An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within:

3 Keys to Transforming Your Potential

Gene Early

Noble News and Books

Harrisonburg, Virginia

Commendations for Gene's Work

"Gene was instrumental in setting up the cultural attributes of Genomic Health and adherence to the corporate values—of a truth-seeking, people oriented, high-performance culture. Gene was a joy to work with. He exudes enthusiasm, is outgoing and people oriented."

Randy Scott

Co-Founder, former CEO, and Executive Chairman of Genomic Health

"So much changed during our nine years together, internally and externally. For so many of those changes [Gene was] the catalyst for addressing the chilling reality and moving toward new life. His fingerprints were evident in who we became."

David Boyd, Former Chancellor of the University of the Nations-Kona (Hawaii)

"Gene is . . . the best person I know at getting to the heart of what really matters."

Lindsay Levin, Founder and Managing Partner of Leaders' Quest

"Gene could see me for who I could be and he held that space for me over time . . . and still does. His belief in me put me on a route to realizing the rewarding life and business that I have today. It was as if all the masquerades and masks that I had constructed over the years were invisible in his presence. I learned from Gene how to work with people, not just by giving them new behaviors and techniques but by tapping into the essence of who they are and their purpose in life. That was and still is profound for me."

Sue Knight, International NLP Trainer, best selling author of *NLP at Work*

"Gene lives the principles, which substantiates my contention that organizations are a reflection of their leadership in terms of language, behavior, and attitudes."

Sue Cheshire, Co-founder and MD of Global Leadership Academy

Former MD of The Academy of Chief Executives

"Gene, one of the most dedicated truth-seekers I know, boldly brought the new Genetic Alliance into being, creating its culture by boosting us forward into truth."

Sharon Terry, CEO of Genetic Alliance

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Dedication

To Benedicte

Table of Contents

Who Is This Guy?

A Quick Orientation

I am a theory-into-practice kind of guy. I look to translate concepts into everyday actions to make a difference in people's lives. Focusing on "transformation" is one of those concepts.

Add to this my absolute delight in having lived in many different cultures—American, Danish, Singaporean, Polynesian, and British—and you get someone fascinated with how different people, especially leaders, move from a world view into action.

In addition to this ebook series, I offer developmental programs for senior leaders in the organizational world (*The CEO Accelerator*), for experienced coaches (*Impact Maximizer*), and for motivated individuals.

You can read my full biography in the *About the Author* section at the end of this ebook.

Now, let's buckle up and take off on our journey of transformation. Read on!

Arrival: The Aha's of Transformation

So often I have thought, "Once I do this, I will have arrived." In the metaphor of *arrival* I bore the hope that my inner goal would be reached. I often reached *a* goal but not *the* goal. Then I came upon the picture of a spiral. Reaching *a* goal is a point on the spiral. I see the spiral moving upward, extending outward, and becoming larger. The spiral is vibrant, alive.

I now know that I will arrive again at a point on the spiral, only this time I will have moved one level higher. At this level, I will have greater insight, more awareness, and, in the end, hard-earned wisdom. However, this is not the final destination, for I keep moving around the spiral.

An example might help make it clear. As a young boy I often felt that my voice got lost in the drumbeat of daily life. I wanted to stand out, to be seen, and to make a difference. In some ways I'm sure I did. Yet, my belief that I didn't have a voice kept me from seeing the impact that I did have. That erroneous belief had more power over me than the reality of whether I did or didn't have a voice.

So, I decided, more at a feeling level than a thinking level, that I wanted to have a voice, make an impact, be a cause for good. It led me to perform well, but it didn't change my belief. In school, top grades gave me a place with younger kids who did great under my tutoring. Excelling in high school basketball made me a role model for junior high players. Leading my church youth group also brought influence, but its extent was veiled to me.

In college and as a young professional, there were many times when I met my goals. I *arrived*. Or so I thought. After the first flush of success, however, I knew that my belief hadn't changed. I kept moving on my spiral for many years until one day I had the stunning *aha* moment. While reviewing my career in preparing a resume for a new job, I realized that I did have a voice. My training seminars made a demonstrable difference in participants' lives. I did influence those around me. Family and friends

asked for and followed my advice. My belief and therefore my filter changed. What a relief!

The good news for me in that was that I had also learned along the way that the spiral would keep rising. As I moved up, out, and around it, I would find new ways in which to make my voice heard. And I could expect many more arrivals at the *aha* point. Each new *aha* built my confidence about the difference I could make.

This original breakthrough brought me to another new insight. *Arrival*, reaching a particular goal, is not a final stop. It is a way station on the journey of life. With this awareness, I found that feelings of disappointment, fear, and failure that I had previously associated with *arrival* no longer had the same power over me. They had been transformed into anticipation (of the next move around the spiral), excitement (about the new experience that would come), and feedback (of how reaching this point would support my going even further).

In this series, *An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within*, I invite you to think about your journey. Focus on your own "trips around the spiral." This series offers a set of principles and practices that empower you as a person to make a difference in the world. It may be in your present role(s). It may be in a future role, including that of CEO.

The series has two main audiences, one broad and one narrow. The broad one is leaders who are open to making an even greater difference in the world. I am addressing the *CEO within* each of us. This part of us is our own secret executive. It is the part that carries vision for our lives, creates success strategies for ourselves and others we influence, and then produces tangible outcomes from that vision and those strategies.

By starting from this premise of the *CEO within*, we soon see the responsibility we each have for our own lives. With that, we face the choice of how we show up and how our lives unfold. I realize not everyone wants to assume such a role. Only you who do will benefit from this book series and the programs I offer. I know from my

work with many people and organizations that choosing this path does enable you to travel your own spiral with greater intention. You will arrive at your *aha* points sooner. And you will produce more profound answers to the questions that matter to you and those you touch.

