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**Hierarchical Assessment
And the Learning Organization – An Oxymoron?**

By /par LCol B.E. Boland
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Abstract: The phenomenon of the learning organization and the characteristics represented by this concept have been recognized and acknowledged as a fundamental prerequisite for organizational progress. Education of the organizational membership is a necessary first step, but it is not a guaranteed means to transition from the organizational structures of the past into the transformed organizations demanded in the future. Integral in the development of the organization is the quality of the leadership. This paper explores the use of the hierarchical assessment process used by the Canadian Forces to identify and develop leadership. Also, the contribution this assessment process makes to the transition to a learning organization is discussed.

The hierarchical assessment process is not congruent with the precepts of a learning organization and its exclusive use to identify and develop the required leaders needed by the Forces in the future is flawed. Contemporary assessment instruments are readily available to not only supplement the legitimacy of leadership identification and development but they can act as a springboard to catapult the military towards a paradigm shift necessary for organizational survival and subsequent evolution.

Hierarchical Assessment

And the Learning Organization – An Oxymoron?

The Global Organizational Milieu

Following the avarice of the 1980s in the business community, downsizing and re-engineering, introduced as productivity initiatives, have, upon subsequent assessment, been generally viewed as the nemesis of creative capacity in many North American organizations. The degree to which these change initiatives occurred, or the sagacity, by which they were managed, has often determined the demise, survival or even the growth of an organization. In leadership and managerial parlance, what was needed in these tumultuous times of organizational upheaval, to grapple a chance for survival, was a paradigm shift in how the organization viewed itself. The manifestation of these changes, whether internally stimulated or externally forced, demanded a pause for reflection. These reflections often stimulated a heightened awareness of how the organization viewed the world, as well as transmit an appreciation of the world's view of the organization. For some, the emerging world-views this meditation produced became the catharsis for dramatic organizational growth and metamorphoses.

From these crises, or opportunities, rose a vanguard of change managers and organizational gurus. These individuals not only assessed past failures and advised how to adapt in changing times to avoid failure in the future; they crafted a framework to develop a capacity to flourish in these challenging times. A harbinger and an acclaimed innovator in the field of positioning organizations to capitalize on change is Peter Senge. His book, The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization was the catalyst for many leaders' reassessment of the learning, leading, and followership culture within their organizations.

The Canadian Forces in the new millennium, depending on perspective, may not be the beneficiary of the retrenchment efforts conducted during the 1990s. Indisputably though, they have inherited the results of these austerity measures. A decade ago there was an excess inventory of serving Regular Force members and hence the initiation of Force Reduction plans.

Today, there is a dearth of willing recruits to fill the rank and file of the Canadian military. Arguably, the Canadian Forces is an organization that could benefit from the type of introspection encouraged by Senge. To stimulate such a debate, it is proposed that any organization purporting to value leadership and leadership development, yet clings exclusively to a hierarchical assessment process cannot be considered a learning organization.

In the context of this essay, hierarchical assessments are the annual personnel evaluation reports prepared by superiors on subordinates to assess performance, leadership attributes, and anticipated leadership capability. The focus of the essay is to stimulate those currently charged with empowering organizational growth and development to reflect on the current learning, assessment, and leadership selection culture in the Canadian Forces. Also, it is hoped that individuals, who understand the value of creative learning in an organization, are encouraged and motivated to become internal change agents.

The following discussion coalesces around the exploration of three core areas. What is meant by institutionalized organizational learning? What are contemporary leadership expectations in a learning organization and are these consistent with military leadership expectations? And, how does the current assessment process contribute to identifying future military leaders? If divergence between the consistency and continuity of these concepts is exposed, viable alternatives and explanations will be presented.

The Learning Organization

To begin with, the question that needs to be asked is - why is the military involved in education? Beyond the initial rhetorical impact of this question, a pondering of it opens the mental doors to a fundamental assessment of the character of the issues involved. Globally, the citizenry and, therefore, the militaries within these nations are no longer able to exist in an autarkical state. The growth of pluralism and interdependency, with its commensurate demand to engage the world, has forced the need for expanded awareness in the membership of nations and military organizations. At the national level, the military is often on the cutting edge of technology in equipment use and purchase. Concurrently, the military needs to maintain a corporate,

knowledge based, memory on a multitude of operational equipment approaching obsolescence. The spectrum encompassed by these scenarios is broad and the demand for specific knowledge within the military remains vast. For all organizations, militaries included, both generating and satisfying this awareness demand can, *en masse,* be effectively addressed through education. In the military, the general awareness base and technical knowledge threshold remains high just to sustain expected levels of operation. Education, in concert with training, is essential to maintain this capability.

