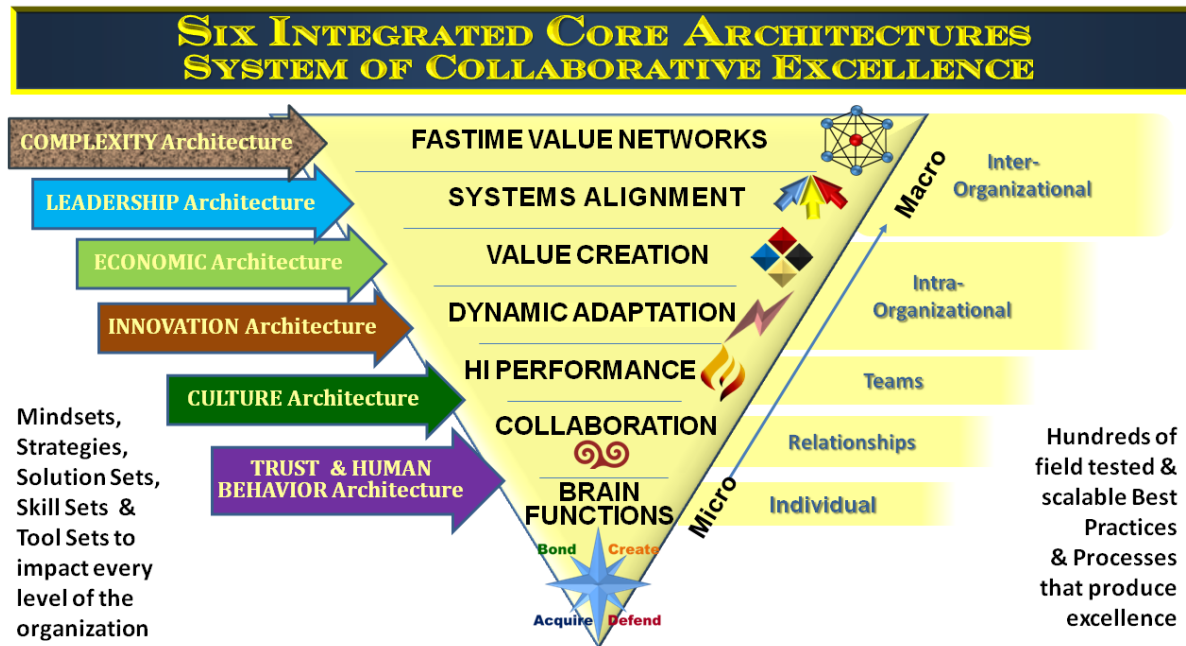


Figure 2: Six Core Collaborative Architectures - Learning Design

Note: These six core architectures were chosen because they have the highest impact and leverage on outcomes – the *building blocks* of collaborative excellence

The design starts at the “micro” level with the brain and human behavior, proceeding up the inverted pyramid with the elements required for collaboration at the individual and interpersonal levels, then advancing upwards with each segment being seamlessly woven into the framework of the next building block, ultimately expanding to complex organizational systems.

30 years in the making to discover, design, develop & test the first fully integrated system that elegantly connects 6 organizational levels to produce up to a 25% competitive advantage.

It's been field-tested, producing measurable results, while optimizing time and resources.

### Overview of the Six Core Collaborative Architectures

These become the basic foundation of the human side of Collaborative Systems Architecture which are essential for any of the other aspects of Collaborative Systems to function fully.

Paradigm Shifts are not just about “doing things differently” .....it's thinking differently, envisioning differently, discerning differently, measuring differently, designing differently, speaking differently, asking questions differently, valuing differently, treating people differently.

These profound differences require a fundamentally different “Systems Design Architecture”, not merely tweaking old stuff designed for a legacy paradigm.



## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

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### #1a: Four-DRIVE HUMAN BEHAVIOR “FOUNDATIONAL” ARCHITECTURE



Human Behavior Architecture developed by mentor and colleague Paul Lawrence of Harvard Business School

- Elegantly simple & straightforward

the  $E=mc^2$  of Human Behavior  
Far better than Maslow's Hierarchy.

- Four Drives of the Brain explains why people are “driven” to act, predicts and prescribes behavior.
- Backed up by breakthrough neuro-chemistry research conducted with Prof. Lawrence.

