

**FULLY ENGAGED INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM
THE INSIDE-OUT**

by

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presented at

The NAPTOSA Gauteng Conference
2 – 3 August 2013

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1. BEING INSPIRED – THE ULTIMATE CALLING OF A LEADER

When approximately 6 000 employees were asked what they look for in a leader, one of the core characteristics they highlighted was *being inspired and enthusiastic about what they do*. In order to project inspiration and enthusiasm, a leader needs positive constructive energy.

Your chairperson, Tinus du Preez, asked me to offer some **insight** and **inspiration** to school leaders with regard to the importance of **inner resources** that school leaders will need in order to work with their staff members in a compassionate and empathetic way. I want to congratulate him with a well-chosen topic.

Inner source of energy

To inspire and motivate others a leader **must be and have available an inner source of inspiration and energy**. Such inner source must be like a bubbling spring or fountain producing a constant flow of inspiration and energy.

Where does a leader get his/her inspiration from?

In order to offer such a continuous flow of inspiration and energy a leader must know how to skilfully manage his or her own energy. The skilful management of energy makes full personal engagement possible.

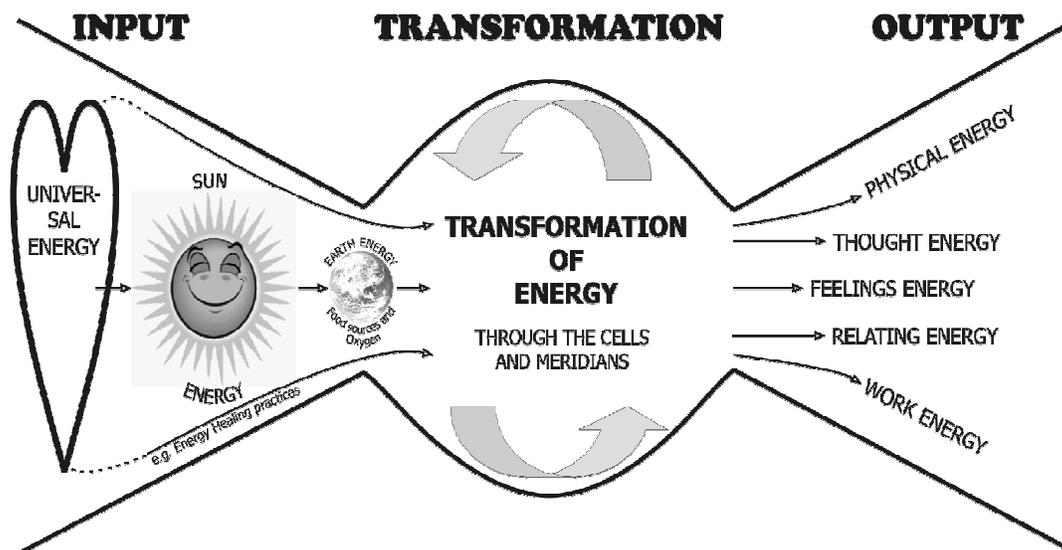
Full engagement requires drawing on four separate but related sources of energy. Fulfilling the four needs in an integrated way is like combining elements in chemistry. When our inner engagements reach a *critical mass* of integration, we experience spontaneous combustion – an explosion of inner synergy that ignites the fire within and gives energy, inspiration and enthusiasm.



The key to ignite the fire within is the synergy between all our life engagements. It *transforms other needs into capacities for contribution*. Food, money, health, education, and love become resources to reach out and help fill the unmet needs of others.

- Mental – to learn and create
- Spiritual – to leave a legacy, to experience a meaningful life and feeling fulfilled

Inspiration is the moment in which your spirit is ignited. Inspiration dawns when something sparks a flame within you and calls forth a special feeling, message or action.



To be inspired means to experience....

- **joy**
- **feeling connected** to our Source, your spiritual essence
- being totally **on purpose**
- exceptionally **high energy**
- **creativity** – ready to create something new
- **being unbothered** by other's behaviours

One can, for example, be inspired by...