The narrow audience is for those high-potential senior leaders looking to take on the title of CEO within the next three to five years. The *CEO Accelerator* program I offer is designed to open your minds and hearts to strengths you can use to speed and deepen your journey toward this role. It also offers a view of gaps in the resources you have and will need to succeed as a future CEO. It provides support for bridging these gaps, whether they are in self-awareness, productivity, or influence.

I invite you to read, engage, and apply. As you do, watch how you transform your way of thinking, feeling, and viewing the world. Focus on how you transform yourself and, as a result, how you transform the world around you.

In this book, *An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within: 3 Keys to Transforming Your Potential,* you are invited to an overview of transforming yourself in order to transform your world. The key premise is that we do this by starting with ourselves. When we transform our inner world, we see ourselves *and* the outer world with new eyes. We see others not as they see themselves but as the people they are capable of becoming. We see the challenges of our day as a call to give our best to the world in order that we all might flourish.

As you read on, keep in mind what is possible. Think about what you are capable of being *and* who you are becoming. Furthermore, consider how the *future you*, which is the *transformed you from the present*, can be lived in the present. In the next chapter you'll be able to reflect on what it means to transform, so let's go there to keep moving up, out, and around our spirals.

Chapter One

What Is Transformation and Why Is It Important to You?

Can you recall a time when you were stuck? It might be right now. Or you might think of a time you needed to decide on a way forward and didn't know which way to go. It could have been to do with a new job, a friendship that you were unsure about, or deciding between the chance to travel and opportunities if you remained at home.

Being stuck is certain to affect you on all levels of your life, even if you attempt to ignore, deny, or avoid it. As a coach, team leader, or chairperson of a board, you know what it is to be stuck. A common answer is to go external, take a new course, and hope you'll find a way past your present state. Or you might ask a mentor for advice on how to engage other team members. Or you might wake up the night before a key meeting worrying about how to steer the discussion.

Organizations are composed of people who bring themselves to work with all their gifts and talents as well as all their own baggage. As a result it's very easy for them, for all of us, to get stuck. This is even more true when the leader gets stuck. It may seem that changes in the market, competitors' new plans, or lagging sales are the cause. And they do play a part. Yet, there may be other reasons. One of these is the leader's limiting belief, which produces limiting behavior patterns within the leader as well as throughout the organization.

In this series, I suggest that transformation best answers the question, "How do we get unstuck?" In the next few pages, I will define what I mean by the concept. I'll give you some live examples from the work that I do. And I'll exhort you to think about how you can transform yourself as well as help others do the same.

A Case Study

Before I define this concept of transformation, let me give you a simple case study. A friend asked me to speak with his friend who was newly appointed as chair of a non-profit board. This new chair was clearly talented. She had been on the board for four

years and now at the age of 26 was being asked to chair it. I quickly knew why. She demonstrated strong leadership insights, knowledge, and skills.

Yet, as we spoke, I could hear she was stuck. She liked her board's talent and the strength of the new executive team that was in place. Her biggest concern was that they needed to update their plans going forward. She asked me to help her focus. She invited me to assist an entire organization in planning and acting on their future. The process we engaged in was rather lengthy so I'll just give you one of the highlights.

Her first breakthrough came when I offered a simple way to look at what she was facing. I said, "What you see is an expression of yourself as the leader. And, what is within you *is present* and *will* express itself in the organization. "

Her response was:

> It seems very powerful in its simplicity in terms of
> unifying many disparate issues and returning them to
> what I have direct control over, which is me. It raises a
> lot of questions as to the best way to think about what
> are the behavior/thought patterns in me that I could
> improve the most to have an effect on the organization.

Exactly! I asked, "What is the single most significant, leverageable issue you face as chair? "

She said, "Putting in strong strategic planning processes." In her own thinking, she felt she had a good process that was appearing to work with the board. She did, however, have some doubts about the degree to which her CEO was taking her seriously as a leader because of her age.

I began working with her to change her mental picture of herself as well as her picture of the key players she works with. As William James wrote more than a century ago, "The greatest discovery of my age is that [people] can change their circumstances by changing the attitude of their mind."

To change her mental images, we worked with two parts of her inner world. One was the part that was really good at planning. The other was the part that resisted being successful at that planning. She said:

> It sounds like the recommendation is to focus on developing a deeper recognition of this framework. That it's what is internal to me that manifests in the organization, and being able to recognize and remove whatever resistance there is within me. And that's the key first step before I can develop the plan.

And that's what we did. The chief change of mindset was how she perceived herself as a young person relating to her older CEO. She could feel how she was resisting due to her fear that her CEO would judge her based on her age and lack of experience. She also felt that others in the board and executive team perceived her age as an issue affecting her legitimacy as a leader and her authority. All these viewpoints drained her confidence to know how and where she wanted to lead.

Realizing that she had control over *her own view* of herself and others was a big step in helping her get un-stuck, and led to changing her view. As she said:

> This is incredibly helpful. This is a framework I can really use for the rest of my life, as long as I'm leading anything.

We'll come back to this story to see how it unfolds. But for the moment, I want to share with you how I define transformation. This concept shapes the whole of my work. I trust that if it speaks to you and you embrace it, you will get faster results, create more meaningful change, and generate more *aha's* for yourself and for others.