Neuro-Chemistry of the Brain provides deep insight into Trust & Fear

- Explains how Fear defeats Collaboration – and how to overcome the fear factor
- Flows directly into the Trust & Culture Architectures

#### Value Delivered

- ➔ Quickly Understand Dysfunctions
- ➔ ReAlign & ReBalance Individuals & Teams
- ➔ Foundation of Trust Architecture

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Trust determines the  
the Destin  
and the Fa

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Profess



### #1b: TRUST ARCHITECTURE

Human Behavior Architecture makes a fluid transition into the Trust Architecture

Elegant and simple to use

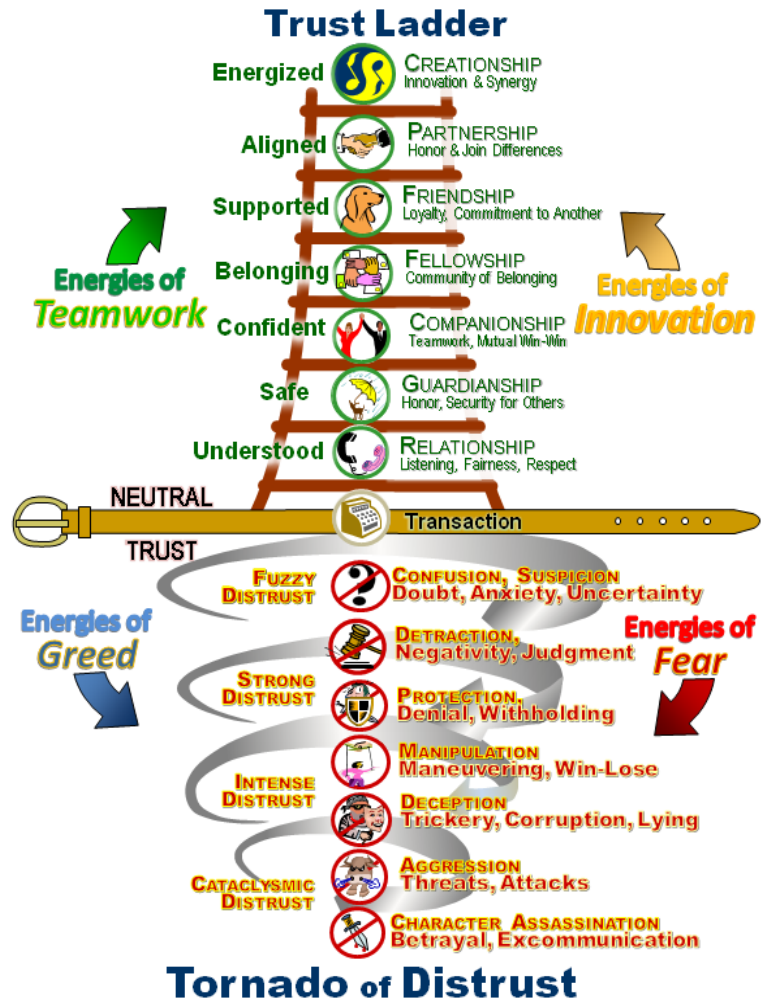
- Trust Ladder & Tornado of Distrust -- powerful tools to create extraordinary relationships.
- Based on Breakthroughs in Neuro-Chemistry
- Includes quick and straightforward tools to assess and build Trust:
  - 8 Principles of Trust
  - Critical Operating Principles
  - How to Rebuild Trust
- Without trust:
  - Impossible to generate high performance teamwork
  - Very difficult to produce consistent innovation
  - Risky to attempt developing alliances

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- Highly challenging for leader to align organization
- Breakthrough modeling to understand *Economics of Trust*, Value Creation and exactly how trust generates productivity, performance, profitability and competitive advantage.

