The Effects of Leadership Style and Cognitive Dissonance on Team Success

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Abstract

Leaders are in charge of today's organizational progress and their influence over their employees has a direct effect on the success of corporations. Through numerous other studies, Appreciative Inquiry and servant leadership qualities have been associated with successful teams. Similarly, cognitive dissonance in individuals has been affiliated with an inability to progress forward in decisions and personal development. This study aims to discover to what extent leadership style and cognitive dissonance have an effect on team success. This study also hopes to raise awareness in leaders, teams, and individuals alike to the positive effects of Appreciative Inquiry and servant leadership, as well as bring an understanding of cognitive dissonance and how it can negatively impact a person's life.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Leadership in organizations does not have the sole responsibility to complete the tasks as set by the corporation. It is also the responsibility of the leadership to ensure the teams are also well taken care of so that they can also provide what is best for the company.

Most of today’s western world spends a good portion of their day at work. They do so by working in teams, focusing on tasks and working toward solving problems for the organization for which they are employed. Many people today are part of a company, and while most have real families at home, they develop their “work families” for most of their business hours.

Families rely on each other for help, support, motivation, and to provide care for the basic human needs innate to all human beings. It is unfortunate that a good number of today’s corporations (and their leadership) is mostly focused on the bottom line, draining the most they can out of their workers, and providing monetary rewards rather than intrinsic ones.

If the bottom line is the most important to an organization and it is the reason why organizations focus on transactional relationships (money for hours of work), are they truly extracting the most benefit from their employees? Are they, in treating them as liabilities to be managed and not assets to be cherished, missing the bigger picture? Are they forgetting that people’s intrinsic motivations are the strongest driving forces and biggest motivators and if so, how much more productive would they be if they made the shift from task-orientation to people-orientation?

Organizations behave like organisms according to Capra (Reardon, 2001), but those organisms are made up of people with their own set of beliefs, motivations, and drivers. They
are also led by people, with that same set of fears and ambitions. It would then stand to reason that focusing on human capital (both leadership and team) could offer companies big gains when it comes to both, their teams’ motivation and their employees’ productivity.

This paper will focus on the behaviours and leadership styles of those men and women at the head of teams in high tech organizations. Specifically, it will provide a look into how their cognitive dissonance (holding two opposing views simultaneously), and their leadership style affects their team success.

Success in this case is defined by the presence of factors having been shown to provide an environment conducive to productivity, effectiveness, collaboration, and team thriving. This environment is achieved, as will be discussed later in the paper, through the Appreciative Inquiry approach, and through the leader’s servant behaviour toward the team members. This was assessed through a series of questions the team members answered, which targeted areas of Appreciative Inquiry, servant leadership qualities in their leader, and the leader’s levels of cognitive dissonance.

The attempt of this paper is to provide a definitive view into how a positive outlook by the entire team and their shared creation of a vision (Appreciative Inquiry), a focus on people rather than process by the leader (leadership style, specifically servant-leadership qualities), and the leader’s own freedom from conflicting internal thoughts and feelings (cognitive dissonance) provides an environment enabling productivity, happiness, and intrinsic motivation of the team.
Background of the Study

Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling that arises when an individual holds two opposing views simultaneously. It occurs when a person is faced with conflicting evidence to their personal beliefs or to what they know to be true (though Mark Twain has said, "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so").

This discrepancy creates an uneasy feeling, and the person remains unsettled for the duration of the cognitive dissonance until the dissonance is reduced or eliminated. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive or need to reduce dissonance which has been shown to occur in several different ways, depending on the situation and the individual.

The Appreciate Inquiry (AI) approach focuses on the positive and ensures collaboration and a shared vision within the team. Instead of focusing on what is not working, AI discovers what is working well, acknowledges where the organization and its team members are successful and doing what is “right”, and understands why these areas are functioning well and what steps are being taken to make it productive and successful. AI also aims to learn how this success can be extended within the company. “It is both the vision, and the process for developing this vision, that create the energy to drive change throughout the organization” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129). This approach has been shown to be very effective in creating powerful, productive, and successful teams.

Finally, leadership, which is at the head of all innovation and change, motivating workers to see and work toward the goals of the organization, is a very important link between teams and the organization’s vision and mission. It is leadership that influences and motivates
the employees to work toward a common goal, and there are a myriad of ways in which this influence can take place successfully. Leadership style, while varying from person to person, dictates the manner in which this influence will occur.  

The study focused on the relationship between leadership style, cognitive dissonance, and the success of a team, which was assessed by the presence of Appreciative Inquiry and servant qualities in the leader. Ten leaders of high tech organizations were given a BASIS-A assessment to determine their style of leadership, along with a Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS) to determine the level of internal conflict experienced. Finally, their teams were asked a series of questions about their leadership tactics, particularly their affinity toward the Appreciative Inquiry approach and servant leadership, as well as the leader’s level of cognitive dissonance. 

The study aims to find whether leadership qualities and the level of leadership cognitive dissonance affect the team’s experience of an environment that has been found to be geared toward success (with Appreciative Inquiry and servant leadership approaches).

**Statement of the Problem**

Does leadership style and leader's cognitive dissonance affect team success?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine if, and to what extent, leadership style and cognitive dissonance in the leader affect the success of the team. The study gives two assessments to leaders who are managing a group of employees in a high tech industry, and one assessment to their followers to determine whether there is a relationship between leadership style, cognitive dissonance, and the team’s experience of the servant leadership and Appreciative Inquiry approach.
Significance of the Study

The question of whether leadership style and cognitive dissonance have an effect on team success is an important one to answer because organizations are made up of teams of people, who count on their leadership to take them in the right direction and lead them through goals and tasks toward a vision. Without a healthy and motivated team, the organization cannot have much hope of successfully advancing forward. Leaders have a lot of influence over how healthy and motivated their teams are. If there are areas where they can improve in order to make their teams better prepared to tackle the tasks of tomorrow, it is imperative for them to be aware of these.

There are studies which have found cognitive dissonance to be inversely associated with personal development (Chow et al., 2003). If it is known that cognitive dissonance is linked with a failure to thrive, then answering the question of how cognitive dissonance affects a leader’s ability to help the team thrive becomes very important. Furthermore, if it is known that servant leadership and Appreciative Inquiry benefit the team, their shared vision, and their healthy attitude toward and within the organization, it is also important to test to what degree those leadership attributes affect the employees under that leader.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

One assumption of the current study is that all of the leaders and their followers were honest in answering the assessment questions. Due to the great lengths the researcher went through in order to ensure their privacy, there should not be a concern regarding their truthfulness.
Another assumption of the study is that teams who were answering questions about their leader were not influenced by factors outside of the leader’s power. For instance, it is assumed that various company policies not perceived in a good light by the team did not reflect negatively on the team’s perceptions of the leader.

Among the limitations of the current study, the present sample was limited to ten leaders completing the BASIS-A and Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS), with at least five of their employees responding to the team questionnaire.

While the study did assess leaders of high tech teams, it did not control for the size of the company, the size of the team, the influence of the company culture on the leader, or the experience of the leader. However, since leadership style depends on the leader’s personality and is therefore relatively fixed (Bedeian & Gleuck, 1983, p. 504) the experience of the leader did not pose a concern.

Future studies are encouraged to sample a larger number of leaders and their teams, in addition to looking into how the organization itself may affect the way in which the leader and his team members relate to each other. It would also be advised to assess potential differences in the sizes of the company or the team. Such studies may show different results between large and small corporations, different corporate cultures, as well as large and small teams.

**Definitions**

*Internal Conflict* – a struggle between opposing needs, beliefs, and emotions within a single person.

*Safe, Safety* – the emotional feeling of being safe and secure in one’s environment.
Self-Concept – the individual’s present-self. More specifically, the perception of how the individual is presenting himself to the world in this moment in time (W. Premo, personal communication, June 3, 2011). Self-concept also influences self-worth.

Self-Esteem – confidence in one’s own abilities. This is past oriented and influenced by the choices the individual has made, along with the choices that he was kept from making, i.e. by a powerful parent who never let him be independent, which may have lowered his self-esteem (W. Premo, personal communication, June 3, 2011). Self-esteem influences self-worth.

Self-Ideal – the manner in which one should be or behave, based on a personal set of beliefs and standards. The self-ideal is the future-self that the person is striving toward.

Self-Worth – the self-esteem, self-concept, and self-ideal are integrated together to create self-worth and self awareness. The more aligned the three are, the higher the individual’s self-worth.

Striving – making great efforts to achieve or obtain an envisioned goal.

Team success – the level to which the team’s environment is conducive to traits that have been linked to increased productivity, motivation, collaboration, and effectiveness. Team success, for the purposes of this paper, is defined as the degree to which the team’s environment engages in the Appreciative Inquiry approach and servant leadership characteristics.

Thriving – to grow, develop, prosper, or be successful.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Positive thoughts and behaviour lead to positive feelings, positive actions, and positive results. It is therefore not surprising that more is accomplished through a half-full world view than a negative and pessimistic outlook. The level of optimism in leaders, and the extent to which they share this view with their team, can determine how confidently, strongly, and aggressively they attack problems together or engage in new challenges. Higher positivity yields more optimal results. The team can feel more confident and empowered under the leadership of a positive and optimistic leader and show a higher level of effectiveness and performance (Locander, 2009). The positive outlook approach is Appreciative Inquiry (AI), and it aims to focus on the good aspects of the team and its members, rather than the problems that need to be fixed. This can minimize the amount of blame and distrust between team members, allowing for a more open, honest and collaborative work environment.

Leaders will also have some level of cognitive dissonance present as all individuals do. In leaders, cognitive dissonance can limit the ability to make decisions most appropriate to the situation, either because of fear, or due to their simple inability to see all of the options.

The style of leadership affects how the leader relates to team members, which has a strong influence on the team’s perception of the leader and their place on the team. Leaders who create an inclusive and safe working environment allow their followers to be free from worry about interpersonal issues so they can focus on utilizing their skills to work toward their shared goals.
This Literature Review looks at cognitive dissonance in individuals, primarily leaders, and to what extent this can hinder that person’s ability to perform optimally. It reviews the servant leadership style and its focus on the mission and the needs of the team to collaboratively and optimistically work toward a common goal. Finally, Appreciative Inquiry, the very definition of which encompasses focus on the positive, attempts to show how its practice delivers positive feelings among team members and ultimately produces more efficient, productive and effective employees.

Cognitive Dissonance

Introduction. Many children are told that they can grow up to be anything they want if they just work hard and dream big. Many kids will also have elaborate ideas for the future when asked about their plans. It seems as though there is no limit and there is no end to their imagination of possibilities. Somewhere along the way, as people grow up, they experience life, they hit bumps and failures along the way, they learn to understand the rules and appropriate conduct of behaviour, and they also learn what is acceptable as a dream and what a realistic goal looks like. They adapt this shift in thinking because of self preservation (Kase, 2009), because they would rather be safe than fail (especially in front of other people) and they are also not comfortable looking foolish by claiming to accomplish what others can only see as impossible. People learn the appropriate ways to behave and they cast aside their aspirations to be professional basketball players, astronauts, or .... a Princess. They conform to the norm because society would never take a lawyer seriously who said that his three year goal was to live on the Moon. However, people still do the “impossible”, people still achieve what could only have been dreamed of before and while on the subject of the Moon – humans never
would have landed on the Moon if they thought that they were dreaming too big. A healthy level of realism is always suggested, but one must be careful that it is not at the expense of underestimating one’s potential.

**Definition.** Cognitive dissonance is an uncomfortable feeling that arises when an individual holds two opposing views simultaneously (Festinger, 1957). It occurs when a person is faced with conflicting evidence to their personal beliefs or to what they know to be true. This creates an uneasy feeling and the person feels unsettled for the duration of the cognitive dissonance, until the dissonance is reduced or eliminated. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive or need to reduce dissonance (Festinger, 1957) which can be achieved “by adding consonant cognitions, subtracting dissonant cognitions, reducing the importance of dissonant cognitions, or some combination of these,” (Harmon-Jones & Brehm, 1986, p. 5).

Studies have shown that people will experience cognitive dissonance if they engage in any behaviour that is inconsistent with their attitude “even when no aversive consequences result from the behaviour” (Harmon-Jones & Brehm, 1986, p. 13). The same study showed that despite there being no evidence of their behaviour causing aversive consequences, it did still “produce dissonance, an aversive state” (Harmon-Jones & Brehm, 1986, p. 13) in individuals. It is therefore the mere presence of two opposing views that causes cognitive dissonance, even if the two conflicting ideas will have no negative effect.

**The influence of past hurts.** Sigmund Freud described how all human behaviour is designed to gratify personal needs and how hidden unfulfilled needs deep in the unconscious often command the fullness of one’s attention (Cassel, 1985). “Using psychoanalysis he was
able to reveal the presence and nature of unconscious hurts which thereby become master of self through dominant brain cognitive direction” (Chow, 2001, p. 45). This means that according to Freud, people who have experienced past hurts and who continue to live with these unresolved hurts may in fact still be influenced by them in their present lives, most often without even realizing it. It also states that these hurts “become master of self”, meaning that they are in fact strongly influencing the individual in his present behaviour. This can have multiple unwanted consequences, mainly because these feelings come from a place of hurt, not happiness, so their ability to produce positive reactions is rather limited.