Defining Transformation

I've thought about this concept for a long time. It wasn't until my friend, Charlie Grantham, and his colleague, Jim Ware, put words to it that I got my *aha.* They wrote:

> Transformation is an irreversible, substantive change in identity that shifts our purpose to a higher level.

Wow, I thought, "What a mouthful!" It is filled with meaning for me. As I thought about it, I began to realize that it put so many things in order. So I began to unpack it.

> Irreversible: cannot be returned to its previous state

> Substantive: meaningful because of its basis in reality

> Change: an alteration from a previous state or condition

> Identity: essence or key aspect of an entity

> Purpose: reason for which something exists or is done

Most people when they think of the "change they want to see" don't go right to the "change they need to be." And yet, to be one who creates transformation, you have to commit to your own transformation. In effect, moving from stuck to unstuck is evidence of being such a person.

It is possible to accidentally transform a context, an event, or a person. Circumstances themselves can be transforming. It is also possible to transform such things with your intention. But to consistently be transforming, you must be being transformed yourself. The transforming self *is* the engine for the transformation of others.

Being a source for transforming others and your world is what this series of books is about. I hope it will inspire, encourage, and equip you to take your own growth to a new level even while you do the same for others. The next chapters will focus on how you might think about transforming yourself and others.

Application: Moving from stuck to unstuck

1. Think of a situation in which you find yourself stuck now. Review it thoroughly in your mind's eye.

2. Identify someone you know personally or through some form of media. Pick one who has the perspective *and* behavior that you wish you had in your stuck situation.

3. Ask yourself, "Where in my life have I been like this exemplar?" Identify a context where you have had that perspective and behavior that you see in this other person. This is your resource state for getting unstuck.

4. Now, allow yourself to access the feelings and mindset from that resource state. Breathe deeply as you review how you felt, thought, and acted in that context.

5. Finally, recall your present stuck situation using these feelings, thoughts, and images of acting from your resource state. Pay attention to the difference now and when you first thought about the stuck situation.

6. If you need to, recall other resource contexts and integrate them into your present state as you recall what was your stuck state.

7. Find an opportunity to act on this new resource state and test out the changes.

Chapter Two

Personal Transformation

In this series of books, we're looking at the structure of transformation from a number of angles. The examples are given to engage you with the topic, prepare you to transform, and equip you to transform the lives of others.

Part of the journey to true transformation is a shift in perspective. Simply turning the familiar around and looking at it from a different angle or position often can free our thought processes and show us new aspects of ourselves or a situation, which can change everything. One great example of such a shift in perspective comes from our world's exploration of outer space.

The magic of space travel first focused the world's vision in 1957, the year the Russians launched Sputnik. It was the very first satellite sent into space. That event marked the public start of the race to space.

The United States then began its Project Mercury to put a man in orbit around the Earth. It was followed by John F. Kennedy's challenge to reach the moon and return safely within a decade. That goal was reached with Apollo 11 in 1969. More importantly it became a symbol of doing what seemed beyond reach.

We've come a long way since Sputnik, Project Mercury, and the Apollo program. My own fascination with space travel offers me a metaphor when I think about transforming. R. Buckminster Fuller, a creative genius from the 20th century, used the image of our planet as Spaceship Earth. The image creates mental space for me to think of myself as a type of astronaut living here on Earth.

More recently, I saw a video that formed the concept for me in the context of my work. It's called *The Overview Effect*, a term coined by the author Frank White.[1] Its awesome footage shows the earth as seen from space. A number of people, including astronauts, speak with passion of how they and their lives were transformed by seeing our Earth hanging in the darkness of outer space.

William Anders, pilot of the Apollo 8 lunar module, describes it well:

> I think it was the Earthrise that really kind of got everyone
> in the solar plexus. We were looking back at our planet, the
> place where we evolved. Our Earth was quite colorful,
> pretty, and delicate compared to the very rough, rugged,
> beat-up, even boring lunar surface. I think it struck
> everybody that here we'd come 240,000 miles to see the
> Moon and it was the Earth that was really worth looking at.

Although this is a somewhat extreme example, it makes the point. Never again could these astronauts think about themselves, our Earth, and all that occurs on it in the same way. This new view of Earth also produced a mental shift for so many who have seen the photos and videos.

The metaphor of space travel also gives another perspective of who we can be. At times I see myself as a rocket, powering off the launch platform, carrying a payload into space where the *overview effect* will occur. In this case, however, it is not outer space we're entering, but inner space. And the astronauts are my clients who have signed up for the ride of their lives. When we escape the gravitational pull of limiting beliefs, cultural constraints, and fixed attitudes, we do reach the *overview effect*.

In this chapter, we'll focus on how a person transforms. There are many ways one can do that. The *overview effect* reveals a massive shift of worldview. Yet, one can also approach it with smaller shifts that over time lead to that "irreversible, substantive change in identity that shifts our purpose to a higher level."

Transform Your Mindset Regarding Identity

In order for you to transform, you must shift how you see yourself—i.e., shift your mindset regarding your identity. In this chapter, I'll begin to address the structure of identity. In another book in this series, I'll go into this topic in much greater depth.

A premise of my work with people—whether CEOs or grass roots leaders, coaches or consultants, teachers or parents—is that each person affects the systems of which they are a part. That system could be an organization, a team, a classroom, or a family. So, since each person's life has such far-reaching influences, personal transformation is the starting point.

A quick way to think about the effect of transformation is to look at the roles you play. When you change yourself, you change how you think about and act toward others. That in turn affects their expectations of you.

It is these expectations from others that help define your role identity along with your place in the social context. Some pretty fixed roles can be found in the family—that of a son or daughter, sister or brother, mother or father. Then there are more fluid roles the further you go into the extended family.