### Value Delivered

- ➔ Rapid Diagnosis of Trust Breakdowns
- ➔ Prescription to Rebuild/Sustain Trust
- ➔ Sets Foundation for Understanding How Culture Impacts Behavior



## EIGHT TRUST PRINCIPLES

- 1. F**airness & Reciprocity
- 2. A**ccountability & Integrity
- 3. R**espect & Empathy
- 4. T**ruthfulness, Courage
- 5. H**onourable Purpose
- 6. E**thics & Excellence
- 7. S**afety & Security
- 8. T**ransparency & Openness

### #2: CULTURE ARCHITECTURE



Trust Architecture flows seamlessly into the Culture Architecture

Enables leaders to “design” the culture of the Collaborative System spawning superior high performance teamwork

#### Why is Culture so Important?

- Between  $\frac{2}{3}$  &  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all human behavior is determined by *culture* (not personality)
- Leaders are #1 determinant of culture – making Leadership the *Primary Lever of Change*
- Framework enables Leaders to spot flaws and misguided thinking immediately and take rapid corrective action
- The “*START*” Model of Culture (*Spirit, Trust, Adversity Response, & Teamwork*) is powerful, elegantly simple, and easy to unite teams and alliances.
- Collaborative Cultures:
  - Produce 25% better results (speed, innovation, adaptability, profitability, etc.) than Adversarial Cultures
  - Retain wandering Millennials
  - Propel Innovation & Value Creation



#### Value Delivered

- ➔ Provides Leaders with Mindsets, Tools, & Frameworks for Building Great Cultures
- ➔ Enables Rapid Diagnosis and Correction of Culture Problems such as hiring, rewards, and measures of success
- ➔ Easy for engineers and technical people to understand

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The idea of Collaborative Systems “Architecture” is that the leader step back, fully conceptualize the kaleidoscopic dynamics; Otherwise leaders get bogged down in the details of everyday “sturm und drang” (turmoil & stress)

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### #3: INNOVATION ARCHITECTURE



Culture Architecture makes a fluid transition into the Innovation Architecture

Enables Rapid Adaptation in Fast Moving World

Explains how Trust can utilize Diversity of Thinking to produce an “engine” of innovation running on “free fuel” – ideas. We call this “Dynamic Differential Energy.”

Reveals potent framework for unlocking  
Co-Creative Power of Cross-Functional Team

- Utilizes *creative inquiry* methodology to unleash hidden ideas
- Engages 10 best processes for maximizing innovation
- Replicable and easy to understand.... produces great results, but only in high trust, high collaboration cultures.
- Transforms Diversity of Thinking, Ideas and Cultures into Massive Strategic Asset
- Uses Collaborative Innovation as a primary mechanism for Collaborative Advantage, Competitive Advantage, and Adaptation to Rapid Change



#### Value Delivered

- ➔ Sustainable Innovation “Engine”
- ➔ Generate New Value from Existing Resources
- ➔ Maximize Value from Alliances
- ➔ Sets Foundation for Value Creation

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Culture is the Hidden Competitive Weapon in the arsenal of Collaborative Excellence.  
Because it's largely invisible to all  
(except for those who understand collaborative architecture),  
it is nearly impossible to duplicate.

When the Innovation Engine is engaged,  
the ability of the system to adapt, morph, realign, and create new linkages is compelling.

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### #4: VALUE CREATION ARCHITECTURE



**Innovation Architecture makes a fluid transition into the Economics & Value Creation Architecture**

**Maximizes Value Generated, Significantly Increases Profit**

- Creates high levels of Productivity
- Uses Trust & Innovation to reduce Non-Value Added Work and reduce cross-boundary inefficiency
- Reduces Risk and Litigation by up to 30%
- Doubles chances of on-time/budget Project Delivery
- Accelerates End-to-End Value Chain competitiveness
- Turns Breakdowns into Breakthroughs
- Enables People and Organizations with Limited Resources to gain Competitive Advantage
- Value Maximization Model creates an “engine” to transform the innovation “engine” into substantial competitive advantage – think of it as “collaborative advantage.”



#### **Value Delivered**

- ➔ **Sustainable Competitive Advantage**
- ➔ **Generate New Value from Entire Value Chain**
- ➔ **Generates 10-25% better return on human capital**

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How many times have you heard some executive command a team to “Create Value?”

But have you ever thought about it in depth?

What course in Business School is dedicated to Value Creation?

For the most part, Value Creation has been an elusive dream in the pontifical mind.

Our approach capitalizes on collaborative architectures to adapt and maximize value in ways adversarial & transactional systems simply cannot.

This is the way we create “collaborative competitive advantage.”

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## #5: LEADERSHIP & ALIGNMENT ARCHITECTURE



Value Creation Architecture makes a fluid transition into the Leadership Architecture

Four Alignments approach to leadership is a Systems Breakthrough

Leadership has traditionally been agglomeration of styles, traits, characteristics, and habits. This level of

thinking is *not effective* – it sub-optimizes talent and bogs things down.