Additionally, “such hurts are believed to be directly associated with different areas of one’s life space where personal needs have not been gratified. The theory in Second Force Psychology follows that when the individual is fully aware of such areas of one's life space that foster such unconscious hurts, the individual on a conscious level can seek to find personal ways to relieve the hurts that are present” (Chow, 2001, p.45).

**Unresolved internal conflicts.** Leon Festinger presented the world with cognitive dissonance as “feelings of unpleasantness which an individual possesses lying deep in the unconscious, and where the individual seldom, if ever, realizes the reasons for such feelings” (Chow, 2001, p. 45). Cognitive dissonance can be caused by conflicting beliefs (i.e. the origin of the world according to the Bible vs. according to science) or through not complying with social conventionalism. The strength of an individual’s cognitive dissonance is affected by two factors: the importance the person places on each belief, and the number of conflicting beliefs the individual holds (Festinger, 1957). According to the creator of the Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS), Dr. Peter Chow, “The Cognitive Dissonance Test was developed based on Festinger’s
theory to serve as a means for helping individuals become aware of the unconscious hurts (cognitive dissonance), so that on a conscious level they might take corrective action to eliminate or redirect such hurts” (Chow, 2002).

In other words, individuals go through life reacting to stimuli and behaving in a manner that is most appropriate with both their feelings at the time and their ability to maintain composure. Cognitive dissonance is a state of being for them; however, once they become aware of these subconscious drivers of their behaviour, they are better able to recognize them and have a higher possibility of changing their actions if desired.

Cognitive dissonance and unresolved internal conflicts, which negatively influence present choices and reactions can be a hindrance to anyone, especially to a person who is in a leadership position and is in charge of people and making critical decisions affecting others. Are those decisions truly what is best for the company and its people, or are those decisions what is perceived to be best in accordance with past experiences, traumas, hurts, and fears?

Human thoughts and behaviours are complicated. There are many driving forces, and multiple different stimuli that can get triggered as a result of the past. It is not uncommon for people to continue to make the same mistake for years. They become accustomed to finding themselves in bad business deals, losing a lot of money every few years, or continually getting involved with a love interest that always leaves them severely heartbroken. They are unable to see the mistake, while to others it is quite obvious. This is because they are functioning in their own perception of reality. Their behaviour may not make sense to those around them, but it makes perfect sense to them. Within their world, within their belief system and their fears, anxieties, and drives, their actions and reactions to the circumstances of their world are the
ones that make the most sense. This is precisely why they continue to find themselves in the same situations.

This type of behaviour can also be self-fulfilling. If a person continues to engage in bad business deals, losing money every few years, this will keep confirming to him that he cannot do better. The same is true for multiple failed love interests. It is not unlikely for individuals to assume that they cannot find a suitable life partner because there is something wrong with them. How can they think differently with so much evidence to support their beliefs? They create that evidence from the choices they made, which is a result from their own past hurts.

Dr. Peter Chow has said the following of individuals and their unconscious hurts: “on a conscious level they might take corrective action to eliminate or redirect such hurts” (Chow, 2001, p. 45). Similarly, Dr. Freud believed that through psychoanalysis and free association, individuals can bring to the surface repressed feelings rooted deep in the subconscious, and through the understanding of those feelings on a conscious level, they can begin to heal. In other words, a person cannot change something of which he is not aware, and cannot correct issues without knowing their root cause.

Each person is different, with different experiences, thoughts, feelings, interpretations, and beliefs about the world. The aspect that makes this even more complex is that for any situation that occurs, there can be any number of different interpretations based on the individual perceptions of those experiencing the event. According to Adler, each person has his own perception about life’s circumstances and this creates his own meaning of events based on his individual way of thinking. As Adler pointed out, “We cannot say that if a child is badly
nourished he will become a criminal. We must see what conclusion the child has drawn” ("Alfred Adler Quotes", 2010).

**Awareness to bring about change.** Life’s circumstances feel different to different people. Life and the human psychology is not one-size fits all which is why every hurt individuals experience throughout their life is personal and unique to them. How emotions and cognitive dissonance manifest themselves throughout one’s life as a result of those feelings and hurts is also unique. Circumstances can begin to change when individuals becomes aware of the source of their actions and behaviours, and begin to understand the true cause of their feelings.

Freud used psychoanalysis to provide his patients “with a full and complete knowledge of their hidden and unconscious feelings so that they in turn could use conscious controls to deal more effectively with problem areas of their lives.” (Chow, 2002). Cognitive dissonance can do the same with appropriate awareness from the individual.

This awareness becomes much more important in light of study findings, which indicate that personal development is inversely associated with cognitive dissonance (Chow et al., 2003). Therefore, a higher degree of thriving is associated with a lower degree of dissonance in an individual. This finding provides a better understanding of how cognitive dissonance can significantly affect one’s ability to achieve higher goals and push through obstacles in the way of success. Ambition and thriving are an important and key element of success, especially in a leader whose responsibility it is to encourage and motivate thriving and ambition in his followers. Reducing dissonance becomes extremely important, and there are several ways in which it can be done.
Reducing dissonance. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance and that they do this in one of several ways: they either change their actions to reflect their beliefs, or they change their beliefs to minimize the dissonance (Festinger, 1957). As an example, smokers are faced with the cognitive dissonance of continually doing something to their lungs and their bodies which overwhelming evidence suggests is harmful. They may attempt to stop smoking, or they can decide to minimize the warnings and believe that it will not happen to them. Whatever the approach, the dissonance creates an uncomfortable feeling inside an individual and enhances feelings of anxiety until the dissonance is reduced or eliminated.

Dissonance can also be reduced by justifying (one’s thoughts or actions), blaming (someone else or the circumstances), and denying. People tend to believe their choices are the right ones, despite contrary evidence. A great example of cognitive dissonance can be found in the fable, “The Fox and the Grapes” where the fox desires the beautiful looking grapes but they are too high for her to reach. In finding the grapes unattainable, the fox deems them “sour” and criticizes their quality and appeal. It is not uncommon for an individual to decide that something unattainable is no longer desired. People decide that something is bad or worse simply because they do not or cannot have it. The misquotation, “Money is the root of all evil” is a good example because there is no evidence to show that those who have more money automatically start behaving in a more evil way. Some people do tend to look at wealthy individuals as dishonest and corrupt and there are certainly wealthy individuals who are not very kind. There are also many less wealthy individuals who are not so kind either. This example becomes especially telling when the original quote is considered which states, “For the love of
money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (Source 1 Timothy 6:10) KJV (The King James Bible).

**Cognitive dissonance experiments.** Jack Brehm, (Brehm, 1956) conducted an experiment in 1956 where 225 female students were asked to rate common appliances, after which they were given the choice to take one of the appliances home as a gift. Upon choosing one to take home, the women were asked again to rate the different appliances. The new evaluations showed that the women gave a higher rating to the appliances they took home and a lower rating to the appliances they chose not to take home (Brehm, 1956). Cognitive dissonance can explain this difference because the female students confirmed their decision was the right one by improving their opinion (rating) of the appliance they chose. They liked the item they were not able to take home just a little less than they did before.

The women’s preference became more biased after they made the choice, which indicates that the females perceived something to be better simply because they chose it over something else. Based on this experiment and others of its kind, it can be inferred that individuals may believe something to be ‘good’ or ‘better’ simply because it is theirs. If this could be a potential tendency in leaders as well, it may cause organizational issues when leaders show inclinations toward decisions they have already made, merely because they have already made them.

Another example of how powerful cognitive dissonance can be in strengthening one’s views in the presence of strong evidence to the contrary, is the explanation found in the book “When Prophecy Fails” by Leon Festinger. Festinger describes cult members who believed that
the world was coming to an end and that their cult would be the only one saved. They waited for the planet’s demise on one particular day, and when that did not happen, the cult members did not feel they were tricked or victims of a prank as one might expect. They instead chose to believe that they were spared the destruction and given another chance (Festinger, 2010).

Instead of giving up their belief when presented with overwhelming evidence to contradict it, the cult members actually strengthened their conviction. They reduced their cognitive dissonance by justifying the occurrence (in this case, “we were given another chance”).

As seen in the above example, the motivation to minimize cognitive dissonance can drive people to strengthen their original beliefs when faced with conflicting facts, and this can become especially true “when people have committed to a belief publicly” (Only a Game, 2006). There appears to be an element of pride or self-protection present, whereby an individual will stand by existing beliefs in the face of overwhelming evidence, especially if that individual has publicly announced the (disproved) belief. In most cases, people are unaware of this self-preservation. That belief drives them to make choices in life (as well as choices for the organization and the health of the company) even though the choices may be driven by their need to reduce cognitive dissonance.

If research shows that one of the ways individuals reduce cognitive dissonance in the presence of conflicting information is by strengthening their original belief, what impact can this have on a leader? Does it hurt the organization if the leader chooses to not be flexible in light of new evidence or does it help the company because he is strong in his resolve?

The impact on organizations. Companies need to be flexible in order to thrive and survive. Organizations need innovation, growth, fresh ideas, and change and transformation
should be part of the culture because our world is ever-changing and those who do not follow suit will fall behind. If one looks at an organization like an organism, as Capra did (Reardon, 2001), and see it as an entity that needs to move freely, interact with its environment, learn and grow, then it can be seen that change and innovation are at the forefront of successful and thriving corporations. In situations of rapid change, Senge postulated that those companies that are flexible, adaptive, and productive are the ones that will excel (Senge, 2010).

Therefore, in order for an organization to be successful and thriving, it needs to have strong elements of flexibility, innovation, collaboration and openness to new ideas. This appears to be in contrast to previous examples where cognitive dissonance has influenced a leader. It should also be noted that there are many ways a person can choose to reduce dissonance, and strengthening original beliefs and decisions is only one of them. When faced with cognitive dissonance, a leader can also choose to acquire a new set of beliefs in order to reduce the conflict (or dissonance) in their thoughts (Festinger, 1957).

This means that in the presence of new ideas, and when shown evidence to contradict the believed effectiveness or benefits of current actions, the leader’s chosen manner to reduce this dissonance depends on his personality and his tendencies. He could strengthen his original belief and reaffirm his actions, or he could change his beliefs and actions in accordance to the new ideas presented to him. If the leader is aware of this, he will be better equipped to make an informed decision and do what is most useful for everyone involved.

Change and transformation, innovation, and adaptability is important for any organization, and leaders are the driving forces behind making that happen. It is up to them to motivate, guide, and overlook the transition from the current state to a collective and shared
future. As leaders, they must be free of limiting and conflicting beliefs. If a leader holds two opposing views about moving forward and achieving organizational goals, this could create many barriers along the way.

**A leader’s outlook.** The ability to accomplish something starts with the belief that it is possible. Too often people deem something impossible or they push it aside as something to be done later, not realizing that it is their own fear and their own lack of confidence in their abilities which is preventing that task from being tackled (Kase, 2009). This is particularly destructive behavior in a leader whose actions impact the organization, the team, and everyone else who may be affected by his choices. There are supervisors, managers, CEOs, and Presidents who, despite their best efforts, do not seem able to reach their desired goals or bring their company to the expected outcome. They speak of their dreams for the organization, they have timesheets and logged hours, business plans and numerous strategic planning meetings to show for their inexhaustible efforts, yet their final result falls short of their desired goal. Why?

One possibility is the presence of cognitive dissonance where the leader truly wants to achieve goal A and understands all of the benefits associated with the success it would bring, yet unknowing to him, also harbours fears about the negative consequences of that very success (Kase, 2009). In other words, through trying to accomplish A, the leader, in his unresolved concerns about what else that may bring, could be engaging in activities which are not conducive to achieving his goal. Unfortunately, these sabotaging behaviours are typically not conscious (Pappo, 1983), making it more difficult to identify and correct.

**Understanding of self.** Many of these leaders who want change, improvement, success, and their desired goals to be realized, will hire external consultants to aid them in reaching
their targets. However, unless and until these consultants are able to help their clients determine the root cause of their problems, the chances of long term transformation are rather slim. This is because surface fixes do not work – one cannot change the fruits of a tree until one changes the roots.

There are many reasons why a person might want to achieve result A, all the while focusing all energies on work that will attain result B (not similar to A). This “self-sabotage” can happen for many reasons and it occurs when “one part of you wants to accomplish your goal and another hidden part doesn’t, due to fear or other reasons” (Kase, 2009, p.22). According to Kase (2009), there are dozens of reasons why a person might not be able to achieve success, but seven factors that she outlines in her article, Get Out of Your Own Way (Kase, 2009, p.23), are the following:

1. Frozen by the fear of failure
2. Unable to sustain self-motivation
3. Not really ready for change
4. Procrastinating and engaging in analysis paralysis
5. Expecting perfection
6. Experiencing distraction and difficulty focusing
7. Making excuses about time and money

Kase (2009) also claims that when one’s reasons to change outweigh the reasons not to change is when the person is really ready to make the transformation into something new. In other words, when one belief becomes stronger than the other, the result is a situation which reduces cognitive dissonance. This is congruent with human nature which always seeks
comfort, safety, and would rather operate in the known than the unknown (J. Reardon, personal communication, April, 2009). However, there is a point at which a person will seek to make the changes, once the reasons to do so outweigh the reasons not to, as mentioned earlier. The road to change, therefore, is paved with struggles and failures of wanting to but being afraid to proceed, until it becomes too hard to continue on the same path and a change is finally made. Higher success will come to those who can make those changes and leaps forward before things become too hard, before they spend money, time, and resources attempting to achieve and avoiding to achieve at the same time. Or rather, it will come to those with less cognitive dissonance.