In this realm, making a lifelong pledge when you marry provides a shift in role identity. If you yourself have committed in this way, or know others who have, you know what it involves. For two to become one, both have to shift their sense of self. Sacrifices are gladly made (although sometimes not so gladly). Change is assured as the two adapt to one another. These changes are part of the shift from being single to being married.

In the same domain, another profound shift occurs when a couple has a child, especially their first child. If you have had this happen in your life, simply reflect on holding your newborn in your arms for the very first time. You are no longer the same person. And as you age a bit, you could become a grandparent. If so, it will shift your view of yourself once again.

These shifts appear to have been *brought* to you. And yet, they also are choices about who you are and how you want to show up in the world. They set up what you will do and won't do differently as a result of the shifts. And they dictate how others see and relate to you.

As an example, I worked with a senior executive who had seen real success in his career. Others looked to him as a model of leadership. Yet, as with so many of us, he knew he was damaging himself with some of the beliefs that he held. He came to me with a problem relating to his CEO. My client had taken a stand in a meeting, and the CEO had cut him off in mid-sentence. It was the straw that could have broken the camel's back, as this was one of many times the CEO had acted like this.

My client said:

> I know marketing. I believe my boss is on a power trip to prove he's the kingpin. Worse than that, when he does this I know I revert to an old pattern. I feel shut down, numb, powerless, and hopeless with nowhere to go. Because of those feelings and my inner voices, I am now scared of engaging. I know it has affected my work, and I'm concerned for my future.

Clearly my client had enough awareness to know that the real issue was not his boss's reaction, but rather his own inner process. He was replaying an old pattern. The good news is that such patterns can be changed with the right approach. When they are, everything around the person changes. In these cases, I like to go for the identity shift that includes belief change, new perspectives, and overt actions.

The first thing I did was to help him find a reference. I asked him to bring up a time when he managed a conflict with a boss and, by remaining centered and true to himself, he made his voice heard. When he found that memory he said:

> You know, I realize that I'm not hearing my inner voice. I would expect it to be going, 'It's not fair. You're not even listening to me!' I'm actually paying attention to the feeling that I really do know what I'm doing, and that I can press on through the concerns. It is making a ton of difference.

We used this reference and inner state to challenge the "powerless/hopeless" state.

As he brought the reference state of success into his stuck state, he felt a profound shift. He commented:

> It was as if this tiny, scared little boy became Superman. Not that I'm Superman, but I felt a surge of confidence. I felt myself getting bigger on the inside. It is like I filled out my body to the full extent of what it should be rather than this other scrunched up person who I don't even really recognize but I know was part of me.

As a result of his work he confirmed that the issue was not his CEO. His reaction of shutting down came from the old pattern, not from his confident self. As he later reported, the CEO didn't change his behavior much, but my client changed his reactions:

> I began to enjoy my work again and kind of just held my CEO at bay. I know that I won't be in this job that long simply because I'm excited about looking at two other options. I know, though, that if I hadn't done this inner work, leaving the job would not have been an answer.

Reflection

In this case he shifted identity from being scared and scrunched up to being a resilient player. He discovered how to overcome his own self-imposed limits. Doing this work rippled out. His courage has grown and he's taken on new challenges. He has broadened his range of activities, including a new non-executive board seat, and a new role in a strong nonprofit organization.

In my language, he transformed his internal representation of himself, which now includes what he believes about who he is (i.e., the identity level shift he made), how he thinks about the way he relates to authority figures, how he feels when triggered by events that would challenge his new identity, and the new actions he expresses. His

transformation began with his mindset and reached into all aspects of his life. It was well worth the effort.

Our next topic builds on this one. We will look at relationships and how you transform them. As we increase the number of people involved, it is clear that this task becomes more complex. Yet, we will also see how to make it simple to improve your relationships.

Application: Making an Identity Shift

1. Recall a series of situations that are emotionally charged for you, some positive and some negative. Write them down. Leave some space for elaboration.

2. Under each situation, write out the phrase, "I am . . ." and describe yourself in that situation. For example, for the positives, you could say, "I am resourceful, efficient, productive, etc." For the negatives, it could be, "I am lazy, self-centered, negative, etc."

3. Pick one of the positives and use it to access the memory and feelings associated with it as a resource state. Pick one of the negatives as well.

4. Allow yourself to be fully present in your resource state and recall one or more situations where you have previously been in your negative state.

5. Use your positive resource state to change how you feel, think, and act in the memory of your negative state.

6. Once you have done this successfully, make the statement, "I am __ (fill in the blank with the name of your resource state)." Allow yourself to fully feel and embrace the reality of this as a statement of who you are.

7. When this moves from statement to a congruent declaration, you will find that you subconsciously generate behaviors consistent with this identity in a variety of contexts.

Chapter Three

Interpersonal Transformation

Transforming yourself at the identity level has a strong effect on how you view yourself, others, and your world. When you learn how to transform yourself, you start to explore. It's like going into outer space and seeing an Earthrise, not a sunrise. Only it's inner space and the revelation is the beauty of who you are meant to be. The image imprints itself on your mind. Your transformation moves you to new levels of awareness and action.

A next logical step on this progression involves transforming in relation to others. In this context, it might seem you don't have as much control as you do when it's only you who have to change. And yet, we live in relationship and need to evolve our change skills in relation to others. In this chapter, we will explore the question "What does it mean to transform interpersonally, and how do we bring it about?"

