

CTI Podcast 1 Transcript: Henry Kimsey House.

Podcast interview conducted by Nick Kettles, CTI UK, Marketing Director.

26th September 2008

Nick: I think that's something people will be curious about, is what kind of leader does the Leadership program create? We tend to think of leaders depending on their style – there's autocratic leaders, bureaucratic leaders, charismatic leaders. Either way, there's a consistent theme that Leadership is about taking control and leading people towards the fulfilment of a mission. But I sense there's a lot more depth to what you offer?

Henry: There are a couple of premises to leadership in our model. The first is that everyone is a leader. What determines their leadership is the size of their world. Most people's world is actually quite small, and for some they're lucky if it extends beyond the space their body occupies. So, the first step in our leadership program is to have people really feel their power, their own self, who they are in the world as they are moving around, and really take responsibility for that Self, for who they are as an individual in the world. And then we want to grow their world, so they take responsibility for it. And that's what the rest of the program is focused on from retreat 2 to 4, and all the time in between. Beginning to grow their world so they take responsibility and leadership in the way they relate to other people, in relating with the space they are in, and ultimately the wider group or community in which they exist.

Nick: So, you start with finding out more about who you are as a person, and then how you relate to others, and then the world around you. Perhaps you'd like to take us through the program retreat by retreat?

Henry: In the first retreat what we're interested in, is knowing how you the individual leader has an impact on the people around you. When you are in your power how do you show up? Most of the time we know how we feel, or how we think we are, but we don't get much reflection or feedback about from the world around us about how we show up when we are in our power. So we have opportunities in retreat 1, to really stand in your power, and get information about what you look like in the world from your fellow participants and leaders. So, the title of retreat 1, is Create From Self. It's really about learning who is this Self, and how to create from it. How to show up in that place of power. It's a natural place, it's not something you need to work hard at. It's more about how you release and let go of the things which are in the way of showing up in your power.

Nick: Letting go of who you are not?

Henry: Yes, exactly. But that's retreat 1. The next step is what happens between retreat 1 and 2, because although the course is four five or six day retreat, it's spread out over 10 months, and there is active participation in between retreats. There's homework, and work that happens between retreats. And the homework that happens between retreat 1 and 2, is about strengthening that sense of who I am, and how I show up in the world. What do I have to do to let go of the lids, or the things that I am not, how do I let go of that, and how do I keep showing up in my power.

Nick: There's a lovely metaphor you use there – the idea of keeping a lid on things. I have this picture of boiling pot with a lid on it.

Henry: And that's exactly what it is too. It's a boiling pot of volcanic mass, and magma passion that is in each individual, and we put a lid on it, and keep it repressed and suppressed. But what it really wants to do is express. So, how do we take that lid off, and allow what's inside to express itself, is what retreat 1 is about, and that's also what the time between retreat 1 and 2 is about. So, there you are out in the world expressing, and now the next question is, how do you take responsibility of how you connect and relate with other. And, how do you find your strength and power, in connection, and in relationship with another, and from another. How do you work and create from another, to make yourself stronger and clearer as a leader and a person. So this is the focus of retreat 2, which is called Create From Other. Here we really start to look at intimacy or connection or relationship. So, the ability to not to create with, or stand side by side with another, where each of us is in our egos, but instead it's how can I look into another and find aspects of myself, and aspects of them, and create from that, instead of my own agenda. And the result is that we create a deeper connection, than we thought was possible, because in that connection will come that synergistic, third space between us. And that space, is our leadership, our leadership dance together.

So we say, that most leadership in the new frame is not actually this solo, lone wolf approach to leadership, it's not this 'the buck stops here' type of leadership, because in that frame of leadership, what happens is risk taking can't happen, because you have to play safe.

But when you have someone's rope things are different. We do a lot of rope work, on the retreats, where you will have one person on the ground holding your rope and keeping you safe, in the air. They literally have the rope of that person, so that person can take risks, and step into things, they wouldn't normally do, without that connection. So, retreat 2, is all about establishing that connection, and really learning to know another, well enough so that you can really feel held by them, to feel like they have your rope, and you've got theirs. That way you as a leader can step out, and take risks and fail and make mistakes, and you know that your co-leader, the person who has got your rope, will move it back in the direction it needs to move in.

