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When Deontology and Utilitarianism Aren't Enough: How Heidegger's Notion of "Dwelling" Might Help Organisational Leaders Resolve Ethical Issues

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ABSTRACT. This paper offers an alternative to deontological and utilitarian approaches to making ethical decisions and taking good actions by organisational leaders. It argues that the relational and context-dependent nature of leadership necessitates reference to an ethical approach which explicitly takes these aspects into account. Such an approach is offered in the re-conceptualisation of ethical action on the part of leaders as a process of "coming into right relation" vis-à-vis those affected by their decisions and actions. Heidegger's notion of "dwelling" is explored as a means of "coming into right relation". Three aspects of dwelling: "staying with", "comportment" and "active engagement" are described and ways in which they might be practically enacted by leaders are suggested. The paper concludes by reflecting on the ways adopting a "dwelling" approach to resolving ethical issues implies a re-conceptualisation of leadership itself.

KEY WORDS: business ethics, Heidegger and ethics, leadership, leadership ethics, relational practices

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Introduction

This paper considers an alternative approach to resolving issues experienced as having an ethical component by those exercising leadership, whether formally or informally, within organisations. The limitations of deontological, or principle-based ethics as well as those grounded in consequentialism or utilitariansm include that they are experienced as being too abstract to be usable, along with the view that the philosophical language with which they are often presented is off-putting to those engaged in organisational life (Monast, 1994; Stark, 1993), However, this paper argues that another key reason why deontology and utilitarianism often fail leaders is that such approaches do not adequately account for the reality of leadership practice: its contextual and contingent nature, along with the relational dynamic which lies at its heart. When principle-based or utilitarian approaches do not adequately address aspects of relational practice, this paper proposes that appropriate ethical conduct might be approached through considering what constitutes "coming into right relationship" (Cheney, 2002) between the actors involved in a given situation.

"Coming into right relationship" involves attending both to one's own values and responses to a situation, as well as to others' who have a stake in the consequences of decisions. But this is not a simple process of active listening or working towards compromise. There is a particular quality to the kind of engagement suggested here, characterised by the phenomenological notion of "dwelling" (Heidegger,

1971). At its heart, dwelling requires actors to be willing to be influenced by, as well as to influence, the other. By adopting a "dwelling" orientation to ethical deliberation, truly creative resolutions can result from seemingly intransigent situations. Because of their emergent nature, the ensuing decisions or actions could not have been foreseen at the genesis of the interaction. Before presenting this argument more fully, the paper frames its positioning vis-à-vis leadership, and then examines further the limitations of more traditional frameworks for dealing with the ethical problems faced by organisational leaders.

Why focus on leaders?

Much of the extant business ethics literature applies generally to managers rather than focusing on leaders per se. This paper particularly addresses ethical action as it pertains to leaders for several reasons:

- Although ethical action and decision making is an important aspect of managerial roles, doing so is necessarily entwined with leading because of the nature of power and influence inherent within leader/follower relationships. Cuilla (1995) goes as far to say that good leadership is necessarily ethical leadership because of its relational aspect.
- The centrality of relationship to the practice of leading (Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1993) is one of the key reasons why deontological and utilitarian approaches may not always serve leaders best, whereas they may be more appropriate to managerial action and decision making.
- Finally, the approach to ethical deliberation grounded in dwelling proposed in this paper implies a radical re-conceptualisation of "leading" itself, which is not necessarily as relevant for "managing".

There are two further qualifications about the way in which leadership is conceptualised in this paper which serve to frame the overall argument. The first is to problematise the concept of "leadership". Although a plethora of literature exists about what constitutes leadership, how it is accomplished, how it

is experienced, why it is successful – there is little agreement about what it is or how it can be accomplished. Post-modern and critical theorists such as Gemmil and Oakley (1992) and Wood (2004) question the viability of the concept itself, suggesting, in Wood's words, that the Western love affair with "leadership" speaks of a "misplaced fallacy".

The view taken within this paper is that leadership is a highly context-dependent phenomenon, and that at its heart, along with other theorists (Northouse, 2004) it is a social and relationally based practice which has something to do with influence. As such, ethics – particularly the ethics of how power is exercised, is an inherent part of the leading process.

