

Reconsidering  
the Authentic Leadership model:  
**Co-creative leadership**  
as authenticity



# Reconsidering the Authentic Leadership model: Co-creative leadership as authenticity

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### <Abstract>

Bill George's Authentic leadership model is re-considered by the method of Co-creative Space Development(CSD). It is because, at first, logical connection between his concepts of "true self", "true north" and leadership is missing and not empirically examined and, second, his notion of "true north" is not made to lead a common direction.

For this, the Co-creative leadership as authenticity is proposed and implemented in this paper, which generates a new mind-set of leadership and capability of leading both you and me into the Co-creative space. In this space, mind-set of "true self" and "true north" is examined and connected empirically at free-will,and heading toward everlasting love of Truth as shared "True North(inner compass)".



Magnets and Balls used in "Co-creative space"

## **Problem-raising : Why is so-called "Authentic leadership" model re-considered? (Oba· Chaudhuri)**

The authentic leadership model of Professor Bill George, Harvard Business School has been in the limelight over years. It is pursuing what is real in leadership and quite needy in our world today, which is full of falsehood, uncertainty and confusion, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Hamas-Israeli War, major earthquakes in Turkey, Syria and Japan, global warming and terrorism, the arrival of the AI age, the information "flood" in the DX, and the threat of coronavirus (an invisible enemy) pandemic.

But, his model needs to be re-considered both theoretically and empirically by using the Co-creative Space Development (CSD) method. Why? It is because CSD makes clear that, at first, connecting his concepts of "true self" and "true north" with leadership is missing and not empirically examined and, second, his notion of "true north" is not made to lead a common goal.

For this objective, four chapters will be presented as follows:

First, in **Chapter 1**, we demonstrate why is the "Co-creative Space Development (CSD) Method" necessary for Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" model. Bill George's core questions for authentic leader are shared, and the co-creative action for connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership is taken into practice (**Meguro·Tsuyuki**).

Next, in **Chapter 2**, the significance, critique and blindspot of authentic leadership model are considered. This analysis has raised a question of lacking connectivity between "Be honest to my way" and leadership. Its connectivity is realized by CSD method and is visualized four distinguish patterns of "Be oneself" authentic leadership in the co-creative space (**Fujino·Ishiwatari**).

In **Chapter 3**, the co-creative action is taken for authenticity and "True North", one by one, which are core concepts of Bill George's authentic leadership model (**Yamashita**).

**Chapter 4** discusses against Bill George's hypothesis and necessity of co-creative leadership and has taken the co-creative actions for "true self" of autonomous <self> and social <self>. And, it shows co-creative leadership as authenticity and "True North(inner compass)" as common goal for all mankind (**Oba**).

**Finally**, the concluding remarks and future challenges will be presented (**Oba·Chaudhuri·Luff**).

**Please note: All names used in the following dialogues of the Co-creative space are pseudonyms, and certain identifying details have been altered to protect participants' confidentiality while preserving the integrity of the narratives.**

# 1. Co-creative action for connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership(Meguro·Tsuyuki)

## 1.1 Why is the "Co-creative Space Development (CSD) Method" necessary?

### 1.2 Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" model

### 1.3 Bill George's core questions for authentic leader and developing the Co-creative space

### 1.4 Co-creative action for connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership

## 1.1 Why is the "Co-creative Space Development (CSD) Method" necessary?

In the uncertain (dark) world known as the age of VUCA<sup>1</sup>, we are required to act with the philosophy of "co-creation" and the sustainable mindset that embodies this philosophy, and to master this philosophy, we definitely need the method that enables us to have "co-creative" mind-set. In other words, in this study, we will focus on the mindset (way of thinking and feeling, values, beliefs, standards of judgment, will, way of life, etc.)<sup>2</sup> which is captured by both human ego and the external unstable environment. This requires the innovation method that enables us to recognize the danger of this unsustainable mindset and to change and improve(Kaizen) it. We call this method, the **Co-creative Space Development (CSD, or Co-creation Matrix)**. Why is this CSD method necessary? It is because it is quite difficult, or even impossible, not only to know who we are objectively, but also to recognize the dangers of one's own mind-set without interacting with others.

Therefore, a "co-creative space" is inevitably necessary to eliminate violence, creates a place to collaborate with others by one's own free will, and to make diverse values visible.

In order to show a more concrete image of this study, it is important to know experientially with a question (question) of "what kind of space is the space for co-creation?" One student who experienced this space in a university lecture described it as "a place of self-projection like a mirror where one can re-examine oneself". Exactly, this is right. In addition, students who participated in a regional collaboration project with Kashiwa City through ZOOM in the Corona Disaster described this space as "a space to be aware of stereotypes and prejudices, and to exchange and share a wide variety of opinions".

The co-creative space is **a space for self-liberation**, a space to become aware of one's ego, which is captured by all kinds of concepts, ideas, images, etc. (i.e., knowledge of ignorance). In other words, it is a space where one can not only express one's own opinions, but also discover multiple answers that one is unaware of and take new action by raising specific

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<sup>1</sup> VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

<sup>2</sup> Mind set refers to a way of looking at and thinking about things that is formed by experience, education, the atmosphere of the time, natural dispositions, preconceptions, etc. It also includes beliefs, attitudes, values, and standards of judgment. It includes beliefs, attitudes, values, and standards of judgment, as well as tacit understanding, unconscious assumptions, and easily trapped thought processes. (<http://jinjibu.jp/keyword/detl/459/>, <http://dictionary.goo.ne.jp/leaf/mb/>)

questions on a single theme and sharing them based on a new axis of judgment. This space is truly an open space to examine and renew one's own entrenched mind-set on any subject of recognition<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, the purpose of developing this co-creative space is to become aware of "blind spots" in any theme or topic, to realize more essential problems and causes, and to discover solutions (action plans). The significance of this process is to change the mindset of each individual, to realize that we are living together, and to act creatively together toward the truth. This CSD method is applied to Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" model.

## **1.2 Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" model**

### **What is Professor Bill George's model of Authentic Leadership?**

The series of books "Authentic Leadership" by Professor Bill George, former CEO of Medtronic Inc. in the U.S., were written after Enron and WorldCom were driven into bankruptcy by massive window-dressing and the serious adverse effects of capitalism became apparent. The book employs an inductive method to show the characteristics of "authentic leadership" in business organizations, based on the results of interviews with 125 business leaders representing the U.S. and their business experiences.

In addition, the book truly projects insights gained from the author's own managerial experience as well as insights cultivated through personal ethics and experience. In this section, we will discuss the concept and characteristics of his authentic leadership, including its background, based on his books, "Authentic Leadership" [2003] (the Japanese version's title is "Mission Leadership") and [2007]

### **Professor Bill George's concept of "Authentic" Leadership"**

Professor Bill George defines authentic leaders in his book (Japanese version 2007) as "people who have a genuine desire to contribute to others, understand themselves, and are free to lead based on their core values," or "authentic people who are true to themselves and dedicated to what they believe in. (In this context, the term "authentic" is used to describe a person who is "true to himself or herself" and dedicated to what he or she believes in [by Meguro].)

