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Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching*

Stewart Borie, M.B.A. and Daniel Eckstein, PH.D

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# Applying Adlerian Theory and Psychological Research:
# Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching

STEWART BORIE, M.B.A. AND DANIEL ECKSTEIN, PH.D.

*An oxymoron is defined as "a figure of speech that uses seeming contradictions 'cruel kindness' or 'to make haste slowly,'" (Webster's, 1991, p. 968). Too often "business integrity" and "business ethics" could be added to that list. The purpose of this article is to define and to illustrate the role of integrity in business-oriented client relationships as well as in the practices of coaching to individuals and groups in organizations; it is referred to as Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching (IBLC) by the authors.*

## FROM THEORY AND RESEARCH . . .

The authors define integrity as being authentic. Congruence is a similar concept. This is the leader who genuinely "walks the talk." It has been concretely described as "what you see is what you get." Conversely, "disintegrity" is the gap between who the person presents himself or herself to be and how the core essence of that individual is at their core. Trust is highly correlated to integrity while mistrust is a frequent consequence of disintegrity.

Corollaries to fundamental theoretical principals will be included, particularly as they relate to a core theme of IBLC, the use of radical inquiry-based approaches to coaching interventions. Three developmental coaching processes will be discussed: 1) assessment; 2) diagnoses; and 3) suggested coaching interventions.

Sometimes it is easier to define what something is not as a way of also describing what it is. Lack of "integrity" in business can be identified in almost every business-oriented journal or newspaper. One of the most prominent examples of course is the collapse of the Enron empire in the United States. Greedy executives, knowing the end was near, cashed in all their stocks. The workers were left with no retirement savings as the company's stock value plummeted.

What the authors describe as "radical inquiry-based approaches" to coaching interventions will also be presented.

Here is some relevant research on how coaches can utilize behavioral science concepts for maximum effectiveness in moving leaders toward integrity.

### Adult Development Applied to Coaching

Axelrod (2005) applies the theory of adult development to the growing discipline known as executive coaching. He is a psychoanalyst who has also expanded his private practice in New York City to include executive coaching. Here is a summary of some of his comments.

Axelrod believes adult developmental theory is important to coaches because it furnishes a dynamic perspective on personality growth without privileging the childhood past. While the coach might have some understanding of an executive's early life issues and conflicts, these phe-

nomena become the backdrop against which the all-impor-
tant struggles of adulthood play out. The coach is more
likely to focus on issues of the adult past and to be aware
of how landmark adult developmental tasks are being ne-
gotiated by the client. The coach then adds to the mix an
understanding of how career progress, success and failure,
goals and values, leadership style, interpersonal relation-
ships, communication skills, self-management skills, and
so forth have affected the development of the personality in
adulthood. (p. 118)

*While the coach might have some understanding of an executive's early life issues and conflicts, these phenomena become the backdrop against which the all-important struggles of adulthood play out.*

An understanding of human development theory is useful in understanding execu-
tives reaching midlife. Axelrod describes it like this:

> My most common assignment as an executive coach has been
> to guide the development of the hard-charging middle manager.
> These are executives who are typically, but not always, men and are
> usually in their mid-30s to early 40s. They are long on drive and
> ambition and rather short on people skills such as active listening,
> persuasion, consensus building, and conflict resolution. They tend
> to be results-oriented, project driven, and highly focused. They ad-
> mit that they "do not suffer fools gladly" and have difficulty toler-
> ating divergent opinions when the solutions to problems seem so
> obvious. These executives are typically abrasive, and in remedial
> cases, abusive. They are often "all business" and don't show enough
> of their more human (and humorous) side. (p.119)

He uses a creative metaphor of surfing in describing his coaching interventions.