- being successful in your work
- acknowledgement
- spending time in nature
- learning exiting new things
- doing good, helping others

- an uplifting, caring person
- an *inspirational box* at your desk or dresser in which you can e.g. keep beautiful quotes, inspiring objects or special memories

Motivational and inspirational sparks – how do they differ?

A fundamental difference exists between **motivation** and **inspiration**.

Motivation is soul and ego-driven. It is driven by an achievement need and a **materialistic orientation**.

Inspiration is a spiritual calling and is ignited by a reconnection with our **heart energy**, our inner energy and enthusiasm.

The table below will shed more light on the difference between motivation and inspiration.

Motivational Sparks	Inspirational Sparks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement driven, production oriented, materialistic orientation • Grabbing an idea and carrying it through • 'I need this job and will work hard to secure my position!' • An ego-determination expecting acknowledgement and recognition for achievement • Live and Learn orientation • A feeling of achievement, success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment, support, safety and loyalty oriented • An idea that took hold of us from an inner spark • Being a proud member of this organisation identifying with our brand. I want to make a contribution • Being unbothered by others, behaviours or attitudes • Love and Legacy orientation • A feeling of contentment, joy

2. INSPIRATION, ENTHUSIASM AND LIFE ENERGY

Everything we do – from interacting with colleagues and making an important decision to spending time with our families – requires energy. Every one of our thoughts, emotions and behaviours has an energy consequence, for better or for worse.

When someone enthusiastically live his or her passion, he or she transmits spiritual energy. Being excited about life is infectious – it rubs off on others and is wonderfully inspiring and energising.

School leaders are the stewards of the energy of staff members and learners. They inspire or demoralise those they lead first by how effectively they manage their own energy and next by how well they mobilise, focus, invest and renew the collective energy of those they lead. The skilful management of energy, individually and organisationally, makes possible something that we call **full engagement**.

To be fully engaged, we must be physically energised, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with purpose beyond our immediate self-interest.

Less than 30 percent of American workers are *fully engaged* at work. Some 55 percent are *not engaged*. Another 19 percent are *actively disengaged*.

What is life energy (L-energy)?

Life energy (L-energy) is the life-giving force in nature, the source of life, growth and recovery. From oxygen and nutrients our body cells create life energy which enables us to...

- energise our internal organs (cell transformation)
- think, feel and do
- communicate and relate with people and our environment
- move – movement is being taken for granted
- work

People who do not experience meaning in life and who are unhappy, have a low morale, are often without courage and life energy and tend to be unproductive. Speaking of life energy – *one out of three persons experiences a lack of life energy*. Furthermore, it seems that approximately 20 percent of men and 30 percent of women experience a more serious fatigue syndrome. As a matter of fact, chronic tiredness or fatigue is one of the top ten complaints of people when visiting their doctors.

Your life energy index

The aim of this short questionnaire is to get an indication of your life energy index. Award marks as follows:

- For each statement, award a mark between 0 and 4 according to the following scale:
 - 0 = Not at all
 - 1 = Very seldom
 - 2 = Sometimes
 - 3 = Often
 - 4 = Mostly
- Write your mark in the block in front of each statement
- Add up your marks and write your total score in the bigger block at the end of the questionnaire

1. I have enough energy and vitality for each day
2. I enjoy my daily tasks or my work
3. I think people enjoy my company and generally experience me as an energetic and positive person
4. My thoughts and feelings about life are generally cheerful and happy
5. I am passionate and enthusiastic about my life

TOTAL

20

Interpretation

- 16 – 20:** You are seemingly particularly energetic, cheerful, bubbly and a happy person.
- 13 – 15:** Your energy level seems to be relatively high. You are doing well and maintain a positive outlook on life.
- 10 – 12:** Your energy level is on a critical balance between good and low. Determine whether it is only temporary.
- Below 10:** Your life is characterised by limited life energy and little excitement. Determine whether this is your nature, or if your life circumstances contribute to this.

3. LEADING FROM THE INSIDE-OUT: A NEW DEEPER LEVEL OF THINKING

For a school leader to solve deep, fundamental problems of their school, he or she needs an edge. Such an edge is a principle-centred, character-based, *inside-out* approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness.