Our breakthrough is *Reframing Leadership* as an Integrated System of Four Alignments<sup>60</sup>

- Like playing “4-Dimensional Chess”
- Enables Collaborative Excellence
- Fast to Implement , Easy to Learn, Rapid Returns
- Nearly impossible for competitors to duplicate
- Greatly enhances ability to create synergies – the unfulfilled quest of leaders for centuries – because synergy only manifests in *Aligned Systems*
- Guiding Framework for how to (& not to) Transform Organizations and overcome



### Value Delivered

- ➔ Synergistic System Producing Massive Advantage & Employee Engagement
- ➔ Produces 4 Dimensional Alignment for Complex Systems and Value Networks
- ➔ Enables Teams, Cross-Functional Integration, and Strategic Alliances to function at a higher level
- ➔ Protects Collaborative Systems from attacks from Adversarial Rivals

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Just as Trust is the Central Organizing Principle for Collaborative Cultures, so is Leadership the Central Aligning Principle for Complex Systems.

Four Dimensional Alignment does for a Complex Eco-System what Gravity does for the Planet – holding the many dynamic driving forces together, preventing disparate parts from flying off in a myriad of directions.

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<sup>60</sup> See [Leadership as a System](#) and Appendix #8 for more details



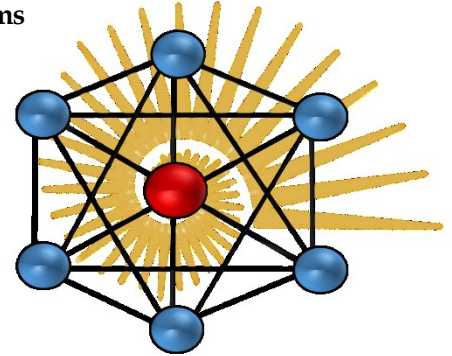
### #6: COMPLEXITY & VALUE NETWORK ARCHITECTURE



an understanding of the way the forces interact, leaders typically resort to old, ineffective command and control methods, often turning the system adversarially in on itself, like an auto-immune disease, foolishly turning partners against themselves, destroying the synergies that nourished them.

Fluid transition from the Leadership & Alignment Architecture into Complexity and Value Network Architecture

Today's Complex Systems are fluid, with dynamic forces intersecting strategic aims. Without



The Complexity Architecture Provides:

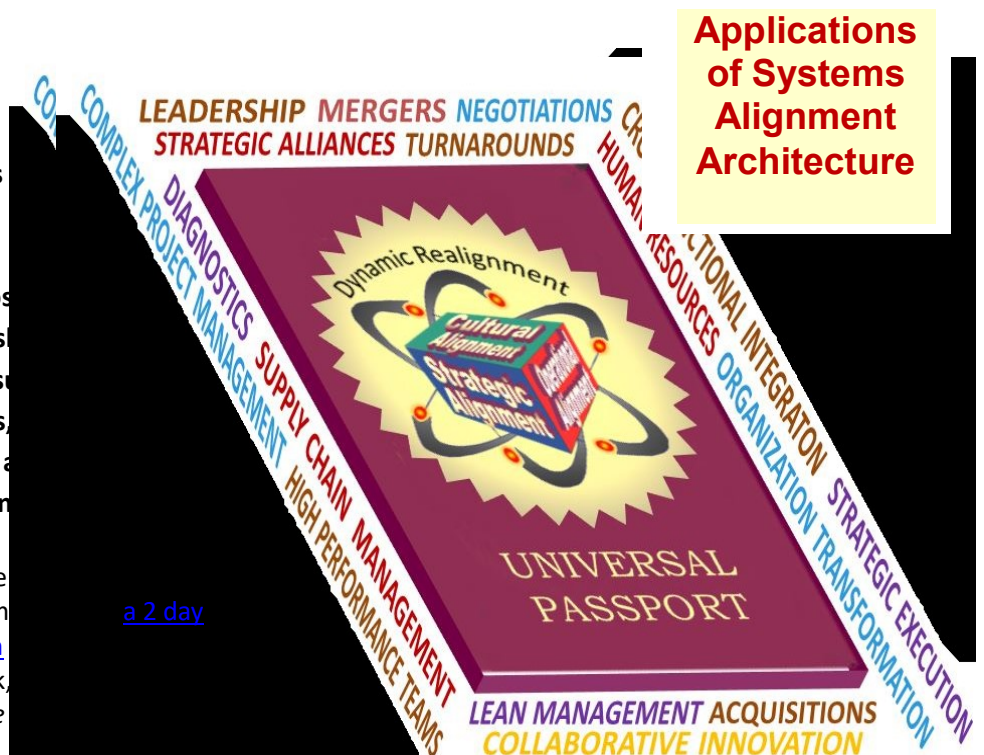
- Leaders with clear guidance and options on how to address complex projects and multi-member alliances, keeping the system aligned, balanced, & integrated
- Risk Managers with a Guidance System lowering risk by up to 30%
- Creating Contracts that enhance teamwork and alignment of interests
- Fluid Interaction in the Eco-System, continuous innovation & dynamic realignment
- Massive Competitive Advantage by doubling innovation flow across the network
- Ability to gain Positive Benefit from the Law of Unintended Consequences
- Methods to Anticipate and Thwart Breakdowns before they happen, and Turn Breakdowns into Breakthroughs
- Tools to rapidly Diagnose compounding risks and fragile breakdown points