I was speaking with a good friend today who was expressing surprise at a recent interaction. She has a peer who seems to be very unsure of himself. He often self-promotes, acting as if he has to be the "one who knows." This stance turns off my friend. The trouble is that my friend has to work with this person on the same project team.

She had spun her wheels trying to figure out how to avoid working with this person. Finding that she couldn't, she realized she had to deal with herself. She had to face her own dislike of his mode of interaction. It took her a month of focused inner work to address her own feelings and reactions to his behavior. At the end of that time, she said, "I can't even bring up those old feelings about him." Also, he and she have become a forceful engine driving the project team. Their shared esteem for one another has increased, trust levels have gone up, and they have modeled how to work together for the team.

She expresses real wonder at the changes. Other team members are saying they see the change in this person's attitude toward her. She and they can feel the marked warmth that now exists between the two of them. This, too, is profound, similar to the *overview effect*. Thinking about your own inner work, you will know the truth shown in this story. When you transform, you're changing not only yourself, but also the systems of which you are a part. The change includes others' actions and attitudes toward you.

Is Changing Yourself the Only Way to Transform a Relationship?

When you transform, you restructure the core of a system. Ecosystem change reveals this through outward changes. Take, for example, a polluted river system. You may transform it through focused action to remove pollutants, bring in life-giving organisms, and take measures for future prevention. In people systems, restructuring your inner world and helping others do the same on a smaller scale is the basis for transforming larger people systems. There are a number of ways to approach such intent. In this chapter we'll look at some of them.

Vision and Process

Attachment theory suggests that the nature of how you relate to others is founded on strong bonds.[2] These bonds most often begin in childhood with early caregivers. They can also be set up through bonding in later years with others who come to play an important role in a person's life.

In working with couples in distress, Sue Johnson and others have shown how to relieve that distress.[3] It comes through the power of having a vision of what's possible along with the means to restore what has been broken. For her, any couple that applies the principles and practices of her work, Emotionally Focused Therapy, can restore a bond.

Before a person, a couple, or a small group can succeed at transforming, those involved must see that it is possible. The examples that Johnson provides in her work,

which show the success of moving from being fractured to being whole, offer the hope that comes from developing such a vision.

Yet, you need more than vision and hope. There must also be a process for moving from the present state to the desired state. The case of couples is an example of how you can transform relationships. Johnson has helped couples find success time and again by leading them to access one or more betrayal events in their relationship. While it's often not conscious, such an event breaks trust at a deep level. As the couples re-access the event and work through it, they form the deep bonds that can transform their relationship.

We can apply this process to all we do, whether it's at work or in our personal lives. In effect, we are daily able to heal our own fractured relationships as well as join others as they heal theirs.

Not long ago I was working with a member of the executive team of a mid-sized firm. He is highly skilled technically. He's also had success as a manager in two other companies. Yet, in a new job, he was struggling to find where he fit in the system. He became confused by the new system he had entered. It didn't work as the others did. It was clear he needed to align himself with himself in order to bring his full strength to the team and the firm.

In our work, we found that he saw himself in terms of his technical gifts. Yet it was his management skill that had caused him to move to this company in the first place. Owning this insight became a platform on which we could build. As he said, "I can do the technical piece with my eyes closed. I know I could offer this as a growth challenge to others. I was unclear [i.e., didn't have a vision] about where I fit in the larger scheme of things."

As we spoke, he saw that his skills of inclusion, connecting people, and building teams excited him. As a result, he shifted the job description to stress his management talent. Within days, he reached out to his peers on the executive team and began using those strengths. While he didn't make big claims for the change, as he got a clearer vision

for his role he affected the whole team in good ways. So vision, combined with a process for rightly placing himself in the larger system, changed his view of himself and how he related with other team members as well as the system itself.

Basic Negotiations

Many people, maybe including you, have been exposed to negotiation training and skills. The basic idea is to begin with a win-win approach. The first step in the process is finding some form of agreeing to agree prior to any attempt to solve the problem at hand. When I was Vice Chancellor of Operations at the University of the Nations-Kona in Hawaii, I brought what William Ury calls "the third side" into some major organizational conflict. Ury says that the third side is "the *us* who act as a surrounding community around any conflict [in order to] play a constructive role."[4] In Hawaii, there is a communal process called Hoʻoponopono. Translated it means "setting things right." It is used to restore broken relationships. We used this process to include our "third side" in resolving the conflict.

A Hawaiian elder led our Hoʻoponopono. Everyone impacted by our executive decision met to set things right. We took a look at the event that seemed to precipitate our difficulties: Our executive team had decided to relocate courses from two outlying centers on the Big Island to our central campus. This challenged the status quo and had caused a rupture among key leaders. Our Hoʻoponopono process surfaced multiple levels of concern with all those involved. It also gave space for each voice to be heard.

As Ury says:

> The third side reminds the parties of what's really at stake...
> The third side helps us go to the balcony, a place of
> perspective to keep our eyes on the prize.

And that is what we did. We, the community, focused on what mattered for the whole, honored those most directly impacted, and created a platform for reconciliation. All who gathered shared an underlying assumption that we needed to find a common way forward.

On a more personal basis, I was once asked by a newly appointed CEO of a global conglomerate to aid in a conflict resolution between two of his divisional CEOs. These two had been strongly at odds. One of them had been tasked with bringing a performance correction plan to the other. In this case, the global CEO held the space for the "third side," the larger need for civility and communication between units. He asked me to host the equivalent of a Hoʻoponopono with these two others.

Even though there were only three of us in our meetings, we were aware of the CEO's support and the larger community surrounding us. We three created a deep and lasting result. Each heard the other. Each felt the enormous pressure that had been present. One of the men spoke of anger issues that showed up in his leadership. He talked of his need to look at himself with an eye toward proactively dealing with these issues.