Nick: It sounds like a beautiful dance between this supportive servant role, and the role of stepping into the limelight yourself, and sharing your passion, and knowing you too will be supported. And allowing that dance to happen naturally.

Henry: Yes, and that's what a lot of people who have been to CTI courses are very impressed with and want some of. They always see two leaders at the front of the workshop room, and those leaders have that sort of wonderful easy dance, where everyone feels at home, and ready to go, and yet their leaders feel very confident. There's a wonderful sharing of leadership, learning and knowledge, that occurs in an environment where you see two leaders up there who are both absolutely one hundred percent present, and sharing from that space.

Nick: So in this respect their leadership is in service of something bigger than their own personal ego agenda?

Henry: Absolutely. And that actually points to the next big part of our model which is that someone's leadership is in service of what we call a stake. Literally a stake in the ground that both leaders have placed and have both aligned on. And that's another thing we begin to explore in retreat 2. What is your stake as a leader? What is it you want to create in the world? And how do you align your stake with another leader's stake, or create a stake together that is actually more important than your own opinions or point of view, so you can blend and lead and dance from that to realise that stake in the world.

Nick: It sounds like a great place to be, to be in space free from the energy you have to invest in maintaining your own agenda.

Henry: It's quite liberating. Another big part of retreat 2 is that we do a lot of work with the things which get in the way of intimacy and connection. What are the assumptions, the beliefs, the things we make up about each other, and how do we clear those out of the way, so we can actually be present with the other person, who's there right now, rather than all of the

story you carry with you. So we actually have that real person there that we're creating from in every moment.

Nick: Can we drill down a little deeper here, with the idea of a stake? Because I think a lot of people will assume a good leader is someone who is able to articulate a vision, those charismatic orators such as JFK, Martin Luther King, and so I'm curious whether there's a connection between the idea of a stake and having a vision for the world, of where we're going? The idea of a leader who leads us literally to a future place.

Henry: It's different than a linear vision, like the old model of leadership where the one out front, see's what everyone else who is following can't see. It's different than that, because that has linear quality to it, whereas the idea of a stake is more contextual. What we're working with the idea of a stake is as if there's a huge bowl of water, and the stake is like a tube of red dye, and the leader takes the stake, sees it clearly, sees that red dye, and lowers it, drops it into the bowl of water, and the water begins to turn red. In the water are all the people that will be effected by this leader – and they all want the water to turn red, or green or blue. They are all aligned with this idea. They don't necessarily have the language for it yet, that the leader has, but as the leader works with them more, and creates more, comprehension amongst people about the stake, and the context that it represents grows, and then everyone can move forward together.

What might surprise people who know about how we talk about level 1,2,3 listening and awareness, in our coaching programs, is that for us leadership is level 4. The leader sets that stake very clearly in place, and level four is the action that happens around it. It starts with an urge, within the powerful level 1 Self of a leader, then marries itself with the urge coming from the level 3, the space or field surrounding us. We assert that the level 3 actually has needs and the leader's job is to marry their urge or need with the urge or need of the space around them. $1+3=4$. And as you begin to find a way to match those two urges, what happens is a compelling need to act emerges, and that's where the leader then gets into action.

Nick: So, where in a coaching dynamic the coach is completely impartial in holding the clients big agenda, in this model they do have an agenda so to speak?

Henry: That's right. One thing to say about leadership and coaching, is that the coaching work that we do is very much about the coach almost being invisible, and holding the clients agenda, it's their job to evoke that and bring it forth. And in our leadership model, it's the other way around almost. The leader has a stake or an agenda, and it's their job to get the people who they are leading, to be aligned with the stake or agenda. The leadership skills we are developing are a different set of skills from coaching, although coaching skills do serve a leader, the contexts of curiosity, intuition, listening, forward the action, deepen the learning, self management for example. But the leader does have a stake, an agenda about something they want to produce, as opposed to what some people would call a group facilitator, which would be the equivalent of a coach of a group, who would be looking to evoke the agenda from the group.

