During the past two decades, and specifically since the early 2000’s, significant progress has been made to determine what enables senior managerial and specifically executive leadership teams to deliver sustainable high performance. This has included the following activities and research:

- Work conducted with more than 20 executive teams since the mid 1990s;
- A review of more than 200 literature sources;
- A doctoral research programme conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Work-based Learning at Middlesex University.
- An MBA research project exploring the extent to which the literature acknowledges the elements that contribute to “the practice and virtues of leadership.”
- A year-long research project conducted by 30 post-graduate students to define and apply the elements of “the practice and virtues of leadership” in their own workplace settings.
- Utilising “the practice and virtues of leadership” framework to facilitate the design and implementation of individual and team leadership development with a wide range of executive teams facing diverse circumstances.
- The development and use of a set of assessment tools that people can use to determine the status of their development of various elements of the “practice of leadership.” This also helps people to identify and implement personal and team development goals which deepen the real-life application of the “practice and virtues of leadership.”

The Practice and Virtues of High Impact Leadership and Teaming

The framework for “The Practice and Virtues of Leadership” consists of the following elements that leaders at every level, especially those at senior and executive levels, need to master and entrench within their organisations. The research demonstrates that teams who deliver sustainable High Impact Leadership and Teaming grow their individual and collective capabilities to fulfil these 12 elements of sustainable high performance leadership:

1. **Values-based leadership shift**: They demonstrate their deep conviction that they must establish a culture of leadership that values and contributes to the upliftment of all stakeholders, namely customers, consumers employees, direct and indirect upstream suppliers, where relevant, unions, the larger community they operate in, relevant industry bodies, government at various levels, and shareholders. This requires the entrenchment of “Values-based Leadership” which is demonstrated by inclusivity, transparency, engagement, valuing and inviting constructive conflict and dissent, developing the competence of people-driven performance, and requiring all managers and staff to live these values. In particular it requires a “values shift” from dominance and subordination to the attitudes and practices of values-based leadership. Peter Senge of MIT notes that the single greatest act of leadership is to intervene in the values of a
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system precisely because it permeates affects every facet of how an organisation and its people operate. This values shift can be presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coercion</th>
<th>Co-Option</th>
<th>Co-Determination</th>
<th>Co-Creation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Power over</td>
<td>Power to</td>
<td>Power through</td>
<td>Power By, For, With</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading servants</td>
<td>Aristocracy</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dictate</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Guide</td>
<td>Unleash Energy</td>
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<td>Privilege</td>
<td>Patronage</td>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>Partnership in continuous improvement</td>
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<td>Demand</td>
<td>Exploit/Entitlement</td>
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2. **Personal authentic leadership:** They understand and live out their own authentic leadership and style. They do not try to clone themselves on others. They realise that each individual has authentic contributions to make and so first and foremost they seek to comprehend and contribute their own style and strengths. This requires regular personal reflection, inviting and creating opportunities for feedback to deepen self awareness. Together this forms the basis for continuous personal growth as a leader.

3. **Valuing and leveraging diversity:** They understand and value the diversity of others to draw on and leverage the widest spectrum of perspectives and styles. Instead of trying to arrive at shallow consensus that is then not lived out, they value and are not threatened by views and perspectives that are different to their own. This enables them to invite and even insist on dissent as a way of exploring and understanding why a colleague holds a different view. An aspect of this is their capacity to work with and respect the dynamics of multiculturism. This requires higher levels of emotional intelligence (EQ).

4. **Discovering and using the power of personal voice:** They appreciate that their most essential leadership “tool” is the power of their voice and the courage to articulate their views. They develop the skill to engage in robust and essential conversations to energise themselves and others. This promotes a culture of trust, valuing one another’s intent, and engaging in sometimes tough conversations that are crucial to mining the optimum contributions of diverse individuals.

5. **Consciously developing high performance teaming practices:** They do not leave the development of high performance teaming skills to chance and invest the necessary time and commitment to develop these crucial attitudes and capabilities. They respect that this cannot be achieved through one or two “quick fix” sessions and that it requires an extended period of learning in how to engage and optimise one another’s strengths and contributions. The attributes of trust, granting one another the benefit of the doubt,
vulnerability, deep listening and inquiry skills, and leading with open-ended questions rather than too much advocacy of their own views are crucial for high performance executive teams.