Inside-out means to **start first with self**, even more fundamentally to start with the most *inside* part of self – your character, and your motives. It says if you want to **have** loyal staff members, **be** the kind of person who generates positive energy. If you want to **have** more pleasant, cooperative relationships, **be** a more understanding, empathic, consistent leader.

The *inside-out* approach says that private victories precede public victories, that making and keeping promises to ourselves precedes making and keeping promises to others. It says it is futile to put personality ahead of character, to try to improve relationships with others before improving ourselves. *Inside-out* is a process – a continuing process of personal renewal.

4. HOW DO WE LOSE ENERGY AND IN THE PROCESS ALSO INSPIRATION

Two principles guide the idea of energy leaks:

- Energy flows in the direction of thought, attention or focus
- Energy is wasted when used destructively

The metaphor of one's body as a bottle of energy:

- The body refuels energy during sleep.
- When one wakes up, the bottle is full or almost full – sometimes not at all
- During the day one gradually empties the bottle of energy. The question is HOW? What do you spend your energy on?

Through a variety of ways one loses energy throughout the day. By becoming aware of some of these, one may be able to conserve some energy.

1) Eyes

Consider the function of the eyes: one moves into the world almost only through the eyes. It is claimed that **eighty percent of contact with the world is through the eyes.** So when one gets tired, the eyes will also be drained of energy. If you can refresh your eyes, you can refresh your whole body, because they are a prominent part of your energy. If you can revitalise your eyes, you have revitalised yourself.

2) Thought

On an even more subtle level, we **lose energy by what we think.** Negative thoughts drain us of immense amounts of energy.

3) People

Being with a friendly group always gives one energy. Being with someone who is antagonistic, one always feels that your energy has been drained out.

4) Emotions

A great deal of energy is also spent on things which is unnecessary and harmful in every respect, such as the experience of unpleasant emotions such as worrying, aggression, irritation, bottling up feelings, or feeling pressured.

5. BEING AN INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS

The more an authentic leader experiences spiritual traits such as inner harmony, inner peace, connectedness, gratitude, joy, genuineness, humility, honesty, inspiration, kindness, patience and being respectful, the higher their vibrational frequency will be. This will impact positively on others to the point where they are able to provide inspiration to others merely by their presence.

Below we will discuss **seven spiritual traits** of an inspirational leader:

1) Kindness inspires others

One simple act of kindness and service will do more to inspire others than lectures on the virtues of being a thoughtful citizen ever could. When we elevate our consciousness above the level of ego, which says, *I didn't spill that food, so it's not my job to clean it up!* to the level that asks, *How may I serve?* We become an inadvertent source of inspiration to anyone who's in the energy field of our spiritually based actions.

2) Gratitude inspires others

If we practice gratitude as opposed to maintaining an attitude of entitlement, we will automatically extend inspiration wherever we go. An attitude of gratitude allows us to adopt what's called *radical humility*, a trait that's very persuasive in helping others feel inspired. Pomposity or self-importance on the other hand, will never inspire anyone. Vanity, conceit, and boasting are all signs that a person has **Edged God Out** (EGO) of the picture.

3) Generosity inspires others

Generous actions are always inspirational. The message is that *we must give whatever it is we have that will benefit others.*

4) Listening inspires others

As ironic as it may sound, we're far more inspiring to others when we are willing to listen than when we're giving them advice.

5) Being at peace inspires others

When we simply demonstrate that we're living peacefully, we offer other people a large dose of inspiration by our mere presence. Being at peace with ourselves is a way of going through life avoiding conflict and confrontation. When we're in a state of tranquility, we actually send out a vibration of energy that impacts all living creatures, including plants, animals and all people.

6) Living passionately inspires others

Living our passion is the way to convey to others how to be in-Spirit. Being excited about life is infectious – it rubs off on others and is wonderfully inspiring. When we are enthusiastically living our passion, whatever it may be, we transmit spiritual energy to those around us that we're in-Spirit, loving who we are, what we came here to be, and whoever comes into our field of vision.