Secondly, I do not want to infer that management does not also have an ethical dimension, or that the distinction between managerial and leadership behaviours is clearcut. However, to the extent that leading involves the deployment of influence and power, this argument is aimed a leading, rather than managing activity.

Difficulties of "Leading"

Leading in such a way that one exercises one's power and influence in ethically appropriate ways can be very difficult. The particular kinds of ethical problems this paper aims to address are those which are not easily resolved through recourse to organisational codes of practice or rules. They involve situations in which conflicts arise between one's deeply held, subjectively informed relational ways of being in the world, and more objectively fashioned, general rules. They also arise when codes of practice do not even address the specific issue at hand. They are the kind of problem evoked through competing, conflicting priorities, or when options for action raise questions of the sort, "What is the least worst option in this case?" They include instances such as the following:

- How should an organisational leader respond to requests for special consideration from a long-standing employee who is undergoing severe personal distress?
- What should an employee of an organisation do when they discover members of the organisation are engaged in wrong-doing, but

the admission of the truth will harm innocent, as well as guilty parties?

- How should a leader handle cases of organisational confidentiality around strategic plans, when information they have would effect a subordinate's career choices, which the leader may know about because of confidentially given information on the part of the subordinate?

In each case, it is assumed that the leader involved WANTS to act well and aims to make the best ethical judgement he or she can in the given circumstance. However, guidance as to how to achieve the best way forward may not be readily discerned through recourse to established organisational rules or guidelines.

Limitations of current approaches to "Business Ethics"

In contemporary times, business ethics has largely come to mean adherence to codes of practice, or the development of those codes of practice. Accordingly, business ethics has come to be associated with bureaucracy, systems whose intent is to control, delineate, or prescribe behaviours. As Cummings (2000) points out, these conceptions of business ethics have their legacy in the Enlightenment's project of objectification, rationality, and the pursuit of meta-narratives unaffected by context. Ethics born of this approach are, paradoxically, in opposition to what many of us know the modern world of organisations to be – that is, post-modern; in which meanings are constantly shifting, in which we are encouraged to acknowledge the plurality of stories informing organisational life, and wherein no one is believed to have an undisputed corner on "truth". He notes the irony of the growth of business ethics literature, and the proliferation of "codes of conduct" which are ever more lacking in meaning for the world in which we operate. Elaborating on this idea he writes:

> "...many now regard the current codes that constitute people's appreciation of what business ethics amounts to, as so general as to be meaningless as a guide to practical action in a fast changing world characterised by unique situations, why ethics is of

little use in the development of company strategy (except in the restrictive sense) why many see business ethics as only being cynically or instrumentally adhered to on an 'as needed' basis" (213).

This view is supported by the kind of response often evoked from organisational leaders encountering the topic of business ethics. From their perspective, initiatives to make them more aware of the need to adhere to certain codes of practice can seem irrelevant in the face of those situations which truly test their ethical sensibilities. The following case study illustrates such a scenario and the issues it raises. The details of this actual case have been altered in order to preserve the anonymity of those involved.

* * *

Jake is Director of European Manufacturing for a large house-hold appliance manufacturer, Vimex. Vimex outsources some of its key components to a smaller, family run company, Sadie Co, with whom it has done business for a number of years. Sadie Co's managing director and founder is Max, with whom Jake has an amicable relationship. Sadie Co depends on Vimex for about 60% of its business, and over the years, the two companies have worked closely together, even to the point that Sadie Co produces specialised components solely for Vimex.

Over the past 6 months however, Sadie Co has not met its commitment to Vimex; orders have been late and an increasing number of defects have occurred in units delivered. Through the grapevine, Jake has heard that Max's wife has been diagnosed with inoperable cancer, and Jake assumes that Max has (quite understandably) taken his eye off the running of the business.