One of the reasons people engage in self-sabotage is the fear of success, as individuals who are identified as having a high fear of academic success “tend to engage in self-sabotage behavior at the approach of success and display a tendency to repudiate their academic competence” (Pappo, 1983, p. 40). Success brings about notoriety, change, and of course, a new standard that the person has not only set for himself but also shown others he can achieve. A behavioural study done by Pappo in 1983 indicates strong evidence of self-sabotage among those who scored high on the fear-of-success questionnaires. As much as everyone wants to be successful and wants to do their best, somewhere deep down other things may be at play that we may want more than success – such as safety, belonging, and significance (J. Reardon personal communication, April, 2009). Success throws the individual into an entirely new realm, into the unknown and into the spotlight – which could prove to be an uncomfortable position.
Internal conflicts yield unfavourable results. “We have aspects to ourselves that may act in contradiction to, or that are competing with, harmony.” (Stolz, 2009, p. 17). What most individuals, and leaders of teams and organizations, may not understand is that their beliefs and attitudes shape their path in a profound way and that the manner in which they think about their progress can (and in a lot of cases will), in fact, impact that progress. “It is very hard to attract what we are actively repelled by or resentful of. It defies logic. When people harbor contradictory beliefs about money, they often experience struggle rather than abundance” (Stolz, 2009, p. 17). This is a great example of how cognitive dissonance can create a negative or less desired reality. When leaders are not able to achieve their goals, but are unclear as to why, a good place to look would be within themselves and ask what the benefit is of not achieving what they desire.

“Studies have consistently shown that our perceptions and expectations are biased in a self-serving manner” (Bazerman, 2003, p.3). There is also a study suggesting that how people react to success or failure depends on their beliefs about intelligence (Plaks, 2008). Essentially, if a person believes himself to be intelligent, his results will more closely reflect those of an intelligent person. The study also found that students performed worse if they believed that they would perform worse and better if they thought they would achieve higher scores, regardless of their actual ability (Plaks, 2008). This finding is of great impact to an understanding of how a person’s mind, perception of reality, and belief about his own capabilities directly influence that same reality. The unfortunate result of this is that once the predicted reality is achieved (as was originally influenced by the individual), it only serves as
proof that the individual was correct in the first place, further solidifying the belief and perpetuating a similar future outcome.

In order to change the result, the person (or leader in this case) must first believe that it can be different. From there, the leader has a greater potential to influence the result toward the openly desired outcome (Plaks, 2008).

**Summary.** Everyone experiences cognitive dissonance and self-sabotaging behaviour (Kase, 2009) and these can hinder individual and team progress. The goal is to make those experiences less frequent and as short as possible. Otherwise, one is left in a stationary state, unable to move forward productively and successfully due to an internal conflict.

Cognitive dissonance appears to play a large role in the lives and decisions of leaders. As mentioned earlier, individuals are naturally motivated to reduce their dissonance in order to eliminate the feelings of discomfort that come with conflicting beliefs. It cannot be predicted how the leader might choose to reduce his dissonance, but to approach the situation with the understanding that his past experiences do affect his present behaviours will allow him to better act according to what is present instead of reacting on his triggered emotions.

It is important for all individuals, especially leaders, to actively work on reducing their cognitive dissonance, because its presence will adversely affect their ability to progress, succeed, and thrive in life. It is equally important that the reduction of dissonance does not happen at the expense of creativity, innovation, and the introduction of new ideas. The best approach is to be aware of the situation, understand that emotional reactions to events will happen, and be able to maintain a rational approach to the circumstances. It is important to contemplate all options – even ones that leaders find uncomfortable. Perhaps the discomfort
arises from cognitive dissonance and not the fact that it is a bad decision. Cognitive dissonance appears to be important in directing one’s actions in the world, and its understanding can be helpful in making appropriate and informed decisions.

**Leadership Style**

The most important attribute of an effective leader is his ability to motivate, empower, and drive his team through their shared vision and toward the desired goals. Leadership style is important only so far as to be able to promote a healthy work environment, create trust and belonging within the team, and facilitate a productive and successful completion of tasks. The style of leadership is the means in which the leader accomplishes those goals.

The website http://www.genv.net/en-ca/dream_it/team_building/what_leader defines leader as “a person who guides others toward a common goal, showing the way by example, and creating an environment in which other team members feel actively involved in the entire process. A leader is not the boss of the team but, instead, the person that is committed to carrying out the mission of the Venture.” A true leader, therefore, works with his team toward a shared vision, places energy and effort in creating a collaborative environment, ensures members feel actively involved, and acts as another committed member of the team, rather than the ruler of the employees.

**Servant leadership, a closer look.** A particular kind of leader, called servant leader, exhibits the above mentioned qualities but also places priority on the needs of his team, colleagues, and clients (Wis, 2002). “Servant leadership differs from other models of leadership in that it focuses on leaders meeting the
needs of followers; if followers are treated as ends in themselves, rather than means to an end, they will reach their potential and so perform optimally,” (Waterman, 2011).

Servant leaders focus on people, principles, and the big picture and they “are not focused on displaying their gifts; rather, they use gifts to make a difference, to create positive change, and in this way they serve rather than impose; they empower rather than control.” (Wis, 2002, p.19). This paints an image of an individual whose vision is to improve the company, lifting his team to new levels of achievement – ensuring collaboration, cooperation, and inclusivity. It describes a person who is not interested in self, but rather the amelioration of his environment and whose focus is on the task to be completed.

An organization which has this kind of a positive example in a leader, one whose purpose is not self-serving, can establish pure intentions to work toward a common goal. “Leadership effects are realized through the fair treatment and satisfaction of follower needs” (Mayer et al., 2008, p.193).

Trust. Servant leaders place importance on intrinsically motivating their team by focusing on their needs, valuing their contributions, appreciating their efforts, “trusting that individuals can accomplish the goal, that they possess untapped potential, and that, if they are shown where they can go, they will want to go there” (Wis, 2002, p.18). That statement is empowering on its own, and when implemented in practice, it can return significant benefits. This is of great importance because understanding the expectations and the belief in another human being has the ability to propel that person beyond where he thought he was able to go. Success breeds success, so when workers get a taste of their abilities, when they see their potential as is shown to them by their servant leader, they will have a stronger desire to
continue performing at a higher level, and they will be motivated to keep achieving (Mayer et al., 2008). It is good to note that this kind of an environment also instills confidence and trust in individuals and confident people will feel more secure to step up and push themselves even further.

The servant leader, as mentioned earlier, trusts in his team and believes they are capable of completing the task at hand. The servant leader does not engage in coercive strategies or tricky ploys to extrinsically motivate his people. It is exactly this attitude that results in a higher functioning team. When a company believes in its team’s ability to achieve success for the organization, when it is confident that every worker knows his job and is working in the best interest of the company, the mere presence of that expectation creates an environment which perpetuates that behaviour until it becomes the culture. When this trust is not present, the company may start monitoring its workers, even hiring more staff to find out more about the employees’ daily activities (Vandenberghe, 2009). This costs those companies valuable energy, resources, and time on what could be utilized more usefully to achieve a common organizational goal. However, the real cost could be much higher than that. It has been found that monitoring and micromanaging employees could undermine their intrinsic motivation (Ren, 2010) and as a result may lead them to work less efficiently and less effectively – the opposite of what is desired. The outcome is a team and an organization which is simply not achieving as much as it could for the avoidable reason of employee distrust.

A servant leader will ask what is best for the team and focus on the people’s needs more than the tasks to be completed. The result of this attitude is a leadership based on serving the
team first rather than himself. The servant leader trusts that in doing so, the goals of the organization will be reached (Wis, 2002).

In addition, by serving the team and ensuring that their needs are met, the leader will create a rapport with his team, further establishing that trust and loyalty (Mayer et al., 2008). This will help the team to be motivated to work, and it will play a vital role should the organization experience an acquisition, merger, or other types of major changes that may weaken the strength of bond between employee and the organization (Vandenberghe, 2009).

A strongly developed commitment to supervisors among employees will be important in this context, as such employees are expected to reduce their turnover intentions and to stay with the organization (Vandenberghe, 2009). This can add tremendous value to those organizations going through major change because the commitment is to the leader and not the extrinsic circumstances the company happens to be going through. In having strong bonds between leaders and teams, loyalty, trust, commitment, and motivation toward a common goal are emphasized. However, it would be best if the team’s commitment and loyalty was toward the leader as well as the organization. It is not wise to have the success, motivation, and future of a team depend on one person who may choose to pursue other career options at a later time.

**On purpose with the mission.** Servant leaders are primarily focused on serving those around them and they “see life as a mission, not a career” (Wis, 2002, p.19). This puts them in a different frame of mind distinguishable from those who see their work as just a job to get done. When life is a mission, the mental attitude becomes “I am doing this for the betterment of the organization/people/the world”, rather than “I am doing this for myself”. The shift moves from “doing what needs to be done” to “doing whatever it takes”. This kind of powerful
approach can mean the difference between success and failure because the servant leader is working toward something that is greater than himself (Wis, 2002). The commitment is then to the company, to the team, to the goal and the driving force toward achieving the end result. Since the focus is on the task and what needs to be done to achieve it, the leader is naturally inclined to enlist the help of his team, as he does not see a threat to his position. It is not about him, it is about the task. The end result is more likely to be an inclusive, collaborative, and cooperative environment, one that truly focuses on the health of the organization and not individual agendas.

“Servant-leaders tend to be people whom others enjoy being around—they are attractive not because of charisma but because of purpose. Everyone wants to be a part of something purposeful and significant” (Wis, 2002, p.19). This sets the foundation for intrinsic motivation, for a shared goal and common values to be created. “If there is employee-organization value congruence, in other words, if there is less discrepancy in values between individual members and the organization, employees are more likely to be reliable and trustworthy to achieve the initial aim of the delegation” (Wis, 2002, p. 18). It is easier for a person to believe in another’s traits and assets if he possesses those attributes as well. Furthermore, it creates the essence of mutual trust when workers see their leader exemplifying behaviour he expects to see from them. When his example stands as a reminder and a motivator of their own strength, integrity, and ability, the team is internally motivated toward their common goal.

**Summary.** There is definite importance in mutual trust, in believing in one’s team and leadership, in knowing that everyone is on the same side working toward a shared vision. This
will make a difference in how individuals feel at work, how productive they are, how open and creative their progress is, and most importantly, how well they function with their fellow coworkers. The company culture is the essence of the approach that individuals and employees take and a leader lays the foundation for that culture. Congruence in the shared vision will go a long way in reinforcing organizational trust. Servant leaders, through their own focus on the purpose and through their perception of life as a mission, encourage collaboration and participation. He believes in empowering and encouraging his team, his expectations are high but not without reciprocation, and he will very likely be pleasantly rewarded by his team when they achieve his expectations.

Leadership style is important as a means of communicating with the followers and a way to influence and motivate them to achieve the team’s and company’s vision and mission. Leadership style cannot be significantly changed, but all leaders can enjoy the benefits of servant leadership through increasing and sharpening their own servant leadership qualities.

Behaviours in leaders can be changed or redirected, and if leaders are aware of the positive responses they could have as a result of focusing more on their teams and putting their needs first, they may be more open to taking that approach. The focus on completing tasks, problem solving, and the bottom line is not necessarily the best way to achieve successful results in those areas. The intrinsic motivation of a whole army of people who will collectively work toward achieving successful results in those areas – that is powerful.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry was first introduced by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University and The Taos Institute as an organizational transformation tool that focuses on the
positive aspects of the team and the organization and helps build success by learning from previous success (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129).

**Problem solving.** The most common techniques of resolving organizational issues “begin by identifying and elucidating the problems facing the organization, then lead participants through a process of identifying, selecting, and implementing a solution” (Sekerka, Brumbaugh & Cooperrider, 2006, p.452). Most organizational consultants who are invited into a company focus on the problems the teams are experiencing, issue warnings about what is not working properly, and aim to “fix” what is broken.

This approach overpoweringly displays the negative aspects of an organization, brings to the surface the issues within a team, and certainly arouses bad feelings among employees because people start believing that their company is full of problems (Locander, 2009). “Design methodologies often emphasize a structured process and overlook or downplay the role that the skills, abilities, and dispositions of individuals play in the success of a particular project” (Avital, Lyytinen, Boland, Butler, Dougherty, Fineout, Jansen, Levine, Rifkin, Venable, 2006, p.527).