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<sup>3</sup> I (Oba) attended the harassment prevention training program (2021.9.8 for faculty members) from the Human Resources Department of Reitaku University and was convinced that the CSD method is an effective technique for harassment prevention. As for comment on this survey, I introduced the CSD method (a non-violence, dialogue type decision-making technique). During the training, the question was raised: "Where does harassment in the workplace come from?". Answers were given as "smug thinking" (assumptions, judgmental, impositions, etc.) and "negative emotions" (anger, disgust, distrust, etc.). These can be solved by applying the CSD method.

But, the word "authentic" is difficult for Japanese to understand. This may be because the meaning of the word is too abstract and ambiguous. As Professor Bill George explains at the beginning of this book, the word "authentic" can mean not only "genuine," "not a fake," but also "worthy of trust," "reliance," "belief," "conviction," "confidence," "integrity", which is commented by the translator Hiroyoshi Umezu of Japanese version. In other words, the meaning of being true to oneself and honest to one's true self, having integrity that does not waver from one's consistent beliefs even when circumstances change, and being true to oneself and honest to one's true self (similar to the meaning of "being oneself" [by Meguro]) are also added to its meaning.

The Japanese translator Hiroyoshi Umezu of this book defines authentic of Professor Bill George as "aiming for being true" or "being true". In other words, he summarizes an "authentic leader" as "a leader who maintains a straight line of belief, is true to himself or herself, and has self-confidence, maintains high integrity in his or her actions, and wins the trust and confidence of others. In addition, he or she is also characterized by his or her ability to act ethically without the temptation of money, as well as their ability to be moderately competitive and strive to achieve their goals (these characteristics also overlap with the meaning of the word "true to oneself" [Meguro]).

### 1.3 Bill George's core questions for authentic leader and developing the Co-creative space

Professor Bill George identifies the following five specific characteristics of authentic leaders (see Figure 1)

- (1) Purpose: Understanding one's purpose.
- (2) Values: Having a strong sense of value for right action.
- (3) Heart (Action from "sincerity"): Being passionate about one's mission. To treat people with sincerity.
- (4) Relationships: Building trusting relationships with others.
- (5) Self-Discipline: Acting with self-discipline and based on values.

**Figure 1 Characteristics and Development Factors of Bill George’s Authentic Leadership**



Professor Bill George identifies the following factors necessary for the development of these five traits.

[Purpose] It is never easy to remain passionate about one's life purpose, and he recommends that people find a job where they can feel motivated at a high level in order to maintain their passion.

[Values] Having good values is meaningless if there are no actions to go along with them. Even when it is difficult for a leader to live up to his or her values, it is important for the leader to continue to act in accordance with his or her values, without being influenced by outside forces.

[Heart] It is not appropriate for a leader to have no concern for others. By fostering strong ties with family, friends, colleagues, and subordinates, a leader can gain their trust. Trust is the feeling of "I want to follow this person.

[Relationships] Building trust and close personal relationships can be achieved by speaking honestly to those around you and working together toward a common goal.

[Self-Discipline] Self-discipline requires consistency in one's words and actions at all times. The ability to control oneself is required so that consistency is not negatively affected.

The basic perspective of Professor Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" seems to reflect the social trends not only in the United States but also in capitalist countries. We, living in modern society, are desperately seeking how we can live our lives in our own way, or "live in our own way (self-actualization)" as independent individuals. However, if this "living one's own way (living authentically)" becomes a pursuit of self-actualization, there is a danger of falling into a state of perpetual frustration. Viktor E. Frankl says that those who continue to seek self-actualization are in a state of perpetual unfulfillment of their goals. He is concerned that people may fall into a mime of going back and forth between the pursuit of happiness and self-actualization. Frankl calls for a shift from a "self-centered way of life" that pursues "one's own happiness" to a "meaning- and mission-centered way of life" that responds to "the call from life. As a result, he believes that happiness and self-realization will naturally arise.

Bill George's HBS article, "Authentic Leadership," discusses "true to be oneself" on the premise that it is a good thing, but its bad parts which are hidden as "blind spot" are unquestioned and ignored. No matter how much emphasis is placed on the "authentic self," the existence of the bad self is really dangerous. If we consider "leadership that is true to be oneself" in the co-creation space, we may have a chance to be aware of both its significance and blind spots.

Therefore, in this section, we would like to introduce the core five questions of Bill George's "Authentic Leadership" model and examine them objectively in the co-creative space.

Regarding authentic leadership, Bill George defines it simply as "leading others as yourself" (2017, p. 32), and then lists five characteristics required for authentic leadership, as showing below. These characteristics are listed as Five Questions for "Developing Yourself as an Authentic Leader," (from Bill George 2007, Appendix C).

**I want you to judge yourself against the five dimensions of an authentic leader.  
(Assess yourself against the five dimensions of an authentic leader)**

**Q1. Purpose: Do you understand your purpose in your career?**

**Q2. Values: Do you practice your values?**

**Q3. Sincerity: Do you lead with your heart?**

**Q4. Relationships: Do you establish deeply connected relationships?**

**Q5. Self-discipline: Do you demonstrate self-discipline?**

Let's reproduce here the landscape where the co-creation space was developed and put into practice (2021.9.10) for the above five questions.

So, we would like to develop two sets of co-creation spaces by combining Q1 and Q2, and Q3-Q5, as follows:

1. understanding your career objectives x your values (beliefs?)
2. self-disciplined and wholeheartedly lead (at work) x deeply connected relationships (at work)

But, now, let us confine only the above first question in order to develop the co-creative space. The second question will be challenged in the near future.

For developing the co-creative space, two steps will be taken. The first step is to travel together in the 2-axis co-creation space, and the second step is to review after the journey in the co-creation space.

### **Step 1: Travel together in a 2-axis co-creative space**

Bill George's two questions for authentic leader, which are constituting two axes of the co-creative space are as follows:

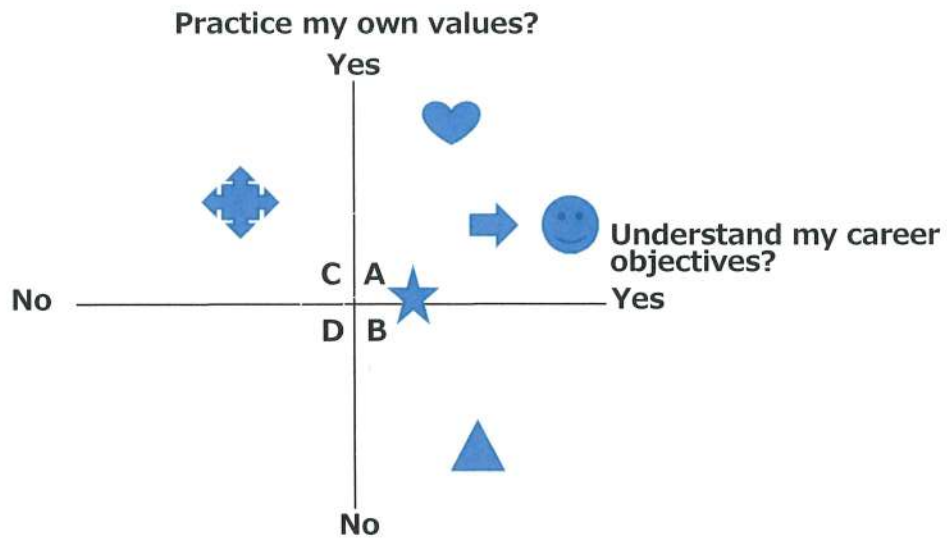
**Horizontal Axis:**Do I understand my career objectives? Yes or No

**Vertical Axis:**Do I practice my own values? Yes or No

Now, let us express our position by putting the stamps in the ZOOM's screen sharing. (In real space, we use magnets, but since we are in ZOOM space, we cannot use magnets.)