Jake is under pressure from his MD to find another supplier and discontinue the relationship with Sadie Co. Vimex's code of conduct declares that employees of the business should not engage in the personal affairs of their suppliers – in other words, in a situation such as this, impartiality is needed and Jake should do what is best for Vimex without considering Max's situation. Normally, Jake would have no difficulty discontinuing a relationship with a supplier if they are not servicing the business properly, but Jake is concerned not to add to Max's troubles given the extremity of his situation. Besides, Jake is not convinced there is another supplier readily available who

would be able to supply the specialist components that Vimex and Sadie Co have collaborated on to create.

At the end of the week, Jake is meeting with his boss who expects a resolution to the problem. Jake is not sure what to do, he is loathe to add to Max's difficulties, and he also has to serve the needs of Vimex. He's had a few sleepless nights trying to arrive at a resolution which takes the interests of both parties into account.

* * *

Aspects of the case key to the argument presented in this paper include:

- Jake experiences himself in a conflict between what the organisation demands of him for expediency's sake (discontinue the relationship with Sadie Co) and what he feels is the correct way to behave towards Max, given his personal situation. Jake wants to consider Max's position in his decision about what to do.
- If he resorts to his company's Code of Practice, it seems clear that Max should base his action on a principle of "impartiality"; he should ignore the personal information he has about Max and do what is expedient for Vimex, which might necessitate finding an alternative supplier.
- However, it is not necessarily clearcut that finding another supplier would really be better for Vimex in the long term. The relationship established between the two firms has been mutually beneficial and finding another company able to supply the specialist components which Sadie Co has developed for Vimex may be difficult, if not impossible.

How deontological and utilitarian approaches let leaders down

As Donaldson and Werhane (1999) point out, some philosophers believe that consequentialist approaches, such as utilitarianism, and deontological, or "principle-based" approaches exhaust all possible modes of ethical reasoning available to leaders finding themselves in situations similar to that of

Jake. However, in line with writers such as Stark (1993) and Monast (1994) I would argue that in this instance, Jake is let down by both deontological and utilitarian approaches. A deontological approach is embedded in the firm's Code of Practice requiring impartiality on Jake's part, with the consequence that he should not take Max's situation into account when deciding on his course of action. However, Jake holds strong personal values pertaining to treating others as he would like to be treated; around caring for individuals with whom one has either a personal or professional relationship; and around the importance of compassion and trustworthiness playing a role in relations with others. Although the deontological principle upon which the idea of impartiality is built may be correct in many instances and is often important in preventing unfair advantage being given, this is not really the issue at stake in this particular situation.

From a utilitarian point of view, Jake might consider the best course of action in relation to the greatest utility different options offer. This approach doesn't result in a clearcut resolution either. Although it may seem expedient to find a different supplier, Jake doesn't know how much time such an endeavour will take or whether or not a new supplier will be able to provide a better level of service or product. As is often the case when utilitarianism is invoked as a way forward, there are too many unknowns for the measurement of benefits and costs to be adequately ascribed.

Furthermore, both deontological and utilitarian approaches omit a key aspect of the position in which Jake finds himself; its relational dimension. This can be done, I propose, through considering what constitutes "coming into right relation" vis-à-vis those involved in the situation, a notion explored in greater depth below.

Coming into "right relation" as an approach to ethical action

In her seminal work about the differences between female and male ways of making ethical decisions, Carol Gilligan (1982) asserts that ways of deciding what is ethically correct have a distinct gender bias. Her work showed that traditionally, men often refer

to principles informed by ideas of "objective truth" to decide what is correct. For instance, in line with a principle that one should be honest, a man might answer truthfully when his wife asks him whether or not he likes the dress she is wearing, even if he thinks it is dreadful.

A woman, faced with the same dilemma, will more often resort to action which will preserve and reinforce the relationship in deciding whether or not to offer a "truthful" response. Gilligan argues that although according to male ways of thinking, the woman is lying if she says she likes the dress even if she does not, her priorities are actually differently formed. In other words, Gilligan proposes that for women, ethical action is centrally informed by relational values.

Gilligan frames this approach as an "ethic of care", that tends closely to the nurturing of defining relationships between people. Likewise, the importance of maintaining and nourishing relationships is at the heart of Cheney's notion of "coming into right relation" (2003) as an approach to ethical action.