While this approach has been used in organizational development and transformation practices for a while, pointing out problems, displaying inadequacies, discussing shortcomings, and fixating on everything that is wrong causes people to become defensive, anxious, and fearful. This problem solving approach “causes people to spend more time looking in the mirror assessing what went wrong than planning where to go next” (Locander, 2009). It also does not take long in the problem solving approach “before people become resigned to the notion that their place of work is filled with problems” (Locander, 2009, p. 30) and “it reduces
the possibility of generating new theories and new images of social reality that might help them transcend the current situation” (Locander, 2009, p. 30). This can leave employees feeling discouraged, incapable, and insignificant to make a difference.

An unhappy and discouraged employee will not work as effectively, efficiently, productively, and creatively as one who feels exhilarated and empowered, who can look around his organization and only see the great benefits of working there. The most likely response to a fixation on the negative will be “blame, denial, defensiveness, anger or depression. Generally, neither people nor systems like to discuss their problems. And even when they do, they usually resist acknowledging their contribution to the problem” (Locander, 2009, p. 30). It does not sound like denial, blame, and resistance to open communication is very productive to resolving issues and “fixing” what is broken.

Managers tend to see themselves as problem solvers and as a result they seek to find issues in the organization and fail to develop a way of thinking about the strengths of the system. “Organizations that expend great energy fixing what is wrong often create the sense that no matter how many problems are solved something is bound to go wrong soon. Such an approach might generate a cadre of problem experts and heroes. But it can also lead to a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness: no matter how well we do, something will always go wrong,” (Barrett, 1995).

The goal of any organizational development or transformation is to transition from point A to a perceived improved point B as seamlessly as possible and hopefully with less problems than before. The goal is certainly not to blame individuals, make them feel bad, or single them out as destructive to the organization. However, as mentioned earlier, it appears that this is
exactly what happens in the problem solving approach. This is highly unfortunate as “no company, corporation, or community can move from good to great merely by healing wounds” (Ramsey, 2006, p. 9).

**A positive outlook.** “Appreciative Inquiry was developed as an alternative to overcome these negative consequences of diagnostic approaches” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.450). The initial insight to apply Appreciative Inquiry stemmed from the realization that in attempting to improve the circumstances within an organization, “the focus is often solely on identifying problems, failures and other culprits that need to be fixed, improved, eliminated or prevented” (Avital et al., 2006, p.520).

It is therefore important to understand the process of Appreciative Inquiry and how it attempts to approach organizational issues in a different way. It “was developed as an alternative to overcome these negative consequences of diagnostic approaches” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.520). It looks at what works within an organization; it focuses on what is good about the team, the company, and their efforts. “It focuses on desirable scenarios and visions of the future by asking what could and might be as opposed to an attempt to predict the future by asking what will be” (Avital et al., 2006, p.521). This could even be the more appropriate approach if one notes the idea behind transformation. It is not to arrive at a predictable future (“asking what will be”) but rather to arrive at a desired and created future (asking what could and might be). “Participants are guided by a trained facilitator to envision a healthy, effective organization in which they take an active role in contributing to the organization’s success” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.452).
“Appreciative Inquiry begins with the organization as an asset to be celebrated, a more positive perspective that counters the initial apprehension and tension generated by diagnostic approaches” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.452). This does not mean that Appreciative Inquiry is blind to problems and that the process does not address issues. It simply means that the team members are not weighed down by a list of problems they have to solve, but rather that they are lifted and congratulated on what they are doing right, and with that, empowered to continue and to improve. “The goal of this process is not to ignore or hide problems, but rather to lay a positive foundation for change as a productive, rather than destructive, process” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.452).

It is also worth noting that research has discovered that “the human brain does not register the word not. Rather, to alter human behaviour, it is more effective to positively tell the person what is expected” than to tell him what he should avoid or what behaviour is not desired. (Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006).

“It is not uncommon for employees to resist change, even when the change is desirable in order to help the organization accomplish its mission” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129). This is simply human resistance to change, and cognitive dissonance likely plays a part in this unwillingness to be open to a different approach. “Faced with the choice between changing one’s mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everybody gets busy on the proof,” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129). Therefore, if this resistance is known to be true, what approach can be taken to ensure the maximum possible motivation in individuals to be open to change? Simply put – how to get a group resistant to change to be excited about making changes?
Appreciative Inquiry answers that question rather well. By focusing on what works and by putting energy and value on the successful aspects of the team, the process of Appreciative Inquiry awakens positive feelings in team members and allows them to see how their contribution is helping the organization. It shows the team how despite potential problems within the group, they are still providing value to the organization and their customers. This motivates them to produce even better results, allowing them to be more open and inviting to the idea of change.

**Appreciative inquiry vs. problem solving – a comparison.** Herb Stevenson, President and CEO of The Cleveland Consulting Group (Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006) drew a comparison between the two approaches – problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry.

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<tr>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
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<td>“Felt Need” – Identification of a Problem</td>
<td>Appreciating and Valuing the best of “what is”</td>
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<td>Analysis of Causes</td>
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<td>Action Planning (treatment)</td>
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<td>Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved</td>
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**Feelings of trust.** Another benefit of AI for organizational consultants is that its approach allows them to learn more about the organization than they might through more conventional methods. Employees tend to believe that consultants are at the company to “fix” problems and to figure out what is not working. Through posing positive questions, team
members shift their mindset and begin to feel more at ease, naturally pulling them to conduct themselves “more openly, with less defensiveness or fear of reprisal” (Michael, 2005, p.226). This creates a rapport between the consultant and the employees, as they begin to see the consultant as helpful and non-threatening.

The President of GTE, Thomas White, posed the question, "In the long run, what is more likely to be useful: Demoralizing a successful workforce by concentrating on their failures or helping them over their last few hurdles by building a bridge with their success?" (Mohr & Watkins, 2001a, p. 7).

People enjoy talking about their achievements and they feel good remembering and sharing their accomplishments. In addition, because people feel so good accentuating the positive and displaying their (and the organization’s) good qualities, they are also more likely to offer more of their time to the consultant (Michael, 2005). This can reinforce the positive feelings, further build on the rapport with the consultant, and help with the transformation process.

**Building of confidence.** “The most pronounced influence of Appreciative Inquiry is on organizational members’ view of self, whereby Appreciative Inquiry leads to a view of self as efficacious and capable while at the same time reducing employees’ focus on negative aspects of the self which may have detrimental effects on performance” (Sekerka et al., 2006, p.473). Therefore, a uniformly positive workplace, an environment which encourages a “can” attitude, sets up a brilliant platform for a healthy work environment in which employees are able to freely perform their daily tasks and work toward a common organizational goal. “The underlying premise of this system is that all human organizations move and grow toward
whatever they routinely ask questions about” (Ramsey, 2006, p.9). This implies that focus matters and where energy is placed is important. Empowering employees, reinforcing their abilities, and ensuring they feel good and confident about themselves will not only create a positive environment for everyone involved, but also ensure optimal output from the team. If the employees believe in themselves and their abilities, they are more likely to utilize their skills confidently.

Thoughts become actions. The Appreciative Inquiry method asserts that people are constantly creating our perceived reality (Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006). Problem solving focuses on the problems that need to be solved. It creates a situation where the energy is being placed on what is wrong and what does not work. If team members continue to focus on problems, problems are all they will see. “Traditional approaches to problem solving are, by definition, a way of seeing the world as a glass half empty. The Appreciative Inquiry approach is an alternative process to bring about organizational change by looking at the glass as half full. Essentially, Appreciative Inquiry varies from other approaches to organizational change in that it builds on what works well,” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129).

In other words, the only plants that grow are the ones you water. People largely feel good when presented with evidence that they are doing a good job. They enjoy hearing that their actions are creating a positive effect rather than being told how they are failing. With this in mind, they are also more inclined to continue engaging in behaviours which give them a good feeling (positive feedback) and keep producing the same good result for which they have received praise.
The appreciative inquiry environment. What end result is expected in AI environments? “Appreciative Inquiry is an approach that is uniquely suited to organizations that seek to be collaborative, inclusive, and genuinely caring for both the people within the organization and for those they serve,” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 130).

Organizations which approach their business and their people with AI are looking at a more collaborative, cooperative, inclusive, caring, and open team which directs energy toward its strengths, and builds on its successes while looking positively into the future. This team is not inhibited by past failures or worries about mistakes or blaming. This team relies on each other to work toward a common goal.

Unfortunately, many organizations today, especially in North America, appear to believe the opposite needs to happen in order to have a successful company. Many corporations who see their workers as expendable liabilities will not see success in the long run if all they focus on is their bottom line. Rick Hendrick, chairman of the Hendrick Automotive Group and one of North Carolina’s most successful businessmen according to “The Chronicle”, openly values the importance of caring for his employees “in order to maximize their effectiveness and improve business,” (Schwartz, 2011). “You don’t have to be ruthless [as a company] to be successful,” Hendrick states. “It’s the human capital inside the company that’s so important. The companies that don’t believe human capital is important don’t last.” (Schwartz, 2011).

Hendrick made a very strong statement. If employees are needed to work efficiently and effectively, to brainstorm ideas and ways to help the company be successful, and then execute those plans and goals, they are the ones driving the organization to success. The employees are the ones needed to perform at their best in order for the company to be at its best. This can
only happen if employees are given the resources to do their jobs well and if they feel valued and appreciated in their work environment. Furthermore, humans have three basic needs according to Adler. They have the need for safety, belonging, and significance (Reardon, 2001). If only one of those is missing, the individual’s performance may falter since his primal and basic human needs are not being met. With Appreciative Inquiry, the sense of community and belonging opens the gateway to safety within the group, and creates significance when the group celebrates success and realizes their team work positively affects the organization.

The assumptions of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is premised on three basic assumptions (Johnson et al., 2001). The first one assumes that “like sunflowers that will always turn to face the sun, an organization will turn toward a positive image of itself. It is this positive image that gives the organization the energy it needs.” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 130).

The second assumption places importance on the image of the future as well as the process of creating that future as driving factors in providing change throughout the organization (Johanson & Leavitt, 2001). This assumption asserts that by helping people focus on what already works, they have a starting point of positive feelings and a positive attitude. This gives them a much better foundation than feelings of negativity and helplessness.

Peter Senge’s belief about organizational behaviour and success is almost identical to this second assumption of Appreciative Inquiry. Senge identified an organization’s shared vision as critical to what he called a “learning organization”. He believes that the ability of a team to hold a shared vision and share a picture of the future together creates a powerful driver and motivation to propel the team forward in a positive, energetic, and ambitious manner. “When
there is a genuine vision (as opposed to the all-too-familiar ‘vision statement’), people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to,” (Smith, 2001). This “want” in a person is a much more powerful motivator because it comes from within. The person is inspired and has a true desire to do the very best. This kind of work ethic and continuous internal motivation to work for the well being of the entire organization is sustainable. People become people on a mission, instead of people who simply come into work every day. They have something to work toward, they have something to get excited about, and they are part of a team that shares those same desires (which harbours their sense of belonging).

Senge continues to say, “The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared ‘pictures of the future’ that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance. In mastering this discipline, leaders learn the counter-productiveness of trying to dictate a vision, no matter how heartfelt,” (Smith, 2001).

The anticipatory principle of Appreciative Inquiry “emphasizes the importance of collective imagination about the future. The vision of where an organization wants to go in the future is what sustains the organization, and the key is to leverage that anticipation to foster change,” (Subramanian, 2003, p. 104). As one can see from Senge’s shared vision within a company, the team’s process of looking together toward the future, and creating actions along the way to realize that shared vision is quite powerful in the successful achievement of goals. “It is both the vision, and the process for developing this vision, that create the energy to drive change throughout the organization,” (Johnson et al., 2001, page 129).

This approach has the potential to produce greater results in effectiveness, productivity, and quality than the simple exchanging of services for money (the way many employees and
employers view the boss-worker transaction) and it is far more sustainable because the team members are motivated by internal factors, such as their own desires.

As Antoine de Saint-Exupery has said in “The Wisdom of the Sands”, “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea,” (“The Vast and Endless Sea”, 2007). Teach them to have the shared vision of being out in the open sea and let their internal motivations drive them to build the best and strongest possible ship. Intrinsic motivation is many times more powerful than external rewards and benefits such as money. Humans react based on emotion more often than any other behaviour driver (such as logic). If a leader can appeal to the follower’s emotions, and awaken their spirits, give them a purpose, and make them feel the burning desire to achieve their shared vision, there will not only be an army of workers doing the best job they can do, but they will also be happy and satisfied about it. That is very powerful, indeed.

Finally, the third assumption places importance on the “power of affirmations,” (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001, p. 130). “If we can envision what we want, there is a better chance of it happening.” (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001, p. 130). In other words, if a person can visualize something in his mind and see this with great clarity, focus on it and not lose sight of this goal, the chances of it materializing are vastly improved. Visualizing is another form of goal setting – by concentrating on the end result and aiming attention and energy toward the desired outcome.

**Visualization.** The power of visualization is profound. Visualizing or goal setting has been shown to have incredible results in people’s lives. A study outlined in Tom Bay’s book,
“Look Within or Do Without” discusses how Harvard Business School examined the financial status of its students 10 years after graduation. The results were surprising: as many as 27% of them needed financial assistance, 60% of them were living paycheck to paycheck, 10% were living comfortably, and only 3% of them were financially independent,” (Bay, 2000, p. 12).