Figuratively, in this regard, is the shift for an organization that already embraces the education of its membership to a learning organization a quantum leap or simply a hop across a crack in the continuum of organization development? Senge, at the most basic, appreciates a learning organization to be:

> an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive. 'Survival learning' or what is more often termed 'adaptive learning' is important - indeed it is necessary. But for a learning organization, 'adaptive learning' must be joined by 'generative learning' learning that enhances our capacity to create (1994, p. 14).

For many organizations, aspiring to be acknowledged by the internal members and recognized by external stakeholders as an institution capable of learning will be a formidable task demanding a magnitude, versus a marginal, change in philosophy and culture. From the educational perspective, the purpose and function of education is the essence of the learning organization. As Senge states "organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs" (1994, p. 139).

A learning organization is more than just organizational advocacy for the education of its membership and its alignment and affiliation with institutions of higher education. Contrary to what Herbert and Madrid (2000) applaud for the United States Marine Corps, and its recent contractual association with Pennsylvania State to create the Marine Corps Research University,

education in a learning organization is more than just a force multiplier and an arsenal of intellectual weaponry used to attack twenty-first century problems.

Education is an exercise in personal growth. Personal growth programmes usually involve a strong emotional commitment or experience with the results having lasting effects on the participant, that, as Yukl (1998) suggests, are organizationally desired by the sponsoring agency. Conger, however, (as cited by Yukl, 1998) found during study of these personal growth experiences that participants may change in ways that are not organizationally desirable.

> Successful leadership often involves a passionate pursuit of a vision or cause, which sometimes requires sacrificing aspects of one's personal and family life. The net effect of personal growth programs that encourage people to find a better balance may be to reduce commitment to the organization. Moreover, increased awareness of unconscious needs and conflicts does not necessarily result in their resolution, and the experience is sometimes more detrimental than helpful to the person (Yukl, 1995, p. 486).

Regrettably, the Herbert and Madrid (2000) article delves into the concept, for the Marine Corps, of a learning organization at a superficial level only. The integrity of the Marine Corps in the construct presented remains constant. The authors imply that the individual Marine will acquire the wherewithal in the sole pursuit of direct servitude to the demands of the Corps. Herbert and Madrid have neglected the intrinsic value of learning and the creative capacity this can generate. The education that is implied to occur in a learning organization, though geared to support organizational aspirations, is to be an intellectual vehicle for enlightenment and liberation not organizational enthrallment.

There are both similarities and differences between individual learning and organizational learning. Popper and Lipshitz (2000) identify that the fundamental element in the learning organization is the learning effort of the individual members. They highlight, however, that learning in and learning by an organization are two very different activities.

Others, such as Garvin (1993), have suggested learning, generated from education, sponsored or encouraged by the organization, by necessity must translate into behavioral changes within the individual and consequently within the organization for a learning culture to develop. These behavioral changes imply that cognitive development at the individual and organizational level must be embraced before the transformation process to a learning organization can begin. Furthermore, marginal behavioral changes and knowledge transfers, within a work environment, are not adequate to achieve the exalted status of a learning organization. Garvin suggests that "a learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge, and insights" (1993, p. 4).

A Learning Organization and Its Membership

Inherently, a learning organization does not just tolerate new ideas: It values them. The, *ab initio,* corollary infers valuing people, the source of ideas, ahead of assets. A study (De Geus, 1997) of long-lived companies reveals, at the margins of their organizational culture, a high tolerance to near encouragement of eccentricity and experimentation to push and stretch the barriers of knowledge and understanding within their organizations. The study indicated that the tenure of long surviving companies was not bound to immutable ties with assets and the immediate profits they yield. These companies would devolve assets to evolve as an organization to ensure corporate survival first and the capacity to develop in the future second. The essence of their organizational being was not just what they did or produced; these companies' essence was their continuation as viable corporate entities. These companies acted like living organisms; they produced or manufactured to live; they did not live to manufacture or produce.

