

Robert Gass Daily Leadership Practices
Phase 1 Report • June 2012 - June 2013

Our Daily Leadership Practices Project was a collaboration between SLN, Biomimicry 3.8, and the Social Transformation Project. The goal was to deepen mindfulness and build leadership capacity among a combined network of Donella Meadows Leadership Fellows and Biomimicry Professionals through engaging Robert Gass’ Daily Leadership Practices. Phase 1 of this project is now complete. We are pleased to report that this project exceeded our expectations. Specifically, 116 people joined the project; this community received 240 daily e-mails over the course of 8 months, organized into 12 sets of Practices:

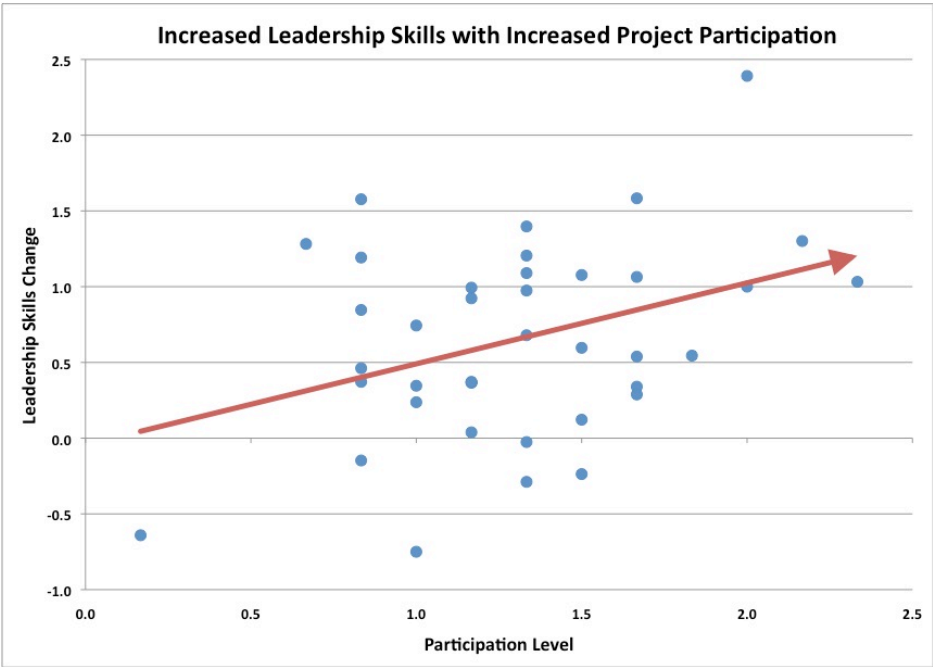
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inner Power 2. Deep Listening 3. Power of the Word 4. Enough / Not Enough 5. Authenticity 6. Purposeful Action 7. Inner Knowing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Have to / Choose to 9. Triggers 10. Stress No More 11. The Power of Love 12. Our Mind is not the Universe |
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These were each introduced with a tailored message, designed to build bridges between leadership and biomimicry concepts familiar to participants and Robert Gass’ Practices. An online Moodle platform facilitated communication between participants, 38 of them paired off for peer coaching for the duration of the project. For every set of practices, which lasted from 2-4 weeks each, we convened a webinar to deepen understanding and application. Donella Meadows Fellows attended a face-to-face session at our October 2012 Workshop to reflect on the project and hear how individuals were applying the Practices. A report on that session is on page 4.



Participants were asked to complete quantitative and qualitative surveys before and after the project. The data is rich and initial analysis of the Lykert surveys – which asked participants to rank their capacity in each practice on a scale of 1-7 – show that the project succeeded in increasing capacity in all 12 leadership practices. The first graph, above, shows the improved average group capacity for each practice (numbers 1-12 correspond to the list of practices, above). There were particularly significant improvements reported for Inner Power, Deep Listening, and Have to / Choose to.