One can be surprised by this result from Harvard graduates, that only 13% were living financially comfortably with all of their education and presumably good connections they made in school. What was the reason? Tom Bay continues to say that the “27% that needed financial assistance had absolutely no goal setting process in their lives. The 60% that were living paycheck to paycheck had basic survival goals, such as managing to live paycheck to paycheck. The 10% that were living comfortably had general goals, they thought they knew where they were going to be in the next five years, and the 3% that were financially independent had written out their goals and the steps required to reach them,” (Bay, 2000, p. 12).

Those who set goals (and actually envisioned what they wanted) were 97% more successful than those who did not. Tom Bay claims that writing a goal on paper has profound effects and increases the possibility that it will manifest in reality (Bay, 2000). The act of getting the team together, creating a shared vision, and looking forward into the future with positivity, optimism, and excitement is not common, but very powerful. Organizations that focus on their workers, their goals, and keep their optimism throughout the process (come rain or shine) reap the benefits of that focus.

**Creating opportunities through attitude.** Richard Wiseman decided to investigate what makes some people lucky and others unlucky. He wrote an article in “The Telegraph” in 2003 outlining his findings. In his own words, “The findings have revealed that although unlucky
people have almost no insight into the real causes of their good and bad luck, their thoughts and behaviour are responsible for much of their fortune,” (Wiseman, 2003).

In one simple experiment, Wiseman sought to discover whether lucky people encounter great opportunities more frequently than unlucky people or if they simply have a higher ability to spot them because of being open to the possibility. He gave the self-proclaimed lucky and unlucky individuals a newspaper and asked them to count the number of photographs. While everyone came up with a number, the unlucky people took two minutes to find the answer, whereas the lucky ones took just seconds. What could possibly account for this difference? The second page of the newspaper contained the message, “Stop counting. There are 43 photographs in this newspaper,” (Wiseman, 2003). Even more impressive was the fact that “this message took up half of the page and was written in type that was more than two inches high. It was staring everyone straight in the face, but the unlucky people tended to miss it and the lucky people tended to spot it,” (Wiseman, 2003).

The answer to luck vs. misfortune in people’s lives lie in their belief. Individuals who think they are lucky will continue to experience luck in life. This is not because those individuals have a bright light shining on them every day, but because they are more open to the possibility of good things happening, and are better able to notice those occurrences. Furthermore, Wiseman states that personality tests reveal unlucky people being more tense and anxious than unlucky ones, and research has shown that anxiety disrupts people’s ability to notice the unexpected (Wiseman, 2003).

Wiseman concludes his article with the following statement, “My research revealed that lucky people generate good fortune via four basic principles. They are skilled at creating and
noticing chance opportunities, they make lucky decisions by listening to their intuition, create self-fulfilling prophesies via positive expectations, and adopt a resilient attitude that transforms bad luck into good,” (Wiseman, 2003).

An Appreciative Inquiry approach which focuses on the positive aspects of an organization and the strengths of the team and its members will see the glass as “half full” and will, because of this, notice and benefit from more opportunities. In this world of rapid change, the ability to spot these opportunities and act on them quickly is crucial for organizations. It appears that those who are positive and open (and perhaps those who apply Appreciative Inquiry) have a much better chance of achieving success.

Appreciative Inquiry asserts several beliefs to be true:

1. In every society, organization, or group, something works
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or groups influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is important to value differences.
8. The language we use creates our reality.

(Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006).
The constructionist principle states that “knowledge about an organization and the
destiny of that organization are interwoven,” (Subramanian, 2003, p. 103). In other words,
what one believes about the organization (in turn, what the collective thinking power of the
members making up the corporation believes) has the ability to shape the outcome of that
organization. Thoughts will drive actions which influence the outcome. Similar to organizational
thoughts, individual thoughts and beliefs drive those individual’s actions and results in life.

Adler stated that key events and circumstances that happened early in a child’s life
shape how children perceive themselves, or more accurately, shape the story they develop
about themselves (Reardon, personal communication, April, 2009). Adler called that story,
much of it unconscious, a "fiction", to distinguish it from who and how an individual really is,”
(“Alfred Adler”, n.d.). Hans Vaihinger, who wrote “The Philosophy of As If”, stated that people
are often not able to see the complete truth (Vaihinger, 2009). Because they are not able to
understand the complete truth, they formulate partial truths for practical reasons. This is a
picture of something that is not as accurate as the “real thing”, but people use them “as if” they
were true. People are served by these partial truths to understand and respond to the world
until they find a better partial truth to adapt. This is a similar belief to Erik Erikson’s “cognitive
structures” where people’s stories about themselves govern their perception of the world and
their existence in it, in addition to “the very choices” they make in life (“Alfred Adler”, n.d.).

Corporations are made up of people, people who carry their own partial truths, people
who have a corporate culture and a set of organizational rules to abide by. The corporate
culture creates beliefs within the organization which will not be the “absolute truth” but a
partial one, creating processes and actions in line with the understanding of that partial truth.
“Adler felt that if we could help the individual identify fictions” that were dysfunctional and inaccurate, “and help them develop a new self-image and goal, he would lead a happier, more productive life,” (“Alfred Adler”, n.d.). This is what Appreciative Inquiry aims to achieve with organizations. As mentioned earlier, knowledge about an organization and the destiny of that organization are interwoven and “Adlerian’s basic premise is that if clients can change their thinking, then they can change their feelings and behaviour,” (Corey, page 125).

**Change through inquiry.** The simultaneity principle postulates that inquiry and change are not linear processes. When the consultant inquires about the organization, his aim is to simultaneously sow the seeds of change, (Subramanian, 2003). The manner in which questions are asked through an Appreciative Inquiry information gathering process drives the attitude in a positive direction. In posing suggestive questions such as, “What things do you value most about this organization?” vs. “What do you think could work better in this company”, the interviewee is led to respond in a fashion dictated by the interviewer, thus sowing the seeds of change and directing the outlook and focus of that person in a positive direction.

Adler took a similar approach to collecting information about his patients. Adler’s analysis was complex and qualitative and he believed that the “literal truth of the patients’ reporting was only part of the story” (“Alfred Adler”, n.d.). What is very significant about Adler’s approach was that the analysts (or Adlerian therapists) should not tell the patient what they believe the problem may be and help the patient through his issues, but rather “through careful question or ‘Socratic Dialogue’, the analyst would lead the patient through the process of seeing the matter for himself, and being part of the process of formulating a new perspective,” (“Alfred Adler”, n.d.). In both cases, the consultant and the Adlerian therapist used the process
of posing questions to suggestively drive the person’s thought pattern and ‘sow the seeds of change’.

**Not all rainbows.** Through all the positivity, optimism, and happily looking into the future with the help of the Appreciative Method, it is very important to understand that Appreciative Inquiry does not ignore problems and “pretend” that things are blissful and joyous. The idea behind Appreciative Inquiry is to redefine “what is”. Suppose “what is” in a company is a lack of communication between peers, insecurity about one’s job, and dissatisfaction with the amount work. Suppose also that “what is” in that same organization is that within a year the corporation increased revenue by 13%, donated a portion of those profits to charity, and signed three more major client contracts. It would be a shame to ignore the incredible amount of success the employees of this organization achieved and instead focus on communication issues.

In this case, the Appreciative Inquiry method would encourage the employees, through an interview process, to share the successes of the organization and the team. This would guide individuals to see the glass as half full, and view themselves, their team, their management, and the organization in a more positive light. Through this process, the negative aspects of the organization tend to fade away and in many cases ‘fix themselves’. “For example, after experiencing Appreciative Inquiry, the organization tends to develop more trust between individuals” (Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006). In the above case, the lack of communication may improve as a result of following the Appreciative Inquiry method, without the need to address it directly.
“Appreciative Inquiry tends to move away from identifying all situations as problems and therefore from hiding problems from others so that the person does not look incompetent. Instead, the frame of reference is toward trusting what has worked in the past and the revealing of situations to determine if others may have experienced the situation and how they successfully addressed it,” (Cleveland Consulting Group, 2006).

**Summary.** Appreciative Inquiry is an approach that will hopefully penetrate more organizations and their teams “because we need leaders who spend more time asking questions, generating possibilities, enhancing strengths, and charting new courses of action than solving problems, issuing directives, and putting out fires,” (Locander & Luechauer, 2007, p. 46).

Appreciative Inquiry provides organizational change by evoking past positive experiences in the company to facilitate movement toward a desired goal, which is a sharp contrast to the traditional problem-solving approach to change (Subramanian, 2003).

Appreciative Inquiry focuses on what works in organizations, what the teams are doing ‘right’ and how they can successfully and effectively strive toward a collectively created vision for the company’s bright future. This approach has been shown to strengthen teams, create a positive and productive work environment, and lead to innovative and successful progress within the organization. Furthermore, it follows the same principles that Senge proposed in his book, “The Fifth Discipline” where he discusses the benefits of a team’s shared vision.

Appreciative Inquiry reaches team members in ways to which they are naturally inclined to respond favourably: through focusing on the positive, accentuating what is going well, and suggesting more ways to do things instead of advising on what not to do. This environment also
takes away blame, hiding, and deceit between team members, additionally eliminating the desire for competition on the team. Appreciative Inquiry creates positive, successful, and productive groups and its approach is useful in bringing the best out of employees and providing them with a healthy working environment.

**Final Summary**

Through understanding Appreciative Inquiry and its positive impact on the team and the organization, it is safe to assume that leaders who engage in an Appreciative Inquiry style of leadership and communication are more likely to experience successful, collaborative, and motivated teams.

Servant leaders who are not only focused on the mission and the task, and whose priority are the needs and satisfaction of their people, tend to experience a higher functioning and more productive, happier team.

Finally, those leaders who are able to identify their own cognitive dissonance and understand when they are engaging in self-sabotaging behaviours, are also more likely to believe in themselves, have a positive outlook and be optimistic about their abilities to overcome hurdles and problems along the way.

It appears that successful teams are best achieved through an AI approach, with servant-leadership characteristics and minimal cognitive dissonance in the leader.
Chapter Three: Methodology

The research was conducted to determine how cognitive dissonance in a leader interacts with his leadership style, and how they together influence the success of a team. The leaders who participated were all managers or owners of high tech organizations or departments who had at least five subordinates composing their team.

The leaders were given two assessments to determine their leadership style and levels of cognitive dissonance; their teams responded to one seven-point Likert scale questionnaire regarding their leader’s levels of Appreciative Inquiry, cognitive dissonance, and servant leadership qualities.

The Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS)

The first assessment, the Cognitive Dissonance Test (or DISS) was written by Dr. Peter Chow and Dr. Cassel to determine the level of cognitive dissonance in an individual. The DISS was tested on High School and University students, though all of the questions posed (such as, “I am a member of a happy family”) are universal to all ages.

The Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS) is the only one of its kind, created in order to determine the level of dissonance experienced by the test taker. The test poses a series of questions about the individual’s life, present and past, and determines dissonance based on how the responses reflect what is expected to occur in reality. In other words, each individual has beliefs about the world which are ‘supposed’ to be true (i.e. a mother loves her child), and the test looks into how the individual’s responses reflect this picture society holds as true.

The test makes the assumption that the test taker shares society’s views of normalcy and expectations – a mother loves her children, honesty is virtuous, a loving home is a happy
home, etc. By reviewing the responses to the true and false questions, it can be determined how closely the test taker’s reality reflects the picture the environment presents as ‘normal’. If a person comes from a broken and unhappy home where the parents were constantly fighting, that person is likely to experience cognitive dissonance between what was true in the home vs. what should have been true according to his environment’s beliefs.

DISS was originally administered to High School and University students by Dr. Chow and Dr. Cassel to determine its validity and usefulness. Since the test, for the purposes of this paper, was administered to the leadership of high tech companies and departments who have already completed their High School and University education, the questions were altered to the past tense when referring to school and family while growing up, and kept in the present tense when addressing the rest of the leader’s life. The integrity and the accuracy of the test have remained intact (by only changing the tense of the questions in order to reflect the test taker’s age and position in life), since a discrepancy between actual past experiences and expectations of what ‘should have been’ will still create cognitive dissonance in the person’s mind.

The Cognitive Dissonance assessment consists of true and false questions, among which are ‘disparity pairs’ or questions placed throughout the assessment to determine the truthfulness or preciseness of the test taker. With these disparity pairs, the creators of the test aimed to ensure that the questions were “correctly read and/or understood”, (Chow, 2001).

The Cognitive Dissonance Test “seeks to determine the presence of cognitive dissonance in two general areas of one's life space: (1) Inner and Personal, and (2) External and Impersonal,” (Chow, 2001, p. 45). Each response to a DISS question that indicates cognitive
dissonance scores one point. The higher the score on the test, the higher the presence of cognitive dissonance in the person’s life.

The BASIS-A Test

The second assessment that was given to each leader was the BASIS-A test. Its purpose was to determine the leadership style of the individual heading the high tech team. The BASIS-A test stands for Basic Adlerian Scales for Interpersonal Success – Adult Form and can be used in clinical, educational, and organizational settings. Roy Kern, who is a distinguished Professor of Individual Psychology at Vytautas Magnus University, wrote a paper in 2008 detailing the background of the BASIS-A test, its purpose, and how it was formed.