> I like to think of the coach's role with these executives as helping
> them "ride the wave" of development from early to middle adult-
> hood. Some are natural born surfers, but others need help spotting
> the wave and riding it. Understanding the normative developmen-
> tal challenges of this era can help the coach guide the executive
> through the "transformational task. (p. 119)

Erikson (1950, 1958, 1968) and Gould (1972) have emphasized the centrality of a
sense of authenticity and integrity in late middle age. Axelrod similarly states,

> . . . the attainment of authenticity carries with it an increased sense
> of what is truly important, a capacity to assess and accept what
> is real in both the external and internal worlds regardless of the
> consequences. Authenticity in late middle age entails a more pen-
> etrating sense of what is intrinsically important over time in rela-
> tionships, work, and the life of an organization. Healthy develop-
> ment at this stage carries with it a strong sense of life as a journey
> and adventure, complete with joy, grief, success, setbacks, love, and
> death. (p.120)

*The Corporation is a Canadian* documentary, based on Joel Bakan's (2004) book
by the same title. The producers asked the rhetorical question "if a corporation is
indeed a 'person' having such literal legal recognition in U.S. courts since the 1930's,
then what type of 'person' is a corporation?" To more precisely assess the personality
of the corporate person, a checklist was employed using actual diagnostic tools of
psychiatrists and psychologists. The results of the diagnostics suggested that the op-
erational principles of the corporation give it a highly anti-social personality, which
is self-interested, inherently amoral, callous and deceitful; it breaches social and le-
gal standards to get its way; it does not suffer from guilt, yet it can mimic the human

qualities of empathy, caring and altruism. A disturbing diagnosis was delivered by Bakan (2006) wherein the institutional embodiment of laissez-faire capitalism fully meets the diagnostic criteria of a "psychopath."

The filmmakers assert that the sole function of a corporation is to make money for the stockholders. Dumping harmful chemicals into local streams therefore becomes one way of outsourcing "internal 'pesky' cost factors." Deliberate pollution becomes one way to maximize corporate profits. Of course this appraisal of the corporate "person" is a generalization and not a fair representation of all corporate philosophies and practices. Indeed the producers identify "healthy personality" companies such as Interface, the world's largest commercial carpet manufacturer, founded by Ray Anderson, where the environmental impact of company products is now being considered. Anderson, Interface's CEO, is a visionary leader, who had an environmental epiphany about sustainable business principles and re-organized his $1.4 billion company to embody these principles. This individual, finding or listening to his personal integrity, shaped the "person" and hence social integrity of his organization.

**Adlerian Contributions to Coaching**
We believe that the notion of integrity and Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching (IBLC) can apply to the individual and the organizational "person" in coaching interventions designed to align the integrity of individuals and organization, with strong corollaries to Alfred Adler's seminal work on a systems approach to human behavior. Adler's theories of social interest—and the attendant assumption that one's behavior is purposeful, goal-directed or teleologicall—an be applied toward committing to the value of integrity in all aspects of one's life in individual and/or organizational coaching processes Adler stressed that individual behavior can only be understood by a systems-based focus. He used the term social interest. Behaviors associated with social interest include helping, sharing, participation, compromising, encouraging and reforming. Social interest also involves being cooperative and empathic. Feelings associated with social interest include belonging, feeling at home, commonality, faith in others, the courage to be imperfect, being human and being optimistic.

Kaplan (1991) identified concrete ways that behaviors, feelings, and cognitions (thoughts) are associated with the "integrity" of social interest. Abraham Maslow created Adler's belief in social interest as a primary description of individuals by noting "this word (Gemeinschaftsgefuhl –social interest)… is the only one available that will describe the flavor of the feeling for mankind by self actualized subjects… They have, for human beings in general a deep feeling of identification, sympathy and affection… it is as if they were all members of a single family." (Ansbacher, 1991, p.5)

Gemeinschaftsgefuhl is the most distinctive and yet one of the most challenging concepts in Adler's model. It is generally translated from German into English as "social interest (SI) or "social feeling." There actually is no accurate English word that seems to communicate the German sense of community (Ansbacher, 1999). O'Connell (1991) prefers the term "humanistic identification." But even that seems to fall short in accurately conveying the essence of being "connected" to the total environment beyond "human" connectedness.

"Embeddedness" is the rich term Adler (1938) used to describe an individual's personal feeling of being connected in an interdependent manner with one's environment. O'Connell (1991) illustrated the interrelationship between the individual and the environment by proposing the following "equation." NH=SE+SI, meaning that a

"natural high" (in contrast to the high of chemical-based addiction) is a combination of both high self-esteem and high social interest towards others.

