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Cultivating a Healthy Organisation

Dancing with Change:

How to Cultivate an Environment that enables your Organisation to Thrive

AN INTERACTIVE OPEN ENROLMENT PROGRAM
for
EXECUTIVES; DECISION MAKERS; CONSULTANTS; FACILITATORS; COACHES

Presented by ERIC LYNN
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Founder of *cultureQs®*

Why wouldn't you …
Cultivate a Healthy Organisation?

Personally, I cannot think of a single good reason.

Nevertheless, searching for a Healthy Organisation is like searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack. It's in there … somewhere. Perhaps there's more than one. Healthy Organisations are rare. We need to cultivate more.

No organisation can thrive without health. It can exist; it can certainly make a profit; it may even satisfy its owners … very many do. Existence is not thriving. While profit is essential for any company, alone it is not an indicator of health.

The Covid pandemic is exposing and amplifying the systemic problems in all societies, problems we urgently need to address. Tired old mantras continue to promote "change management", the need for "agility" and efforts to achieve "resilience". These ill-conceived and poorly understood management buzzwords describe so-called 'solutions' that rarely deliver what they promise. Indeed, initiatives with such a binary focus may result in additional harm to the organisation's health. Too often they fail to deal with the root causes of the problems they are supposed to address. Furthermore, they overlook the relational, holistic, systemic nature of life in organisations.

We need to Question our narratives about change.
We need to Question our narratives about the purpose and design of our organisations.
Indeed, it is essential that we change the way we think about change; the way we work with change; the way we think about organisations; the way we design our organisations; the way we develop our organisations.

We need a human-centred holistic approach to business.

Cultivating a Healthy Organisation entails Organisation Culture Change.
Organisation Health is a holistic phenomenon.

In this program, I share experiences of supporting organisations that came to life by promoting human connection while focusing on their business challenges. In doing so, people recognise their interdependence, enjoy cooperating, and ensure that they all thrive and realise real value.

The program consists of ten highly interactive practical online sessions of 90 minutes each. Group size is limited.

This brochure provides further details of the modules as well as a link to my book ***Dancing with Change***, in which these ideas are presented.

I welcome your enquiries: info@cultureQs.com.

We need to change the way we think about change.

If an organisation is not consciously trying to thrive, why does it even exist?

Ultimately, all organisations are communities in which people work.

Correcting the current unhealthy condition of far too many businesses and organisations requires explicit recognition of the damaging impact of outdated ways of thinking and behaving that, still today, are the norm.

Organisation health requires continuous cultivation, by its people … all its people. This is just one example of the shift in perspective needed. In order to Cultivate Healthy Organisations, we also need to understand the dangers of applying 'off-the-shelf' solutions in the form of management models; recognise that traditional leadership styles no longer work; and expose the widespread myths about change.
We need to develop new approaches to organisation design based on appreciation of the significance of relationships and the true characteristics of change.

To work together effectively, people need to make a conscious shift towards cultivating the healthy environment everyone desires. The practical framework outlined in my book is reflected in the approach participants experience during this program.

At board level, and among the senior management, awareness of the need to Cultivate and maintain Organisation Health is crucial.

CULTIVATING HEALTHY ORGANISATIONS
AN INTERACTIVE PROGRAM

In ten ninety-minute modules, I will outline the principles of *Cultivating Healthy Organisations*, while challenging narratives that prevent us from thriving. In each session, an initial brief introduction will be followed by group dialogues focused on the practical application of insights highlighted in my book *"Dancing with Change: Cultivating Healthy Organisations"*. My work is founded on more than 30 years' experience working on four continents as a facilitator and executive coach with clients from a broad range of sectors.

PROGRAM MODULES

1. **The Irrefutable Business Case for Organisational Health**
2. **Organisation Culture: How Your Organisation Comes Alive**
3. **Fundamental Interdependent Characteristics of Organisation Health**
4. **How Nature Overrides Populist Myths About Organisation Change**
5. **From Management Models to Orientation and Frameworks**
6. **From Control to Cultivation: Cultivating Healthy Organisations**
7. **Leadership Matters**
8. **Adding Value: Implementing Meaningful Generative Change Initiatives**
9. **Staying Healthy and Thriving**
10. **Transitioning to Action: Open Questions**

The relational nature of organisation life determines that there is no separation between these core themes. That all are interwoven will quickly become clear.
Consider the sessions as an invitation … individually and together … to engage with Questions and perspectives that may well challenge some of your ideas about the nature of organisations and organisation life. The potential value of insights gained while participating in an open forum with one's peers is unlimited.