"Coming into right relation" with another, as described by Cheney, involves a reciprocal and interactive way of engaging which honours the integrity and independence of the other. Such an approach is based on a concern for "rightness" within a particular situation rather than a notion of objectively constructed "truth". Expanding on this notion of "rightness", Goodman and Elgin (1988) write:

> "No philosophical pronouncement can provide a general criterion or rules for determining rightness; rightness is a matter of fitting and working. (But this fitting) is not sheer coherence...fitting is neither passive nor one-way, but an active process of fitting together; the fit has to be *made* (emphasis in the original), and the making may involve minor or major adjustments in what is being fitted *into*, or what is being fitted *in*, or in both" (158).

"Rightness" in Goodman and Elgin's sense then, is not something that is pre-determined or objectively constituted. It is a way of being which emerges from the engagement between subjects wanting to find a "right" way of "fitting" together within a particular context.

The ethical approach which best acknowledges the importance of context to ethical deliberation and action is probably Virtue Ethics. Virtue ethics approaches, based originally in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1976) and popularised more recently by Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) take the view that ethical action is the manifestation of a virtuous character. A key component of virtue ethics approaches is their acknowledgement of the importance of context in defining what is "right". For instance, Whetstone (2001) asserts:

> 'Virtues and vices are fully understood only by considering the overall context of life and work. A virtue is not merely a principle, the practice of an ethic of virtue requires that the person has perceptive insights concerning the context of each act. What is most right depends on the situation' (105).

The possible contribution virtue approaches to ethics could make to managers and leaders operating within organisational contexts is currently being explored by a range of business ethics theorists. Writers such as Whetstone (2001) Hartman (1998) Collier (1995) and Boatright (1995) build strong cases for the inclusion of virtue approaches in the teaching of business ethics. They argue that the importance of context to ethical decision making in the practice of leadership and management necessitates a more reflective response on the part of organisational actors, and one which is dependent on their own moral development. Still, practical ways of developing virtuous leaders are difficult to locate.

A concept which seems to incorporate the idea of "coming into right relationship" while also suggesting a means by which that can be achieved is "dwelling", to which this paper now turns.

What is dwelling?

The notion of "dwelling" from a philosophical point of view is most commonly associated with Heidegger's phenomenology. At the start of his essay, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1971), Heidegger, traces the roots of the word "Bauen" – the German word commonly translated into the English, "building". Heidegger enriches this meaning, suggesting that in its original sense, "Bauen", means "to dwell" (146) , which in turn, means "to remain, to stay in a place". The "Nachgebur", or

'neighbour' in English, is "he who dwells nearby". Noting an etymological connection between the German verb "bis" ("to be"), and "bauen" (to dwell) Heidegger asserts that "dwelling" constitutes a central feature of human experience, writing, "to be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal, it means to dwell." (147).

Colloquially, "dwelling" is associated with a particular quality of engagement. It connotes lingering, paying attention in an unhurried way. As a quality of thought dwelling suggests openness, it is not quite so directed or forceful as "pondering" while being more focused than "day-dreaming". As an activity, dwelling implies affecting a place, creating a home space perhaps, which reflects the self while sympathetically representing the particularities of the space itself.

In Heidegger's terms, dwelling has corresponding connotations. Similar to the common sense use of the term, dwelling is strongly associated with a "poetic" way of being in Heidegger's writing. As such, it can never be wholly apprehended through hermeneutics or completely rational ways of knowing; the imaginal plays a key role in both our understanding, and enactment of dwelling.

There is a further aspect of Heidegger's description of dwelling which is relevant to explore here. Heidegger makes a strong connection between bauen and the Old Gothic word, '*wunian*', which like *bauen* means to "stay in one place". However, within it is also the notion of "being at peace", to be "safeguarded from danger". Heidegger asserts:

> "To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving*" (149) (emphasis in the original).