Applied to the concept of integrity, the authors assert that consultations and interventions that are directed toward the individual or group learning about oneself—about learning to be in integrity-- has fundamental implications in assisting clients in finding Gemeinschaftsgefuhl or "embeddedness". The implication is that learning about and acting in integrity can be beneficial to individuals, organizations and the larger community. Through such integral practices a community becomes sustainable.

## Covey's Seven Habits

Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching is also consistent with Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1992). Covey believes these "habits" are characteristics of what he calls "abundance managers". They:
1. Return to the "right" sources (a sense of internal serenity that helps keep them gentle, open, trusting and genuinely happy for the success of others).
2. Seek solitude and enjoy nature.
3. "Sharpen the saw" by continually upgrading their skills.
4. Serve others anonymously.
5. Maintain a long-term, intimate relationship with another person.
6. Forgive themselves and others.
7. Are problem solver, specifically being able to separate the people from the problem been addressed. (p.33)

Covey (1990, p. 52) stresses that people are guided to practice simple "habits of effectiveness." "Because they are based upon principles (guidelines for human conduct that are proven to have enduring, permanent value), they bring the maximum long-term beneficial results possible. They become the basis of a person's character, creating an empowering center of correct maps from which an individual can effectively solve problems, maximize opportunities, and continually learn and integrate other principles in an upward spiral of growth." In the authors' view, if people or organizations "walk the talk" of their "maps", then they would be operating in integrity with their core "self."

In The 8th Habit from Effectiveness to Greatness, Covey (2004) cites research from a Harris poll of over 23,000 people employed full time within key functional areas. Here are some of the five key findings:
1. Only one in five was enthusiastic about their teams and organization goals.
2. The same percentage said they have a clear "line of site" between their tasks and their team's and organization's goals.
3. Only 15 percent felt they worked in a high-trust environment.
4. Only 20 percent fully trusted the organization for which they worked.
5. Only 13 percent have high-trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other groups or departments. (pp. 2-3)

From this, Covey adds his eighth habit, "find your voice and inspire others to find theirs." In suggesting that people need to find their voice, Covey alludes to the condition we refer to as "disintegrity," wherein the persona of the individual or organizational "person" lacks integrity, and that "person's" voice is not their real voice. The person must therefore search, find, discover, or inquire into what is their real "voice." (p.5)

We believe that integrity is a cornerstone of Covey's eighth habit. Covey believes that "voice lies at the nexus of talent (your natural gifts and strengths), passion (those

things that naturally energize, excite, motivate and inspire you), need (including what the world needs enough to pay you for), and conscience (that still, small voice within that assures you of what is right and that prompts you to actually do it)." (p.5)

Conversely, being "politically correct," is a symptom mentioned in M. Scott Peck's best-seller People of the Lie (1983). Saying what is expected represents when people are "out of integrity"

According to Yukl (2002), "Personal integrity means that a person's behavior is consistent with espoused values and the person is honest, ethical and trustworthy." Integrity-based leadership is the type of leadership wherein the leader is at-one with him or herself, where essentially "what you see is what you get" and his/her personality has integrity, not in the moral sense, but in the sense of reliable continuity of self. Observers of this style and type of leadership recognize it easily, when a leader "knows herself, when she is comfortable in her own skin." In other words,  they are simply themselves.

Covey (1991) refers to "principle-centered leadership" or "leadership by compass" wherein "correct principles are like compasses: they are always pointing the way. And if we know how to read them, we won't get lost, confused or fooled by conflicting voices and values. Principles are self-evident, self-validating natural laws. They don't change or shift. They provide 'true north' direction to our lives when navigating the 'streams' of our environment." (p.19)

We know when someone is operating according to "true north," but this is not listed in normative taxonomies of leadership. Instead, a chorus of leadership traits and attributes drown out the essential characteristic of personal integrity-- knowing oneself--as the "true north" of leadership.