#### Value Delivered

- ➔ Multiple Applications in a Wide Variety of Complex Organizational Systems (see graphic)
- ➔ Prevents poor decision making and mis-diagnosis cause & effect relations
- ➔ Significantly increases success rates of teams, projects, turnarounds, alliances, & organizational transformation

These Six Core Elements of the Excellence Architecture are emphasized in detail in a forthcoming book, *Excellence – Leadership for the*

[a 2 day](#)



### ***The Paradox of Collaborative Excellence***

During my career I've been blessed with the opportunity to work with a multitude of very fine collaborative leaders who have produced remarkable results.

One thing that is striking about most who possess Collaborative Leadership Excellence is that they typically have gained their skills *intuitively* and often do not understand why other leaders don't have the same intuition.

Often I'll ask simple questions, like "What's your design for building trust?" They then stare somewhat blankly and mutter "Well what is there to design? You should just know it naturally." In other words they can't communicate the core principles of trust, integrity, or fair play, but live it daily.

In workshops over the years I've asked thousands of senior executives four pivotal questions:

1. On a scale from 1-10, how important is trust in maintaining critical relationships?  
↳ Nearly 100% answer: 9-10 (some answer 11).
2. If you were to write down everything you know about trust, how many pages would you write?  
↳ Over 90% answer: about ½ page.
3. For something so important, how many of you have taken a course in trust?  
↳ Over 95% answer: No.
4. So, for something so important to your profession, why don't we have better coverage of the subject?  
↳ Is there something wrong with this picture?

This is just a small example of why we need design architectures to transmit critical understanding of how collaborative systems actually work.

The consequences of leaving things to "intuition" is that when the classic intuitive leader retires, and new executives take their place -- particularly if they come from the "outside" -- there is a high possibility that everything established by the trusted leader collapses. It happens every day in organizations large and small, all over the world. This is the consequence of having tools and techniques but no effective thinking about design architecture.

That's the paradox of Collaborative Excellence -- great leaders don't ordinarily know how to install a systems design architecture that will sustain itself through changes in leadership. We aim to change that.

### ***Misconceptions about Collaborative Excellence & Culture***

The biggest fallacy about collaborative excellence leadership is that it's soft, sweet, squishing, or tender. Most collaborative leaders are tough, hard-nosed, demanding *and* caring. Collaborative Excellence demands leaders put the team and the cause above the individual, while recognizing every individual has unique needs and circumstances.

This is substantially different from a *congenial* leader, who may be either too soft, too kind, or too squeamish to exert the authority to hold people accountable. Beware the leader who's too busy trying to be nice to get great results.

The ideals and practices of *Collaborative Excellence* constitute a paradigm shift in Western culture; thus they need a systems architecture to make them sustainable. And to be sustainable they must create results that far exceed their rival *adversarial* and *transactional* alternatives. Fortuitously, *collaborative excellence* wins time and time again, except in cases where transactional trading is simply more efficient.