Here I am noticing the extra quality Heidegger bequeaths "dwelling" through this passage, which itself carries an ethical dimension. Heidegger asserts that dwelling requires a kind of caring from us that "spares and preserves". Elsewhere (1971: 151), he writes that this kind of dwelling allows entities to come into the fullness of themselves, it is the kind of "being with" which enables entities to exist peaceably , without having to be more than they already

are. Foltz (1995) points out that this aspect of Heidegger's thinking recovers an earlier, Greek notion of ethics, and is more akin to the concept of "coming into right relation" described earlier. Foltz expands on this:

> "Heidegger's understanding of the ethical recovers the original scope of ethics, retrieving it from the narrowness of the modern conception of ethics as a theory of moral obligation that concerns only certain sorts of questionable action, and that leaves the remainder of human existence drifting in the realm of the arbitrary....It concerns the bearing through which we comport ourselves toward entities, how we hold ourselves in relation to the being of entities, and how we in turn are held by our being. It concerns wither we dwell poetically upon the earth" (168–169).

This passage summarises two key features of Heidegger's concept of dwelling, firstly, its poetic nature, and secondly, the kind of ethical relations it encompasses and promotes. But how might the notion be readily put into practice? I'll explore that issue by considering three further aspects of dwelling: "staying with", "comportment", and "engagement".

Staying/being with

Heidegger asserts that fundamentally, "to dwell" is to "stay with". We know that colloquially, "to dwell", denotes a certain quality of being, it means "to linger", perhaps, or to take time with. Similarly, in Heidegger's terms, dwelling indicates a lingering mode of attention. However, there are at least two ways in which Heidegger's notion differs from the colloquial connotation which are particularly relevant to enhancing the development of contextual awareness.

The first focuses on that which one is aiming to stay *with*. As those who have worked with Heidegger before will know, he was fundamentally devoted to exploring and explicating the nature of "Being" (Heidegger 1962). In dwelling, Heidegger was concerned that particular attention was paid to the "being" of that which was being engaged with. In extremely simple terms, this "beingness" could be thought of as the "essence" of a thing. In order to

"stay with" something (either a person, an entity, or even a thought) , one has to pay attention to its "Being".

This requires a particular quality of attentiveness. Zimmerman (2000) describes the means by which this kind of attention can be achieved in the following way:

> "Before we can dwell harmoniously and appropriately with other beings on earth, we must learn to dwell 'within the house of Being' and learn to hear and understand the language (Logos) of Being" (249).

Understanding the "language" of being itself demands a very focused and active kind of attention. This kind of attending aims to perceive below the surface of appearance of things, to the very heart of their meanings. To attend in this way requires an openness of heart as well as perceptual acuity. It also demands a certain psychological capacity, that of allowing self-concerns to "take a backseat" in the encounter. This kind of withdrawal is the second aspect of "staying with" I'd like to explore in more detail.

In "staying with", the person who is attending must paradoxically pay so much attention to the other, that they suspend their sense of self. Heidegger refers to this as "presencing", and he suggests that through such presencing, the "Being of Beings" comes into manifestation (Heidegger 1971: 151). Zimmerman (2000) describes this capacity:

> "such 'presensing', paradoxically, requires an 'absensing', or a clearing or opening in which to occur (251).

In other words, the way of being which enables this kind of "staying with" to occur is one in which self-concerns are absent, or at least temporarily suspended. In the most practical sense, to really "stay with" another, we must let go of our own interpretations, analyses, and most importantly, our judgments, in order to be fully available. Through this quality of openness, the other can reveal aspects of him or herself which might otherwise remain hidden.

This way of being could be seen as antithetical to much of what is proposed as effective leadership practice. In much literature about leadership, the leader is the person who influences (Burns 1978;

Drath 2001; House 1976) and her or his viewpoint is very present in making judgements, interpretations, and decisions. "Staying with", requires a very different kind of leadership presence, one that attends to the other rather than necessarily asserting one's own position. Such attending requires time and above all, commitment to letting go of one's preconceived perceptions and goals.

"Staying with" exists along a continuum of ways of being. Taken to its most extreme form, it could involve a capacity most often associated with "enlightenment", the kind of complete emptying of the self in order to be present to the other. However, "staying with" could also, at a more quotidian level, involve engaging an active and conscious openness to the situation at hand. It could be enacted through basic behaviours such as:

- Inquiring of the various stake holder groups and really listening to their concerns and the assumptions and emotions behind their concerns,
- Seeking to understand more fully the history of the situation and which factors have brought you to the current state,
- Exploring the emotional terrain inherent within a situation and remaining open to both negative and hard to hold emotions as well as more pleasant ones,
- Being open to intuitive insights, dreams, chance encounters which might shed light on the situation,
- Creating new ways of conceptualizing the situation; rewriting it as a story, drawing it, having others draw it.