This second graph, below, plots individual level of participation in the project (measured by how much individuals reported engaging in each component offered) and individual change in overall leadership capacity (the difference between the average individual capacity for all 12 leadership practices before and after the project). The latter changes are measured within the 1-7 capacity scale, described above. Each blue dot represents a person and the red line shows the trend: the graph indicates that the more deeply an individual participated in the project, the more they improved their overall leadership capacity.



In addition to quantitative measures, we also asked these qualitative questions at the end of the project:

- 1) Which of the practices stood out most for you? Why? What’s an example of how you applied the practice?
- 2) How do the practices inform your personal life and leadership work going forward?

- 3) If we run a similar project in the future, how would you suggest we improve it?

Example responses include:

1) Inner Power: *“Claiming a mantra has made a deep difference on a daily basis. Maybe it was because it was an early practice, or maybe because I worked with a*



peer coach on this one, but the impact of this lesson permeates everything now.”

1) Deep Listening: *“I always thought before that I was a good listener, but during this practice I learned that I could be even better. I started quieting my mind when I was having conversations, I stopped myself from answering in my mind before people finished talking and gave more concentration to my phone conversations.”*

1) Have to / Choose to: *“[I realized that I have a] choice from where I perceive my life: as a victim or from a place of empowerment.”*

2) *“[Engaging in this project] was one of the most important commitments I made that truly brought treasures to my daily life. I was always curious what the next day would bring. It made me grow as a person by considering such sensible perspective on life, living and leading.”*

2) *“These practices have informed both my personal life and my leadership work by grounding me in what’s important and providing structure for remembering how I wish to be in this world. They are an*

incredibly valuable compass, providing the kind of perspective that before I would barely recall.”

2) *“My actions - in my life as a whole - are now more directed to something I profoundly feel is right. It feels SO good. I have more energy and (almost) always feel that I am at the right place, at the right moment.”*

Multiple participants expressed that they would continue revisiting the practice e-mails and webinar recordings they had received. Many also want to engage in the project for a second time to further deepen mindfulness and leadership capacity. Example suggestions for improving the project (question 3) touched on content, translating the practices more robustly into the workplace, enhancing the role of the peer coach, and ideas for strengthening online interaction among our community of practice.

In the future, we would like to learn more from our detailed survey results, build on our Phase 1 successes, and offer an improved second round of the Daily Leadership Practices project to an expanded network.

Summary of Session on Robert Gass' Daily Leadership Practices
 Donella Meadows West Coast Fellows Workshop • October 16-17, 2012

As part of our workshop we dedicated a session to the Robert Gass Daily Leadership Practice project in which 56 Fellows are currently engaged alongside 60 Biomimicry Professionals. The project includes receiving daily emails over 8 months, divided into a dozen practices. To help embed the practices, participants can join a monthly webinar led by Toby Herzlich, engage in an online discussion forum, journal, and confer with their peer coach.

The purpose of the session was to assess the impact of the project to date, now at the halfway point. 80% of the Fellows at the workshop were part of the project. Inspired by the discussion, 2 more have since joined.



Project leaders Edie Farwell & Dayna Baumeister

The session was lively and rich, with participants reflecting that the “spectacularly designed snippets” have had more impact than they expected. Several reported the practices help them to be “present in the moment and to be more effective at bringing forward the world we want to see.” They said that the daily emails provide them a welcome structure, “a positive transition exercise into work at the start of the

day.” One participant is “psyched” to read the emails and values that Robert’s tone is welcoming and forgiving of any lapses.

Another Fellow values the webinars as “a way to hear other voices, other people” and build relationship across networks.



One Fellow reported that the relentless Tea Party opposition to his proposed wind energy farm in Michigan is wearing him down, but the daily practices serve to give him a new perspective, sustain his energy and address their concerns more effectively. Many say they more skillfully select which “doings” to undertake, and do so from a place of greater “calm, focus, and power.” This led to a discussion of the neurological implications of consciously changing habits.

All agreed that the practices invite us to “decide to think differently.” And that even just reading the daily email has power – as each sets in motion the idea that Robert’s proposed ways of being are possible, practical and desirable.