Metaphorically, a commonly seen converse of the above is the organization that scuttles or disbands a factor of production, people, to save the produced asset. This is not to suggest that, analogous to an individual trimming off a few pounds and eating and exercising properly, an organization's membership is a fixed quantity. Changes to the organization's human capital should be akin to evolutionary progress not amputation. The learning organization embraces

change. It does not exist to maintain the status quo. It pursues stability through adaptation and evolution.

The industrial revolution and the associated corporate affairs that have evolved from that era have dramatically influenced the social consciousness of Western society. This influence has been so pervasive that people working in organized groups to achieve collective ends are not conceptualized as communities, but as extensions of a mechanical process. Fortunately, learning organizations are now embracing the axiom that they are not an embodiment of an industrial and mechanistic mental model (Wheatley and Keller-Rogers, 1996). Organizations can not be described, nor adequately represented, by mechanical metaphors, such as "a fine tuned machine" or "running like clock work," so often used. Myron Keller-Rogers summarizes this by stating that "the accumulating failures in organizational change can be traced to the fundamental, yet mistaken, assumption that organizations are machines. In fact, organizations are living systems – dynamic, complex and filled with the capacity and behaviors that are at work in all living systems" (1998, p. 18).

Leadership and the Learning Organization

Within an organization, in the transition to the mastery of appreciating and embracing learning as a core competency for growth, several leadership challenges have risen from their latent status of the past. A description of leadership that encompasses the contemporary demands of the learning organization is "the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (Kouzes and Posner, 1997, p. 30). The concept of "mobilizing" and "to want" and "shared aspirations" engenders significant connotations. There is a dramatic shift from a compliance-based goal for the leadership to a commitment-based aspiration from the organizational ensemble.

From an organizational leadership perspective, Yukl (1998) discusses three outcomes from leadership influences. These are resistance, compliance and commitment. Resistance, the

antithesis of organizational efforts, goes beyond indifference to a proposal or request, but is manifest as either overt or covert action in opposition to the request. Compliance is the ambivalent willingness to do what is requested. It infers an organizational influence on the person's behavior but not necessarily on the person's attitude. Commitment identifies a fundamental emotional and values based agreement with the request and an intrinsic motivation to comply with it.

For leaders in the learning organization to be effective, they need to have a rational appreciation of an aspect often ignored, but an operational imperative in effective organizations - followership. Kelley (1992) suggests that leaders contribute no more than 20 percent to the success of most organizations. The remaining 80 percent is the result of followers' efforts. Also, the distinctions between leader and follower are not clear because, "for most of us, followership represents 70 to 90 percent of our working days" (Kelley, 1992, p. 29). The learning organization not only recognizes this natural symbiosis between leadership and followership; it also extols its benefits.

The paradoxical hurdle that inhibits organizations from harnessing the natural synthesis of leadership and followership that exists in its membership has been the societal polarization of these two characteristics and not any actual antagonism between the traits. As Kelley suggests "leadership as defined by exemplary followers differs considerably from the myth espoused by leadership enthusiasts. Leaders are partners who simply do different things than followers. But both add value and both contributions are necessary for success. But one is not more [intrinsically] important than the other" (1992, p. 227). Harmony between both and not dominance of one over the other is the "golden alchemy," which creates an organization that is greater than the sum of its constituent parts.

From the follower's perspective, what does this partnership look like? The characteristics most admired in leaders as determined by respondents from a 1995 international survey (Kouzes and Posner, 1997) were honesty, forward-looking, inspiring, competent and fair-minded at 88, 75, 68, 63 and 49 percent respectively. Clearly, this survey identifies that the single most important ingredient in the leader – follower relationship is honesty. "If we're to willingly follow someone

– whether it be into battle or into the board room…we first want to assure ourselves that the person is worthy of our trust" (Kouzes and Posner, 1997, p. 22). The level of honesty was not assessed by the words spoken by the person, but was measured by the respondents based upon the evidence of the leader's behavior.

The opposite of the trustworthy leader is the toxic leader (Whicker, 1996). From a possible myriad of reasons, the toxic leader "may be one of several types, but all toxic leaders share three defining characteristics: deep-seated inadequacy, selfish values and deceptiveness" (Whicker, 1996, p. 53). It is recognized that all people have needs. Trustworthy leaders find situations in which personal values and goals are consistent and compatible with those exhibited by the organization. In theoretical terms, learning organizations are effectively rejecting the contingency theory of leadership, that appropriate intervention is determined primarily from the conditions of the situation, and are embracing a values-based leadership model, founded on ethics and morality (O'Toole, 1996).