**Ken:** All members who participated, put a stamp on it, please. See Figure 2 for the results.

**Figure 2 Relationship between career objectives and personal values**



**Zone A (understand my objectives and practice my own values)**

**Ken:** Now, Ana san, please choose a stamp.

**Ana:** Well, a person of 😊 please.

**Yoshi:** Yes, that's me, I put it at zone A. As to whether or not I understand the purpose of my career, I do understand it. It is because the present work is chosen by its objective. I have chosen my work to be public jobs, to be involved in work to create a society that is comfortable for people to live in. So, I believe that I have recognized my sense of purpose and values in that work and have practiced (built a career) a certain part of it. However, after many years of working in think tanks, there are moments when I wonder if this work is really creating a society that is necessary for human life.

Then, next person is ★ please.

**Sato:** Stamp ★ It's me. It's on the horizontal line between zone A and B. It is because It is moving between zone A and B according to my emotional things, anxiety,as such. I think I understand in my head what the purpose of the work is, but I am not quite sure how to put the values into practice. Driven by my emotions, my view of things got blurred.

**Ken:** I would like to hear what kind of values you have. I think values are different for each individual, so I don't think it would be productive if we don't get specific.

**Sato:** Well, since I'm uncertain about my understanding, it's hard to fix my position in this space. I can think more slowly, but time is not waiting for me and I am in a hurry. What I just thought about is that an authentic leader, after all, has to have a certain amount of his or her own axis, for example, if the absolute is 10, it is not good to be 5 or 1, but it must always be

stable. I think it is important to have something immovable. For this, I still don't have enough training.

**Ken:** Are you saying that you see steadfastness as a value?


Sato: Yes, I think so. I would like to have steadfastness. I would like to have steadfastness as an authentic leader. I put it in the middle (on the horizontal line between zone A and B) because I myself am uncertain about it.

**Ken:** Leadership, whether it is authentic or not, is pretty much revealing in times of crisis. When the Taliban took over Afghanistan, the prime minister fled. It is in times of crisis that the true nature of the leader comes out. I think authenticity comes out in that kind of situation. I am sure that steadfastness is involved in whether you are practicing your values.

Please choose next person.

**Sato:** A person of  in zone C, please.

### **Zone C (do not understand my objectives, but practice my own values)**

**Ana:** It's hard to say, but I put stamp  at zone C. Career-wise, in my case, it's first stage is over and now that I am in the second stage, I am trying to figure out what to do as a career.

**Ken:** What is the difference between first and second stage of career?

**Ana:** I have been freelancing, but I feel like my paid working days (the first stage) are over when I no longer get job offers. All of my work colleagues who were part of organizations have retired and are beginning their second lives (the second stage). If you think of work as making a living by getting paid for it, it is over. I continue to do volunteer work in the rice paddies and other places, but I have been writing for a living, so I continue to write something as an extension of that work, but the purpose is blurred. **Values are the guidelines for my way of life**, and that is to make a society where there is no discrimination and everyone can live comfortably. A society that values each and every life is ideal. Like Coronavirus pandemic, natural disasters are happening all over the world. I would like to contribute to activities that address problems that are occurring close to home. Examples of activities that value life are the abolition of nuclear power and the abolition of the death penalty. I have long been questioning whether or not it is okay for people to take the lives of others, no matter how many crimes they have committed, and I would like to eliminate the death penalty. But if you ask me if I am putting it into practice, I am not doing much.

**Ken:** Values have a lot to do with the way we live.


**Ana:** I think values are different from career. Next, a person of stamp  in zone A, please.

### **Zone A (understand my career objectives and practice my own values)**

**Taka:** I believe that lifework is throughout life, and career is a part of it. So, the vertical axis (values) is broader than the horizontal axis (career purpose). Career is not a major purpose, but I understand its confined purpose of career through my work. As for whether I am putting my values into practice, I don't think I am clear or practicing them yet. So, for me, zone A is

still my ideal place. For shifting zone B to A, I would like to clarify my purpose in my career and have values based on that, but I still don't think I'm reaching out there yet.

**Ken:** So, zone A is a calling (vocational work) literally, isn't it?

**Jun:** I am  of zone A. I am now in the position of being retired. I have changed three companies in the past, but now I decide to choose one of them and try to continue it. At this point, my current position is that I want to support companies that are thinking about the same kind of things that I have realized with my values. Therefore, my current position is to support (assist) companies and organizations that can make the most of the themes and things I want to do together with them, and that also want to practice them.

**Ken:** Now what you just said is relating to "well being" and "quality of life".

**Jun:** For the past four or five years, I have been making various proposals based on the concept of "health management" at an academic conference to which I belong. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has established such a framework, and keywords such as "well-being" are gaining popularity. However, I am concerned that many companies are not involved in the current discussion, but are only interested in "just trimming the façade(formality focus)". Few companies that truly consider the happiness of their employees have emerged. It may be a Japanese cultural issue, but in essence, about 80% of the companies just want to be legally acceptable. Unless that changes, it will be difficult to achieve this goal.

**Yoshi:** Now that I have moved to work at a public organization. I feel that it is only a formality, as Jun-san mentioned here. The form is in order, but I don't think that the people working in it are working with a sense of quality life. What needs to change to bring us closer to the essence?


**Taka:** I have been asking myself the same question at the research institute. Is this a characteristic of Japanese society?

**Jun:** My first impression when I joined a Western corporate society is that they are much more straightforward and honest than the Japanese. If they have their own ideas, I think their will to actually act to do so is stronger than the Japanese. One of the biggest flaws of Japanese business organizations is that they are fine with the atmosphere or conditions as long as they are in place, and they are doing things legally, so they do not mind if things are different from the reality. The reality is that there is a certain level of honesty and integrity, and if it is for the sake of work, form is form and substance is substance (substance is not important). Former prime minister Kan says he has done these things, but what he has actually done is not clear to us. People under him assume that they did what they did because their superiors said they did. In reality, nothing remains. Although it is exposed in the world of politics, I have the impression that this kind of thing is happening in various places in the corporate world.

**Ken:** Taka san, what are your own values?

**Taka:** Ideally, I should put myself in the shoes of the weak and do what I can to help. When I make excuses or blame others, I consider myself weak. To practice your values is to set your own goals and control yourself. If I were weak, I would not be able to do that.