MODULE 1:
The Irrefutable Business Case for Organisational Health

In this session, you will be challenged to reflect upon a number of health-related questions as they affect you and your organisation's potential. In addition, we will consider the role and responsibilities of leaders in creating an environment that enables the organisation to thrive. Human dignity lies at the core of such an environment.

Who am I without my health? What are we without our health? If an organisation is not consciously trying to thrive, why does it even exist? Every single organisation, everywhere, is functioning below its potential. The reasons are manifold, yet primary among them is the widespread lack of understanding of the holistic nature of health and how it directly and indirectly impacts everything from quality to business results. A narrow perspective on a few selected KPIs is actually detrimental to individual and organisation health, creating invisible costs that inevitably prevent your organisation from thriving.

As this is the first session of the series, we will begin by providing orientation on why cultivating healthy organisations is such an essential aspect of long-term success, as well as agreeing some working principles to enable all participants to access and benefit from the potential of learning with and from everyone in the group.

MODULE 2:
Organisation Culture: How your Organisation comes Alive

In this session, we will look at how historical patterns and deeply embedded roots underlie the behaviour we observe in organisations. We will learn how to consciously experience the dynamic nature of culture, enabling us to change its patterns by cultivating and nurturing a healthy environment.

The notion of culture, like change is widely misunderstood, frequently misrepresented as it if were a piece of software that can be manipulated to achieve some pre-determined desired outcomes. Beware! Working in accordance with this perspective of culture will damage the health of your organisation. Culture is a far more complex phenomenon.

It is the culture of your organisation that determines how it comes alive, how people interact with one another and external partners, how decisions are made, how leadership and management functions, and much more. Culture is so significant to life that we can say, it is the soul of your organisation.

Module 3:
Fundamental Interdependent Characteristics of Organisation Health

This session will examine the relationships between ethics, psychological well-being, quality relationships, environmental awareness among others, and how they affect the economic health of your company.

What constitutes a healthy organisation?
To answer this Question, we will take a look at the 13 core characteristics and how they are intricately intertwined with one another. Organisation health is a holistic phenomenon. Why? Because an organisation is an organism, it is alive. It is a living system within other living systems with which it is inextricably interrelated. We can only Cultivate Healthy Organisations by considering and working with the organisation as a whole entity. The fundamental Question for any organisation to ask itself is therefore: *"What do we want our Organisation to … BE?"* The challenge is far more complex than it may appear initially.

MODULE 4:
How Nature Overrides Populist Myths About Organisation Change

In this session, we will begin by presenting Nature's Dance, the dance of change, while challenging 12 of the popular and populist myths of change that pervade organisation life. Top of this list is "Change Management", the misguided belief that change can be managed. Dismantling these myths constitutes an essential step on the path to cultivating a healthy organisation.

The natural world continuously demonstrates how change pervades every aspect of our lives. We human beings are nature. This fact alone ought to enable us to recognise that change is a natural fundamental characteristic of all organisations. The metaphor of nature gifts us a ready-made compass to provide orientation for intentional organisation change initiatives. Unfortunately, we often fail to recognise the existence of this compass and design initiatives according to a model of organisations based on a machine analogy rather than nature. It is this model that has given rise to a series of popular, populist, and misleading myths about how organisation change works.

MODULE 5:
From Management Models to Orientation and Frameworks

In this session, we will briefly examine the historical background to the rise of our dominant models of organisation life. We will then access our personal experience to clarify the limitations of these conventional ideas about understanding and knowledge, enabling us to reach a more realistic framework for cultivating each organisation as a unique and healthy entity.

Established academic institutions, business schools and large consultancies have for decades been supplying us with clear rational models for designing and changing organisations. The problem? The models are wrong. They are wrong because they are inappropriately founded in the notion (assumption) of an organisation as a machine to be tweaked and manipulated so that it functions more efficiently and profitably. Making technical and administrative process more efficient is undoubtedly desirable. The living interdependencies of the organisation with other living systems are sufficient to illustrate the unpredictable nature of life.

MODULE 6:
From Control to Cultivation: Cultivating Healthy Organisations

This session will examine the harmful effects of attempting to control organisations as if they were machines, and of using coercive power. We will then reference the characteristics of healthy organisations as well as the interactions we considered when looking at how cultural patterns shape organisational life, before presenting a practical working framework for cultivating healthy organisations.

"We are in control", is one of the most widespread delusions of modern corporate and institutional management practice. Control is desirable, indeed necessary for machines. History has taught us that it is possible to control human behaviour – by using physical and psychological power, and sometimes violence. This, however, is neither appropriate for 21st century democratic societies nor can it be considered in any way healthy.