Kern notes that Alfred Adler created the concept of lifestyle in the early 1900s describing it as a “cluster of personality attributes that an individual subjectively arranges into a systematic schema at a very early age,” (Kern, 2008). This systematic schema is what Adler called a lifestyle and accordingly, the individual developed this lifestyle based on what was most helpful in order to understand, accept, and solve problems relating to three life tasks: social interactions with peers, work (or productivity), and intimacy (Kern, 2008). According to Adler, there are four ways of categorizing a person’s lifestyle and the priorities of those lifestyles are: getting, ruling, avoiding, and useful (Kern, 2008).

This lifestyle assessment provided clinicians and practitioners a way to very quickly and effectively determine the person’s way of being in the world through a series of open ended interview questions about the individual’s early childhood memories and family dynamics. This process is subjective to the interviewer’s style of assessment and interpretation of the answers. BASIS-A provides a more objective look at the individual’s lifestyle, and a way to numerically
quantify a number of the personality attributes related to family constellation, family atmosphere, and methods of child training (Kern, 2008).

The creation of the BASIS-A assessment tool was based on twenty years of research on three other accepted assessments: The Lifestyle Questionnaire Inventory, The Kern Lifestyle Scale, and The Lifestyle Personality Inventory. BASIS-A took into account the weaknesses of the previous three questionnaires, while combining their strengths for an optimal assessment tool (Kern, 2008).

The BASIS-A assessment tool has been “widely researched, listed in Test in Print and reviewed in the Burros Mental Measurement Yearbook. One of the reviewers for Burros Mental Measurement Yearbook reported that the BASIS-A was the instrument of choice for individuals wishing to acquire an empirical approach to the lifestyle construct,” (Kern, 2008).

According to Kern, BASIS-A is standardized, objective, and can be used for research, clinical or educational purposes for clinicians, educators, and organizational personnel. “Numerous studies on the validity of the BASIS-A scales have supported the structure of the scales and correlated it with various instruments,” (Kern, 2008).

Therefore the BASIS-A assessment provides an accurate and objective view of (in this case) the leader’s lifestyle, along with an interpretation of what this might mean in the various organizational and team settings.

**Team Assessment**

The third assessment, created by the test taker, collected responses from team members aiming to learn more about the leadership style of the leader (specifically if the leader, as perceived by the team, exhibited servant-leader qualities), cognitive dissonance
within the leader (in order to determine how the leader’s DISS results manifested themselves on the actual team), as well as asking questions to determine to what extent Appreciative Inquiry is present in that particular team.
Chapter Four: Analysis

Data Findings

The tests administered. The results of the surveys taken by the leaders of high tech teams, along with their team members, revealed moderate to significant correlations between certain aspects of the parameters tested.

The team assessment poses questions relating to three different topics regarding the leader: Servant Leadership, Appreciative Inquiry, and Cognitive Dissonance. These aimed to determine, through the team’s perspective, to what extent the leader engaged in each of the above mentioned categories.

The BASIS-A test attempts to discover the person’s leadership style (in the field of business) and it does so by considering the subject’s individual scores of belonging and social interest, going along, taking charge, wanting recognition, and being cautious.

Finally, the Cognitive Dissonance Test (DISS) shows the level of cognitive dissonance the leader experiences based on his own responses, which may have an effect on his decisions, conduct, and perceptions.

Each of these scores, along with the subject’s leadership style, have been analyzed in relation to each other, as well as to that leader’s team responses.

The results. While a correlation was found between leadership style and the team’s assessment of the leader, due to the sample size and the fact that there were leadership styles which were not represented in the results, it was not possible to accurately determine whether style of leadership has a great effect on team success.
However, other relationships were found, and perhaps revealed an even more interesting and important picture than leaderships style might have.

The different parameters tested were:

1. Team’s assessment of the leader regarding:
   - Level of servant leadership
   - Level of Appreciative Inquiry
   - Degree of cognitive dissonance

2. The leader’s assessment of himself regarding:
   - Belonging and social interest
   - Going along or agreeability
   - Taking charge
   - Wanting recognition
   - Being cautious
   - Cognitive Dissonance

Each of the above mentioned parameters were analyzed in relation to each other and the following correlations (Pearson’s r) were made. Note that cognitive dissonance below indicates the leader’s own self assessment:
### Cognitive Dissonance and Going Along

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Parameter</th>
<th>Second Parameter</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Going Along</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>Being Cautious</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Belonging/Social Interest</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Dissonance</td>
<td>Belonging/Social Interest</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can see from the above table, cognitive dissonance (as assessed by the leader himself) and the leader’s agreeability or affinity toward going along have a moderately significant correlation of 0.57. This means that the more cognitive dissonance the leader is dealing with, the more likely that leader is to go along with his environment.
Appreciative inquiry and being cautious.

On the other hand, Appreciative Inquiry and being cautious have a negative correlation of -0.61 which is also moderately significant. This means that the more traits leaders have corresponding to Appreciative Inquiry behaviours, the less likely they are to behave cautiously. This correlation implies that traits leading to an Appreciative Inquiry approach within a team also leads to a more trusting, open, and safe feeling for the leader of that team (as indicated by the low ‘being cautious’ score). A leader with a low ‘being cautious’ score trusts that “life’s problems can be solved” and that his “needs will be met” (source: BASIS-A test), leaving less reason for cautiousness.
Servant leadership and appreciative inquiry.

Servant leadership and Appreciative Inquiry have a moderately significant correlation of 0.50, meaning that a leader who engages in servant leadership behaviours is also more likely to engage in Appreciative Inquiry behaviours (and vice versa). This is important because both of those traits in leadership and management have been shown to provide an environment that is conducive to team bonding, growth, trust, safety, belonging, and productivity.
Cognitive dissonance and servant leadership.

Cognitive dissonance and servant leadership have a negative moderately significant correlation of -0.60 indicating a relationship between the leader’s level of internal conflict and that leader’s ability to be present, servant, and overall successful at meeting the needs of his employees.
Very significantly, the leader’s belonging/social interest score, and the score his team assessed as his servant leadership score, have a significant correlation of 0.74. This indicates that leaders who score high on the belonging/social interest scale will also have a higher tendency to serve those around them, to make them feel like they belong, to put their needs first and focus on people rather than tasks. This indicates true social interest in seeking improvement for the benefit and advancement of everyone.
Finally, another significant correlation of -0.87 has been found between the leader’s own cognitive dissonance score and the leader’s own belonging/social interest score. This score indicates a negative significant correlation, meaning a strong indication that a leader who has a high score for belonging/social interest is unlikely to experience a lot of cognitive dissonance.

**Interpretation of Data**

The last two findings mentioned are very significant. It has been well established that social interest is important in creating a sense of community within a team, as well as a sense of safety and belonging that will allow the members to trust each other, rely on one another, and bring out the best qualities in team members. It has also been shown that the presence of servant leadership characteristics helps the team members feel safe, confident, and free to express themselves professionally, creatively, and in a way that enables the team to work in the best and most productive manner. Since cognitive dissonance has been inversely related to
personal development, it is not surprising that the findings of this experiment indicate a negative correlation between cognitive dissonance and the leadership characteristics which make the team successful.

**Cognitive dissonance and belonging/social interest.**

In this research, it has been found that cognitive dissonance has a negative correlation with the leader’s score of belonging/social interest. Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person holds two opposing views at the same time which can create disharmony within the individual’s mindset, feelings, and actions. Such feelings can lead the person to react to events based on this disharmony instead of his own authentic beliefs.

Belonging and social interest is a key point in Alfred Adler’s teachings, emphasizing that its encouragement in individuals and teams leads to an emotionally healthy and fulfilled life (Reardon, 2001). Individuals who focus solely on themselves, their personal striving for superiority, and drive to be better than those around them, tend to engage in unhealthy behavioural patterns. This drive can lead to consistent unhappiness and neurosis (Ansabacher & Ansabacher, 1956).

According to Adler, social interest is the key to a healthy and progressive group (Ansabacher & Ansabacher, 1956). In caring about what is best for the group, in ensuring that the collective whole is taken care of, everything and everyone benefits, including the leader who is part of that whole.

However, cognitive dissonance appears to hinder that. This can be seen not only through the assessments performed for the purposes of this paper, but also through Adler’s own theory about the individual’s perceived and ideal self. Adler believed that each person
carried two images of himself. One is the perceived self-concept or how the person believes himself to be, and the other is the self-ideal or how the individual would like to be in the world (Mosak, 1995).

When the self-ideal and the self-concept are not aligned, inferiority feelings develop within the individual. The less aligned the self-ideal and self-concept are, the stronger the feelings of inferiority experienced within the individual (Mosak, 1995). In addition, the farther away those self perceptions are (concept and ideal), the greater the level of dissonance the individual will experience, as there will be a discrepancy between what the individual strives for and what he perceives to be true in reality. This conflict between self-concept and self-ideal will drive the person toward the need to minimize the gap between the two, pushing him to focus his energy on overcoming his feelings of inferiority (Ansabacher & Ansabacher, 1956).

As the test results have shown, through engaging in actions which attempt to overcome those feelings of inferiority, the person will focus internally and in a self interested way, not sparing much room or time for socially interested behaviour. The individual will simply be working toward a more urgent need (as perceived by the individual) which is to take care of self first. This type of behaviour (attempting to overcome feelings of inferiority) is normal; however, it is not in the best interest of the group as a whole.

Therefore, cognitive dissonance has a negative effect on the leader’s ability to create a sense of belonging within the team, and to encourage and promote social interest within the members and the organization.

**Cognitive dissonance and servant leadership.** Furthermore, cognitive dissonance has a negative correlation (-0.60) with how the team scored the leader’s levels of servant leadership.
Servant leadership traits have been connected with leaders wanting the best for their people, putting them first, serving them rather than controlling them. These traits have also been linked to more safe, cohesive, and productive teams. The servant leader is not after a big bonus or his own superiority, but is rather motivated to work for his people, ensuring they have the resources to do their jobs well, in order for them to perform at their absolute best.

A healthy person is one who engages in horizontal striving (Reardon, 2001) and works toward the improvement of the entire group. People with high levels of cognitive dissonance show a lower score when it comes to engaging in servant leader behaviours. Similarly to the explanation given earlier, people with cognitive dissonance have a more pressing need to take care of their own internal conflict than to focus on and serve others.

It has been shown that two of the leadership traits known to be greatly beneficial to the creation and successful operation of a highly functioning team (belonging/social interest and servant leadership traits) are negatively affected (to a degree which cannot be considered negligible) by the leader’s cognitive dissonance.

**Appreciative inquiry and being cautious.** Appreciative Inquiry is negatively correlated with being cautious (-0.60). This is likely because the approach of AI focuses on what works well and on what will work successfully in the future. Leaders who engage in Appreciative Inquiry have a healthy level of optimism which is probably not hindered by thoughts of cautiousness because of their accentuation of the positive. While it is good to have an understanding of what action will and will not work, being overly cautious does limit leaders in pursuing goals that may be best for the company. Organizations need change, adaptability, and innovation. All of these
require leaders and their teams to move into the unknown where too much caution can be a hindrance.

**Belonging/social interest and leadership.** The second significant correlation (0.74) has been found between the leader’s own score of belonging/social interest and the team’s score of the leader’s level of servant leadership. This means that the stronger the leader’s affinity toward belonging and social interest, the more likely this leader is to serve his team members, care for them and about them, and exhibit traits conducive to their high performance and progress.

The research is in line with Adler’s theory which states that belonging and social interest have a positive and profound effect on the group. This allows for inclusion, collaboration, and higher levels of performance. If it is known that servant leadership is team oriented and focused on the overall health and benefit of individuals on that team, and if it is known that this leads to healthier, happier, and more productive employees, it reasons that belonging and social interest (which is significantly correlated to servant leadership) contribute to all of those servant leadership benefits as well. It is unlikely for a leader to be servant without also being socially interested. By definition, if his goal is to serve others and put people first, his interest will be focused on the well being of the entire group.

**Servant leadership and appreciative inquiry.** Less significant, but still moderately so, is the correlation between servant leadership and Appreciative Inquiry in the test results (0.50).

Similar to the earlier argument of Servant Leadership and Belonging/Social Interest, leaders who exhibit an affinity toward conducting things with the Appreciative Inquiry approach will also be more likely to present themselves as servants to their teams. Their focus will be on
what is best for those around them, their environment, their company, and their team members. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on everyone’s input, ensuring a sense of belonging and contribution. It is an inclusive, rather than the too familiar exclusive process seen in many organizations today. This implies that an approach that requires a sense of community and belonging, thought and regard for others, and an appreciation for their contribution, would also show a leader exhibiting similar (servant) qualities in his own leadership style.

**Cognitive dissonance and going along.** Finally and interestingly, cognitive dissonance and going along are also correlated (0.57). It appears that the leader’s inclination toward going along, being agreeable and avoiding confrontation is directly related to his degree of cognitive dissonance. Does this mean that a leader may not take charge and execute a necessary action, but rather go along with the circumstances if his cognitive dissonance is high? It is unclear from the test results, but given that the two are correlated, it would appear that cognitive dissonance, once again, influences the way in which a leader acts and reacts in his environment. It is unlikely in this case that the leader’s cognitive dissonance is influenced by his inclination to be agreeable and go along. Rather, it is more probable that his cognitive dissonance leads to his susceptibility to going along.