### **Zone B (understand my objectives but do not practice my own values)**

**Ken:** I challenge to put stamp  at zone B (because no one is there!) . I used to work in a Toyota think tank in 1980s and understood purpose of my career, but felt nothing about practicing my own values. In there, I felt like Toyota eating me up...I was there for 7 years and got swallowed up by the Toyota Way and my values went somewhere else. The Toyota Way has two sides: viewing Toyota from the outside and Toyota from the inside, which might be different. I worked in market forecasting, and I had to forecast the market for automobiles around the world for next three years. It was easy to predict when the market was rising steadily, but it was difficult to predict whether it would stay the same or fall when it was falling, and for this, I sometimes worked all night. My values were swallowed up somewhere, and that was hard, at the expense of spending with my family. I still remember the section chief(Kacho in Japanese) at that time. He is a powerful person as a section chief and ordered me to set up a research meeting that started after 5:00 pm. But, that meeting was just beginning. After it was over, we went to posh areas in Tokyo like Akasaka or Roppongi for dinner, and it would cost 30,000 or 40,000 yen per person. Sometime, it went upto midnight. When I said to the section chief I was running late and couldn't catch the last train, he gave me a cab ticket for backing home. So, my life was just like 7-Eleven lifestyle, meaning I left home at 7:00 a.m. and returned home at 11:00 p.m. (it is called "7-Eleven Daddy (father)"). There was no private life at all, and it was nowhere near my values. Maybe it was somewhere in D zone.

### **Step 2: Reflection after the journey in the co-creation space**

**Sato:** Zone B (understanding my career objectives, but do not practice my own values) would be interesting to think about why he or she puts his or her stamp on it. One reason is, as Taka san said earlier, it might be "he or she **blames others**".

**Jun:** Another reason why choosing Zone B is that understanding career purpose is NOT based on its own values, but may know its career purpose through "**encounters**". One of the things that many people talk about is "encounters". "Encounters" include encounters with people, work, and many other things. One of these "encounters" becomes a trigger. For example, you happen to change your job, your boss changes, and you start to feel more energetic.

**Ken:**Yes, I do agree. In fact, I had a wonderful "encounter" of a person myself. That encounter gave me the vocation that I have today as a university teacher. Fateful encounters are the result of a call from heaven, also known as "calling," and this is exactly what I am experiencing every day. When I was struggling with my career, I never thought I would become a university teacher. In fact, I thought it would be my least favorite job. The reason was that I had bad image on the office of my mentor teacher. I visited there when I was a student. It was in the basement, a dark, book-filled space. So I couldn't imagine my life working in such a place all

the time. I thought I wanted to work in a place like a trading company. So I thought it was no option for my career. However, my mentor led me to work at Reitaku University. So it was not about my values, but rather the "encounter" with my mentor that showed me to my real career purpose.

**Ken:** As for zone D (of not understanding your career objectives and not practicing your own values), most probably, many people might be there. Jun san, did you have your own values when you were a student?

**Jun:** I am not sure when I first became aware of such things in society or in my self-formation. I don't think I had it from the beginning. So, it might be interesting to look at ourselves chronologically when and how own value axis has been found. It is also quite difficult to put such values into practice. What kind of value axis do you live by? I wonder when I would have become aware of such things. The process of moving up from the bottom of the vertical axis (practicing values) may be a process of life by itself, and it takes time to get into a position where you understand what purpose you are working toward on the horizontal axis of your career. So, it would also be interesting to look at this co-creative space chronologically how career problems occur and where the most stressful parts are.

**Jun:** Regarding zone D, in our senior generation, it was normal to join one company starting at this zone; there could have been any number of cases of being in the D-zone. The question is: From there, what kind of effort would he or she make to get to the A-zone? That process might have been the traditional corporate person. But, nowadays, some people in the D-zone get paid an hourly rate just to carry things and live off that and do what they want to do.

**Ken:** Oh, that is a person called a jig worker. He is hired by the hour.

**Jun:** So, skill is irrelevant. Even if low skilled work, it cannot be done without human thought that may change in the future. There is a growing number of young people who are fine with that kind of work style. **They remain to stay at zone D.** Bill George's book is lacking in terms of how people see things who can make a living now but what about in the future? Is it not really relevant for them? And the one thing he doesn't mention is human resource development. There is no question in the book that says, "Are you thinking about developing human resources?" There is no such question in the book. I think this is very Bill George-like. Although things have changed a lot in recent years, in Western companies, there is no such thing as training. They want you to go somewhere and study on your own. There is almost no in-house training or education. When I joined a foreign company and asked for a budget for education, there was a huge uproar. The conversation turned to, "What is education?" They said that although it is hard to believe in Japan, for them there is no such thing as employee training, and that all they have to do is find the people they need. This is totally different from what Japanese companies have been doing for a long time, such as trying to nurture the people they have now or improve their skills, or what positions they want them to take with the future in mind. Recently, American companies have changed. What do you do when there is a shortage

of human resources? When times did not change drastically, it was enough to upgrade skills based on existing technologies, and individuals could cope with the situation. However, when times change tremendously, the reality is that there are not many people who can cope with the changed situation and who can do the job. This is where education, in other words, human resource development, becomes necessary. I use the word "cultivate" rather than "develop". The term is not found in Bill George's writings to date. I have said, "If the reader wants to be a leader, this is what I have done. This is the kind of leader I should be." We are organizing those stories. It's like, "I've interviewed a lot of different leaders, and the common thread is this, so you should be a leader too..." The leader who should be in charge today is the leader of an American company. I think we have to put this aside as a model and consider the case of Japan.

**Ken:** Perhaps the question of whether or not you are practicing your values depends on whether or not you are authentic. The Japanese word "jibun-rashiku" means "true to be oneself" which is considered as authentic. If you are practicing your values, you are authentic as expressed as "jibun-rashiku" or "true to be oneself". If not, it is not authentic. This is Bill George's way of thinking. However, I think that judging whether leadership is authentic or not is not just a matter of whether or not one is "true to be oneself". I think there may be another criteria for whether it is authentic or not.

**Jun:** Yes, indeed. "Authenticity" is a popular word these days, and it is often referred to as "jibun-rashiku" or "true to be oneself". It is a liberal way of thinking. On the other hand, the idea of "self-responsibility" has emerged. It is the individual's fault if he or she is unable to achieve it. In fact, there is such an aspect in American society, and in that sense, the idea of liberalism, or rather liberalism that has been based on the Reformation, has been authenticated. Then, it becomes simple. As Max Weber said, it would be easier if we assume that the Reformation was the background, but then why did he use the word authentic? I am a little confused about that.

**Ken:** Conversely, in response to the idea that authenticity is what makes you to be yourself, we will try to show that there are other ways of looking at authenticity. I think authenticity is about real or not real. What is the criterion for authenticity? To be honest, I don't know who I really am. It is difficult. That is why we need to create an axis in the co-creation space and ask what the authenticity is. It is a difficult theme, but it can be said that the approach of the co-creation space is to discover various answers to authenticity.

**Jun:** I think the starting point is to understand diversity rather than empathy. That is where empathy comes from. There is a space for empathy in this co-creation space. This is very good. With putting the whole process in perspective, as we proceed by checking each of the questions, we can see how the participating members are living by way of thinking. It is very member-friendly at this stage.