The other man spoke of having the task of disciplining a peer. When they got past the content issues that had provoked blame, they saw each other as people, not perfect but having good intent. The one who had been the focal point of discipline became an advocate within the global Executive Committee for his colleague. The two met each other, commended one another to others, and gave cross-functional support, something that never would have happened in the past.

This outcome happened because of a context in which agreeing-to-agree formed the basis of the social contract. This context was set up by the global CEO, honored by the two who were in conflict, and maintained through my presence "in the balcony."

Rising Up to a New Level

Good relationships can be transformed into great ones. It may seem risky to do so. It may take courage, truth telling, and vulnerability. But, despite the risks, it is worth doing. I can validate the value I've had and also seen with others. In a former season of my career, I consulted for a nonprofit organization. I worked with the board to bring in a new CEO. And I worked with the new CEO and staff to create an open culture. In the course of that work, I became good friends with the board members.

I was challenged to rise up to a new level in one memorable board meeting. The board asked me to consider joining as a member. I resisted this offer because of a concern about the inside/outside dynamic. Could I still be effective if I were also part of the board itself? At one point a board member who knew me well said, "What is the real reason you are saying no? Is there something you are afraid of?"

It was a deer in the headlights moment for me. I had been seen and knew I could not escape answering the keen question. Fortunately, I knew I could honor the manner in which the board member asked the question and answer it clearly. I recall saying:

> At one level, I see what I can bring as an outsider that I can't as an insider. But, that's not the real issue. The real issue for me is whether I can allow myself to be as vulnerable with you guys as I am asking you to be with each other. You have given me a profound challenge to rise up and be who I have asked each of you to be.

At that point, my friend spoke, "If that is true, where do we go from here?"

I said:

> I still don't think it is right to be a board member at this stage. Although I do know that if we can find some other role than either board member or consultant, I would very much value joining you. For me that would mean relating from a fully engaged state where I was a participant and not an onlooker.

My friend who raised the issue and the other board members all knew what I meant. They were asking me to make the move. We found a third context in which we could relate where I was a fully engaged. We created a type of think tank. There we combined our cognitive and emotional intelligences to grow, both personally and organizationally. We functioned in this think tank context for over four years.

This time gave me some of the most formative learning of my entire career, all of which came from one person's request that saw the benefits of deep relationship. This experience transformed me by requiring me to be open to my peers in a way I had never done before. In that sense this experience bridged the personal and professional divide.

I now realize I committed to be fully integrated in how I show up in the world. Because I decided to be present with my friends and allies, we took many deep dives that led to transforming the organization. Even though the intent of the think tank was to engage deeply with tough issues that touched us personally, our content moved us forward as an organization. It grew exponentially in budget, network reach, and social-cultural influence.

As I allowed myself to make the shift, I also saw my allies making profound shifts. These shifts occurred in their perception, their talent of opening and holding space for others, and their impact through presence as well as performance. For me, then, the proof of how we transformed was how we all embraced change that persists until today.

Reflection

In this chapter I've shared three approaches to interpersonal transformation—the union of vision and process, basic negotiation, and rising up to a new level. The essence of each is that those people involved need to come to a shared map of reality. Once that occurs, one who is transforming has escaped the gravitational pull of wounded egos, dogged resistance, and fear of exposure. It means that the people involved agree that the common goal is greater than their own issues.

In the next chapter, we'll go one stage further by looking at organizational transformation. As you may have noticed, aligned transformation is what we're looking at. The challenge is to begin with ourselves, then to extend it to our relationships with others. Next, we consider the even greater challenge of cultural transformation within organizational change.

Application

1. Vision and process
   a. Effective relationships engender safe, open communication and empower whatever common goals you may have.
      i. If you compare your safest, most open relationship with an important but problematic relationship, what are the three key differences?
      ii. If improving the problematic relationship is important to your success, have you identified someone else who has vision and a demonstrated process that would help you improve it? If not, what stops you from finding such a person?
      iii. What might you do today, tomorrow, or in the days to come to move such a relationship in a positive direction?
2. Basic Negotiations
   a. As a leader, at whatever level, you can "go to the balcony" and mobilize others from the "third side."
      i. Consider a relationship within your network that negatively affects your performance or others around you.
      ii. What initiative might you take to facilitate "setting things right" within that relationship? Who else might be directly involved as part of the community, providing the "third side?"
      iii. What might you do today, tomorrow, or in days to come to positively affect that relationship?
3. Rising Up to a New Level
   a. Your friendship is a powerful tool in relationship.
      i. Think of one or more people who you know would benefit from straight talk from you concerning their stepping up to a new level.
      ii. What context would be most conducive to your challenging this person or these people to be more fully present and engaged in order that their full potential might be seen?

iii. What might you do today, tomorrow, or in the days to come to engage them at this new level?

Chapter Four

Organizational Transformation

Think of an organization as a "people system" working toward a common purpose. Take a minute to create a mental picture of your own "people system" or one that is vital to you. It may have five or 1,500 people. At this point, size is not the key.

Pick out one person whom you know something about. It could be yourself, or someone else. Ask yourself:

> Whom does this person relate to _____ (customers, clients, vendors, staff, etc.)? What function does this person fill?
> What outcomes are expected of him or her?

As you're forming this mental picture, name three types of *relationships* they have. In each of these, think of one type of *decision* they might make and one *action* coming from each. This will give you three actions.