As a service member, reflecting on the organizational attitudes towards these contemporary leadership philosophies provides a glimpse into the prevailing cultural norms held. The distinction, that needs to be articulated clearly, is differentiating between what the espoused theory is and what the theory in use or practice is (Argyris, 1991). To exemplify the distinction, the quality of the military ethos and ethics of the military in Canada has been closely scrutinized and intensely debated. The ethics of the membership have been codified, through the efforts of the Defence Ethics Program by defining the standards of moral behavior, and promulgated as "Ethics and Conduct" for all to abide. Not all do, however.

The violators are dealt with and justice rendered through due process. What happens, however, to those who demonstrated the courage to bring unethical behavior forward? The words used to describe these people can reveal the subtle but prevalent culture of the organization. Vilified as "whistleblowers," they often become the pariah of the organization and are marginalized as leaders. These individuals are not regarded, indicative of the terminology used to describe them, with the highest esteem. Yet organizationally, the behavior epitomized by their actions is purported to be of great value. This spotlight, on the institutional attitudes, highlights the abyss

that exists between the espoused and practiced behavior that exists within organizations. Though acute, this situation should give one pause when considering the actual extent to which values-based leadership and the concept of honoring moral and ethical behavior has permeated the mindset of the Canadian military institution.

Identifying Leaders from Hierarchical Assessment

At its most basic level, the annual assessment of personnel and the subsequent identification of aspiring leaders from these assessments are grounded in the opinion of a single person. The epistemological foundation, or the grounds for knowledge, which embraces this approach, is based on authority. This is an arrangement where "an authoritative individual says that something is so and you accept it as fact purely because the authority figure told you it was so" (Palys, 1997, p. 4). This single perspective may, however, lack the desired validity and is by construct not particularly objective. In this assessment arrangement, the authority holds considerable power.

This influential power can solicit for the boss a considerable degree of conformity and compliance from the subordinate. Most societies and organizations encourage conformity because "submission to authority is reinforced at home, in schools, at church, on sports teams, in the military, and at work. The rationale is that the price of victory – whether in life, war… is deference to authority" (Kelley, 1992, p. 109). As for compliance, Sperlich suggests that "life in a large corporation is easier if you go with the flow. People who propose things that are different make more conservative people nervous, and the corporate environment just doesn't reward people for challenging the status quo" (as cited by Kelley, 1992, p. 189).

In many bureaucracies, good followership must be demonstrated before leadership opportunities are accessible (Kelley, 1992). West Point and the Royal Military College of Canada both subscribe to this approach. This approach is, however, conceived in an idyllic world. In an organization with toxic leadership, where self-centeredness and self-promotion are the values emphasized, social tyranny can reign (Whicker, 1996). Where rewards, both personal and financial, are disbursed as a consequence of a hierarchical assessment process, the arbiter of the

assessment has significant power. If the leader has a toxic disposition, this arbiter has substantial leverage to induce, manipulate and position subordinates such that the toxic leader's ultimate goals are achieved, often at the expense of the subordinate.

Organizations can overcome this undesirable outcome and still maintain a "followership as apprentice to leader" model. The Chinese mandarin system demonstrated its viability centuries ago, predating any type of Western professional military selection process (Kelley, 1992). The two incumbent and paramount fundamental criteria were proficiency as a follower and the capacity to satisfy the needs of the people one would lead. In the military, this later criterion is often forgotten or not validly assessed, because the voice of the follower is purposely left silent, or the assessee's capacity is assumed by the hierarchical assessor.

The 360-Degree Survey

To add a measure of validity and reliability to the hierarchical assessment, there are a variety of legitimate assessment tools available to assist in determining the alacrity of a potential leader to support subordinates. The use of a 360-degree survey is but one way. This survey instrument is used to gather feedback on performance, competencies, and interpersonal skills, teaming ability, leadership potential and a host of other areas if desired. A 360-degree survey can be uniquely tailored to meet the feedback needs of the individual, or to glean information about an individual's organizational skill and accomplishments. Combined with a hierarchical assessment, a 360-degree survey can be a powerful information tool for an organization that is committed to elevating itself to a learning organization status. From a double loop learning point of view, the capacity to not only understand what is happening but appreciating why it is happening (Argyris, 1991), the organization will gain appreciation of the interpersonal dynamics at the formal leader/follower interface, which would otherwise be inaccessible.