**Ken:** "jibun-rashiku" or "true to be oneself" may not be the answer. I think that is not "Me", but "We" when we think co-creatively, it comes out in the relationship between me and others.

**Jun:** I think that is where Bill George's discussion is lacking. He does not mention much about relationships with third parties. How you train your own people, who and what ideas you create within your own team, and so on. In their minds, the main focus is on how to implement what they are thinking, and they probably don't have the idea of absorbing ideas, sharing them with others, and creating something from them.

**Ken:** So it makes sense to create a co-creation space. I can see it much more now, we are going with "We". Bill George also says "We" rather than Me, but it doesn't say how it will develop. So I think what we are trying to do now is good news for Bill George as well.

### 1.4 Co-creative action for connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership

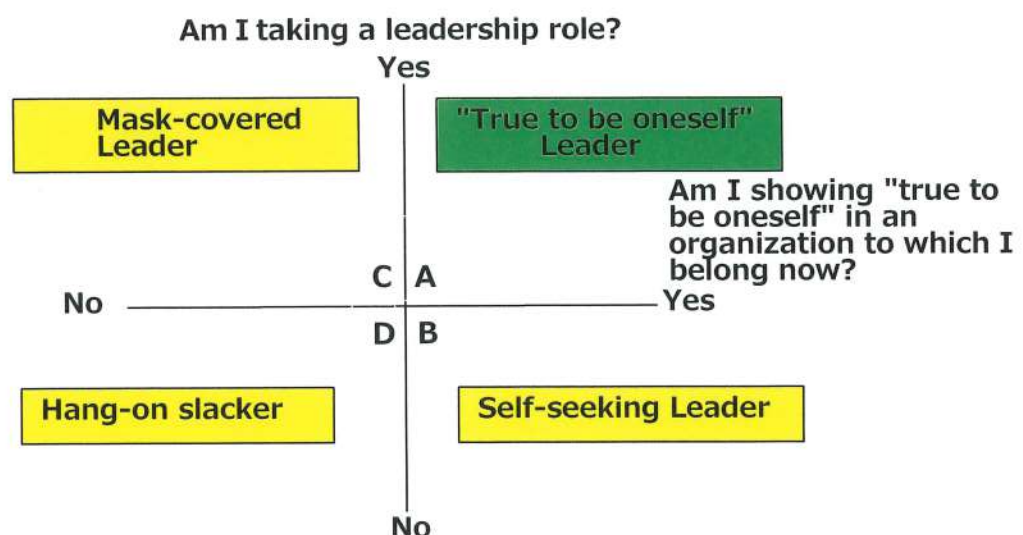
Next, based on our findings, let us do co-creating new perspective by connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership. The questions to be shared are as follows:

Horizontal axis: **Am I showing "true to be oneself" in an organization to which I belong now?**

Vertical axis: **Am I taking a leadership role?**

The co-creative space was created and developed by sharing our our opinions (answers) to this two questions. The results are shown in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3 Co-creating new perspective by connecting "true to be oneself" with leadership**



As the result of co-creative action(held on October 16,2020), we have tried to identify four types of "true to be oneself" leadership and then made a strategy for how it can be achieved.

## <Explicitly identify four types of “true to be oneself” leadership>

Let us review what we did in the co-creative space and make clear features of four types of “true to be oneself” leadership by naming the each of four zones in order to make the Action Plan.

**Type A** is a “true to be oneself” leader, who is considered to be authentic leader. But, the other three types, B·C·D are NOT. So, Type A shows the “authentic leadership” type, whereas Types B·C·D are Non-“authentic leadership” types. Namely, what we did is to capture both objectively and empirically the differences of the “authentic leadership” type vis-à-vis “Non-authentic leadership” types.

Let us begin by **Type A**.

### **Type A is: “true to be oneself”(Authentic) Leader**

To be “me”(express my unique qualities) in the organization I belong right now. Be more specific, for instance, I engage the creative work with my colleagues as a leader in the organization of a university. Or, I could make myself to be “me” as a CEO leader in the German company despite the different cultural environment. This German company’s case is Jun san’s experience. This type is taking the leadership for the creative work by realizing the vision which he is seeking in an organization he belonged. But, by taking the leadership as CEO in the company in Germany, he was not able to express his own way fully, so about 60% only, due to the different cultural wall which was obliged to compromise to same extent.

**Type B** is: **Self-seeking Leader** or Inner-Self focus with non-leadership type. This type is that it expresses “my own way” and lives by my way, but does not take the leadership. Four reasons why I am to be “me”(express my unique qualities) in the organization without taking a leadership are as follows:

- ① Because I can express my ideas within the organization (working as a Nursery School Director), even if it is another person who makes decisions.
- ② Because the job I am doing now(teaching and researching job) is fitting or suitable to my own way of life without taking a leadership role.
- ③ Because I don't want to be dyed in the company by taking the leadership, and work there in my way. This is the individual or self-focus mindset, like “I don't want to be dyed in the company”. I do not want to involve or commit to my company by taking the leadership.
- ④It is because the object of the lead is not others but oneself, which is known as “Personal Leadership” (Scheatti, et.al., 2008) suggested by Yamasita san. The idea of this leadership is to create a vision of where you want to be, and then follow six practical habits in your daily life to get you closer to your vision. The six practical habits of this “personal leadership” are: (1) look at your own assumptions and beliefs, (2) be close to your feelings, (3) pay

attention to your physical reactions, (4) take a "pause", get back to normal, (5) be curious and play with ambiguity, (6) be open to your own "vision" (aspiration).

**Type C is: Mask-covered Leader** or Not true to be "Me" as a leader" type. This type is that it does not show "true to be oneself" despite taking the leadership role. It means I play my leadership role by killing my heart. This is traditional style of leadership which is the top-down style. I will be exhausted if I express "my own way" or true to be myself when I am against the decision-making. So, I will ride on the wave by reading between the lines.

This is happening, for instance, nowadays, the reform of the university is, by and large, undertaken by the top-down style. This top-down style of leadership is getting closer to the political systems such as China and Russia. On the opposite, the democratic style of leadership is now mess to have consensus. So, there is a trend that It's OK to "Just follow the leader". But, it is really dangerous that there is a great risk of everyone to be drowned by following such leader in turbulent today's world.

**Type D is: "Hang-on to the organization:Slacker or eggs to be hatched(freshers)" type.**

This **Hang-on** type is that I neither express "my own way" nor take the leadership role. Many people might be this type, just hanging in the organization by either own will (slacker) or just joined as a freshperson.

But, they may be just like "The usefulness of the useless". They may be useless, but their presence is important by giving the feeling of being saved. Even, in student time, a person lives just as I am, but once he or she joins the company, this person is bound to be losing his or her self. This brings him or her to think what I really want to do in this organization. This person is trying to judge the situation by contacting different kinds of people. Virtually not much skills and experiences. Not passions or desire to know by his or her self, but just work as it is in a passive way.

This passive way of being dyed in the color of the company reminds me(OBA) my experience in T company. "Being dyed in the color of the company" has a completely different impact on the individual's motivation, depending on whether or not he or she sees "the company's human nature (e.g., Toyota's way of life)" as his or her own will, not as the company's intention, but as "his or her own personality. If he or she does not see it as such, he or she will experience a loss of "self-worth" and will truly be playing a masked leadership role. Conversely, if he or she perceives it as such with his or her own will, he or she will experience the possibility of shifting into the B-zone, where he or she will demonstrate "his or her own personality.