In other words, the leader who is concerned with developing his or her capacity to "stay with" a given situation can build this in a number of ways. At a basic level, the leader could practice attending more consciously to his or her habits of judging and jumping to conclusions, and instead work to remain open and inquiring. Alternatively, the leader might begin to practice meditation or other consciously reflexive disciplines in order to build the capacity to "stay with" the other in a way which enables him or her to really perceive the meanings behind the surface appearance of difficult situations.

"Staying with", then promotes a kind of attitude to the other, which is open and receptive and essential to "coming into right relationship". This way of being communicates itself in an embodied fashion, through the leader's "comportment".

Comportment

In his essay, *The Essence of Truth* (2002) Heidegger writes extensively about his notion of "comportment". He asserts that comportment is a way of "standing open to beings", a way of holding oneself in relation to the other which is essential to dwelling (122). He elaborates on this, writing:

> Every open relatedness is a comportment. Man's open stance varies depending on the kind of beings and the way of comportment. All working and achieving, all action and calculation, keep within an open region within which beings, with regard to what they are and how they are can properly take their stand and become capable of being said. (122)

According to Heidegger then, the way one comports oneself is essential for creating a space wherein things can reveal themselves as they truly are. This "sparing" things to be as they truly are enables them to be free in a way which is central to his idea of "care". Perhaps this concept might best be illustrated by a story recounted by Cheney (1999) who likewise writes about the centrality of "how one orients oneself vis-à-vis the other" as key in establishing ethical relations with them.

Cheney (1999) recounts the experience of a journalist observing three sets of people engaged in producing a programme about chimpanzees who had learned sign language. The journalist quickly found herself much more interested in the people than the chimps. The actors, for instance, who were brought in to make the programme, swanned in and out without taking much interest in the chimps. The scientists who had worked with the chimps engaged with them, but in a somewhat distanced way. But the relationship between the carers and the chimps was different, as the journalist observed: The handlers, I noticed, walked in with a soft, acute, 360-degree awareness; they were receptively establishing...acknowledgement of and relationships with all of the several hundred pumas, wolves, chimps,

spider monkeys, and Galapagos tortoises. Their way of moving fit into the spaces shaped by the animals' awareness. (Cheney 1999: 128)

Cheney goes on to suggest that in arriving at appropriate ethical decisions – our comportment – the way we enter the arena of such decisions, may be the most crucial aspect of finding a correct relational "fit". This way of being is characterized according to Cheney, by an "ethical-epistemological orientation to attentiveness" (2002: 6). This entails assuming the other with whom we relate has a valid and important viewpoint, and comporting ourselves in such a way that enables that viewpoint to emerge. Referring back to Heidegger, this "dwelling" type of comportment would be characterized by a desire to "free" the other to be most fully themselves – a comportment which cares and preserves the essentialness of the other.

This is not to say that ethical engagement necessitates dismissing one's own views – in fact, dwelling requires active engagement on the part of all of those involved in a given situation or circumstance.

Dwelling as active engagement

To illustrate this point, I'll draw again from *Concerning the Essence of Truth* in which Heidegger writes:

> ...to let things be – does not refer to neglect or indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings. On the other hand, to be sure, this is not to be understood only as the mere management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings in each case encountered or sought out. To let be – that is, to let beings be as the beings which they are – means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself (2002: 125).

One interpretation of this passage suggests that Heidegger is promoting a high degree of transparency within relationships informed by "letting be". The self must also be open, in order to engage with the openness of the other. This may seem a naïve or unrealistic stance in light of the role power and politics often play within organizational settings. However, perhaps there are at least two aspects of

this kind of engagement which can helpfully inform organizational realities.