7) Truth inspires others

Finally, and perhaps most powerful, we need to live and breathe truth because nothing inspires other people more than being in its energy field. Honesty is a necessity if we're ever to live in harmony with Spirit and become a source of inspiration for others as well. When we shade the truth, a part of our brain registers this incongruity – it shows up as a disconnect from our True North, and we're out of balance.

6. FINDING YOUR WAY TO AN INSPIRED, HARMONIOUS LIFE

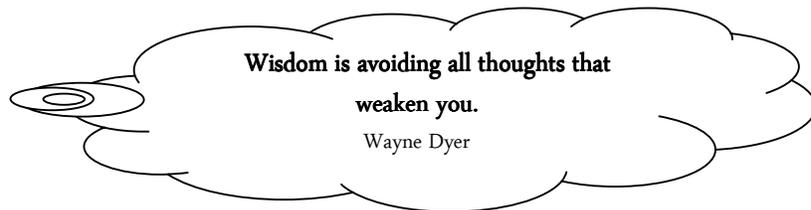
Why should we strive for inner harmony?

Being stuck at the lower energy level of the personal self, manifests in dis-eases of the spirit: depression, addiction and lack of spontaneity, despair, in need of love, suffering, meaninglessness, unforgiveness, violence, materialism, existential frustration, stress, loneliness and overgrown ego.

Growing spiritually to a higher level of consciousness will contribute to inner harmony, joy, peace and cooperation. How can we be more in tune with our true authentic self – our spiritual being? Below we will share a number of **Life Lessons** for inner harmony.

Life Lesson 1

**You are the captain of your thoughts,
feelings and actions.**



Thoughts and Bodily Resistance

Every single thought you have can be assessed in terms of whether it strengthens or weakens you.

Thoughts and Energy

Thought seems to be the most powerful energy in the universe. It transmits positive or negative energy. Your thoughts are the currency for getting what you want in your life. When you place those thoughts on what you do not want, regardless of how negatively you feel about it, you will involuntarily act upon what you do not want. In the process more of what you do not want will show up in your life.

Life Lesson 2

Keep your energy field uncontaminated.

You have within you the absolute ability to increase your frequency and enhance the energy field of your everyday life. By increasing the speed at which you vibrate you move into those frequencies called spirit, and away from those that are grounded in the material world of problems.

Your environmental energy field

This energy field extends into your home, your workplace, your family, your friends, community involvement and places you visit often, e.g. a shopping centre. Other environmental factors that impact on your energy level are noise levels, air quality, food purity and crime.



QUESTION: How does each of your environmental energy fields affect you? And, how do you think do you affect them?

ASSESS ON A 10-POINT SCALE

	Very negative					Very positive				
Home	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Workplace	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Extended family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Community involvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shopping centre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Clearing your energy fields

What you may not realise is that *you* play a potent role in keeping *your* energy fields clean and uncontaminated and that you also can have a cleansing effect on the energy field of those around you. For this reason, you should make an agreement with yourself **to become conscious of what you allow into your fields of energy.**

Life Lesson 3

Your governing values are the foundation of personal fulfilment.

(Smith, H. 1994:46)

Governing values are **what matters most** to you. Your governing values are expressions of **what is important** in your life.

Although many of us do not realise it, we all have governing values. Those values are unique to you as a person. They come from the way we were raised as children, from the experiences we've had, from our talents and interests and unique personalities.