For example, choose yourself. Three relationships you might have include with your boss, a peer, and a direct report. A decision related to your boss might be, "I'm committing to extend myself beyond my comfort zone and fully embrace an area of the work my boss has wanted me to take on, but which I felt was too much." The action might be, "I'll reach out to five key clients. I'll explore upgrading our services for them in order to increase our business with them." Do similar thinking about other decisions and related actions.

Now take a moment and reflect on how each action will affect that person, their team or group, and the larger context. How will it affect customers or clients and their view of the organization? How will it affect others as well—e.g., staff, vendors, or board members?

If I follow up on this example, I might create these answers. First, this decision and action will require me to become more efficient with the rest of my work in order to

make the time needed. I'll role model to my team what we all can be doing, both in terms of efficiencies and sales. It will definitely help our company. These key customers will be surprised to see me in this role. Given the approach I'm taking, they will be pleased at the improved quality of what they receive from us. This will improve our brand with them. That gives us the possibility to leverage new business from them. The positive effects of these steps should ripple across the company and will lead to a better morale and even more business.

These linked steps are one way that organizations form and sustain themselves. People relate to others, decide and take actions, and create outcomes that spur new responses, decisions, and actions. Organizational transformation begins to occur when one or more of these links changes and as a result changes key aspects of its function.

I'm not talking about when a staffer leaves and is replaced by one who produces about the same results. I am talking about where actions and their effects produce new structures and new outcomes.

Transforming Organizations

My chief focus in this chapter is on small and medium-sized organizations. There are two reasons for this focus.

First is the question, "Who has the power within the system to make changes that affect the substance of the system? " In these organizations, the founder, owner, CEO, executive director, or executive team is quite capable of making such changes. Through working with that person and their team, true deep-level change is possible.

Second, the larger and more complex the organization, the more challenging it is to transform it. The principles laid out here work in these larger systems. Yet, for many of you who work in larger and more complex environments, transforming the organization may not be a goal you are after.

As a result, I'm focusing on the *power of one* to influence organizational change. That one may be a single person or a group agreeing to function as one. When I think about

such change, I ask, "Where is the leverage for change?" I have found it most often with leaders or their teams. Helping them change their mindsets about who they are and what their organization is makes the most impact.

Changing Mindsets Leading to Transformation

In Chapter One I shared the story of a young chair of the board of a nonprofit. She changed how she saw herself. She also changed how she saw her organization. As a result she changed her behavior.

I suggested that she had limited herself by seeing her organization as outside herself. In one sense it is. But in the sense that it is an internalized picture, it is her. She had been questioning her own judgment. She knew she didn't know all there was to know about the organization. These knowledge gaps stopped her from trusting what she did know. She realized she could trust her intuition based on what she did know. Her faith in her decision-making as it relates to her CEO increased. As she said:

> I know that even though I don't know everything that
> everyone is doing, I can trust my understanding of the
> structure of the organization and how it functions, and,
> more importantly, I can trust my own intuition about the
> decisions I need to make.

As a result of these mindset changes regarding herself and the organization, her desire to fully embrace her role as chair grew. She assessed these two major shifts in how she saw herself and said:

> I think what I am seeing hasn't changed so much, but the
> way it feels has changed. I feel bigger but more connected.
> [With regard to our CEO] I still see her behavior, the looks,
> the nonverbals, and am still thinking about it and
> processing it. I guess there are still some worries, but they
> are much more external and they are not encroaching on
> my certainty about my ability to come to the best decision

and then continually re-assess that based on new info that
she may bring, or new perspectives.

This vignette is an example of organizational change driven by a leader's change of mindset. Think of examples you see in your own life and work. The change could be the result of coaching, much as this one was. It could also be a result of other forms of information gathering. These could include brainstorming with key players, inspirational visioning, and/or necessity driven by factors such as competitors, loss of market share, or funding needs.

It is clear that something needs to trigger a change of mindset. When that happens, a leader changes his or her view of the world. The leader can then act on the new view in order to transform the organization. Assisting in that process is what coaches who are strategic advisors do.

Reflection

I co-founded Genomic Health, a Silicon Valley life sciences company. We as a team transformed our inspirational vision into an operational vision. In that process the executive team was open to consider multiple ways in which the company could develop. We settled on one that was different from the original impulse but that held the greatest promise. That change turned out to be a wise choice on our part.

Also, in working with the previously mentioned nonprofit, the change of CEOs brought in a new perspective on moving forward. The board embraced evolutionary change. Then at one point the board, led by the CEO, committed to a radical shift in approach. Exponential growth and impact in their chosen field resulted.

I've also consulted with the newly appointed CEO of a global company. His strategy, while quite different from that of his predecessors, took time to unfold. It, too, resulted in the transformation of a company whose identity became very different over seven to eight years.

In these and other cases, I focus on leaders' mindsets and how they intend to bring their vision about. To be sustainable, the leader's vision must be shared with a critical mass of other leaders within the organization. When it is, and others embrace the vision and the processes for achieving it, it is possible to create and sustain transformational shifts and to iterate them over time.

Application

1. Recognize that you are *the power of one.* By choosing how to affect key relationships with strong decisions and effective action, you affect the entire organization.
2. Pick a person in relationship with you who has the power to leverage positive organizational change.
3. Identify
    a. How does this person relate to you?
    b. What specific function is this person fulfilling in relation to you?
    c. What outcomes does this person expect of you and others?
4. Specify one decision that you and this person can make and one action following from that decision that can positively affect your organization.
    a. Decision:
        i. Action:
5. What might you both do today, tomorrow, or in days to come to positively change your organization?