The foundation of the survey is integrity and its support to individual and organizational improvement in a fashion that respects the dignity of the individual. Normally, a 360-degree survey is sent to a variety of individuals to solicit, for the most part anonymous, feedback. Anonymity eliminates the potential for reprisal action from the assessee and increases honest

reporting. The survey responses are normally sent to a third party, who either by respondent knowledge or formal status, is in a position of authority and integrity. Also, commercial firms are available to formally conduct these activities on an individual or organization's behalf. This third party collects and collates the responses and provides an accurate summary of the survey to the organization and the member being assessed.

The survey is sent to a variety of people, including those who have worked for, currently work for, or with, know as a peer, have been, or are involved as a client of the individual being assessed. This is done to gain a broad perspective on how a larger community views the person. Epistemologically, the perspective rendered from such a process is a much more valid and informed representation of the individual being considered than the single hierarchical assessment. The survey approach, because of its processing structure and anonymity, diffuses the potential for the instrument being used surreptitiously for influence and control.

The greatest benefit of a survey assessment process, such as the 360, is that it provides honest and true information on the whole person. Information that both the organization and the individual can benefit from. The organization has a more reliable picture from which to make decisions, and the individual will be informed on strengths, weakness and how he or she is actually perceived by others in a professional setting. From this knowledge, the organization and/or the individual can initiate a strategy to effect change, learning, and improvement.

The 360-degree type survey process is not a simple and insignificant endeavor to undertake. Notwithstanding the recognized challenges, by indicating epistemically sound leadership potential and facilitating progress towards the transition to a learning organization, this type of process moves the organization from espoused theory well into the realm of practicing organizational learning theory. In a respectful way, the organization is liberated to deal with information strictly on its merit and not with the source of its production or the destination of its receipt. As indicated by McGill and Slocum "one task of management in learning organizations is to expose failure and constructively promote dissent" (as cited by Popper and Lipshitz, 2000, p. 6). This suggests nurturing the capacity within an organization to have constructive disagreements and not recrimination for presenting opposing ideas. The broader spectrum of

assessment and evaluation of the membership contributes, in parallel, to the development of the members and the organization.

A common, yet debilitating, paradox played out in many organizations attempting to effect positive change and development of a learning attitude is the personal behavior of the very leaders who are the biggest advocates and most enthusiastic and genuine about continuous improvement (O'Toole, 1995 and Argyris, 1991). As long as learning and change efforts are focused on external organizational factors, many leaders willingly champion the cause. Rarely, however, will these leaders turn a mirror on themselves to reflect on their own performance using the same criteria. When this was done, the leaders "began to feel embarrassed. They were threatened by the prospect of critically examining their own role in the organization" (Argyris, 1991, p. 33). A 360-degree feedback process can effectively provide this information to the organizational leaders without threat or embarrassment.

The Current Status

The actual triage and culling process used by the Canadian Forces to identify future leaders portrays substantial deficiencies in meeting, even the minimum, expectations of a learning organization. Additionally, the nurturing of the leadership skills demanded by an increasingly dynamic world may not be fostered by the current hierarchical assessment approach. Before castigating the military as an odious oppressor of creative minds and contemporary leaders, gazing beyond the obvious and current status may be enlightening.

There are many plausible reasons why the Canadian Forces has lagged other organizations in transforming its culture, particularly in the assessment of its members, to be more accommodating of the essential elements of a learning organization. These will not, however, be discussed, because they go beyond the scope and focus of the essay. What will be discussed is an individual taxonomy of learning that may have similarities in the learning evolution of an organization.

A cognitive development model, which may parallel and resonance with the stages of development in a learning organization, was proposed by Perry in 1970 (as cited by Salner, 1999). As people are exposed to educational experiences, their relationship with, and various assumptions on, knowledge is challenged. With continued exposure and increased expectations to facilitate a transformation, a student may evolve through three stages to a greater level of awareness. These stages, analogous to a search for truth, enlightenment and understanding, progress from dualism to multiplism to conceptual relativism (Salner, 1999).

Dualism, the conviction that the body of knowledge is divided between right and wrong, suggests enlightenment will be revealed to those who are committed to the search for the truth. Through education this paradigm of right/wrong is assaulted by the multiplicity of plausible alternative concepts. The student is forced to evaluate the subjectivity of their and others' beliefs and how these are implicated in determining what is true and false. Confronted with multiple alternatives, the student acknowledges there existence and perhaps legitimacy, but cling steadfastly to their own beliefs. This is the multiplism stage.