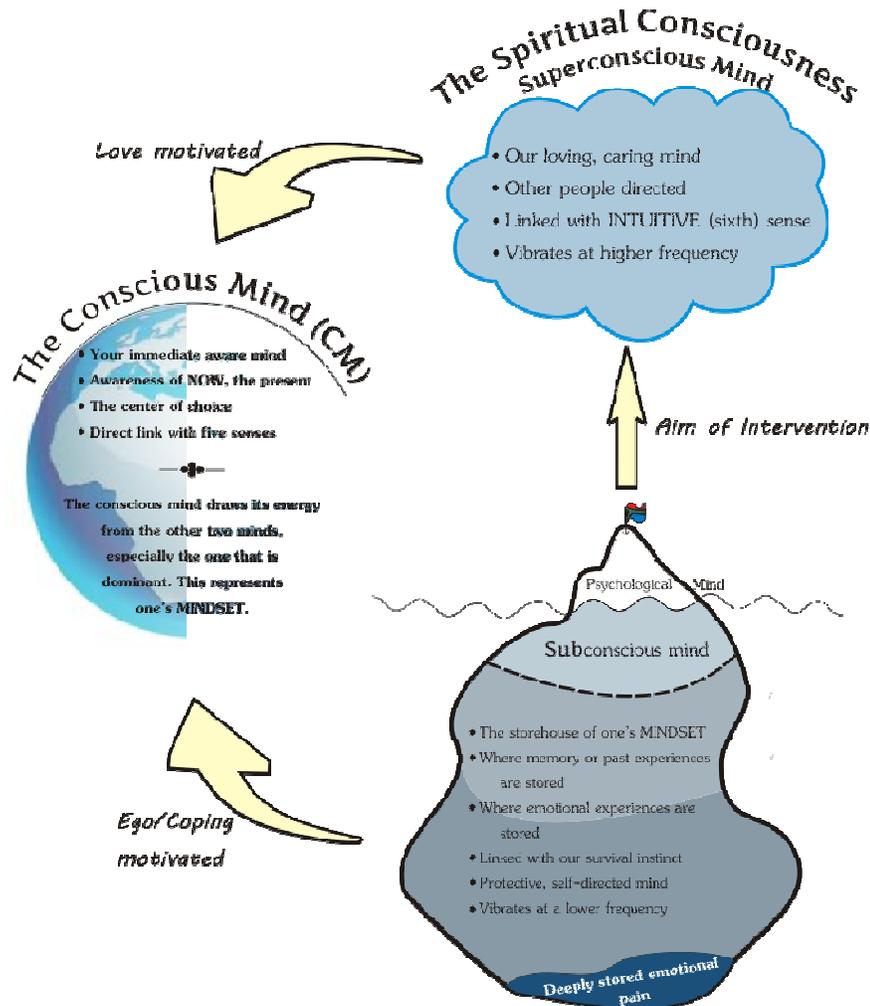
The importance of establishing your priorities

By prioritising and ranking your governing values you become clear and focused about what is really important to you. At times you will have to make important decisions or even land up in defining moments. Then such governing values will guide you to make the right decision.

Life Lesson 4

Enhance the energy field of your everyday life to a higher frequency.

Generally we think of people with high energy in terms of stamina and vigour with qualities of enthusiasm and tirelessness. What we are suggesting is that you think of energy in a context of vibration and movement. The idea here is that a higher frequency will make daily problems less acute. Your focus and priorities will be on inspirational experiences.



Life Lesson 5

Be impeccable with your word.

Your words are exceptionally powerful. Your words are like the two sides of a coin. The one side can be beautiful, the other side can potentially be destructive. The dark side is the misuse of the word, which evokes negativity and unpleasantness. The other side is the impeccability of the word, which will only create beauty, love and positivity.

The human mind is like a fertile ground where seeds are continually being planted. The seeds are opinions, ideas, and concepts. You plant

a seed, a thought, and it grows. What is important is to see which kind of seeds our mind is fertile for, and to prepare it to receive the seeds of love.

Don Miquel Ruiz describes the word *impeccable* as follows: *Impeccability* means “without sin.” Impeccable comes from the Latin *peccatus*, which means “sin.” The *im* in impeccable means “without”, so *impeccable* means “without sin.”

Religions talk about sin and sinners, but let us try to understand what it really means to sin. A sin is anything that you do, feel or believe which goes against yourself. From the root of the word *sin*, this word means *to miss the mark/target*. You go against yourself when you judge or blame yourself for anything. Being without sin is exactly the opposite. Being impeccable is not going against yourself. When you are impeccable, you **take responsibility** for your actions, but you do not judge or blame yourself.

