
Organizational enhancement through recognition of individual spirituality

Reflections of Jaques and Jung

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Abstract *In today's world of heightened change, many individuals are suffering from a perceived loss of meaning and purpose in their lives, engendering a sense of spiritual desolation and impelling a spiritual quest. The work environment, so central to their existence, often contributes to the sense of desperation and thwarts individual growth. However, if management recognizes the potential for mutual benefit in the nexus of the individual's spiritual odyssey and the structure of the organization, the organization's contribution can be truly positive. The paper proposes an integration of the theoretical frameworks of Carl Jung and Elliot Jaques as a source of managerial insight into the process of individual spiritual growth within the context of the organization. With such perspective, management not only enhances its prospect for precluding the dysfunctional behavior of the spiritually bankrupt, but also enhances the organization's capacity to foster heightened initiative and productivity from its members.*

Introduction

More than ever, individuals find themselves in a world of permanent white water, experiencing a lack of meaning in their lives and an attendant sense of spiritual desolation (Vaill, 1989). Consequently, many people are increasingly embarking upon a spiritual journey, seeking to discover their true selves, searching for a higher purpose and meaning to their lives (Conger, 1994). This spiritual journey is not necessarily confined to a religious framework (Conger, 1994) as many might conclude, for, as Patterson (1997) observed, "religions can be viewed as the maps, while you might consider spirituality to be the territory".

What is this sense of desolation that prompts the spiritual journey? For that matter, what is meant by a spiritual journey? Although the words may vary, we found a common thread in the writings of many authors (e.g., Covey, 1989; Mitroff *et al.*, 1994; Morris, 1997; Neal, 1997; Peck, 1993; Roof, 1993; Stein and Hollwitz, 1992). In general, they refer to the spiritual journey as a process of focusing within, in order to gain an awareness of Self. Only through this awareness of Self can individuals become truly actualized and find meaning and purpose in their work and in their lives. This is the individuation process which produces both an interconnection with Self and a connection with others, fostering a sense of order and balance in an otherwise chaotic life.

For our purposes, then, the journey toward spirituality represents the quest to unite one's inner and outer world, to provide meaning and purpose to one's

life. The search, and consequent realization, provides an individual with a sense of alignment and order – a spiritual cohesiveness, which instills a sense of rightness and well-being. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes the experience as a feeling of being in the flow. It is a sense of wholeness, a oneness with who we are and an awareness of how we fit with our external environment.

Because work is a central part of our existence, much of this spiritual odyssey occurs within the context of the workplace. Yet, when assessing the relevance of its human resources to the effective performance of the organization, few consider the extent to which the organizational environment fosters an individual's spiritual development. It is our contention that this constitutes a costly oversight. We propose that an organization whose work environment responsively supports the quest for individual unity and direction, and fosters spiritual development, will realize heightened individual and organizational performance. As Tom Morris, an author and consultant, states, "Good people in a good environment do good work" (Morris, 1997, p. 126).

To realize the organization's benefit potential from such an orientation, management must address attendant challenges and opportunities by learning to understand the relationship between an individual's spiritual quest and the organizational environment. This can produce a previously unrealized synergistic relationship in which management's support of the individual's spiritual quest for meaning and purpose benefits both the employee and the organization.

In this article, we suggest the combination of Carl Jung's and Elliot Jaques' theories as a valuable construct for attaining that understanding. Carl Jung's theory of the individuation process provides perspective as to how and why individuals behave as they do. Spiritual growth, as described by Jung, entails an inner journey to become an individuated Self (Jung and von Franz, 1964). The journey of self-discovery leads to an understanding of Self in relation to others, and allows individuals to find meaning and purpose in their work.

However, for the individual's efforts toward self-awareness to be fully actualized, it is necessary for the organization to be structured to support the individual's growth. Jaques' Stratified Systems Theory offers a framework consistent with such individual development. An understanding of how the two theoretical frameworks may be linked can enable management to both support individuals in their spiritual journey and fulfill the managerial commitment to optimize organizational productivity.

We begin with a brief discussion of the theoretical framework of Jung and Jaques. We will then amplify on how the application of these theories can enable organizations to support the individual employee's spiritual journey, both as its social duty, and for its benefit.

Carl Jung's theoretical framework

In Carl Jung's theory of individuation, the individual strives to become whole and distinctive from the collective (Jung, 1933; Jung and von Franz, 1964). In order for an individual to realize her/his specific purpose, connection with one's unique Self must be achieved (Eddinger, 1972; Harding, 1965). In this context,

Self is the whole of the individual, including all aspects of an individual's conscious and unconscious, often referred to as a paradoxical union of opposites (Harding, 1965). The Self is superior to the ego and is experienced as the center of the personality (Jung, 1933). Although the path to individuation can be quite different for each person, the process tends to be similar (Singer, 1972). Individuals become conscious of their whole personality, the Self, to gain awareness of their higher purposes and potential capabilities.