Nick: I can see that it's a very pragmatic process, impelling people to make a claim to a stake for what they stand for and believe in.

Henry: Absolutely. When we talk about that leaders are responsible for their world, and growing their world, what we mean is that they can't take responsibility for it, unless they can say what it is.

Nick: I have this feeling, that when you know what your stake is, that can be a huge source of energy and passion, for the individual, which is so important in leading, because you need to be able to transmit that energy to other people.

Henry: Absolutely. One of the things which happens between retreat 2 and 3, is that two leaders are assigned to go out, and create, co-design and lead an event together. This could be leading a workshop together, or a fundraiser, or an online event. When we talk about co-

designing and collaborating together, we suggest that leaders spend 80 per cent of their time aligning around the stake, and only 20 per cent of your time working out what's going to happen at the event. Which is opposite to the way most people do it. They spend 80 per cent of their time looking at what they are going to do, and if they are lucky they spend 20 per cent of their time, working out how to align and work together. We reverse that, and we really want the leaders to be so clear on their stake, because once they are clear on their stake, what we say is that the pieces and particles, and content of what the leaders want to present, line themselves up, because the stake has become so clear.

Nick: When you have a clear vision all the pieces fall into place?

Henry: Exactly, and that's where the way you are talking about vision, and the idea of a stake do align. They are related.

Nick: So there's a notion that when you're working with the natural law, or way of life, you're in alignment with what your purpose is as a person, what the Buddhist's call your Dharma. When this happens, life, the Universe moves to support you.

Henry: Absolutely. But there is a distinction. We spend a lot of time in retreat 1, getting very clear about purpose as distinct from stake. Purpose is that ongoing river of meaning of who I am, of my life and what I am meant to be doing. And there isn't necessarily an outcome or a destination, it's more of a journey.

Nick: A becoming?

Henry: Exactly. Whereas, stake is much more specific to an event. I'll have a purpose which will go on for the rest of my life, but I'll have many stakes, many events. I like to think of my purpose as thread that is running through a line of all my 'stake needles'. My purpose is ongoing, but I want to establish stakes that I can run my purpose through, but each stake has to do with the people around you, where you are right now.

Nick: It seems like pearls on a thread might be another metaphor to describe the relationship between purpose and stake?

Henry: I love that idea.

Nick: So, tell us a bit about retreat three.

Henry: Well now we have worked with another individual in retreat 2, and worked powerfully on creating the dance, now in retreat 3, we need to pay attention to the space. And this is what really separates us from other leadership programmes. We talk about how leaders need to look into the space between people, the space around the group, how to read energy. The things we don't have a lot of language for actually, and that's why retreat 3 is called Create from Nothing. So, how do we empty ourselves, and really tune into what's happening energetically in a room or a space, and read it, and notice, particularly what is my impact. If a space is a pond, and me, as a pebble was thrown into it, how do my ripples hit the side of the pond. How do they impact the pond. And how to read that impact. Before you can take responsibility for your impact on a space, (which is ultimately what level 4 leadership is about) you need to know how to feel it, see it, and read it, and that kind of thing. So, we do a lot of work learning how to really empty out our brain, so we can really feel into the space, and notice what's there in the field.

Nick: So when you say creating from nothing, it's actually what appears to be nothing? What appears to be invisible is actually what we call 'between the lines', the unspoken words? But in fact it's a rich space and full of information, and pregnant with potential.

Henry: That's right. I think about 90% of the information a leader draws upon, actually comes from the space. Not from the collection of individuals in the space.

Nick: So, when you say create from nothing, it's what's hidden, or appears to be hidden?

Henry: Yeah, of course, when you get into words like nothing and everything, there's inevitably a paradox. That's a question that we really start to explore in retreat 3, which is when does something become nothing, and nothing become something. How do you make that nothing, that space that seems to be empty, between the lines, how do you make that space tangible, real, and feelable.