The first is the importance of "engagement" itself. Dwelling requires engagement. The kind of engagement characterized by staying with and open comportment is different from that more typically associated with leading. However, it is still very much an engaged way of being. Heidegger makes the point that building and dwelling are necessarily entwined:

> Dwelling and building are related as end and means. However, as long as this is all we have in mind, we take dwelling and building as two separate activities, an idea that has something correct in it. Yet at the same time by the means-end schema we block our view of the essential relations. For building is in itself already to dwell (1971: 146).

For Heidegger, then, dwelling comes about through the active engagement of building. One can't "dwell" by thinking about it. Likewise, ethical acts informed by dwelling require active engagement with a situation and the people it touches, rather than thinking about it from a distanced viewpoint. Dwelling requires the richness of subjective knowing and response which can only occur through subjective involvement *with*. Without such subjective apprehension "coming into right relation" cannot occur.

Secondly, "solutions" resulting from this kind of approach are necessarily emergent. For how can the way forward be known before the process of engagement begins? A leader striving to find an ethical way forward within a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder situation will learn far more of the nuances and textures of the territory through engaging with it. Through doing so, completely novel and previously unimagined paths could unfold, especially if the leader is willing to be influenced by emerging insights and perspectives. In order to explore how this might work in practice, I'll return to Jake's difficulty at Vimex.

From a relational point of view, Jake wanted to do everything he could to help Max, rather than cause him further distress. Over the 5 years that Vimex had been engaged with Sadie Co, Jake had grown to like Max, and to respect the way he was running his company. Until the recent troubles,

Sadie Co had been the ideal supplier, often going out of their way to supply parts at the last minute and also to alter their own production process to better suit Vimex's needs. For Jake, taking the business, which he knew Sadie Co relied on, away, was akin to "kicking a man when he was already down", something Jake was loathe to do. Jake had a strong sense of empathy for Max, and at this point in time that sense of care was, in Jake's mind, outweighing his own company's needs.

Turning to "Staying With", Jake considered what he actually knew about Max's situation. It turned out to be fairly little. Much of what he assumed was hearsay. Although Jake liked Max, their relationship had never gone beyond the bounds of business. Jake decided to arrange a meeting with Max to "lay his cards on the table" in terms of his business concerns, but also to inquire into Max's situation.

Jake went into the meeting truly wanting to find a solution which would ease the pressure on Sadie Co, as well as enable Vimex to get the reliability they wanted in terms of supplying parts, without knowing what that solution might be. He decided to open the conversation by telling Max about the pressures he himself was facing at Vimex due to the increase in faulty parts. He encouraged Max to speak frankly with him about his own personal and professional situations. Through the conversation Max discovered that in addition to the personal difficulties Max was facing in terms of his wife's illness, a key member of staff had also left the company and Max was having trouble filling the post. The manager who had left had been responsible for overseeing Vimex's components.

A solution emerged. Vimex would second a member of its staff to Sadie Co for a period of 6 months to help get over the period until a new staff member was found. This would help Vimex, as an organisational restructure had meant that one or two staff members needed redeployment over a short period of time. This member of staff would look over Vimex's supply in particular, and also learn as much about Sadie Co as possible, in order to discover other ways synergies could be found between the two firms.

* * *

The nature of the leading such an approach implies

Using dwelling as a basis from which to make ethical decisions as a leader requires a re-conceptualisation of leading itself. Whereas much of the leadership canon suggests leaders enact their roles from omnipotent positions of knowing, this approach necessitates putting "knowing" to one side and trusting that good ways forward will emerge through open and engaged interactions with those involved in the situation. In fact, it requires at least three different adjustments in thinking about the notion of leading:

- In practicing "staying with", the leader attends to the present and the factors which have shaped that present rather than focusing his or her energies solely on the future. This noticing of the present enables new contours of the given situation to be revealed and through that, new understanding to be gleaned.
- The leader is influenced as well as influencing, and actively seeks out information which will help him or her to understand the situation more fully. Through their comportment, they suggest to others that they are willing to be moved and influenced by others' ways of being in the world and their understanding of a given situation.
- The leader is not required to have a clear vision of the "right" course of action or decision, but instead, through a process of engagement, enables a space to be created wherein a resolution which "fits" the situation emerges.