**<Let us make the Co-creative Action Plan for becoming "true to be oneself" leadership>**

**Ken:** Two reasons have been pointed out for why "true to be oneself" leadership is

attracting so much attention. One is that it is important to have an unshakable sense of self, and the other is that the definition of power is changing. Power used to be a symbol of physical strength, but now it has been shifted to integrity, information, communication, and networking skills. That kind of power is needed for leaders.

Then, we shall, as a next step, challenge to find out the “problem” as perceived by the gap between A and D in the Co-creative space and try to make a strategy of shifting from zone D to A (to become “true to be oneself” leadership). But, setting up a direct gap (problem) between zone A and D might NOT be realistic. So, two routes are possible. One route is:  $\text{ZoneD} \Rightarrow \text{B} \Rightarrow \text{A}$  route. Shifting from “Hang-on to the organization” type to “true to be oneself (authentic)” leadership type via “**Self-seeking Leadership**” type. The other route is:  $\text{ZoneD} \Rightarrow \text{C} \Rightarrow \text{A}$  route, shifting from “Hang-on to the organization” type to “true to be oneself (authentic)” leadership type via “**Mask-covered Leadership**” type.

Before making a strategy, let us confirm briefly the feature of D type people. Type D people, who are assumed to be the most common, are hanging on to their organizations. There is said to be as “usefulness of the useless”. Like, nothing is useful, but his or her presence gives other people a feeling of being saved. When he or she was a student, he or she had own identity (to be oneself) and sense of presence, but when he or she joins a company, it is not so sure to have “to be oneself (who I am)”. It is bound to have confession, like “I don't have the skills or experience, and I don't have what the company is looking for”. So, what to do is to adjusting to the workplace environment. If he or she sees own self to be dyed just like the company's colors as his own will, rather than the company's intention, it would have good impact on its own work motivation. But, if not, he or she will experience a loss of “being oneself”, just like “Mask-covered” person.

**Ken:** Shall we co-create the shifting strategy by dividing into two group or not? A member says NO, because we will not share different opinions altogether once we are divided into two. So, we accept this proposal. Thereby, we have to choose which route is going to be tackled. By looking at both the present reality and the probable future, it is better to **choose the Route zone D→B→A (via “Self-seeking Leadership” type)**.

First, how can we shift from the “organization hanging” type to the “self-seeking” type (zone D to B), i.e., from “I am NOT true to be myself” to “I am true to be myself”, regardless of taking leadership role.

**Ken:**  $\text{ZoneD} \rightarrow \text{B}$  is exactly opposite of  $\text{ZoneD} \rightarrow \text{C}$ . Finding out and activating “True to be oneself” requires courage. It is because “True to be oneself” is to express and act by own values which might be different from those of the world, society, and around oneself. On the other hand, shifting from zone  $\text{D} \rightarrow \text{C}$  is what I can move on easily while fully accepting the values of society. But, shifting from zone  $\text{D} \rightarrow \text{B}$  is to feel fear as I move on what is different from social norms. So, move from zone D to B may be a bit extreme, just like anti-establishment.

**Jun:** I think your point is important. In the past, there have been many leaders taking the route D→C→A, but I think that from now on, leaders who follow the D→B→A route will be desirable. Expanding diversity by activating “true to be oneself” people creates the ability to respond to major changes from within that diversity. In the past, D→C→A route was rather accepted by organizations, but now we are in an era where the traditional organization will not work. It is only important how the organization accepts the skills that the individual has.

Recently, I often talk to people in middle management positions, and I say “middle up and down.” Until now, they have often looked up and observed the situation while simultaneously looking down and proposing ideas that would be accepted by the organization as a whole. However, what they are struggling with now is that the organization can no longer function in this conventional way. They have to make all decisions by themselves. Otherwise, the higher-ups may run you and your subordinates. There is a fear that if they do so, they will lose their own place. I feel that if I don't have my own way of thinking and values, I won't be able to survive in the future organizations and I will lose my place.

**Ken:** We need to be an organization that embraces individual values.

**Jun:** Yes, it is. We have to take care of that to keep up with the changes. I would like to ask Yoshi san. There is a movement to change to a job-based organization (from membership-based in Japan). What elements of leadership will become important? What kind of leadership style is best for survival in a job-based organization?

**Yoshi:** I think that It is like a social context, where leadership flows toward a goal in an uncertain society, and people with various differences show their originality and use their own skills to organize the work. This is beneficial to the company in the sense that specialists are trained, but it can easily lead to a black work environment. On the other hand, the membership type(conventional Japanese style) provides a path for career and skill development and broadens the range of flexible duties. In a job-based organization itself, each individual must have leadership skills to get the job done. The leader who unites them must grasp the leadership of each individual and make the company unique, which will require different skills.

**Deepak:** Our discussion about shifting from zone D to B is too difficult to catch up with understanding. The level is too high.

I think those in the zone D are really scared. Maybe they don't have the skills and don't want to move on to the zone B as a personality. It's a hassle. But zone D is the most peaceful. There is a word Aam aadmi (आम आदमी) in Hindi. It means ordinary person. D is the best. It is because, if you show who really you are, you will create a war. it's better not to show up who really you are. People from zone B and C should go to D, instead of moving up to zone A.

**Ken:** Agree with your idea that “I don't want to go from zone D to B”. But, if there is a will, it can be possible to move from zone D to B. Such as, if I want to meet the company's vision or be the kind of person the company wants me to be. If you join a company and meet the vision that the company is looking for, and you want to show that kind of self, then it would be moving to zone D to B, wouldn't it?

Then, how about the move up from zone B to A? (It is unclear who provided the following comments. We apologize.)

- In the case of shift from zone B to A (Taking the leadership role by show "true to be oneself"), it may not be possible in large companies.
- I don't think you can do it without being a yes man.
- It is impossible without a flexible organization. It is impossible to do so in the position of an ordinary employee.
- Zone A may be ideal place. Thinking about what leadership is, I believe that leadership is when there are many people who demonstrate their own individuality and unite them to act in a single direction. The ideal society is one that makes the most of diversity and allows each individual to express his or her own personality.
- You can't do that unless you have a workplace that respects and in some way seeks out the individuality that each person has. Therefore, it is important to nurture people. Leaders need to have the ability to care for each individual, to recognize and understand each person's individuality. There are fewer opportunities for leadership than ever before. The reason is that the world is changing so rapidly that we need a variety of ideas, and it is important to have a small team of people from various perspectives to think about what can be done. In a broader sense, it is important for each individual to have his or her own personality. In such an organization, people can come in from the outside. It will become a desirable resource.
- I have kept on thinking of what the leadership is. I think we need to overturn the stereotypes that have been held. Examining and overturning the stereotyped view on leadership is quite needy right now.
- An organization can be diverse when each person is independent and has his or her own identity. The entire organization must understand what the organization is for. Shift from zone B to A is now my own problem, but I cannot do it alone. You cannot go to zone A without acceptable work environment; if you try to go to zone A, You will have no place to stay.