Nick: Tell us a bit about the process whereby people begin to learn this skill? Is it simply a case of learning intuition, or are there practical things to consider too?

Henry: Definitely, we work on developing the intuition. We develop peripheral vision too, by which I mean not just the visual field, but how we explore the periphery of all our senses, which are so orientated towards the real thing, the objects in front of us, that we don't even notice the spaces around the objects. So how do we start playing with and exploring the spaces around the objects, or people.

Often, we do front of the room leading. Even though not every one who comes on our courses wants to, or will lead a room full of people in an activity, from the front of the room, we know this is one of the most frightening things that people face. It makes people take responsibility for other people's experience, and so is a good way to help them learn how to take responsibility for things. What happens when most people get in front of a group of people, is that the thing they notice is the group of people, a group of individuals, and that's where they gauge their feedback, rather than the energy which all of these people together create. So, how do I sense into this space to determine what it is that this group collectively want to learn, know or go? If I can feel into that space create by that group in relation to the leader, and speak directly to that urge, when I'm addressing individuals then everyone learns, no one is bored. Everyone moves forward and no one stays behind.

Nick: I have the image of being able to see the currents in the river.

Henry: Yes! We actually do some meditative work, where we learn to actually feel what's tangible about the space, what's the temperature, slowing down time, and stretching space, which get to be very malleable when you're widening your peripheral vision.

Nick: I think this is something that many people who have meditated for some time find, that boundaries are permeable.

Henry: Yes, and the same thing can happen with time, where you lose a sense of time.

Nick: To be able to bring a group to that place of stillness is a powerful tool?

Henry: Yes, and that's what retreat 3 is about, finding our way into the stillness, and learning how to create from that space. And noticing most importantly what is your impact on that space. How does your breathing, your speaking, effect that space.

Nick: So, what do you have course participants do between retreat 3 and 4, to really get that skill in the bones and integrated?

Henry: Well one of the things that participants are doing between retreat 1 and 4, is identifying their retreat quests, like questing for something. So, between 3 and 4, is when the action on the quest is the primary focus. So, now that we know how to read the space, how does your project, your stake and quest as a leader show up in that space. And how do you take responsibility for taking that forward. So, what happens between three and four is really beginning to take action with your leader quest which you identified in retreats one and two. What's the difference you're going to make as a leader? Then, in retreat four, we're really grounding ourselves in the model (the level four leadership model). We've been grounding ourselves in it all along, but we're coming back to retreat four as experts in it. What we're

doing is completing the arc of the program. We see everything that we do as a storyline, everything has a natural arc, where it builds to a climax and then comes down. So, we have climatic events in retreat 4 that will complete the story of leadership, and the leadership program, and begin the story of leadership in the world, what are you going to create and resource.

Nick: Do you mean more detailed planning of how to put your quest into action beyond the actual program?

Henry: Yes, of course, their quest will continue. It's worth pointing out that this program has changed over the last year, from a program which used to be very focused on personal growth, and there still is a lot of personal growth that people under go...

Nick: ...which is inevitable in a situation like that.

Henry: Yes. But a lot of people used to take it just for the personal growth and development. But, what we've done in the last year of two, is point it much more towards leadership development. So, now we really want people who recognise their latent leadership, and they recognise the need for that in the world, and are looking to activate it. So, retreat 4 is really about activating that leader. Getting them active and out in the world. What you discover about the leadership program, as you talk to people who graduate from leadership, is that it keeps working you after you leave. That many of the concepts and ideas which come up in the program, bubble to the surface over the next year or so. It's such a rich contextual program that your mind, takes a while to catch up to it, to what you've learned.

Nick: That's the nature of any true growth experience – it takes time to integrate sometimes.

Henry: That's often what you see in people who took the program recently, but don't know yet how to talk about it, because they haven't fully integrated it, and reinterpret it for others, like I am now.