6. **Creating the high performance organisation culture:** They have a deep comprehension for the fact that creating a high performance organisational culture is a primary task of executives and general managers. Creating and sustaining the drivers of a high performance organisation culture is not an exercise or event. It is as integral to the performance of the organisation as annual budgeting; and monthly tracking of targets for production, sales, profits, stock movements, etc. If any of these core disciplines of management are ignored or interpreted incorrectly then the performance of the organisation is at risk. Likewise the leaders of sustainable high performance organisations recognise that creating, investing in and maintaining the drivers of a culture must feature at every monthly executive meeting. As with every other core organisational discipline it requires regular assessment, realignment and enhancement. Performance appraisals include assessment and feedback on how well specifically managers are contributing to living the culture. Individuals who develop a reputation for not fulfilling the culture are not considered for appointments or promotions.

7. **Making talent creation a core executive and managerial accountability:** They know that the ultimate source of sustainable performance is the capacity to attract, develop and retain the talent without which no individual manager, team or the organisation can strive to be truly competitive and maintain superior performance. It starts with the executives who are the primary drivers of placing talent creation at the centre of their duties. At a practical level it is the rigour with which they identify, assess and appoint members of the team. The top two tiers of leadership invest dedicated time to review a pool of talented people who they believe have the potential to move into positions of senior leadership. Exco and general managers take collective accountability to ensure that people with both high potential and the ability to deliver high performance are nurtured; given challenging projects and roles; and are moved around within the organisation to expand their experience and learning. In the famous term of Jim Collins (**Good to Great** he concludes that the primary challenge is to “get the right people on the bus; the wrong people off the bus; and the right people in the right seats.”

This includes the rigour with which new team members are “on boarded” and the extent to which executives become one another’s most important source of feedback and how they contribute to one another’s ongoing development. One of their top priorities is to create an organisation where the development of talent and continuous learning and re-energising of people is a strategic priority. The executive team need to apply the principles of continuous energising, engagement and development of talent to themselves and to their own teams. The core challenge for executives is to become the coaches and mentors of creating and building talent. This in its own right is a major personal, interpersonal and organisational role. If executives truly fulfil this role it extends beyond the borders of the organisation to contribute to the development of talent for the good of sectors of the economy and society as a whole, because such leaders and organisations are continuously contributing to the development of people who carry the same values and beliefs into other organisations.
8. **Creating meaningful work at every level is a priority:** They know and have a deep belief that the vast majority of people want to do meaningful work. Adam Smith, the “father” of market economics two centuries ago said that if people are required to the same thing over and over again it makes a human being as dumb and unfulfilled as it is possible for a person to become. This is why high performance executive teams lead the drive to create meaningful work at every level of the organisation. They realise that they employ adults who generally want to feel good about what they are contributing; who want to have pride in their work; and who want to leave work every day feeling they have done something worthwhile. The executive leadership focus on implementing practices that reduce micromanagement and treat people as if they are not trustworthy. In doing this they create entire companies of leaders at every level who take personal charge of ensuring the organisation’s sustainable high performance.

A critical approach adopted by executives and next levels is a combination of Eliott Jacques’ well-researched *Stratified Systems Theory.* A more recent although largely similar approach is the work of Charan and Drotter which they have defined as *“The Leadership Pipeline.”* The essence of these approaches is that an organisation has to deliver broad “levels of work” to ensure its sustainable competitiveness. Each level defines the core accountabilities and focus for people at that level. Where organisations have entrenched this it creates “a company of leaders” who are committed to and energetically fulfil their own leadership roles at every level.

9. **Exercising the art of strategy execution:** They have a fierce commitment to the three “E’s” of success: execution, execution, and execution. They master the “art of strategy execution” and instil the necessary expectations, disciplines and commitment at every level of the organisation. High performance executive teams see strategy as permeating every level of the organisation, with every person regardless of level, rank or role, understanding that ultimately strategy execution is more important than conceptual plans. In line with Winston Churchill they believe that “plans are useless – planning is essential." In the hands of superior performing executive teams the art of strategy execution becomes a discipline and commitment that is embraced and driven with joy by the vast majority of people within the organisation, suppliers, clients and all other stakeholders.