MODULE 7:
Leadership Matters

Every organisation has nominal leaders – people formally appointed, perhaps self-appointed, to a role that charges them with responsibility for the organisation's actions and results, as well as for ensuring they operate within the legal framework of the country in which their entity is registered and located. Of course, organisations need leadership, but not necessarily the kind that is commonly understood as such. Healthy organisations require collective leadership. What this means in practice is one of the challenges actively examined in this session.

Leadership is an omnipresent topic in organisational life. Yet how many leaders lead their organisations consciously, according to a philosophy aligned with their values? And what does leadership actually mean in the first place? Others ask, "Do we need leaders?" I ask, "What kind of leadership is appropriate for healthy organisations?"

MODULE 8:
Adding Value: Implementing Meaningful Generative Change Initiatives

This session will examine how we can bring the framework for Cultivating Healthy Organisations to life. We will also consider the challenges likely to be faced in doing so.

Without implementation, a good idea remains … a good idea. The Question, "How can we Cultivate a Healthy Organisation?" is all about the work. It is the work of adding value. What do we understand by value? For whom? How do we assess value and value-added? So much of true value cannot be meaningfully measured. So much that can be measured can only be done so indirectly. Direct cause-effect chains rarely exist in living organisms.

MODULE 9:
Staying Healthy and Thriving

How do we maintain integrity and dignity in an unhealthy world that is continuously pulling at our personal boundaries? How do we remain centred? How can we actively work to strengthen relationships, which themselves strengthen the healthy patterns and healthy roots of the organisation? Everybody matters. These are some of the Questions that will challenge us during this session.

The work of cultivation is never ending. It is neither a project nor a process. Cultivation is life, and health requires nourishment. Especially in a world that is currently fundamentally unhealthy, challenges to ethical boundaries, environmental health, psychological health, and economic health permeate life. A variety of interests not necessarily aligned with the principles of remaining healthy will pull leaders and employees in different directions simultaneously.

MODULE 10:
Transitioning to Action; Open Questions

In this final session of the program, participants will be challenged to reflect while gaining clarity on a number of key value-based personal questions, enabling them to ensure actions that are congruent with both their personal values, and the principles of organisation health. We will make space for participants' questions before concluding with a reflection on key insights gained.

Organisational and personal change are inseparable. The former is not possible without the latter.

Because few truly healthy organisations exist, the act of Cultivating a Healthy Organisation almost inevitably entails significant large-scale change, if not radical transformation. We start where we are. We start now. There is no other place and no other time. The initial questions are inevitably personal. The fundamental question remains, *"What do we want our organisation to … BE?"*

Participants will be encouraged to specify and make commitments to themselves on implementing their learnings and insights. The group will be invited to consider a follow-up initiative which could involve regular online mutual learning sessions to share reflections and experiences. We will consider possibilities during this final session.

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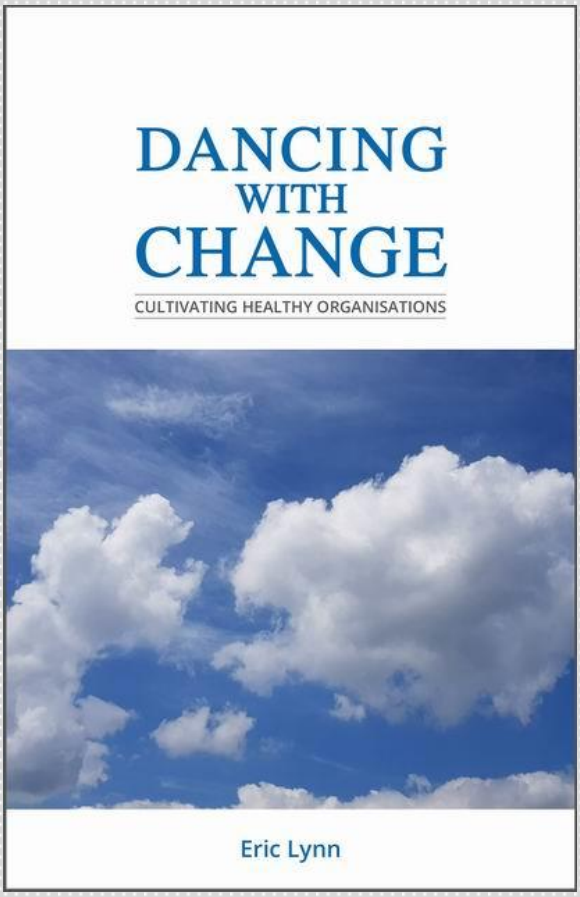

Dancing with Change: Cultivating Healthy Organisations was published in September 2020. **Further information**

It is also available on **Amazon**.