The individuation process

The individuation process occurs as one's ego is initially developed, then challenged, and ultimately subordinated to a more comprehensive psychic entity, the Self (Jung, 1933; Singer, 1972). The process constitutes the conscious realization and fulfillment of one's unique being. In the first stage, an individual is without conscious awareness of Self (Harding, 1965). The whole of the individual is unified in the unconscious. However, as a child develops a conscious awareness, the ego begins to develop and becomes the seat of one's identity. Through these first stages of development, a child only develops part of the "whole of the personality", leaving the other part lost in the unconscious (Harding, 1965). The conscious personality, the ego, develops as a result of adaptation to parents, environment and collective expectations. Thus, it reflects factors such as gender, birth order and personality characteristics. The more disciplined and rigid one's ego becomes in response to external influences, the more difficult it becomes to reconnect with the part lost in childhood (Eddinger, 1972; Harding, 1965). This chasm leaves individuals wandering in a spiritual desert, suffering a sense of alienation and separation from the Self.

To emerge from the desert, the individual's Self must transform the ego and achieve alignment with its individuality (Eddinger, 1972; Jung and von Franz, 1964). However, the ego fears the loss of what is known – its identity – and resists by struggling with the unknown aspect of Self. For example, the ego of entrepreneurs can be so identified with their businesses that they are unable to leave them, even when their Selves are calling for something different in their lives. The resistance is so strong because the ego is dependent on the business for a sense of identity. Without the business, the entrepreneurs fear there will be no sense of Self. In this context, it is understandable why so many entrepreneurs have difficulty with the individuation process and, unable to realize their true individuality, often destroy their businesses (King *et al.*, 1996).

Jung believed that the need to reconnect to the Self is instinctual; hence, the effort to do so occurs either consciously or unconsciously (Jacobi, 1965). Individuals who continue to be disconnected from their unconscious sides and operate solely from their egos often experience extreme adverse emotions (Eddinger, 1972; Harding, 1965). In fact, if the struggle continues unconsciously, individuals who find themselves unable to fulfill their unique destinies may experience depression (Eddinger, 1972), often with detrimental consequences for their work.

In order to find one's unique path, it is necessary to become aware of the various unconscious aspects of the Self. It is through the discovery, affirmation and integration of these aspects that individuals gradually move toward a higher sense of individuality (Jacobi, 1965; Jung and von Franz, 1964; Singer, 1972). Hence, the struggle between the ego and the Self manifests itself through various inner voices reflecting these unconscious aspects (Eddinger, 1972). As individuals become aware of the voices emanating from the undeveloped aspects of their personality, they develop a clearer awareness of Self and a greater appreciation of others. The organizational consequences of such a revelation can be quite positive (Stein and Hollwitz, 1992). An individual learns "to hoist one's sail," having achieved an understanding of the "boat" (framework) of her/his life; enabling greater sensitivity to and alignment with the surrounding forces (Singer, 1972, p. vii). As a consequence, an individual is more likely to value her/his own uniqueness and that of others.

Jung suggested that if an individual's ego becomes too one sided, with the conscious personality fixated on his/her dominant characteristics, then the repressed unconscious personality characteristics gain expression by being projected onto another (Harding, 1965; Jung and von Franz, 1964; Singer, 1972). It is therefore possible to develop an awareness of one's undeveloped personality by focusing on the nature of relationships with others. Manifestations of an individual's undeveloped personality are often actualized through interpersonal relationships (Jung and von Franz, 1964). For example, when individuals experience extreme psychic energy (e.g., love or hate), they are usually projecting onto another person their own repressed personality. If projections are recognized and confronted, an individual has the opportunity to understand and then consciously integrate those personality characteristics (Harding, 1965).

The most basic of projections is the shadow – the dark side of the personality (Jung and von Franz, 1964). Essentially, the shadow is the personification of that which we deny in ourselves. By projecting our shadow onto others, we are able to reject it, instead of having to take responsibility for it (Harding, 1965). Alternatively, we can accept our shadow's existence, allowing us the opportunity to confront and eventually find a healthy way to integrate the dark side of our personalities into our lives. Through the integration of one's shadow, an individual develops an awareness of his/her connection to other human beings, providing a basis for communication, understanding and respect.

Another aspect of the unconscious personality is Jung's conception of the Soul, referred to as *anima* in the male and *animus* in the female (Harding, 1965). For each individual, the animus/anima corresponds to characteristics which are opposite of her/his biological gender and accompanying culturally determined roles. Hence, *animus/anima* refers to a woman's unconscious undeveloped masculine side and a man's unconscious undeveloped feminine side. If individuals are able to appreciate and integrate these contrasexual personality elements into their consciousness, they tap into a rich resource for their

development. For example, if courage were associated with maleness, a woman can become more courageous by recognizing and integrating her *animus* into her life. Conversely, a man who integrates his *anima* may become more receptive.