10. **Mastering the challenge of continuous change leadership and innovation:** They recognise that the only constant is change – and so they become masters of continuous change leadership. This is embodied by defining the innovation that is required from people at every level and part of the organisation. Identifying, suggesting and driving change is a mantra that the executives communicate continuously. It extends from continuous incremental improvements and innovation at operational levels through to product and process innovations at middle managerial and specialist levels. From there it builds into innovation of managerial and business processes, as well as the review and innovation related to structures and policies, and ultimately to innovation of entire economic models that drive the wellbeing of the organisation and all of its stakeholders. Change leadership thus embraces the entire sphere of the organisation’s large value streams. Executives master the art of identifying and exercising the necessary influence
“It takes a village of leaders....”

to initiate innovation and the requisite change leadership wherever it is required – both within and beyond the boundaries of their organisation.

11. **Seeing and managing the organisation as a living and organic system:** They realise that the complex systems of many interests that are often conflicted and always diverse resemble a living and vibrant living system. This system resembles a biological organism with all of its often chaotic dynamics much more than it resembles a neat clockwork mechanism. Executive leaders appreciate that they cannot control the complexities of their entire environment. But they acknowledge that they are capable of and have the accountability to engage with and influence the entire system that influences the performance of their organisation, division, region or department. This includes everyone from upstream suppliers to final consumers; trade unions; regulators; industry bodies; and government at national to local levels. They “see” their organisation as intricate and multidimensional webs of leadership and interdependencies and accept that it their role to influence and optimise the alignment across all of these sometimes competing and even conflicting participants in and contributors to their organisational webs.

12. **Entrenching optimum inclusivity and collaboration as a leadership necessity:** They understand that because they are part of a continuously shifting system of interests and conditions they cannot control their environment. But, they accept that they have the accountability to engage with and mutually influence all elements that may impact the performance of their organisation. This enables them to take the responsibility for initiating collaboration that is inclusive to fully engage and satisfy the interests of all stakeholders.

When these 12 elements of “The Practice of Leadership” converge they create a “chaordic” system where the interplay between chaos and order prevails. Instead of viewing these 12 elements as loose standing or disconnected they see them as a system of interrelated leadership challenges. By applying some of the insights offered by systems thinking and chaos theory these twelve elements of “The Practice of Leadership” can be positioned as one integrative and systemic (as opposed to systematic and hence mechanical) set of converging fields of leadership demands and energy. This can be diagrammatically presented as follows, with each of the 12 elements offering a “field of leadership endeavour and demand.”
Coping with pressures of driving and sustaining “The Practice of Leadership”

These 12 challenges for leaders at senior levels of the organisation represent an often underestimated set of demands. They present a sometimes awesome and incredibly demanding set of leadership challenges. As they converge they create a complex system of interlocking demands that can quite readily become overwhelming in which case organisational leaders typically retreat into the relative comfort of pursuing shorter term and more simplistic pursuit of profits, stock price increases and significant incentive rewards linked to short-term performance. On the other hand, if leaders and specifically executive teams manage to engage with and ultimately fulfil all of these challenges presented by “The Practice of Leadership” it creates the foundation for sustainable high performance.

The question that requires an answer is what makes it possible for some teams to cope with juggling the demands of “The Practice of Leadership” while others fail or only achieve modest success? The research conducted with a wide range of highly successful executive teams, as well as some mediocre and poor performing teams, has made it possible to identify the underlying “Virtues of Leadership.” This thinking has its roots in the contributions of the philosopher Aristotle who defined a set of higher order human virtues that go beyond values and underpin the capacity to do good deeds that benefit the self and the larger community.

In some ways the core “Virtues of Leadership” resemble the recent discoveries of the Higgs-Boson Particle – that elusive element of existence that enables particles to develop the mass that ties the universe together. It may at this stage appear to be quite esoteric, but the hundreds of observations of interactions within executive teams indicate that there are three critical “virtues” that enable executive team members to cope with and continuously fulfil the
“It takes a village of leaders....”

sometimes competing demands of the elements that constitute “The Practice of Leadership.” By borrowing insights from systems thinking, complexity and chaos theory it assists visualising what occurs when the 12 elements converge and interact with one another.