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In *Primal Leadership* Goleman et al (2002) write, "Great leadership works through emotions. No matter what leaders set out to do – whether it's creating strategy or mobilizing teams to action – their success depends on how they do it. Even if they get everything else just right, if leaders fail in this primal task of driving emotions in the right direction, nothing they do will work as well as it could or should." (p.3)  Goleman believes *emotional intelligence* (EI) is at the root of effective leadership. One of the EI competencies in the self-management domain is transparency, "an authentic openness to others about one's feelings, beliefs, and actions – allows integrity." (p. 254) In order to become a resonant and sustainable leader, a person must have experienced or changed according to five personal discoveries:

1. My ideal self : Who do I want to be?
2. My real self: Who am I? What are my strengths and gaps?
3. My learning agenda: How can I build on my strengths while reducing my gaps?
4. Experimenting with and practicing new behaviors, thoughts and feelings to the point of mastery.
   5. Developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible. (p.109)

Personal integrity, whether seen from the perspective of the authors, or from that of Covey, Peck, Garner or Goleman, appears to be consistent with a core Adlerian principle: one's behavior is purposeful, goal-directed, or teleological (Adler, 1938).

## Positive Psychology and Coaching

Positive psychology attempts to understand positive emotions, positive strengths and virtues, and positive institutions (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Seligman (2002), strengths are special traits that meet additional criteria, setting them apart from talents and more general personality traits and imbuing them with moral significance. A partial list of strengths that fit these criteria would include creativity, social intelligence, wisdom, bravery, kindness, fairness, leadership, humility, spirituality, and integrity.

According to Peterson and Seligman's (2004) influential classification system, strengths are the building blocks of higher order virtues. Bacon (2005) also discusses additional applications of positive psychology for coaches to consider. Rather than a set of unrelated topics, new patterns may emerge. Peterson and Seligman's Values in Action (Peterson & Seligman, 2001, 2004) classification system exemplifies this productive way in which to structure the domain. This system identifies 24 universally recognized strengths and organizes them hierarchically under a set of six higher order virtues. The web-site www.authentichappiness.com is an excellent resource for coaches relative to helping leaders identify "signature strengths."

### . . . TO PRACTICE

#### Assessment Philosophy

Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching (IBLC) begins with an underlying philosophy of what we call "a reason to be." In Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor Frankl (1984) quoted Neitzche who said, "A man who has a 'why' for his life can withstand any 'how.'"

The "reason to be" is similar to what the existentialists refer to as an "existential anchor." This is related to a basic assessment that is made by consultants with the individual, team, or group. This assessment is based on two fundamental questions: "what's right?" and "what's wrong?"

The assessment phase of IBLC features a basic philosophy of inquiry into the core, authentic self. This has strong corollaries to Adler's concept of personal lifestyle assessment. There are many methods of exploring one's self that Adlerians use in personality life-style assessments. They are only briefly identified herein. A more thorough description can be found in Eckstein and Kern's (2002) Psychological Fingerprints: Life Style Assessment and Interventions.

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There is also a theme issue of the Journal of Individual Psychology devoted to life-style assessment, in which Eckstein's (2003) "Footprints and fingerprints: reflections on 30 years of life-style assessment" features many consulting interview questions. Les White and Linda Page have also created a "work-style assessment" that is a sequential exploration of an individual in his or her workplace (in Eckstein and Kern, 2002, pp. 209-225).

Henry Stein (1991) observes that there are many similarities and differences between Adler and the classic "Socratic method" of questioning. Milliren and Wingett (2005) have adopted the Adlerian Socratic method to their own oxymoron they paradoxically call "the practice of precision guesswork." It is based on a coaching interview style they call both "creative empathy" and "respectful curiosity." Their process encourages a person to reflect on the process of reflection. For example, after addressing some of the above questions, they add such questions as:
1. How do you experience your reflections on these responses right now?
2. How are those responses a part of your life now?

3. What do your responses say about you now?
4. What do you think are some future implications of your responses?
5. If you were your own coach, what would you suggest to yourself?"

Regardless of whether one uses Alderian lifestyle assessment or another form of directed inquiry, we suggest that radical inquiry is an important component of knowing "self" and finding individual or organization integrity.