Cognitive dissonance is a state of being. The mere presence of two opposing views is not a personality trait. Rather, it is a hindrance to the expression of the individual’s personality traits. This state of being should be minimized as much as possible to allow leaders to authentically and freely make decisions which will benefit the entire organization.
Summary

The parameter that had the most influence and (negative) correlation was cognitive dissonance. It appears that cognitive dissonance plays a substantial role in a person’s life and that its management (and minimization) can go a long way in helping individuals be more free to be who they really are without their internal conflicts.

Cognitive dissonance, as found in the assessment results, disables the individual from participating in socially interested and servant behaviours by creating a more pressing matter to be resolved – that of dissonant beliefs or attitudes. In this particular paper, the cognitive dissonance of a leader was assessed in regard to his personal life experiences. It was found that the most significant correlation in all of the parameters tested was between cognitive dissonance and servant leadership.

The reason for this significant finding could be found in the person’s striving for an increased self-worth. Self-worth, as defined for the purposes of this paper, is the individual’s view of his three-selves: self-esteem, self-concept, and self-ideal. When the person’s self-esteem or self-concept are not aligned with his self-ideal (how he wishes himself to be), he will experience cognitive dissonance and a decreased self-worth (W. Premo, personal communication, June 3, 2011).

In this case, the individual will try to minimize that dissonance by striving to overcome those feelings and move his perceived views of self toward his ideal self. This motivates the person toward self-preservation and awards him less ability to focus on servant-leadership behaviours.
It was also very interesting to note that belonging and social interest has been so highly correlated with servant leadership, noting that a focus on people, their happiness and their needs (servant leadership) is at the foundation of social interest.

Finally, Appreciative Inquiry showed a correlation with servant leadership and a negative correlation with being cautious. This reaffirms the nature of the leader to focus on the positive, serve the people, and dive into new and creative ideas without being stopped by worries or caution. While caution can be beneficial in helping individuals avoid adverse effects of their actions, the negative correlation between cautiousness and Appreciative Inquiry in this case shows a freedom from the burden of cautiousness as the leader moves the team forward with the AI approach.

It would therefore appear that a low level of cognitive dissonance and a high level of belonging and social interest are most beneficial in a leadership setting in order to create more cohesive, collaborative, motivated, and productive teams as defined by the presence of Appreciative Inquiry and servant leadership in those environments.
Chapter Five: Recommendations

Cognitive dissonance has appeared three times in high correlation to other parameters tested, demonstrating that it plays a large role in (negatively) influencing a person’s leadership. Furthermore, it has been shown that Appreciative Inquiry and traits of servant leadership can go a long way in helping shape a team that is safe, productive, motivated, and concerned about the welfare of each other and the organization.

While a person can work to improve his social interest and sharpen his traits as a servant leader, it does appear as though the most benefit would be achieved through attempting to reduce the cognitive dissonance first. The assessment provided to the leaders did not test whether or not the cognitive dissonance was influencing the servant leadership and social interest behaviours or whether it was the opposite. However, since cognitive dissonance is a personal and internal conflict, it is very possible that through only eliminating the cognitive dissonance in a leader, that individual can experience more freedom from disharmonious feelings.

Upon having reduced cognitive dissonance, individuals can work on increasing understanding of servant leadership, why it works and what its benefits are. Without this barrier, they would be able to feel a higher sense of social interest (since it is innate) and begin exhibiting servant leadership behaviours. The leader can also aim to learn more about social interest and its great benefits to the team, the environment, and the overall improvement it can have in the company.

However, without first addressing the cognitive dissonance in a leader, it is uncertain if the leader will be able to fully grasp and execute the traits of servant leadership and behave in
a socially interested manner. It seems that cognitive dissonance negatively impacts the leader’s behaviour when it comes to servant leadership and social interest, and it appears to be a barrier and a hindrance, rather than a personality trait of the leader. This is because cognitive dissonance is defined as holding two opposing views at the same time, an issue that is conflicting and that needs to be resolved, not something that is a deep rooted personality trait.

Cognitive dissonance is something to be minimized as much as possible, but how can one consciously do that?

According to Festinger, individuals look for consistency in their beliefs, opinions, and the world around them. When the two do not match, they experience cognitive dissonance which they can reduce by either changing their thoughts and opinions or changing their behaviours (Festinger, 1957).

It was also noted earlier that several factors strengthen cognitive dissonance in an individual – the number of conflicting beliefs he has and the importance placed on each of those beliefs (Festinger, 1957).

There are several ways to reduce cognitive dissonance. When confronted with two opposing views, one can introduce more beliefs that outweigh the cognitive dissonance, reduce the importance of the dissonant beliefs, or change the conflicting belief so that it is consistent with other beliefs or behaviours.

As an example, if a leader perceives his childhood to have been lacking love, he will likely experience cognitive dissonance around thoughts of his childhood and his parents. How does one minimize that? How can someone have less cognitive dissonance about something
that he factually cannot change – “my family was not loving” vs. “families are supposed to be loving”.

The individual can, in this particular example, focus on traits that were loving in his childhood. Perhaps his father was an alcoholic. Maybe his mother was absent and withdrawn. However, was he always fed on time? Did they assist in providing him with a good education? Did they respect his favourite childhood toy and refer to it by name? Did he, amidst all of the problems, have his own space to which to escape? There are usually many things in one’s childhood that were positive, despite all the negatives. One way for a leader to reduce cognitive dissonance is to try to remember the positive aspects of his childhood, the things his parents did correctly, and the loving ways in which he did get treated.

Secondly, the leader can trivialize the dissonance, deciding that it is not very important to have had a loving childhood. In reducing the importance of the conflicting belief, the individual takes away from the strength of that belief. Once the importance is taken away from it, the strong negative feelings toward it will be minimized as well. Over time and with practice believing that this is not that important, the leader may be able to minimize or eliminate conflicting feelings about his childhood.

Leaders can also change the conflicting belief so that it is consistent with other beliefs. In other words, they can change the belief that their childhood was not loving to make it consistent with other beliefs that children are supposed to have loving childhoods. In order to do that, one can simply decide that the events of the childhood did occur and while unpleasant, it did not mean that the overall childhood was unloving. Perhaps the mother missed every
school event and was not very kind, but the new belief could be that it did not mean a lack of love.

Finally, the person can decide that despite an unpleasant childhood, it was good and beneficial in shaping the person of today. There can be adopted the belief that the misfortunes of the past, although unhappy by most standards, are the best thing that could have happened. If the individual truly believes that, it will be easier time dealing with the history of past hurts and how they control the present and future.

From the several ways a person can reduce cognitive dissonance, one must choose the one (or the combination of a few) that will work best. It has been shown that sometimes a few minimization techniques can occur simultaneously – as people confirm their original belief, “they also reduce the perceived importance of one or more of the relevant cognitions,” (Simon, Greenberg, Brehm, 1995, p. 254). Once the cognitive dissonance is minimized, the individual can embark on improving Appreciative Inquiry and the servant leadership approach.

Since Appreciative Inquiry and servant leadership are very important in creating strong and productive teams, all leaders would benefit from sharpening those skills. Books on the subject, seminars, assessments, and speaking with other like-minded leaders possessing those qualities would be very helpful in assisting the leader in the pursuit of those attributes.

While leadership style has been said to be relatively static, based on personality traits of the leader and not easily subject to change, it would be difficult to make the same argument about cognitive dissonance and the leader’s level of engagement in belonging and social interest. Cognitive dissonance can be reduced (as has been stated), but a leader can also learn to be more socially interested, understand the value of the group, and appreciate the vast
benefits of caring for the team as a whole. Since belonging and social interest are innate in all human beings (humans are social creatures), leaders should be able to sharpen their skills when it comes to creating a community feeling. Leaders can learn to focus more on their team and over time, begin to put their people first, so that their entire army of employees can put the organization first.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

The study was conducted in order to show whether leadership style and cognitive dissonance has an effect on team success. While the study was not able to accurately show that leadership style has effects on teams, other and perhaps even more important leadership correlations were made.

The results of the study clearly show that not necessarily leadership style, but the leader’s own affinity toward belonging, building relationships, focusing on the employee’s needs, and ensuring the overall well being of the group is what ultimately lead to a successful and empowered team (as defined by servant leadership).

Leadership which empowers team members also enhances their desire to contribute. Leaders who exhibit more empowering behaviors are more likely to help and motivate members to apply their skills toward positive contributions. More highly empowering leaders convey to their teams that they are confident in their abilities to handle challenging work by encouraging members to be more involved in key decision making, to collaboratively and autonomously self-manage their work, and to be accountable for outcomes in their team, (Chen et al, 2011).

This is at the forefront of a successful organization – capable employees who collaboratively and autonomously self-manage their work. Relationship building, team trust, and a shared vision that will propel that team forward toward the goals of the organization.

Cognitive dissonance, shown to have a negative effect on the leader’s ability to provide the type of positive servant-leader environment, is linked to a person’s inability to thrive and achieve great results. Leaders are men or women who make daily decisions on behalf of
themselves, the team, and the organization. That leader, however, is still a human being, one that is influenced by past experiences, history of hurts, as well as present and future fears. Leaders are better able to give fully to the benefit of the team and organization if they are free of such personal internal conflicts of cognitive dissonance.

Through recognizing the negative effects of cognitive dissonance, the positive influences of servant-leadership and Appreciative Inquiry, and of the incredible influences those can have on leadership and their teams, one gains a better understanding of exactly how imperative it is for everyone to understand the inter-personal relationships and the psychology of what drives and motivates all human beings.

The most successful leader, it seems, is one that truly cares about people, attempts to understand them and provide for them (instead of use them for further organizational gain), and through that, give them a sense of belonging, understanding, safety, and significance. If these factors were not important to all human beings, if business was just business without the need to worry about interpersonal relationships, these leadership attributes would not show such a strong connection with teams that are successful, thriving, and motivated.
Appendix A

Leadership Style Assessment – BASIS-A

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. All of the statements to follow are about you and your family. As you answer, compare yourself to your brothers and/or sisters or friends before you were ten years old. The word "parent" refers to the person or people who took care of you at that time. Please answer each question as quickly and as honestly as you can. Please answer every question. Please use the following scale to respond to each statement: 1 - Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Indifferent 4 - Agree 5 - Strongly Agree Each of the following questions begins with the statement "When I was a child, I ..... ".

* Required

1. enjoyed playing with other children *

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2. got special attention *

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3. liked telling others what to do *

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4. frequently had my feelings hurt in school *

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5. could not be honest with my parent(s) *

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6. felt sure of myself in several areas *

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### LEADERSHIP EFFECT ON TEAMS

7. got more than I should have *

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8. bossed the other children *

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9. had several close friends *

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10. had a parent who I felt was hopeless *

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11. felt like I belonged *

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12. caused my parents a lot of trouble *

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13. felt I had a lot of power *

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14. wanted to do well what was asked of me *

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15. felt inadequate at home *

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16. fit in well with a group *

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17. got even when I was punished *

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18. was bossy *

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19. felt important when I succeeded *

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20. had a parent who was angry with me *

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21. felt accepted by other children *

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22. was friendly *

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23. wanted to control the other children *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

24. liked the attention I got for doing well *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

25. wanted to hurt a parent *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

26. felt equally at ease as a leader or follower *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

27. rebelled if I did not get my way *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

28. was good at showing people who was boss *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

29. felt accepted when I did well in school *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree

30. thought one of my parents was mean *

Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Strongly Agree
31. was outgoing

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

32. got in a lot of fights with other children

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

33. wanted to be in charge in school activities

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

34. behaved well to be noticed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

35. was afraid of my parent(s)

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

36. enjoyed being with other children

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

37. became more stubborn when punished

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

38. felt important when I could get the other children to do what I wanted
39. pleased adults rather than upset them *

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40. just could not seem to do anything right at home *

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41. liked working in a group *

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42. fought back when I was teased by others *

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43. was treated fairly *

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44. was concerned with whether adults approved of what I did *

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45. did not like having responsibilities *

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46. was pampered at home *

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47. wanted to get even *

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48. had trouble making friends *

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49. was glad I could please my parent(s) *

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50. succeeded in most things I tried *

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51. was given everything I wanted at home *

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52. openly rebelled to get even with others *

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53. wanted to be left alone *

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54. wanted a parent's approval *

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55. tried to avoid doing work around the home *

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56. got my way *

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57. needed to be tough to belong to the group *

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58. felt I was a victim of other people's anger *

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59. was concerned about being liked *

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60. did many things well *

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61. was spoiled *

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62. got my revenge *

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63. always wanted to go to bed on time *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

64. wanted the teacher to like me *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree

65. was good at taking care of details *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree
Appendix B – Cognitive Dissonance Assessment

Cognitive Dissonance Assessment – Part 1

The following test is composed of true/false items. Please read each item carefully, and if it is more true than false circle the letter “T” for true. If it is more false than true, then circle the letter “F” for false.