Each of the 12 elements of “The Practice of Leadership” resembles a field of energy and endeavour that occupies time, effort and resources. Each of these executive leadership demands requires exceptional levels of energy, learning, application and discipline to make it an integral part of the endeavours of the individual leader, the team, and the team’s engagement with the organisation as a whole, and then the society beyond the boundaries of the organisation. In the diagram above each of these elements is represented as a “field of energy and leadership endeavour” resembling the petal of a flower. Now imagine all of these petals demanding simultaneous attention and alignment across all facets of leadership. Experiments in chaos and complexity theory show that such complex systems give rise to or contain “strange attractors and fractals.” These are systemic forces that recognise chaos and find order within it – hence chaordic systems of leadership.

The original diagram illustrating the various elements of the practice of leadership can now be represented as one integrated and converging set of forces or demands. This creates leadership challenges that exceed the demands of any one or even multiples of the practice of leadership. Diagrammatically it may be portrayed as follows:

As the demands and continuous endeavours to drive the practice of leadership evolve it gives rise to a central core of attributes that appear to differentiate the sustainable high impact leadership and teaming of some executive teams from others. Successful executive teams appear to posses something tacit or almost intangible that serves as the “glue” or spirit that bonds and holds the 12 together. In terms of chaos or complexity theory, the virtues appear to be the “strange attractors” that enable leaders to “keep it all together.”

The Virtues of Leadership

The “strange attractor” that creates the capacity for the development and sustained performance of executive teams appears to consist of three core virtues:

- **Embracing** Creative Anxiety as an inevitable element of leadership.
“It takes a village of leaders....”

- Exercising *Generative Power* to drive constructive influence and execution.
- Practising *Relentless Love* to engage and align competing interests and perspectives.

These three “virtues” create an integral flow and dynamic system that is self reinforcing. The one cannot survive or operate without the other. The potentially controversial conclusion is that for executives to achieve sustainable *High Impact Leadership and Teaming* it is essential for them to exercise the *Virtues of Leadership* most of the time. This is undoubtedly an awesome challenge and one which the vast majority of executives have never been confronted with. To the contrary, prevailing conventional wisdom may sneer at the thought that these virtues can in any manner be associated with sustainable superior performance. Yet recent research proves that organisations that provide the leadership and entrench cultures that live these three virtues, significantly outperform direct competitors and the market in general by orders of magnitude. Here we are talking of 500% to 2000% better performance over the medium to longer term when compared to competitors and the average market on all hard indicators such as return on investment, market share, profitability, growth, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and retention of talent.

The *Virtues of Leadership* cannot exist in isolation of one another. Visually they can be portrayed as the “infinity triangle” where each one of the three elements flows from and simultaneously into both others.

This is undoubtedly the most controversial and high risk conclusion reached from the research on High Impact Leadership and Teaming for Executives.

**Power?** It's a no brainer. Of course executives have power and must exercise it. After all, the executive prerogative is what determines how organisations are run. But what if the notion of power is overturned to require *generative power* where the primary demand is to utilise and create widespread power that enables rather than controls everyone?
“It takes a village of leaders....”

Anxiety? You must be joking! Cowboys don’t cry and if you can’t stand the heat get out of the kitchen! But what if creative anxiety is a natural condition of life and leadership without which there can be no creativity and innovation?

Love? You want to make me belch?! Business is not for the weak and only the strongest survive. My job is not to love my competitor, my workforce, my neighbour, my supplier or customer. It is all about profit and serving shareholder interests. But what if relentless love is the very best way to achieve these objectives?

The interaction with dozens of teams and hundreds of executives and senior managers made it increasingly clear that the real sustainable winners had learned and were applying a recipe of human characteristics that are so seemingly obvious that it is almost embarrassing to hold them up as the core of sustainable High Impact Leadership and Teaming for Executives.

Introducing the notion of power into the equation, on the face of it, does not create any discomfort. After all, once you have reached the top of the pyramid you have earned the right to exercise power and control. Is that not so? Yet when executive teams are quizzed they acknowledge that they actually have very little power that is rooted in control and coercion. A strange contradiction of managerial life is the higher up you go you the less direct power or control you get. The upside is that your power to influence increases exponentially – if you understand how to define and leverage it.