### ***Embedding Collaborative Excellence in our Institutions***

To proliferate the ideals of Collaborative Excellence, look not to government – its role aims at governance, not culture change. There are two places where *Collaborative Excellence* can take root and produce value quickly:

- Corporate Executive Education – which is often conducted by major universities with business schools
- Community Leadership Programs – most medium and large cities have leadership programs that have been organized by civic leaders.

It will be leaders who reap the rewards from *Collaborative Excellence* that will be the first adopters and champions of the cause. From there it will migrate into our cherished institutions, and then be picked up by two institutions that can proliferate the learnings and expand on the essence of *Collaborative Excellence* being engrained in the culture of the Modern age.

*The most important factor shaping human existence is the goal of building a community of free and happy human beings who, by constant endeavor, strive to liberate themselves from the inheritance of anti-social and destructive instincts. – Albert Einstein*

### ***Anchoring the Collaborative Shift***

The two institutions on the planet – Education & Religion -- that should have discovered, developed, research, tested, and prescribed a method, system or architecture for *Collaborative Excellence* failed to address this most fundamental quest -- WHY?

They got caught in thinking too small, ever alert to protecting their fiefdoms, never addressing the central issue of human existence as (what should have been) their most important mission.

Their self-imposed, self-constrictive human and organizational dynamics prevented such breakthroughs in thinking to be realized.

We are all aware of how this failure has left today's world filled with haves and have-nots, wealth and poverty, heroic materialism and despair. More and more children are born fatherless, out of wedlock, family-less, and destined for oblivion – in despair.

As a society, we've addressed technical solutions that put a man on the moon fifty years ago, and a computer in every hand, but we cannot develop responsible, trustworthy leaders to guide us, nor can we graduate students from our high schools with the capacity to be great parents, great friends, great teammates, and great future leaders.

What if our forbearers had not gotten entrapped in such small thinking?  
Is it too late to reinvigorate such ideals and ideas?

Of course not!

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## The Future of Civilization

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### ***A Bold New Future***

It's wasted energy to rant and rave about what's passed; rather: lay the past behind as just a bitter memory and reach forth into the future for a new beginning.

### **Education**

"What if" the Age of the Enlightenment had not stalled out in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century?

What would our revered educational institutions of higher learning have done?

What if they embraced *Collaborative Excellence* in the early 1800s?

How might they have reoriented their thinking and purpose?

A retrospective on the institutions of higher education, particularly our universities, shows they kept their fiefdom structure from the Medieval era: all their departments – History, English, Engineering, Mathematics, and so forth – stayed as siloes, with their blinders on.

Never did our best schools of higher learning set as their mission, purpose, or "quest" to have all their departments, deans, professors, and graduating PhD's jointly aim at ...

*Elevating the Dignity of the Human Spirit by building a  
Collaboratively Excellent Central Core for the Future of Civilization*

Such a quest would extend Einstein's "*goal of building a community of free and happy human beings who, by constant endeavor, strive to liberate themselves from the inheritance of anti-social and destructive instincts*." So too would such a quest extending the line of progression of innovation started by the Greeks and relaunched with the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. And it would, perhaps, answer William Butler Yeats' disturbing observation that the "centre cannot hold" by creating a new *central core of civilization based on collaborative excellence*. Our learning programs, course materials, and curricula would be far more integrated and better aimed at a purpose poignantly relevant and applicable to life itself.

### ***Education and the Lack of Conviction***

Yeats also referred to "the best lack conviction." Today our finest schools turn out thousands of the most highly competent students the world has ever seen.

What is troubling about Yeats' observation is the best people of our times, those who best and brightest who graduate from our universities lack real conviction of purpose, and the worst, our terrorists, for example are passionately intense. In between lies a muddy middle made up of people tuned out on smart phones and video games, or even drugs. Today depression pandemic -- one of the greatest illnesses in our society. Suicide is the number two killer of our teenagers.

Nearly everyone entering into our educational institutions, when interviewed, state they "want to make a difference."

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## and the Nature of the Human Spirit

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Robert Ulich, professor at Harvard's School of Education in the 1950s observed in his book *Crisis and Hope in American Education*,<sup>61</sup> that it is the school's responsibility to aid an individual in discovering a purpose in life – without which it's impossible to align on a progressive trajectory the Greeks foresaw but the Romans either rejected or could not see.