### Diagnostic Approach

Integrity-Based Leadership Coaching (IBLC) is built upon a basic foundation of diligent inquiry into "self." However, the notion of self-inquiry should not be viewed in terms of isolated self-inquiry. Instead, we suggest that facilitated and managed inquiry in a collaborative, co-creative environment is the root of effective discovery and manifesting of authentic self, or "showing up" in integrity.

Consistent with the Adlerian philosophy that a coach and client are "equals," IBLC diagnosis is meant to be a collaborative team effort. It is not the "all knowing Oz" coach making the diagnosis. Furthermore, it must incorporate a systems focus rather just focusing on the individual in isolation, particularly relative to the "and therefore what does all this mean?" summary. Several diagnostic methods are particularly well-suited for facilitating and managing radical self-inquiry, including:

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1. *Encouragement:* is an ongoing critical coaching skill. Adler stressed that one should build on strengths and not weakness. Dreikurs added that humans need encouragement like plants need water. Additional application of Adlerian theory in organization settings is found in Dinkmeyer and Eckstein's (1996) *Leadership by encouragement.*

2. *Confrontation* is paradoxically an essential aspect of encouragement. Nikelly (1971) has called them "stoke and spit" consulting skills. By that he means that both the building on strengths approach, coupled with the approach of what Adler (1956) very vividly called "spitting in the soup" is a "dynamite" "one-two" coaching "skills combination". Adler said, "if you are eating a bowl of soup and someone comes along and spits in it you can keep eating the soup… it probably won't be as pleasurable however." To confront is to focus on a discrepancy. Adler (1956) said it this way "trust the 'tongue' of the shoe not the 'tongue of the mouth.".
Examples of confrontational discrepancies include:
a. Between what one says he or she will do and what is actually done
b. Between one's perception not only of quality and excellence but also of basic satisfactory work when compared to the perceptions of other people
c. Between the stated job description and stated standards of performance and the extent to which an individual is willing and/or able to perform the job and work to these standards.

Confrontation does not have to be harsh. It can be done in such a way that leaders cooperate, especially when they are invited respectfully to examine their behaviors, attitudes, and thoughts. An essential ingredient in effective confrontation is basic respect for the recipient.  Coaches who care enough to make demands on their clients and show genuine empathy are, in effect, communicating to the clients that they can be fully in contact with their own potentials or personal integrity. Ultimately, however, coaches are most effective in confrontation when appreciating that, as adult learners, the individual himself or herself ultimately is responsible for deciding what to do with the information (Corey, 2005).

## Intervention

IBLC is both an approach and a discipline. It focuses on identifying gaps in personal or organizational integrity and in using critical directed inquiry to identify solutions, narrow or bridge the gaps, and replace problematic patterns with inquiry-based solutions.

## The role of the coach

It is important to recognize the various potential roles of the coach. They can include:

1. *Problem solving:* dealing with diverse issues such as organizational process, conflict resolution, human resource management, organizational design, decision making, brainstorming or simply unsticking organizational log jams.

2. *Being a third party:* providing situational, objective oversight to mitigate bias and insure impartiality. This can provide fair opinions, test concepts, or critically examine a position from another point of view, including debunking false or disabling/limiting assumptions.

3. *Empowering:* providing motivational enhancement.

4. *Providing expertise:* providing expert value in areas such as knowledge, process and methods, systems, resources, organizational design, or environment,

5. *Accessing:* providing difficult-to-obtain information or influence.

6. *Bringing prestige:* attaching branded personal or organization credibility, along with an implicit endorsement.

7. *Leveraging:* using an intermediate resource as a stepping-stone to another objective, e.g., using a consultant to access a prospect, financing source or political resource.

8. *Managing issues:* using issue-specific expertise to manage a specific circumstance.

9. *Providing management coaching:* including in areas such as marketing, strategy development, and decision-making.

10. *Being a knowledge merchant:* shortening the learning curve with expert facilitation, access to hidden or hard-to-find knowledge, research, and interpretation.

11. *Being an educator/mentor:* transferring knowledge.

