

ESCAPE VELOCITY

THE FIVE LITERACIES CODE BOOK

INTRODUCTION

The energy required for a space vehicle to escape the earth's gravity is colossal. It is called the vehicle's 'escape velocity'. The *Five Literacies Code Book* (specifically designed to be used by five literacies leaders in their organizations) performs the same function, gathering and focusing the energy needed in order for the organization to break free from the gravitational pull of past habits and unchallenged practices. Without this energy any enterprise will remain earthbound and captive to its past.

This *Code Book* contains 'breakthrough' materials, which are used by extraordinary leaders to guarantee success – in their personal lives and in guiding their business initiatives. Together they comprise the key to growing an ecology of appreciative leadership – the only kind of leadership that is truly effective in the global economy and where energy is focused on confidence and leverage rather than on fear and effort.

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THE LITERACIES

A literacy (within the context of contemporary leadership) is the ability to sense, make sense of, construe, create, compute, visually depict and communicate knowledge in a specific domain.

Five literacies leaders recognize five cardinal domains: (i) Networked Intelligence; (ii) Futuring; (iii) Deep Design; (iv) Strategic Navigation and (v) Brand Resonance. Thus, being literate as a global leader requires the development of mind, body and soul in living the *five literacies*. This involves a continuous braiding of reflecting and acting to enable:

- The imagining of possibilities and the achieving of aspirations.
- The development of knowledge and the realization of potential.
- The desire to engage with and contribute to society.

THE SECRET

Of course, the secret to extraordinary leadership in the ‘attention economy’ is not just a personal praxis predicated on the *five literacies* – however well executed. On the contrary, leaders without a disposition to see, think, feel and act *appreciatively* will be indifferent to *five literacies* knowledge, remaining trapped by their own history and ego.

Remember the matrix! In order to realize fully the potential of the *five literacies*, leaders need a level of self-awareness that is uncommon. The secret to success as a *five literacies* leader is contained between the interstices of being, choice, praxis and wisdom. Okay, that sounds pretty mysterious. But it is quite simple really. We have discovered the existence of a cognitive and behavioural code underpinning the practice of the *five literacies* – a very simple code which, when unlocked, enables *five literacies* leaders to achieve extraordinary things in their personal and business lives.

THE CODE

1. Context

The global environment and international issues are considered boundaryless by *five literacies* leaders who strive to understand the world in

all its richness and dynamic complexity. Emergent properties of this ecosystem, rather than linear solutions and other reductionist frameworks, set the scene for continuous discovery and learning. Consequently *five literacies* leaders are comfortable with, and often excited by, complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity.

2. Relationship

Five literacies leaders have a well-honed consciousness of their personal relationship to the context at every moment, which they leverage to their advantage. They influence ethically the ‘alchemical’ space between themselves and others. Preferential networks are the means by which *five literacies* leaders connect ideas and people. These relationships are transcultural: *five literacies* leaders seldom display the paternalistic relationships usually seen in most traditional western cultures.

3. Time and timing

Past, present and possible are collapsed into an expanded consciousness of what needs to be done at any given moment. This amounts to an ‘atemporal’ sense of time where ‘performance’ is intensely focused on the current moment – and every other moment stretching into the future. This ability to focus and not be distracted, often observed in high-performing athletes, gymnasts, politicians and musicians, is aided by a belief that we are integral to a world of interconnected flows, rather than mere actors in a series of disconnected, objective, sequential events.

4. Purpose

Five literacies leaders intuitively strive to be the best they can be in every moment so as to help themselves and others become the people they were intended to be. They do this in their chosen field of endeavour as well as in the living of their lives, helping to change humankind’s capacity to create better futures in the process.

5. Disposition

Five literacies leaders consciously engage others in compelling ideas and actions. In spite of prevalent assumptions, they are not hung up

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on ‘the vision thing’. Indeed many have no vision as such and focus more on a vague intent – an ideal state of becoming. They habitually view their journey through life as one of expanding and accelerating, connecting more and more people and ideas. Frequently they are heretical in their views, knowing that disruption creates attention. They remain relevant by changing *what* they do and *how* they do it.

6. Principles

Principles are pivotal to *five literacies* leaders. Principles are passionately held, acting as a moral guide and compass to behaviour. They are never bent, sacrificed or subverted for any reason whatsoever. Principles are used to assure continuing coherence (some would say authenticity) while exploring the new. Although individual values differ with different individuals, *five literacies* leaders often display an intense drive and ambition, coupled with genuine humility and a generosity of spirit that many find intimidating. Other principles typically observed are: constant attention given to the shaping of system dynamics; a temperament to link and connect people and ideas; a willingness to relate to others deeply and intimately; framing short-term issues within a longer term purpose; consciousness of an ‘expanded now’; dedicated to liberating wisdom; an ‘appreciative’ moral compass; and comfort with alternative epistemologies.

BREAKTHROUGH MATERIALS

Apart from the above ‘tacit’ code *five literacies* leaders slowly develop a different profile to most of us as they engage with the world. In so doing, they learn to ask different questions in varied situations, mostly so that they can learn new things and engage in startlingly honest dialogue. They use different models and explanations of reality and are masters of a compelling story. Above all else they have the confidence to jettison orthodox thinking and practical conventions so as to free them to explore new possibilities.

You will find much to explore in the following ‘breakthrough’ materials, which we will add to from time to time. Currently these ‘breakthrough’ materials comprise three topics:

1. The Profile of a Five Literacies Leader.
2. Uncommon Sense – What you always needed to know but were afraid to ask.
3. Breaking Free! Overcoming the orthodoxies that stifle innovation and creativity.