* Required

1. My family encouraged or supported my interests. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

2. One or both of my parents seldom acknowledged my accomplishments. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

3. I wish that my family had passed on some important moral values to me. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

4. I seldom had my own time because I had to look after my younger siblings. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

5. One or both of my parents are proud of me. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

6. I am a member of a happy family. *
   
   □ True
   □ False

7. I never hold grudges against my parents. *
   
   □ True
   □ False
8. One or both of my parents kept tight control on the child(ren) in our home. *
   - True
   - False

9. I enjoy harmony with close family members. *
   - True
   - False

10. I tend to be tolerant and understanding. *
    - True
    - False

11. I am easily upset by changes. *
    - True
    - False

12. I tend to think of myself as worthless. *
    - True
    - False

13. I feel that I would be a much better person if I could gain more understanding of myself. *
    - True
    - False

14. I find it hard to take no for an answer. *
    - True
    - False

15. I lack a sense of responsibility. *
    - True
    - False

16. After I have finished something, I often come away feeling I could have done better. *
    - True
    - False
17. I always stand up for my rights when I am mistreated. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

18. I am free from racial or religious prejudice. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

19. I have a deep respect for all human beings. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

20. I tend to be jealous of others. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

21. I am often troubled by a lack of self-confidence. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

22. I often feel discouraged because of a sense of inferiority. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

23. I am inclined to be shy and withdrawn. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

24. I feel self-conscious because of my personal appearance. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

25. I do not always tell the truth for fear of exposing too much of myself. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False
26. So far my life has been quite meaningful. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

27. I worry about dying. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

28. I feel warm and happy toward myself. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

29. I put up a bold front, but it is only a bluff. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

30. Often I am judgmental of others. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

31. I feel that something important is missing in my life. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

32. I often despise myself for what I think or do. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

33. I boil inside, but I don't show it. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False

34. I tend to harbor grudges that I don't tell anyone about. *
   - [ ] True
   - [x] False
35. I seldom speak up even when there is cause to be angry.
   - True
   - False

36. I am easily irritated.
   - True
   - False

38. I am easily upset when things go wrong.
   - True
   - False

37. I wish I were a child again.
   - True
   - False

39. I am easily bothered by noise or confusion.
   - True
   - False

40. I prefer to accept an unfair situation rather than complain.
   - True
   - False

41. I am easily embarrassed.
   - True
   - False

42. I am generally very easy-going.
   - True
   - False

43. I can become so emotional as to be unable to think or act logically.
   - True
   - False
44. I tend to keep feelings "bottled up inside". *
   - False
   - True

45. I find it hard to accept criticism or blame. *
   - False
   - True

46. I often feel depressed by memories of past experiences. *
   - False
   - True

47. I maintain self-control even when frustrated. *
   - False
   - True

48. I can adapt to changes easily. *
   - False
   - True

49. I wish I were not so shy. *
   - False
   - True

50. I have difficulty saying or doing the right thing at the right time. *
   - False
   - True

51. I often dwell on past misfortunes. *
   - False
   - True

52. It devastates me when a friend moves away. *
   - False
   - True
53. I learn from my own mistakes. *
   - True
   - False

54. I often have to consume substances or beverages with caffeine to stay awake. *
   - True
   - False

55. When I have a fight with a friend, it takes me a long time to get over it. *
   - True
   - False

56. I feel at ease no matter where I am living. *
   - True
   - False

57. I have headaches quite often. *
   - True
   - False

58. I worry about things I should not have said or done. *
   - True
   - False

59. I have trouble relaxing. *
   - True
   - False

60. I am tense most of the time. *
   - True
   - False

61. I have trouble falling asleep during bed time. *
   - True
   - False
62. I usually feel tired and burned out. *
   - True
   - False

63. I really feel that I need a good break or a vacation. *
   - True
   - False

64. I am often troubled by aches and pains. *
   - True
   - False

65. I am always concerned about getting hurt in sports. *
   - True
   - False

66. I seldom seem to have time to enjoy life. *
   - True
   - False

67. I find it necessary to watch my health carefully. *
   - True
   - False

68. I am quite free from anxieties or tensions. *
   - True
   - False

69. I don't exercise much even though I know it is important for my health. *
   - True
   - False

70. I can become nervous easily. *
   - True
   - False
71. I tend to allow tension to build up to the point of feeling "ready to explode". *
   - True
   - False

72. I use medication or drugs to aid in relaxation or getting to sleep. *
   - True
   - False

73. I seek release from tension by excessive smoking, eating, or drinking. *
   - True
   - False

74. I have had more than my share of things to worry about. *
   - True
   - False

75. I am frightened easily. *
   - True
   - False

76. I am so busy that I don't have time to relax. *
   - True
   - False

77. I tend to be low in spirit. *
   - True
   - False

78. Sometimes, I just feel miserable for no good reason. *
   - True
   - False
Cognitive Dissonance Assessment – Part 2

The following test is composed of true/false items. Please read each item carefully, and if it is more true than false circle the letter “T” for true. If it is more false than true, then circle the letter “F” for false.

* Required

1. I feel ashamed of my lack of good school achievement. *
   
   - True
   - False

2. Often I was not given recognition for doing good work. *
   
   - True
   - False

3. I have trouble with math and numbers. *
   
   - True
   - False

4. I tend to give up on school work that is difficult. *
   
   - True
   - False

5. I am/was motivated to do well in school. *
   
   - True
   - False

6. I have forgotten many things I once knew well. *
   
   - True
   - False

7. I learn things very slowly. *
   
   - True
   - False

8. I have difficulty concentrating while reading or studying. *
   
   - True
   - False
9. I failed one or more grades in school. *
   - True
   - False

10. I left school at least once without graduating. *
    - True
    - False

11. I failed one or more subjects in school. *
    - True
    - False

12. I am overly cautious about making mistakes. *
    - True
    - False

13. I wish I could speak more languages. *
    - True
    - False

14. My school performance did not reflect my true abilities. *
    - True
    - False

15. I should have tried harder in school. *
    - True
    - False

16. I wish my parents had been more involved in my education. *
    - True
    - False

17. I usually find it difficult to talk to strangers. *
    - True
    - False
18. I enjoy being the center of attention. *
   - True
   - False

19. I hunger for recognition. *
   - True
   - False

20. Most people seem to like me. *
   - True
   - False

21. I would like to have more friends. *
   - True
   - False

22. My friends are important to me. *
   - True
   - False

23. I am not interested in being with other people. *
   - True
   - False

24. I wish I had more time to spend with close friends. *
   - True
   - False

25. I hunger for approval. *
   - True
   - False

26. I cannot trust even some of my close friends. *
   - True
   - False
27. I think that my friends have little confidence in me. *
   • True
   • False

28. I often hold a grudge against people for a long time. *
   • True
   • False

29. I feel lonesome even when I am with people. *
   • True
   • False

30. I dislike being told what to do and what not to do. *
   • True
   • False

31. I like social gatherings. *
   • True
   • False

32. I am self-conscious and concerned about what others might think of me. *
   • True
   • False

33. I am easily taken advantage of by others. *
   • True
   • False

34. Only those who share my beliefs are my friends. *
   • True
   • False

35. I often feel left out or unwanted. *
   • True
   • False
36. I often wish that I had someone else's life. *
   - True
   - False

37. I always treat people equally, regardless of race, sex, or color. *
   - True
   - False

38. I have to bring my work home over weekend. *
   - True
   - False

39. I worry about the increasing responsibilities of my work. *
   - True
   - False

40. Often I am expected to do more work than I can handle. *
   - True
   - False

41. I wish I had more help to deal with the demands placed upon me. *
   - True
   - False

42. I have trouble meeting deadlines. *
   - True
   - False

43. I don't like to be in financial debt but I have no choice. *
   - True
   - False

44. I work under too much tension. *
   - True
   - False
45. I buy a lot of things on credit. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

46. I tend to be suspicious of people's motives or actions. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

47. I find it hard to break a bad habit. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

48. I wish I could abandon my current life and start a new life. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

49. Often I am unable to afford the things I would like to have. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

50. I sometimes pretend to know more than I really do. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

51. I would lie to get ahead. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

52. Sometimes I rather enjoy going against the rules and doing things I'm not supposed to. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

53. I don't like things to be uncertain or unpredictable. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False
54. I could hardly live on what I have now. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

55. I often continue to work during my lunch hour or break. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

56. It is unsafe to walk alone in the city streets at night. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

57. There are more people that I dislike than I like. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

58. I am wary of people with authority. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

59. I give in when a person insists on doing something another way. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

60. I accept suggestions from others. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

61. I am easily hurt when people find fault with me or my work. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False

62. I am concerned about the welfare of others. *
   - [ ] True
   - [ ] False
63. I always try to convert someone to a particular point of view. *
   - True
   - False

64. I am inclined to "tell people off." *
   - True
   - False

65. I am bothered at times by feeling unappreciated or by the idea that "nobody cares." *
   - True
   - False

66. I have the tendency to dominate people around me. *
   - True
   - False

67. I envy those people who have things that I don't have. *
   - True
   - False

68. I find it hard to ask others for help. *
   - True
   - False

69. I like to have most things my way. *
   - True
   - False

70. People often expect too much of me. *
   - True
   - False

71. I generally wonder what hidden reason(s) another person may have for doing something nice for me. *
   - True
   - False
72. Often I pretend to care about others. *
   - True
   - False

73. I feel that I have often been punished without cause. *
   - True
   - False

74. I don't like rich people. *
   - True
   - False

75. "An eye for an eye" is the way I deal with people. *
   - True
   - False

76. I tend to rely on others when there are decisions to be made. *
   - True
   - False

77. I often "drag my feet" when requested to do something. *
   - True
   - False

78. I am a good loser. *
   - True
   - False
Appendix C – Team Survey

Thank you for agreeing to complete the team survey. Your responses are completely anonymous. In order to secure your privacy, no identifying data is saved with your replies. Please answer the following questions using a 7-point scale, where 1 indicates “I strongly disagree” and 7 indicates “I strongly agree”. The words “leader” and “manager” refer to your immediate supervisor. The word “team” refers to the group of people working directly under your immediate supervisor.

* Required

I have the resources to do my job well *

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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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The leader creates a sense of community on the team *

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People on the team are encouraged to be good team members and build good relationships *

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I feel supported and encouraged by my leader *

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My manager cares about me as a person *

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I understand how my work directly contributes to the overall success of the organization *

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I participated in declaring the vision for this team

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The leader helps team members understand how their role fits into the big picture

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Our team celebrates its successes

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There are many complaints and the morale is low on my team

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Conflict and hostility between members is a pervasive issue that doesn’t seem to get better

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Employee performance evaluations are fair and appropriate

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There is a positive attitude within the team

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My job is important in accomplishing the mission of the organization

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**LEADERSHIP EFFECT ON TEAMS**

My manager is actively interested in my professional development and advancement *

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I can disagree with my supervisor without fear of consequences *

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The leader tries to understand my point of view when he discusses problems or projects with me *

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The leader is usually available if I request his time *

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The leader uses influence and motivation to obtain results from team members *

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My manager uses positional power to coerce team members for results *

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My manager is inconsistent in his behaviour *

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My manager changes his mind frequently after making a decision *

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The leader can have different opinions about the same employee (i.e. whether the employee is a good performer or not) depending on a circumstance that isn’t necessarily in that employee’s control.

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The leader is not always consistent in his actions.

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On our team, we focus on each other’s strengths.

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The leader is aware of my strengths and how they fit into the team.

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On our team, we collaboratively discover what approach would be the most effective.

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Our team focuses on problems and how to solve them.

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Our team focuses on what “could be” and actively moves toward that vision.

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On this team, I feel that I am growing personally and professionally.

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On my team, the job and the deadline is more important than individual needs

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree

The leader mentors me through my work and gives me direction when needed

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree

My leader is willing to admit his mistakes if and when this is necessary

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree

Thank you for completing the survey. Please add any questions, comments or clarifications:
Appendix D – Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore cultural and personality type patterns that may affect the performance of an organization. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently a manager who works in the << >> organization.

This study is being conducted by Maya Vujosevic, a Master’s degree candidate at Adler Graduate School. Any affiliation with the investigator prior to consent to be a participant was in no way a factor in being chosen as a participant. The only reason for selection was your necessary experience level and knowledge related to the specific topic of this study. By signing below, you are indicating that you have in no way been coerced to participate in this study.

We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to answer the question, “How does leadership style affect team success?”

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and an assessment which will together take approximately 40 minutes of your time.

Benefits of Being in the Study

The benefits of being in the study are the ability to provide insight into your current leadership style and how it impacts effectiveness as a leader. You will obtain further insight into your team’s experience at the organization and better understand your own thought and decision process.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private and coded. Any sort of report that might be published will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Only the researcher will ever have access to the records.
Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher, Adler Graduate School or with other cooperating institutions. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.
Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Maya Vujosevic and her advisor at Adler Graduate School is Dr. William Premo. You may ask questions at any time, either in person or by contacting them:

Maya Vujosevic                Dr. William Premo
612-760-1357                  612-889-9508

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Name (Print): ___________________________ Phone: ____________________
Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________________
Signature of Investigator: ________________ Date: ____________________
Signature of Advisor: ________________ Date: ____________________
References