Contextual relativism occurs when the student begins to appreciate and takes into account the reason why beliefs are held. The student develops the skills of reasoning and critical thinking. Also, an appreciation of the sources of knowledge and soundness of these epistemic approaches evolves. In this stage, understanding the context with which knowledge exists and the cultural dependencies of knowledge pushes the student to wrestle with the social nature of truth. The student is increasingly capable of contemplating the source of beliefs and the process of thinking and does not automatically settle for authoritarian decrees or the products of group compliance and consensus. The student " begins to understand that learning is generative as well as adaptive" (Salner, 1999, p. 4).

The transition from dualism to contextual relativism is arduous and long. Similarly, learning organizations are not created over night. As Salner (1999, p. 4) suggests "the capacity to take part in a learning organization requires cognitive complexity and a commitment to reasoned exploration of dissimilar ideas that is not characteristic of the dualist thinker."

As the concept of an organization is more consistent with a living organism than with a machine (Wheatley and Keller-Rogers, 1998), organizational evolution achieved through stages of development is not a particularly radical concept. Discerning whether the organization is stagnant or in the process of evolving into a learning organization is the critical issue. Just as the student transformed her behavior and intellect through an extended learning experience, likewise can an organization. Like students, however, not all organizations will successfully make the transition. Successful learning organizations "are the products of carefully cultivated attitudes, commitments, and management processes that accrued slowly and steadily over time" (Garvin, 1993, p. 15).

The military has always been a bastion of tradition and conservatism. Also being an extension of the national authority, ownership of the organization by its members is at times abdicated. The combination of these influences can create an environment for stasis or slow change. As the world and the partners, which the Canadian Forces interact with, continue to evolve, organizational lethargy may have a requisite high price in the future. The Canadian Forces may become irrelevant to the Canadian public and redundant or a liability to the international community in peace enforcement campaigns.

Conclusion

The recent history of the Canadian Forces has provided ample stimuli for change, and at this juncture in the development of the organization; it is at a crossroads. The relevancy of the organization in the consciousness of the global community and within the fabric of Canadian society may be at stake. As the membership becomes more educated individually, there will be an increasing internal grassroots demand for complimentary and compatible progress in organizational learning. If this expectation is not realized, members will abandon the military in search of an organizational community that supports them as individuals and fosters collective learning. As suggested previously, the Canadian military organization might be in the throes of a paradigm shift in attitude and awareness similar to an individual's cognitive development. As for a student involved in institutional learning at the university level, the patience for this

transition is of a finite capacity. Similarly, the tolerance of internal and external stakeholders for the military in Canada to transition is approaching the point of exhaustion.

The exclusive use of a hierarchical assessment for the identification of leaders and leadership potential is not consistent with the tenets of a learning organization. Also, under a variety of work environments where a supervisor has specific personal goals different than the organization, such as a toxic leadership situation, the sole use of hierarchical assessments is a powerful tool to suppress leadership and force compliance on the membership to pursue these personal goals. An organization that not only knowingly tolerates but also anecdotally rewards this behavior has not progressed beyond authority based knowledge in its selection and identification of leaders and leadership competencies. Consequently, from a contemporary organizational learning perspective, the Canadian Forces must be considered suspect in the actual value it places on the generation of the creative capacity characteristic of a learning organization and the development of the visionary leadership needed to transform.

For the Canadian Forces, the ground swell for change is rising like a tsunami just beyond the horizon. The manner in which leaders have been selected in the past, and the fashion in which they are currently identified may not even provide the organization with the vision to recognize the rising tide, let alone the capacity to weather the coming storm. The very leadership that is at the helm of the military may be unknowingly trapped in the paradox of wanting external change but unwilling to reflect on, or unawareness of, their own internal intransigence to change. To get beyond this paralysis to change in the Canadian Forces, a safe environment for reflection and the development of a broader spectrum of self-awareness, at all levels, is a necessary first step. Supplementing the hierarchical assessment process within a more inclusive, follower membership, assessment framework will have a positive cascading effect. It will contribute to the nurturing of the characteristics of a learning organization; it will eliminate toxic leaders; it will identify, reward, and select trustworthy leaders: In short it will be the catalytic element for both welcomed and needed change.

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