The role of a coach involves utilizing such interventions as critical inquiry, guided self- or situational appraisal, objective but empathetic directed inquiry, deconstructing limiting beliefs and systems, and reconstructing empowering and enabling belief systems. The roles can be diverse, concurrent and evolving, depending upon the issue or presenting problems. But depending upon the issue, presenting problem or need, the client may be facing one or more of the following challenges:

• Not knowing what they need nor having realistic expectations

• Confronting many issues which confuse the situation

• Covering up, denying, blaming or confusing

• Neediness

• Pursuing incongruent objectives

• Unindividuated thinking (i.e., groupthink)

• Using inappropriate methods or tools

A major theme of IBLC is that "Integrity (or lack thereof) runs deep". Hence, the presenting problems may only be a symptom. Not having integrity is an example of "What you see is not what you get." either organizationally or individually. In other words, the persona (the personality protected by or assembled of "icon armor") is

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incongruent with person or "self." IBLC applies directed inquiry to identify these gaps.

A second theme is that people or organizations may not recognize their own dis-integrity. The role of the coach is to identify this, and then use directed inquiry to allow the client to see their own gaps, helping the individual or organization find authentic "self." Another theme is that the integrity of the coach sets the resonant tone of the engagement: Integrity begets integrity.

Issues of integrity are particularly important when looking at the presenting problem or strategic objective of the coaching assignment. Organizations or individuals rarely hire coaches unless they "need" something. The presenting problem is often presented as a specific issue, a general problem, or a broader strategic issue. However, issues of integrity are confounding, illusory, and subtle and often reflect an oversimplified perspective, including a "quick fix" expectation.

Often, conflict is an individual and organization taboo, an indicator of failure, and hence shunned. Yet it is often an essential indicator of the health of the individual and the organization, essential to proper individuation and interdependent work. A coach will often be hired to help the members of an organization "solve" or "fix" conflict rather than embrace its benefits and allow it to run its course. Amidst the confusion, there are some integrity-based truisms, including these:
• If the client knew what the real problem was, he or she would probably be able to fix it.
• The client may be the problem.
• The crisis of an individual may become the crisis of the organization. For example, corporate cultures can make or break business combinations, and leadership integrity can create a lasting culture. A CEO's divorce can kill a company, highlighting the myth of work/life separation.

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**Intake interview.** In order to get a true picture of what is going on above and below the surface, the coach needs to pay great attention to the intake interview or series of interviews, applying disciplined inquiry to such questions as:
• Why is the coach being hired?
• Is the coach being used as a credibility enhancer rather than for substance?
• Does the client know what they need?
• Does the client have unrealistic expectations of the coaching?
• Might the individual (organizational customer) hiring the coach be the problem?

Much like a career consulting interview or a therapeutic counseling interview, the coach must be prepared to skillfully explore many layers to uncover the true issues of integrity that affect their client. There are both project scoping questions to ask of the organizational customer, as well as interview questions of the client. Scoping questions can focus on business need and urgency, what's been done before and with what result, decision making process, decision makers and their criteria, budget, and desired results and expectations. Interview questions may include:
• Why do you feel you need a coach?
• What are your specific or general needs?
• What are your expectations?
• How did you arrive at this decision?
• Who will work with you on this?
• How does this make you feel?
• How do you think this will affect you?

• How do you think this will affect others?

There may be multiple "clients" or multiple problems. There may be "fatal flaws" that hamstring the engagement from the beginning, and there may be problems best suited for someone else. Basic ethical integrity on the part of a coach is that he or she cannot be all things to all people. This is a fundamental criticism that has often been leveled at the coaching profession . IBLC begins with the personal integrity of the coach.

It is very important that in the initial inquiry a coach:
• assesses the integrity of the assignment,
• asserts the integrity of the coach with the assignment,
• sets the tone for future interventions activities, and
• establishes initial intervention inquiry paths.

**Intervention**
There are several important philosophies on IBLC intervention, including: identification and iconization, irreverence, and doing things incrementally.

**Identification and iconization.** Understanding identification and iconization as essential paradoxes is one of the most important elements of intervention, related to the aforementioned "reason to be." Much of our individual and organizational personality is based upon drive for identification made up of icons and icon (object) orientations. The essential drive for identification makes up the fabric of our separateness and hence our ability to have a different and individual perspective on life. To inquire into our own nature can sustain us but can also become a trap, where we overly revere our own icons, losing our "self" in the process.