Individuals, who are unable to confront their *animus/anima*, will project their contrasexual qualities onto others in an attempt to fulfill their unconscious need to develop into whole individuals (Harding, 1965; Jung and von Franz, 1964). This may be illustrated in a woman who constantly looks to her male boss to make decisions that she could easily make on her own. The irony of the projection is that what the woman sees in the man actually originates deep within her own psyche. Unless she can recognize the projection as a mirror image of her own psyche, it will not stop. The recognition and utilization of those projections is important in the process towards individuation and spiritual enhancement.

In business relationships, individuals who are aware of their projections are able to develop an understanding of the source of interpersonal conflicts. As a consequence, they are more objective in assessing situations and making decisions. They are more accepting and less prone to blame others, thereby enhancing teamwork (Stein and Hollwitz, 1992).

Application of Jung's work in organizations

The health of the organization is dependent on the quality of its interpersonal relationships. When individuals become emancipated from their projections, they are able to develop healthy relationships with others. Since they no longer project their needs onto others, they are capable of functioning independently and of honoring others as unique entities. Thus, anchored in a relationship with the Self, these individuals are more tolerant of others, more responsible for personal behavior, and no longer afraid of being possessed by others (Singer, 1972). As such, they are willing to delegate work, to empower others, and to be empowered. Consequently, the organization develops a sense of community that supports healthy interpersonal relationships, while preserving individuality. When this becomes pervasive in organizations, a great deal of dysfunctional behavior is eliminated.

To the extent that an organizational environment is supportive of an individual's change, the process is likely to be more positive, and the benefits for both the individual and organization more expeditiously realized. The organization must not only acknowledge the individual's need for growth, but also alter its utilization of the individual in recognition of her/his growth.

Elliott Jaques' Stratified Systems Theory

Elliott Jaques' Stratified Systems Theory (SST) (1996) provides a way to foster a healthy organizational environment by focusing on the organization's structure. Instead of creating an environment that limits the full utilization of an individual's potential capability, Jaques provides a framework that acknowledges individual growth, not only accommodating it, but also encouraging it. Within the organization, Jaques' SST provides a strategic model for a hierarchical system of managerial layers to utilize employees' talents optimally.

Well-defined roles enhance the organization, in part by supporting the staffing of positions with people who possess the required mental complexity to perform in such roles. With the right individuals in the appropriate roles, it is easier to grant the authority and accountability necessary to perform effectively. By assessing the role requirements, the structure provides a system that enables people to develop and flourish by providing work that allows them to apply their potential capability. Organizations will be enhanced if individuals, who value their work, are provided the freedom to actualize their full potential. In an organizational environment emphasizing the importance of teams, Jaques' SST can be a true asset as it enhances team effectiveness by empowering individuals to realize their full potential (Jaques 1996).

Jaques (1965) recognizes that work, given its centrality to our existence, is an essential element in the determination of an individual's self-worth. Successful implementation of SST supports individuals in their spiritual quest, removing barriers that otherwise obstruct the effort to actualize fully their potential. Providing a vehicle to align one's capabilities with her/his role as well as the opportunity for both to grow in unison, is, indeed, conducive to spiritual growth.

Conversely, failure to provide conditions in which individuals are able to work at a level consistent with their capacity and values can be destructive to the individual and the organization. In addition to causing resentment and anger against the organization, inhibiting an individual's development can give rise to inner turmoil that manifests itself in a variety of non-productive ways, including loss of self-esteem (Jaques, 1965). Through its inattentiveness, the organization can create an environment where an individual's spirit may be lost. This can be both destructive to the individual and the organization. Enabling individuals to work at their full capacity will provide an environment conducive to healthy and productive individuals and, as a result, a healthy and productive organization. Therefore, the aim of Jaques' approach is to build a system that fully employs an organization's human resources through the recognition and utilization of the employees' capabilities (Jaques, 1996).

Potential capability (PC)

In formulating his framework, Jaques posits that, at any given stage in life, individuals possess a mental capacity that determines their potential capability (PC) to handle a certain level of complexity (Jaques and Cason, 1994). The organization can measure this potential capability to more effectively align individuals and their roles. In addition, one's PC is assumed to mature with age, producing an increasing capacity to deal with complexity of mental processing and role complexity (Jaques, 1996). The perspective provided by SST enables an organization to anticipate an individual's increasing capacity and to accommodate and benefit from it. This organizational acknowledgement that individuals are growing and therefore require continuous effort to align roles with individual capabilities is conducive to the reality of change associated with an individual's spiritual journey.