Being impeccable with your word is not using the word against yourself. If I love myself, I will express that love in my interactions with you, and then I am being impeccable with the word, because that action will produce a like reaction. If I love you, then you will potentially love me. If I insult you, you will potentially insult me. If I have gratitude for you, you will potentially be grateful to me. Being impeccable with your word is the correct use of your energy. It means to use your energy in the direction of truth and love for yourself which then overflows to others.

How do we learn to be impeccable with our words?

First, think positively and constructively about yourself. Think and tell yourself how much you appreciate yourself and how much you have to be grateful for.

Second, be impeccable in your words when you speak to and about the pivotal people in your life.

Third, do the same when you speak to and about important people in your life, e.g. friends, colleagues, people rendering a service such as your hairdresser, your pharmacist or the man filling your gas tank.

Fertile ground

Impeccable thoughts and words will shield you against anybody talking or thinking negatively about you. When you are impeccable with your

words and thoughts, it will change the way you deal with yourself and later also the way you deal with other people.

Life Lesson 6

Do not take things too personal - also be willing to accept disapproval of others.

Do not take anything personally, because by taking things personally you set yourself up to suffer for nothing.

Don Miquel Ruiz

Life lesson six is born from lesson five. Whatever happens around you, do not take it personally. You take things personally because your ego responds. As soon as your ego gets involved, the poison goes through you, and you become more toxic. What causes you to become toxic is what we call *personal importance*. Personal importance, or taking things personally, is an expression of selfishness because we make the assumption that everything is about “me.”

Even when a situation seems so personal, even if others insult you directly, it has nothing to do with you. What they say, what they do, and the opinions they give are according to the agreements they have in their own minds. Their point of view comes from all the programming they received during domestication or conditioning.

When you take things personally, then you feel offended, and your reaction is to defend your beliefs and create conflicts. You make something big out of something so little, because you have the need to be right and make everybody else wrong.

The **exception to the rule** is when you deserve what is said or done to you because of your own actions or words.

Why not take the words or deeds of other people personally?

Because...

1. people suffer from their own problems and projects their problems onto you

2. people have their own opinion according to their belief system. Nothing they think about you is really about you, it is about themselves.
3. both praise and scorn should make no difference to a person who knows himself
4. other people's words can only hurt you when you suffer from your own baggage, pain or feelings of guilt

When you make it a habit not to take things too personally, you will learn not to trust what others say and do. You will learn to trust your own judgement and to take the responsibility for your judgement.

Be independent of the good opinion of others.

Wayne Dyer

Life Lesson 7

Keep your life simple.

"I have lived long enough to learn how much there is I can really do without. He is nearest to God who needs the fewest things."

Socrates

We wish to end this paper on a very practical note. We want to share with you ten specific tools for simplifying your life.

1. **Unclutter your life.**
 - You will feel a real rush of inspiration when you clear out stuff that's no longer useful in your life.
2. **Clear your calendar of unwanted and unnecessary activities and obligations.**
 - If you are detached from Spirit, you are unlikely to know the glow of inspiration.
3. **Be sure to keep your free time *free*.**
 - Be on the lookout for invitations to functions that may keep you on top of society's pyramid, but that inhibit your access to joyful inspiration.

4. **Take time for prayer, meditation or anything peaceful.**
 - Give yourself at least 20 minutes a day to sit quietly and be at peace with yourself.
5. **Return to the simplicity of nature.**
 - There is nothing more awe inspiring than nature itself.
6. **Put distance between you and your critics.**
 - Choose to align yourself with people who are like-minded in their search for simplified inspiration.
7. **Take some time for your health.**
 - Make some time every single day for exercise. Even if you can only manage a walk around the block, just do it!
8. **Play, play, play!**
 - You will simplify your life and feel inspired if you learn to play rather than work your way through life.
9. **Slow down.**
 - One of Gandhi's most illuminating observations reminds us that "there is more to life than increasing its speed."
10. **Do everything you can to avoid debt.**
 - Remember that you are attempting to simplify your life, so you do not need to purchase more of what will complicate and clutter your life.

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