Acknowledging that anxiety is inevitable and not necessarily negative is at first often rejected by well-seasoned executives. The very idea of acknowledging feelings of anxiety is tantamount to admitting “I cannot cope and the job is too big for me.” Anxiety is therefore written off as a symptom of incompetence rather than a signal of appreciating what is required.

Peter Koestenbaum, philosopher and explorer of leadership has a totally different view to this. He concludes that anxiety is not a symptom but is rather an essential element of life. During an interview he posed the question, “Do you ask whether you are breathing because your heart beats; or do you wonder whether your heart beats because you breathe?” It is of course nonsensical. Neither breathing nor having a beating heart beat is a symptom or somehow potentially disconcerting condition. They are integral and inevitable facets of life just as it is for anxiety. Here we are not considering the psychiatric condition of free floating anxiety syndrome often associated with depression, mental and emotional paralysis, and suicidal tendencies. We are talking about the ever present anxiety of merely being alive and responding to the seemingly endless stream of life’s challenges.

High performance leaders accept anxiety as a natural consequence of being alive and coping with the often awesome challenges of achieving and sustaining the performance of organisations.

But love? Now this really raises the tension levels. Business is after all rooted in the Darwinian principle of “the survival of the fittest” and the twisted belief that “the winner takes all.” Nowhere did Darwin make such claims. Instead he believed that survival is dependent upon those who are most adaptive to changing circumstances and most capable of
"It takes a village of leaders...."

interacting in mutually beneficial relationships with their environment – even if that means eating one another but not to the point of mutual extinction.

*The Practice and Virtues of Leadership* offers an entirely different perspective on these three virtues and provides valuable clues to the core secrets of sustainable High Impact Leadership and Teaming for executives.

**Creative Anxiety**

Anxiety merely means one is alive. It is not primarily to do with not coping or being incompetent. It is simply not possible to be a leader and to not experience anxiety. Every one of the elements of the practice of leadership will induce anxiety within any person barring sociopaths and psychopaths. Consider just the following:

- The mere commitment to reflect and define one’s own authentic leadership style and perspectives eliminates the hope that there is some external “formula” or easy definable set of rules that can be followed to be a good leader. Instead every person who has the will to be a leader or is in a leadership role is confronted with the challenge of uncovering and living out his or her own authentic leadership. Work with thousands of MBA students since 2002 and even larger numbers of managers demonstrates that they find this to be one of the toughest elements of personal development and that it is inescapably accompanied by quite normal anxiety.
- Creating meaningful work for people at every level demands empowering them to take decisions and requires trusting that they will deliver the required outputs. Placing one’s trust in someone else and suspending the compulsion to micromanage and directly controlling people is accompanied by anxiety.
- Continuously leading change and innovation catapults the leader into perpetual untested arenas and, as Peter Senge defines it so well, it means that to be a leader is to be ignorant and incompetent because by definition no one can already be competent at something that is changing. Anxiety is again an inevitable consequence.
- The complexity and demands of coping with and driving the combined elements of the practice of leadership means that no individual or even the strongest team of leaders can hope to be mastering all challenges all of the time. Just as every athlete of distinction will admit, the task of fulfilling exceptional demands creates anxiety.

Koestenbaum offers these radically different and also more realistic perspectives on anxiety (Polly LaBarre, FC issue 32, March 2000):

**Anxiety generates knowledge.** "As Kierkegaard explains it, anxiety is the natural condition. It's a cognitive emotion that reveals truths that we would prefer to hide but that we need for our greater health. In an essay called ‘The Concept of Dread,' Kierkegaard draws a connection between anxiety and free will. We cannot prove that free will is true -- because we freely choose the meaning of truth in the first place. But our anxiety tips us off to the existence of our freedom: It reminds us of our huge responsibility to choose who we are and to define our world."

**Anxiety leads to action.** "Kierkegaard wrote that the most common form of despair occurs when one does not choose or 'will' to be oneself — when a person is 'another than himself.'
"It takes a village of leaders...."