Nick: As we've been talking I've had an inkling of what you're talking about, because I'm aware of an urge that wants to go out and walk to the top of the mountains, near to our house, a sense of really wanting to stretch. That's what the leadership program feels like – a big stretch. Something that's going to stretch me on all levels.

Henry: Yes, I love that. One of the things that's important to think about with this program, is that it's one which will engage you for the entire ten months. It's not just four retreats you go to, and then return to your life in between, which is what I mentioned earlier. We ask you to pour your life through the lens of this program, rather than try and fit this program into your life. Because if you do the latter, you'll end up short changing yourself. But if you take this program and really commit to it, and filter your life through the lens of the program, you'll find that relationships in your family begin to shift in great ways. What you take a stand for at work gets clearer.

Nick: I can really feel your passion Henry. I think everyone listening to this, or reading the transcript will have taken one of CTI's courses, and know already how rich the course material is, which you are largely responsible for. It's a powerful experience talking about it, so I can only imagine just how much more powerful it is to take it.

Henry: It's powerful to lead it! I've led it for 12 years, over 35 programs, and I never get tired of it. Everyone, every group, every space is different.

Nick: I can tell this is something that really comes from your heart, and I'm curious to know what kind of impact you hope your graduates will have on the world?

Henry: Wow. Well I think the world today is in a possible crisis place, we're at the edge of an evolutionary step, and if we don't create a critical mass of leaders who can take us

powerfully to the next step, we're actually in trouble. So, there's a real need to get folks taking responsibility for their world in powerful evolutionary ways, and stepping into what's next, for our species on this planet. And, what's next for our species in relation to this planet. And it's urgent.

Nick: Very urgent.

Henry: Yeah, if we don't get busy with that imperative, either creating leaders who will take responsibility for it, we're in trouble.

Nick: It's a bit like collectively being in a boat, with a hole in it, and we're looking at the hole saying oh, there's a hole, and then instead of doing something about it, we're playing checkers instead of taking responsibility for it.

Henry: We need to have people who looking at that hole and working out what to do about it, bail the water out and all the things that need to happen. We have graduates of the leadership program doing amazing things.

Nick: Tell us some stories.

Henry: We have a couple of different people who have created schools in Africa, we have huge differences being made in some companies, in terms of turning them into from a hierarchical structure into a co-active structure. In communities too. We've got people working with youth at risk, even in communities which you wouldn't think had youth at risk. We have people doing things they wouldn't even dream they would be doing. I just heard that someone got approval for funding for some work in South Africa, with youth leaders there. It's astonishing to hear the reports. I'm starting to collect stories now, of leadership stories, because I'm getting ready to write a book.

Nick: When can we expect to see that? Does it have a title?

Henry: My co-author David Skivens and I are shooting for a year from now. We don't have a title yet, but it will be about co-active leadership though.

Nick: Watch this space. So, Henry, you've been very generous with your time, and it's been exciting talking with you. And even though I haven't taken the leadership program, I already feel very passionate about it. But for people listening to this, or reading the transcript, who similarly have been inspired, what can they do more, what step can they take next, in considering, whether leadership is right for them.

Henry: Sign up! But, of course there is also the opportunity to arrange to talk to someone who's taken the leadership program, in addition to regular conference calls led by leaders of the Leadership Program, where people can ask questions, including the more detailed questions about the physical events we do. And I just want to say a few words about the physical events we do, we've had people who are disabled, blind, deaf, people with every kind of capability. We've had women take the course while they are pregnant. Everything is worked out so they can get full value. So, there's no reason to hold yourself back, because you think you are unable to do the events that we have. Our ropes course people are fabulous at making that work.

Nick: So, that brings us to the top of the hour, and it's time to close, and I was just wondering if you would be willing to leave the people listening or reading the transcript with an inquiry about leadership?

Henry: Yeah, how big is the world you are taking responsibility for? And how big do you want it to be?

Nick: Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure speaking with you.

Henry: It's been a pleasure too. Hello to all the leaders of the world, I hope to see you soon.

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