Chapter Five

Principles and Practices of Transformation

As I reflect on the topic of transformation, I ask myself, "What are the principles and practices others can use on their journey?" Surely there are more than the following. I offer these as a starting point. They have helped me on my journey. I trust they may help you too.

Principles

- *Commit to the inner work of transformation.*
  - So many of us begin by wanting to change others or change the world. That can be a good beginning, but we must understand that we can only change ourselves. Once you do, the world around you changes in ways you wouldn't have thought about.
- *Learn to say yes.*
  - That means saying *yes* to yourself and then along with it, saying *yes* to life and to others.
- *There is always an answer. Keep searching until you find it.*
  - This removes the urge to give into a victim mindset. We are not victims. We choose how we show up. Choose to find the answer you are searching for.
- *Be aware that the world around you and others who trigger reactions in you (positive or negative), are simply mirrors showing you yourself.*
  - Accept what the mirror is showing you and learn from it.
- *We are connected.*
  - Seek out answers to the question, "How is *this* related to me?" You will discover how to better live in your world.
- *We journey through the world based on the map we have created about it.*

- o Our lives are based on premises and beliefs that lead to our actions. Challenge yourself to try on new ones and find new ways of being in the world.
- *What you sow is what you reap.*
  - o Sow love and you reap love. Sow truth and you reap truth. In the end, growing your character creates transformation for yourself and others.

Practices

- My own growth journey took off when I began embracing the premises and practices of modeling excellence in human beliefs and behavior. This process is a core learning and growth tool. It reveals the structure of excellence and assists you to make it your own.
- I learned to think and act with a "*yes, and . . .*" approach. The *yes* builds on some part of what another says or does. It affirms the other and so opens him or her to what you have to offer next. The *and* reveals your connection to his or her thought and builds upon it. It is a leadership tool in that it assists in collaboration.
- If you don't have the tools to find the answer you are searching for, ask others. Engage with yourself and others. Keep asking. Keep inquiring. Each time you find an answer to a tough question, you strengthen your belief that you can find answers that matter.
- Learn to use the process of *identification*. It says, "That which you see in others or the world can be found within yourself." Grow the skill of answering the question, "How is what I see or sense out there true about me?" The content will not be the same, but you will find a structure that is the same. From there build a bridge of rapport. Nurture what's common. Problem solve with others.
- Use the connectivity question to increase your insight into the web of relations you live within. Ask yourself, "How is this connected to that?" Look for multiple answers. Keep using the question until it becomes normal.

- Expose yourself to new contexts that take you out of your comfort zone. Go cross-cultural. Step into another's shoes. Learn a new language. Listen deeply to others and find new aspects of yourself. Do all of the above and more to force yourself to challenge your existing view of the world.
- Dream of what you want. Find its structure. Go and act on the structure of what you have found. Observe how you begin to harvest what you have planted.

What next?

If you have found this ebook helpful, and you want to learn more or discover how you can apply these principles and practices for yourself, then check out Book 2 in this series, *An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within: 5 Transformational Practices to Increase Your Impact.*

You can also visit me on my websites www.theceowithin.com or www.impactmaximizer.com to learn more about systematic approaches I've developed to catalyze movement to new levels of skill and capacity.

Thank You

I hope you've enjoyed the first book of this series, *An Accelerator's Guide to the CEO Within*. Discovering how to transform yourself in order to transform your world is a powerful idea that has made an enormous difference in my life. I trust you will find similar success as you apply what you've read here, and also as you imagine yourself into the future.

I'd appreciate it very much if you could leave a short review of the book on Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk. It will help me improve this book as well as future books.

Many thanks and best wishes on your leadership journey!

Gene

About the Author

Gene Early has always been curious about what makes people tick. His interest was initially sparked by attempts to understand himself—how and why he saw the world differently than others around him. He discovered that others looked to him as a leader, whether in the classroom, on the basketball court, or in extra-curricular activities. This perspective, and his desire to make a difference in his own and others' lives, led to his early communication skills training and consulting work.

His passion for transforming himself and the systems he's a part of contribute to the variety of contexts in which he has flourished. These include co-founding Genomic Health, a Silicon Valley life sciences company that produced the first genomic-based, diagnostic test assessing the risk of recurrence of breast cancer; spearheading a major organizational transformation at the University of the Nations-Kona as Vice Chancellor of Operations; and hosting and helping organize the first learning journey of Leaders' Quest, the social enterprise connecting global leaders as well as grass roots activists with inspirational leaders around the world.

In addition, he was instrumental in transforming Genetic Alliance from primarily a patient advocacy nonprofit supporting research and development of treatments for rare genetic diseases *to* a powerful force of innovation in public policy, scientific and medical research, and health care innovation.

Previous to these initiatives, he mentored leaders in six European countries as they developed communication skills training institutes; equipped CEOs from the Academy of Chief Executives for a number of years with executive development training; and partnered with the internationally recognized author and business trainer Sue Knight in providing business development training.

He completed his PhD through the Open University while studying under Rosemary Stewart, his director of studies from Templeton College, Oxford University. He focused on the interface between leadership and organizational development, and has published the results and reflections in different places.

In all of these efforts, some of which continue until today, he's focused on leadership transformation as a means for organizational and systems transformation. Those he works with recognize his ability to get to core identity issues and catalyze personal transformation that leads to organizational development.

Footnotes

[1] Reid, Guy. *The Overview Effect* (A Planetary Collective Film, 2012), 19 min., 11 sec.; from Planetary Collective http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHMIfOecrlo

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[3] Johnson, Sue. *Hold Me Tight: Conversations for a Lifetime.* New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.

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