The opposite of despair is 'to will to be that self which one truly is.' That's the experience of anxiety. It is choosing life in the face of death; it is the experience of thought becoming action, reflection becoming behaviour, and theory becoming practice. Anxiety is pure energy."

Anxiety makes you a grown-up. "Anxiety is the experience of growth itself. In any endeavour, how do you feel when you go from one stage to the next? The answer: You feel anxious. Anxiety that is denied makes us ill; anxiety that is fully confronted and fully lived through converts itself into joy, security, strength, centeredness, and character. The practical formula: Go where the pain is."

Viewed from this perspective anxiety is an essential force for creativity and exercising one’s power and influence. It lies at the root of acknowledging that every decision contains within it the possibilities of success and failure both of which are equally real. Celebrating anxiety as a pure and essential human reality is the humble acknowledgement that we are not “in control of destiny” This poses four challenges which turn embracing anxiety into an essential virtue of leadership:

i. Individuals need to accept and honour their personal anxiety as essential to being creative and coping with change.

ii. Individuals and teams need to acknowledge anxiety as being both inevitable and in fact a positive force that encourages self and others to review perspectives and put checks and balances in place to address the leadership challenges.

iii. It requires the creation of an environment where people feel free to voice their anxiety without fear of being ridiculed or viewed as not coping.

iv. It means that leaders need to accept that they will often find themselves in situations that are unfamiliar to them and require them to confront and work with their ignorance and incompetence as a crucial facet of leadership.

Generative Power

In an interview with Prof. Harry Schroder who studied high performance leadership for more than 20 years at Princeton University, he stated, “Leadership is about making positive and productive things happen, and if there is an absence or shortage of this, or if no constructive change occurs then there is no leadership!” Exercising influence and power that is generative as opposed to destructive is synonymous with leadership. Every one of the elements of the practice of leadership is entirely dependent on leaders who take up their generative power and make sure the practice of leadership is in place and contributes to the sustainable performance of self, others, the organisation and society as a whole. This requires the fulfilment of eight facets of power to turn it into an essential virtue of leadership:

i. Openly expect self and others to own their own voice and exercise their personal rank and power in ways that contribute to the common good and drive sustainable performance.

ii. Encourage the divergence of views and invite dissent to ensure that the diverse perspectives of people are heard and can contribute to better decision making and action.
"It takes a village of leaders...."

iii. Once decisions have been made actively "hunt for the no" which encourages others to state why they may still have reservations or feel there are still other elements to consider.

iv. Practise and insist on "loyal dissent" which amounts to people feeling free and empowered to engage in robust discussion and disagreement. Once a decision has been made they need to put their differences aside and give one another the undiluted support that is required to drive optimum execution.

v. Ensure a consistent balance between inquiry and advocacy which can only be achieved if people exercise deep listening and exploring skills as opposed to obstinate disagreement.

vi. Acknowledge that reflection does not slow things down but in fact mostly speeds up processes and makes decisions more enduring.

vii. Hold and exercise essential values of democracy such as valuing diverse perspectives; exercise as much inquiry as advocacy; understand and encourage loyal dissent; value multiculturalism; view inclusivity of diverse stakeholders and interests as non-negotiable; and require engagement with all stakeholders and parties with vested interests and contributions as essential.

viii. Exercise the generative power that alone is capable of ensuring the optimum execution of work and achievement of objectives which secures the organisation’s sustainable wellbeing.

**Relentless Love**

Mention the word love and that it has to be a core element of leadership and organisational success, and one can almost see some managers cringe, others shaking their heads, and yet others developing a cynical sneer as they conclude that they now no longer need to take the speaker seriously. Yet there is a powerful and growing body of evidence that love is increasingly an essential ingredient of sustainable success.

This is not the romantic love of Hollywood movies or the often soppy sentimentality of a Barbara Cartland novel. It is the embodiment of what Gary Hamel describes in *Moonshots for Management* (HBR, Feb 2009) when he states, “Management pioneers must find ways to infuse business activities with deeper, soul-stirring ideals such as honour, truth, love, justice and beauty.” He goes further to say, “Companies must create communities of passion by allowing individuals to find a higher calling within their work lives......The aim of management is to make every organisation as human as the people who work there.”