Ken: In the co-creation space, we have so far identified the causes of the lack of "to be oneself (authentic) leadership" (expressed in zones B, C, and D) and how it can be achieved, and have identified action plans as solutions. We have found  $D \Rightarrow B \Rightarrow A$  route (via "**Self-seeking Leadership**" type) is better than  $D \Rightarrow C \Rightarrow A$  route (via "**Mask-covered Leadership**" type) as a solution.

## **2. Authentic leadership model: Its significance, critique and blindspot (Fujino·Ishiwatari)**

### **2.1 Significance of authentic leadership model**

### **2.2 Critique and blindspot of authentic leadership model**

### **2.3 Connecting "Be honest to my way" with leadership by developing the co-creative space**

### **2.4 Classifying in patterns "Be oneself" authentic leadership by the co-creation space**

### **2.1 Significance of authentic leadership model**

In this session, how significant is so-called authentic leadership model is discussed based on "Discovering Your Authentic Leadership" by Bill George, Peter Sims, Andrew N. McLean, Diana Mayer (2007, republished in chapter 8 of Harvard Business Review: 2018 Japanese version). Three questions to make clear: One is why the authentic leadership has been highlighted in the domain of leadership literature. Second, how to become an authentic leader and to continue it. Third, what makes this authentic leadership significant.

#### **(1) Why the authentic (true to be oneself) leadership has been highlighted?**

As to why "authentic leadership" has been highlighted, one of its proponents, Bill George, a professor at Harvard Business School, says that the problem is not with the numerous leadership styles that have been used in the past, but with the leader's own authenticity. One of its proponents, Bill George, a professor at Harvard Business School, says that the problem lies not in the numerous styles of leadership that have been used in the past, but in the authenticity (own fundamental values) of the leader. There are four reasons why this leadership model is highlighted.

The first is that leaders themselves are questioning the image of leaders who base their success on money, prestige, and power. Bill George points out this point as follows. This was particularly evident in the global financial crisis of 2008 in the United States (the Lehman Brothers collapse), which led to a failure of people's expectations of their leaders. This bitter lesson has prompted today's leaders to seriously consider how to avoid falling into the trap of losing sight of their "True North" (orienting point) and pursuing money, prestige, and power rather than the interests of the organization, and risking putting their own self-interest first. seriously consider what is best (see Bill George [2015]). In other words, many leaders have highlighted the danger of basing success solely on financial measures, and raised strong fears that they were truly stepping off in the wrong direction. They then came to believe that they wanted to "base their leadership on their own personal values." (Harvard Business Review [2019], Authentic Leadership, p. 48. Brackets and underlining are by the author)

Thus, what can be read from these points is that the reason why "authentic (one's own)

leadership" is highlighted, even in the age of VUCA, is that Bill George insists on having an "inner compass (True North)", in other words, on having an unshakable self-principle.

Second, the definition of a leader's "strength" is changing dramatically. Ryuji Nakatake [2019], who edited the Harvard Business Review [2019] and was in charge of the "Japanese edition" of the same book, argues that the "definition of strength" of a leader is changing significantly as the reason why "authentic (be oneself) leadership" is highlighted, as follows.

Power is a symbol of strength. In the past, in more primitive, mono-cultural societies, power was determined primarily by physical and military strength and the authority and position that came with it. Later, however, the elements of power have been changing radically over time. Smarter people increased their dominance not by force of arms, but by information and knowledge. Moreover, the ability to communicate and build networks that interweave these elements has become a source of influence for leaders in modern societies. (Ibid. [2019], p. 4)

Third, Millennials are changing their expectations of leaders. This generation has no patience for bureaucracy or excessive hierarchy and prefers to work in a collaborative way. This generation also wants to be able to make an immediate and meaningful contribution to society and has an admiration for leaders who are constantly challenging themselves and doing so (see Bill George [2015]).

Fourth, the bearers of leadership are becoming more diverse. Today's leaders are more diverse in gender, ethnicity, and nationality, with greater emphasis on global leaders (see Bill George [2015]).

## **(2)How to become and remain a "leader who is true to him/herself"**

The book of 2007 was written by four people, including Bill George (Professor at Harvard Business School), and the issue (research question) they raised is: How do we become and remain "leaders who are true to themselves?"

To answer this question, 125 leaders were interviewed. What became clear was that no common traits, characteristics, skills, or styles were found to be the prerequisites for success as a leader, and that these were heavily influenced by a person's life experiences. Therefore, leadership traits and qualities are not innate, and one does not need to wait for a push, or even to be at the top of an organization. He points out that you can find leadership within yourself, and your potential can be discovered right now (Harvard Business School (HBS) [2018], pp. 214-215). In other words, "leaders who are true to themselves" are passionate about their goals, practice their values without wavering, and lead people emotionally as well as knowledgeably. He builds fruitful relationships over the long term and achieves results through self-discipline (Ibid., p. 213). Bill George describes authentic leaders more simply: "Authentic leaders are true to themselves and to their beliefs. (Bill George [2015], p. 2).

So how can we become and remain "leaders who are themselves?" The HBS authors emphasize that "self-awareness is the foundation of all actions," and offer the following eight

growth steps (ibid., p. 215 and Chart 8 on p. 225).

**Step 1:** Looking back over your life, which people or experiences have influenced you the most?

**Step 2:** What are you trying to do to improve your self-awareness (ability to know yourself)? What kind of person am I really? What are the moments when you feel like your true self?

**Step 3:** What are your deepest values? What do they stem from? Have your values changed significantly since you were a child? How are these values connected to your actions?

**Step 4:** What are the extrinsic motivations that drive you (e.g., to live for promotion, reward, and the enjoyment of the recognition and status that comes with it) or intrinsic motivations (to grasp the meaning of your life, e.g., to develop yourself, help those around you grow, work for the greater good of society, make the world betterment of the world, etc.). How do you balance extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in your life?

(You need to stay highly motivated, because understanding what motivates you is crucial for doing so)

**Step 5:** What kind of support group do you have around you? How does your support group help you to achieve leadership that is true to who you are? How can you increase the diversity of your team to broaden your perspective?

**Step 6:** Is my attitude toward life consistent? Are you always the same person in all aspects of your life, e.g., at work, outside of work, home, in the community? If not, what are the obstacles?

**Step 7:** What does being yourself mean in your life? Is being yourself enhancing your ability to be a leader? Have you ever sacrificed anything by being a leader who is true to yourself? Was it worth it?

**Step 8:** What can I do today, tomorrow, and over the next year to grow as a leader who values my own personality?

Of the above eight growth steps, Steps 1-3 can be interpreted as how to become a leader who lives up to his or her identity, and Steps 4-8 as how to continue to do so.

### **(3)What is excellent about this paper?**

This section discusses the appeal or excellence of the HBS paper "Authentic Leadership," while summarizing previous research.