For example, individuals chase "success" according to a symphony of learned leadership metrics, frequently becoming identified with those metrics rather than their authentic selves. They build a leadership "persona," thinking they are doing all the right things, but ultimately are disingenuous and encounter problems. They can never build trust or effectively adapt to change because they are "stuck" or cemented" in iconic belief systems. Similarly, organizations chase a business plan, and its organizational identity emerges, with the organization becoming the plan instead of the applied intelligence of its members. In either case, we assess that the individual or organization is operating in "disintegrity." Disintegrity can lead to a host of problems such as becoming disenfranchised from employees, becoming myopic in focus, encountering competitive difficulties, or breeding pathologies such as improper doctrines of failure, groupthink, moral and ethical shortfalls, compensation schisms, and false leadership metrics.

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**Irreverence.** If we can identify and "unstick" individuals and organizations from a pathological icon orientation, we can intervene as a coach and open them to new perspectives. If the intervention supplants the pathological icon orientation with an inquiry orientation, the intervention can become sustainable, i.e., "self-healing" over time.

Detachment from icons allows the individual and or organization to pursue discovery of a constantly emerging "self," beyond the familiar trapping of icons such as success, career or adult responsibility. In organizations, this detachment can be known as innovation, entrepreneurship, adaptability, or competitive differentiation. In individuals, this can mean the difference between false, icon-oriented leadership,

and utilizing one's own integrity.

*IBLC is an approach to individual and organizational mentoring based upon discovery, alignment, and the practice of integrity. .*

**Doing things incrementally.** Much of our identity and identification process is made up of incremental cognitive assemblages formed over a lifetime. In order to affect true change, those that are assessed to be detrimental must be deconstructed and then reconstructed with healthy alternatives. However, if the process is too radical several things can result:
• The client's sense of self can be shaken..
• The client can become overly self-critical or consumed with remorse.
• It can be too painful or threatening. Too much insight or too much change can be emotionally, mentality and spiritually overwhelming and painful. The client can "check out" and abandon the intervention.
•It can be destructive. There is a fine line between deconstruction and reconstruction, and destruction. In the absence of establishing new foundations, deconstruction cannot rebuild, and becomes therefore destructive.

IBLC looks at change management much like a martial art. One cannot learn a martial art overnight. Neither can one unlearn a lifetime of behavior or undo an entrenched organizational bureaucracy overnight. It takes incremental retraining and incremental introduction of new perspectives. This begins with incremental inquiry as a foundational path to new incremental insight.

**Five Intervention Tools**
The primary tool of IBLC is disciplined, radical inquiry, looking for unhealthy icons, and then seeding questions (inquiry-based solutions) that open thinking to alternatives. Some of the elements of this inquiry practice include the following.

**Assigned journaling.** Journaling is designed to invoke self-inquiry and situational inquiry and examine value alignment and disintegrity. The coach can assign themes, as illustrated by these.
• What are your success metrics - in life, work, and/or in your business?
• Where are you going? How? Why?
•  How do you practice?
• Who are your role models?
• What is your vision?
• Who is involved in your success or failure?
• What to you want to do?
• What do you have to do?
• What do you wish you could do?
• How do you make decisions?
• What are your limits? Why?

**Needs analysis.** IBLC emphasizes the impact of individual needs as foundational to understanding organizational issues. We look for alignment of needs, stated and unstated, throughout an organization. Stated needs are only a start, giving hints at motivating systems of thinking or icons of identification. Unstated or implicit needs are more subtle and difficult to distinguish. Diligent inquiry can uncover the implicit needs and draw them out to become explicit. For example, when dealing with a narcissistic client, implicit need can be the hidden engine driving behavior and organizational design. Questions of a needs analysis can include these:
• What do you need – in work, life, family, and play?
• What do you want – in work, life, family, and play?
• What do others need from you?

• What do they want from you?
• What drives these needs?
• How do they affect you?
• Why do you believe this?
• What have you learned?
•What do you do that is part of your culture?