Perhaps one of the most important implications of such a stance relates to the leader's relationship with power. In order to participate in this way, the leader must suspend positional or role power in such a way that enables him or her to engage genuinely with the emergent process. In practical terms, this requires relaxing control, contributing one's position without advocating it, and surrendering to a sense of the larger process in which one is engaged.

Practical implications

The approach suggested here aims to help leaders develop contextual sensitivity in order to move into "right relation" with those people or situations which evoke their ethical sensitivities. The process of "dwelling" does not provide ready-made answers to the ethical conundrums faced by leaders, but rather suggests aspects of the situation which should be attended to in deliberating over possible actions. Its contribution is a process in which organisational leaders might engage (at various levels of "intensity") in order to arrive at decisions and actions which best fit the given circumstance.

In summary, I am suggesting that a process based in dwelling encourages "staying with" a situation rather than rushing to a solution, comporting oneself in a way that expresses care for the other and their worldview, and engaging actively with full recourse to one's subjective experience. Such an approach can foster surprising resolutions to issues of ethical concern.

Dwelling is demanding in many ways, particularly to the extent that it challenges leaders to embody behaviours which are antithetical to much of the vast canon of "leadership" theory and practice. By its nature, it requires a certain pace and time. "Dwelling" cannot be rushed. This is in opposition to how much of organisational life is perceived to be. "Staying with" as a foundational way of being confronts organisational cultures run to mantras such as "time is money" and "efficiency counts". Overworked and harassed leaders will feel there is "no time" for the kind of listening and inquiring "staying with" requires.

However, one of the capabilities of a leader which most theories support is the importance of the ability to respond appropriately to context. This capacity can only be developed over time, and through a particular kind of attending. Knowing enough about what is going on in an organisation to make good business decisions, let alone good ethical ones, takes time. Furthermore from the point of view of effective leadership, spending time getting to know the organisation and its context should probably be a key "leadership" pre-occupation. When compared to the costs of "fixing" downstream difficulties which could have been avoided through more

thorough reading of context, "staying with" appears to be a valuable organisational capability.

Along with the practical difficulties caused by the time a dwelling approach requires, its enactment also seems to contradict much of what is taken for granted about leading. Certainly, the suggestion that the leader needs to be able to BE influenced, as well as influence, stands in opposition to many heroic ideals of leadership. However, a growing body of literature offers alternative models of leadership more aligned both to the needs of contemporary organisations, and to the process of "dwelling". Such theories include "servant leadership", offered by Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (1995) among others, "quiet leadership", suggested by Pollard (1996) and distributed leadership (House and Aditya 1997). These theories, which recognise that leaders do not hold all of the answers, that much of the knowledge upon which effective decisions can be made is held collectively within the organisation, and that recognise ethical relations to be at the heart of leadership practice, could, I believe, be enhanced by the practice of dwelling described here.

Finally, approaching ethical dilemmas from a "dwelling" perspective takes courage. It takes the courage to let go of many of the preconceptions held about leadership on the part of both leaders and those they lead. It calls for developing trust in emergent processes rather than in the capacity to control outcomes. It requires belief that good processes can result in good decisions. Most importantly, it demands a degree of humility in leading – the humility which comes from knowing one's place within a wider scheme of things and realising one's limits in influencing and directing what happens within that space. It also requires an ongoing commitment to bringing a quality of engagement with the world based in curiosity, interdependence and reciprocity. In this worldview ethical relations are always emergent and in process, rather than finalised. The "rightness" of an ethical choice is determined by "the 'fit', the working, by the forwarding of work within a deeply interconnected pattern of relationships and interwoven needs" (Goodman and Elgin 1988: 156).

In exchange for these difficulties and challenges, dwelling offers a process by which leaders can include and work from their own relational values in their ethical deliberation. This seems increasingly important to many of the leaders I meet, who struggle to balance competing organisational needs which don't always take into account the leader's own desire to act with personal integrity. Finally, as an approach informed by emergence through engaged processes, dwelling can enable new, creative outcomes as a result of leaders coming into right relation with both their own deeply held values, and others affected by their decisions.

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