Through the recognition of an individual's current and future development of PC, an organization can provide an environment that has the prospect of

fully utilizing its human resources (Jaques, 1965). Thus, an individual placed in a role that matches her/his level of PC has the opportunity to realize her/his full potential. Of course, whether or not individuals actually achieve their PC is also a function of their level of commitment. If they are distracted, adrift, or spiritually bereft, their ability to function at their potential capability will be severely constrained. If individuals yearn for the opportunity to be fully challenged by work that they value, then the perception of value is an important element of how much of a person's potential will actually be applied to work. Hence, if, through self-reflection, individuals are able to assess the extent to which they value their work, and are able to identify the work that is consistent with their capacity and value system, then they will be able to achieve their full potential.

The nature of the organization's structure in terms of the extent to which it acknowledges and responds to an individual's values and capabilities is key to organizational health and prosperity. The organization possesses a powerful capacity to influence and be influenced by the individuals within it. If there is a discrepancy within the organization between individuals' potential capabilities and the level of complexity in their assigned roles, then both internal and external stress and conflict will occur. Enabling individuals to reach and work at their full capacity, regardless of their background, creates a structure that provides a healthy organization by minimizing conflict and frustration (Jaques 1965).

Theoretical integration

Individuals, moving toward reconciliation of Self, are increasingly able to satisfy their potential capability and, therefore, are better able to make a valuable contribution within the organization. To the extent that the organization enables individuals to derive satisfaction through spiritual development, and to function consistently with their full capabilities, the organization can achieve optimum performance from its human resources.

In our increasingly complex environment, effective utilization of human resources is becoming vital for an organization's health. One element of that challenge, which is often not actualized, is the ability to harness the organization's latent human potential. By understanding and acting on the theoretical concepts that we have set forth, the organization has the capacity to support the spiritual growth of its members and, as a consequence, unleash its potential. The organization can maximize the energy present in the dreams, skills and aspirations of those that make up its reality.

In this vein, creativity and innovation are considered to be significant contributors to an organization's competitive advantage. Yet, creative insights are not readily forthcoming from those that lack a sense of self-worth. This means that until individuals truly acknowledge and embrace the Self within, the organization will be unable to realize its full creative potential. The more it restricts input, knowingly or otherwise, the more latent potential will never be realized. Conversely, if the organization encourages spiritual development, and thus enables individuals to achieve their individual wholeness, they are far

more likely to make a truly valuable contribution to the organization. Of course, facilitating and sustaining what will develop within the organization is, to say the least, challenging. O'Connor (1996), in *The Spiritual Journey of the Corporate Warrior*, concluded that to do so, organizations must possess "an understanding of the nature of 'spirit'; an ability to recognize, encourage, and reward potential; and, the capacity to continually integrate the emerging potential into the normal processes of business". We believe that an understanding of the theories of Jung and Jaques enhances the prospect of achieving these objectives.

Maximizing the realization of an organization's capability involves career planning to allow individuals to develop their capacity, and ensures that roles are aligned with the current and future potential of employees. Jaques' SST provides a framework for defining those roles and a methodology for ascertaining individual potential in order to achieve that alignment. Both its assumptions about the individual, and the nature of its implementation, support spiritual growth.

Conclusion

Two frameworks have been presented to assist individuals and organizations in facing a world of permanent white water. Although the two theories are distinctly different, together they provide a framework for supporting the growth of the individual. The theories of Jung were offered to foster understanding of what prompts individuals in their quest for the complete Self, including how the success or failure of that effort may manifest itself. Through the individuation process, individuals achieve integration of the Self and the full maturation of their potential.

Jaques' SST provides an organizational framework for acknowledging and supporting the realization of individuals' potential capabilities. In this manner, Jaques' structure can contribute to the fulfillment of an individual's spiritual quest. Not only is this desirable, but it has been suggested that to do otherwise, to frustrate one's capacity to grow, can create an emotional response that inhibits the individuation process. Thus, in a sense, the organization has a social responsibility to stimulate and support this process of social growth.

Both theories are based on concepts that can help individuals find meaning and purpose in their lives and provide a new level of spirituality. They support individuals in their development into fuller, more complete human beings; and, in doing so, allow individuals and the organization to flourish. Awareness and understanding of Jaques' model provides organizations with a system for enabling individuals to apply their full potential; while Jung's model provides an understanding of individuality and its relation to meaningful work. The combination provides a foundation for integrating the discovery of Self with work deemed to be meaningful and purposeful. Hence, the integration of Jaques' and Jung's models can assist in providing an organizational environment that releases the unique creativity, imagination and growth of individuals as they follow their spiritual paths to wholeness. The

organization's ability to foster and benefit from their journey will, in turn, enhance its own health. To the extent that both models contribute to achievement of that end, mutual benefit is derived and a new level of spirituality is attained.

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