**Mapping values.** Mapping values along decision chains, management chains, or even across an individual's thinking or actions can tell a lot about integrity. The consultant looks for disconnects and balance in areas such as congruence.

For example, the simple distinction between outcome orientation and process orientation can tell a lot about how an individual or organization works. Similarly, valuing ideas over operations can set a huge differential tone in any organization, e.g., thinkers vs. doers, or strategy vs. tactics. The paradigm of women as relationship-oriented vs. men as agency-oriented can create themes of value orientations. Value mapping can include these kinds of questions:
• What are your leadership skills?
• How do you apply them? In your work? Your family? In the world?
• What are your rules on politeness? Where do you apply them? When?
• What rules do you use? Where, when, how and why?
• How do you develop strategy?
• Where did you learn this?
• How do you react when things go wrong? Who do you turn to? Why?
• When someone asks who you are, what do you say?
• How do you compete? Why and when?

**Mental modeling.** Decision-making, self-conception (identification) and reverence for icons are modeled behaviors, patterned in the associations of values, cognitive functions and environmental interaction. These can include examples such as dysfunctional behavior, narcissistic thinking, groupthink mindset, overly complex process, overly simplistic rationales, or reverence to disempowering icons.

Inquiry can uncover limiting mental models, allowing their "unpacking", reframing and reconstruction of new, inquiry-based (open-ended, less reverent) models. Mental modeling is a powerful tool. Applied to self-inquiry, it can also be an important element in practicing facilitated and disciplined "self" inquiry.

**Practiced irreverence.** This involves loosening the grip of individual or organization icons, where inquiry is the antidote to reverence. We adhere to icons (concepts, models, notions, people, words, processes) in direct proportion to our reverence systems. Here are some examples.
• *Leadership:* We mimic iconic leadership traits according to how much we attach the reverence of "success" to them.
• *Religion:* We iconify religion according to our need to belong, or to have faith, believe, or have a solution to unanswerable questions.
• *Meritocracy:* We look to meritocracy as a dominant self-satisfaction system if we inherently believe in competition, achievement, success, or academic systems.
• *Adulthood:* Most adults abandon their essential and healthy childlike nature in reverence to the social norms of adult behavior and responsibility systems (there's that disintegrity again).

Most systems of action are based upon concrete operations, which are based on outcome orientations, judgments and conclusions. These develop into patterns of simplicity - revered in their simplicity, apparent merit or usefulness, and accepted

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social context. But any individual or organization can become a victim of their patterns and their iconic reverence (importance) systems. They believe in the icons, not in themselves. Practiced irreverence can be a pattern against pathological (overly stuck) iconification.

## SUMMARY

IBLC is an approach to individual and organizational mentoring based upon discovery, alignment, and the practice of integrity. Using radical facilitated inquiry to examine and deconstruct revered icons (concepts, models, notions, people, words, processes), IBLC can be a powerful tool to incrementally deconstruct disintegrity and reconstruct more empowering and self-healing, inquiry-based integrity.

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**J. Stewart Borie, MBA**

**Phone: 760-924-0072**
**Email: jsborie@cox.net**

Stewart Borie is currently a doctoral candidate at Capella University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the industrial organization psychology program. Mr. Borie is a Strategic Advisor and Business Mentor, specializing in entrepreneurial management, strategic planning, finance, and business formation and development. His clients have ranged from Fortune 500 companies to start-up ventures. In addition to his consulting work, Mr. Borie is President of a non-profit organization, Entrust Environmental Corporation, dedicated to alternative capital formation and innovative organizational development. He has a B.A. from The University of Pennsylvania and an MBA in Finance and Entrepreneurial Management from The Wharton School of Business.

**Daniel Eckstein, Ph.D.**

**Phone: 760-924-0072**
**Email: danielgeckstein@yahoo.com**
**Website: www.leadershipbyencouragement.com**

Daniel Eckstein, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling, Sam Houston St. University, Huntsville, Texas. Dr. Eckstein holds the diplomate in Adlerian Studies from the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology. He has authored such books as Leadership by Encouragement, Psychological Fingerprints, and Raising Respectful Kids in a Rude World.

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