*If our schools fail to help a person discover his purpose,  
they fail in almost everything that really matters.*

Yet most don't know what that difference is; they hope their career will reveal it, and by the time they hit mid-life they have the crisis that their lives are not very meaningful.

Making a difference means dealing with the *differential* between what is our *current reality* and what we *want it to be*. We all need something more than material aggrandizement promised by *Heroic Materialism* to have that fulfillment. The nature of humanity is that it seeks meaning and purpose in everything. When we don't find meaning, nor have the facility to find meaning, we become despondent or rebellious.

The Greeks were convinced that *moral, collaborative, and innovative excellence* was the foundation upon which a human being could construct their personal purpose in life.

That has not changed in two thousand years; it is built into our DNA, but lies mainly dormant in our Modern age.

With courage, vision, and commitment, our institutions of higher learning  
can put things back on track.

### **Making Religion Relevant**

As I was lamenting the fire in the Notre Dame Cathedral in the Spring of 2019, I reflected back on the two Easter Sundays spent in that venerable temple several years ago. With sadness I thought of the 2000 years of Christianity and the untold hours of priests, ministers, nuns, monks and committed souls who have preached and prayed for a better world.

Why hasn't it materialized?

A minister friend commented that too often the Christian community wore the mask of collaboration and community, but underneath defined themselves adversarially – Protestants versus Catholics, Jesuits versus Dominicans, Synod versus Synod. Probably the single greatest objection to Christianity is the number of wars fought in God's name.

Retrospectively, this certainly looks like foolishness.

Together we conjectured:

"What If" over a millennia ago, the Christian Community had formed an ecumenical alliance uniting Christian sects to design a "collaborative socio-economic community," seeking to:

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<sup>61</sup> Ulich advocates that a properly conceived educational process aims at growing each person by matching the educational structure to each individual's unique strengths and capacities, this preparing him or herself to carve out a special place in their society, their relationship to wisdom, and their ability to act upon this special understanding.



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## The Future of Civilization

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*Elevate the divinity of the human soul in a Collaborative Christian/Ecumenical Community<sup>62</sup> on earth today, instead of waiting for salvation in heaven?*

Had Educational and Religious Institutions along with Foundations teamed up earlier to create some of the breakthroughs in collaboration we are designing today, civilization could have had a “head start” aiming a “lead cultural arrow” on the Greek trajectory to design a world that would be far more rational, trustworthy, and collaborative than it is now in the 21st century.

How many lives of the nearly 200 million lost to tyrants in the 20<sup>th</sup> century would have been saved from the savagery of beasts like Mao, Stalin, Hitler, and their lineage?

### *Onward and Upward*

It is now time for a *shift* -- with new thinking, new strategies, new focus, a magnanimous quest -- aimed at bringing forth a new vision, a new design architecture, real possibilities, and concrete practices that will turn the tide before time runs out.<sup>63</sup>

This will require an alliance of spirited champions and committed leaders for the quest to become reality. The future of civilization is dependent upon our commitment to a renewal of vision, of energy, of values, and of trust.

Collaborative Excellence is a philosophy, an architecture, and a quest; it is not a religion; it’s an extension of a Greek ideal.

The quest must fuse science, humanity, and environment, while engaging in a prospering economy that satisfies human quality of life. It calls to question:

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*Be practical as well as generous in your ideals.  
Keep your eyes on the stars and  
keep your feet on the ground.*

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Theodore Roosevelt, President 1901-1909  
Last President embodying the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment

“Are we, as a society, and agglomeration of individuals charged with our anxieties and fears, or are we our community inspired with our vision and ideals?”

The alternative – staying the course in this storm – is bleak.

The choice depends upon our resolution to create a brighter and better future.

We must choose now and choose well, before the potential of a bright future dims as it gets farther and farther beyond our grasp.

*Toujours Avant et Élevé!  
Always Forward and Higher!*

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<sup>62</sup>This would not be strictly a religious endeavor, a fully ecumenical integration of ethics and collaboration into the *socio-economic-political fabric* of those communities that wanted more meaning and purpose in their lives on earth, rather than await death to attain peace in heaven. The idea of an “ecumenical” movement embraces all religions that believe in a divine power, including deists, etc.

<sup>63</sup> see our [Collaborative Excellence White Paper](#) for more about how this can be done. A book: *Collaborative Excellence – Leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is well underway.