In their eye-opening and almost prescient research, Rajendra, Sisodia, Wolfe and Jagdish show that what they call “Firms of Endearment” outperform others by orders of magnitude. (Firms of Endearment, 2007.) This includes comparisons with Jim Collins’s famous “great” companies in his best selling *Good to Great*. In *Firms of Endearment* (FoE) the authors state, “Firms of endearment are companies people love doing business with, love partnering with, love working for, love investing in.” They demonstrate that “It is no longer share of wallet but share of heart that counts.” The comparative of performance of the firms who believe that their purpose is to create wellbeing for all stakeholders versus others is startling. As illustrated below, these organisations outperform all others by several multiples over periods of five to ten years. Their study of super performing companies leads them to conclude, “Heart is not a word often heard in business school. But heart — a symbol of
“It takes a village of leaders....”

empathy, nurturing, caring, giving — has recently made a quantum leap and landed in the middle of mainstream business consciousness. The problem is that many Wall Street analysts have not caught on to the idea that there is much profit to be gained by bringing love into business operations.”

The authors summarise the essence of these companies: “Soulfulness is a hallmark of FoE companies. It is a distinctive component of culture in the Age of Transcendence that is reflected by an upsurge of interest in spirituality.”

The virtue of love is perhaps THE meta value and virtue that needs to drive high performance leadership of the future. It is not about sentimentality or being soft on poor performance. It is about creating organisations that are fit and friendly for human life and all of global existence. This cannot be achieved by organisations that are unprofitable, commercially unviable, reliant on fraud and malpractices, or prove incapable of delivering services and products in ways that create and keep more customers.

The virtue of love in this sense forms the central principle of ensuring the capability to be sustainably competitive, innovative and to contributing to the upliftment of all stakeholders and society as a whole. This is a powerful commercial and economic purpose. In systems of government it drives the capacity to uplift poverty, create conducive policies, and deliver services in a competent and sustainable manner.

Leaders achieve the virtue of love in practice when they fulfil these six commitments:
- Being present in the here and now and engaging with others in ways that are not distracted.
- The capacity to see and be seen; to hear and be heard. This ensures that there is a culture of truly valuing one another and being valued.
- Being able to speak the unspeakable in the interests of openness and honesty which enables all participants to address issues in ways that are constructive.
“It takes a village of leaders....”

- Valuing “different truths” and acknowledging that even when one is in total disagreement with others, it is necessary to explore and find the “1% truth” that lies within the perspective of the other.
- Love is being capable of “hating what they stand for and never hating them.” It is the tenacious capacity to fundamentally disagree in ways that do not undermine the self esteem of someone else.
- Finally, love does not demand the need to like and enjoy everyone. It is possible to say to someone, “You are not my friend, but I still can love you.”

The Integrative Dynamics in the Infinity Triangle of Anxiety, Power and Love

These three virtues of sustainable high performance leadership form an “infinity triangle” in which the absence of any one of the virtues destroys the presence of the others. As indicated earlier, the three virtues flow endlessly into and from one another. The observation of and work with dozens of executive teams, and increasingly leaders at every level, makes it clear that when the three virtues form the core of leadership the following dynamics and forces emerge:

- When someone experiences anxiety and instead of suppressing it, speaks about it, then in the vast majority of instances others start to listen and this will often enable the anxiety to recede.
- As people join in listening to stories of anxiety or speaking about it they release their anxiety and allow it to flow into the support and power of community created by others.
- Power, love and creativity flow into this human space and give birth to the courage and support through which it becomes possible to more successfully meet the challenges of leadership.

This integral dynamic is described so beautifully by Rudyard Kipling: The strength of the wolf is in the pack; and the strength of the pack is in the wolf.

As we enter into this space we know that:
- Anxiety without love is isolating and terribly lonely.
- Anxiety without power is the curse of victimhood.
- Power without love is oppressive and brutal.
- Power without anxiety is manipulative and sociopathic.
- Love without power is anaemic and sentimental.
- Love without anxiety is denial of reality.

Sustainable High Impact Leadership and Teaming becomes a reality when individuals and teams build their capability to visualise and exercise leadership that embodies “The Practice and Virtues of Leadership” as one integral state of being and action:
“It takes a village of leaders....”