The outstanding point of this paper is that it examines the points of the previous theories of leadership and proposes a new viewpoint of authenticity. The origins of the leadership theories can be traced back to Plato and the rationalist revolution of the 18th century, but it was in the 1920s that serious research began on the "character theory". The character theory discussed personality character, attitude character, and other characteristics common to effective leaders, and the qualities of self-disclosure of one's own weakness and self-worth, which are

emphasized in personalized leadership, originate from this theory. After the character theory, the "style theory" emerged in the 1940s, followed by the contingency theory (situational adaptation theory), which is now considered the mainstream, but both of these theories have pointed out problems. The former "style theory" developed mainly in the U.S., but it has the drawback that even promising democratic leadership can be forced to change due to unforeseen circumstances, and the latter contingency theory has an infinite number of variants and is not a useful model (Harvard Business School (HBS) [2018], pp. 113-116).

According to Ryuji Nakatake, one of the authors of the Harvard Business Review [2019] Authentic Leadership, conventional leadership theory has focused on the arrow pointing outward from the leader (influencing others, building relationships with members, etc.). But, the "authentic leadership" is about turning the arrow to oneself, not others, passionately working on one's own goals based on one's own personality and practicing one's values without wavering (see pp. 5-6). As to why "individuality" is attracting in leadership, Nakatake points out that in this era of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity), every industry is faced with the challenge of predicting the future (by individuals). He explains that this is because it is very difficult to predict the future (by individuals), and in an environment where there is easier access to a wider variety of leadership, leaders are ultimately expected to pursue their own identity while valuing their own roots (authenticity) (Ibid., pp. 6-7).

## **2.2 Critique and blindspot of authentic leadership model**

To properly understand Bill George's Authentic Leadership, it is necessary to understand not only its strengths but also its weaknesses. Authentic leadership is not a perfect model of leadership, of course, because many shortcomings can be pointed out. Of course, this is by no means to say that its shortcomings and criticisms detract from its value as a model. Rather, by identifying the shortcomings of the model and exploring solutions based on them, it will once again help us to grasp the practical significance of Authentic Leadership.

So what specific criticisms have been developed against Bill George's Authentic Leadership? For example, the following three researchers offer sharp criticisms of his Authentic Leadership Model. First, Jeff Feffer of Stanford University states, "Authenticity is the complete absence of the need for leaders at crucial junctures". And Herminia Ibarra of the INSEAD Business School argues, "Before we can become authentic, we must find a way to make it 'fake'". And Adam Grant of the Wharton Business School added, "It's really the worst advice ever to tell people to be themselves. Because no one wants to see who you really are" and outright rejects authentic leadership (George, 2016). In addition, Grunfeldt notes that authentic leadership runs the risk of the "honesty trap," while Ford and Harding point out that the concept of the "true self" envisioned by authentic leadership is an unattainable ideal.

While various criticisms of authentic leadership have been identified, here we would like to highlight three major critical views of authentic leadership: Ibarra's "Authenticity Paradox,"

Deborah's "Honesty Trap," and Ford and Harding's "The Impossibility of the 'True Self'". I would like to summarize the limitations of authentic leadership by introducing these as the main critical views of authentic leadership and summarizing them.

### **The "Authenticity Paradox" hypothesis**

First, we would like to focus on Ibarra's (2015) "Authenticity Paradox" hypothesis. This hypothesis focuses on the essential contradiction that authentic leadership faces. Authentic leadership emphasizes the "true self," and it is good to follow it, but it is criticized as having the problem of inhibiting one's personal growth and limiting one's influence. This is called the Authenticity Paradox (Harvard Business Review, ed., 2019; Ibarra, 2015).

To begin with, prior research on leadership often takes the position that "as people evolve through experience, they discover multiple facets of themselves that cannot be uncovered through introspection alone". However, as mentioned earlier, Authentic Leadership emphasizes the idea of "true self". This creates a contradiction with prior research. In addition, while "thorough transparency", i.e., "revealing every thought and feeling", is important for authentic leadership, it is unrealistic to continue to adopt this attitude, and it can also put the self at risk (Ibarra, 2015, p. 89).<sup>4</sup> This is, in other words, the authenticity paradox. The following three reasons have been identified as reasons why the authenticity paradox is triggered (Ibarra, 2015).

First is the problem of a rigid self-concept. When one is striving to somehow achieve in the workplace or elsewhere, a clear and solid sense of self serves as a "compass" and gives direction to one's thinking. This helps them as they make choices and move toward their goals. However, when we are trying to change our workplace or job, or when we should change, a rigid self-concept can rather become an "anchor" and hinder our new voyage. Thus, as one's circumstances, such as the work environment, change, the desirable leadership will also change, and while authentic leadership is one of the most important leadership model, it is not a universal leadership model that can be applied to all situations.

Second, in a cross-cultural society, there is a possibility that the leadership required by the organization and society may conflict with one's own personality. In today's corporate world, globalization is accelerating, and business is often conducted with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In such organizations and societies, people's cultural norms become more diverse, and they have different expectations of how they should behave. Under these circumstances, if one tries to demonstrate one's ability to meet the expectations of those around them, a contradiction may arise between one's "self" rooted in different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, we may be forced to choose between the expectations of those

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<sup>4</sup> According to Professor Herminia Ibarra INSEAD, although it is one of the "styles" for growing as a leader who values his or her authentic self, it has been criticized for becoming homogenized. There is also the criticism that it is impossible to become authentic oneself in the first place.

around us and our own "identity".

Third is the contradiction that arises between identities that are made public to others and one's self-identification as an individual. Nowadays, with the proliferation of social media, many people's identities are constantly on display. Blogs and YouTube postings are probably the best examples of this. Such self-disclosure through social networking sites is based on various motives, such as obtaining advertising fees and enhancing a sense of self-satisfaction, but the self that is expressed there is not necessarily consistent with the self-perception as an individual. Rather, a different self may be staged depending on the motive for disclosure, which may conflict with the original self-perception (Harvard Business Review, ed., 2019, pp. 89-90).

In summary, the "Authenticity Paradox" that Ms. Ibarra raises can be understood as (1) "people think that they are unique in their efforts to achieve a certain goal, but their commitment to their own identity becomes a barrier when their work changes, such as when they are reassigned or change jobs," (2) "people do not feel a sense of their own identity even when they demonstrate who they are expected to be in a cross-cultural workplace," and (3) "The self that is expressed in social media is at odds with one's sense of self as an individual.

### **The "honesty trap" hypothesis**

Next, we would like to review the criticisms of Deborah Grunfeldt and others. Grunfeldt examines authentic leadership from the perspective of organizational behavior theory, taking up "true to be oneself leadership" as the main concept there, and critically points out that it runs the risk of making leaders themselves fall into the "honesty-oriented trap.

A leader who is true to himself or herself is simply put "a leader who does not change and continues to be honest to himself or herself". This attitude is called "authenticity". In a trend that emphasizes authenticity, leaders are told to "always be who I am". However, focusing on the negative aspects of this attitude can justify a leader's insistence on "This is my way I do things," even in a changing environment or in the context of cultural diversity<sup>5</sup>. This attitude can make it difficult for subordinates to work and, in turn, prevent increasing productivity. The following example is a typical example of such a problem (Harvard Business Review, ed., 2019, p. 115).

When encouraging executives to become their best selves, we often encounter resistance. People don't want to change the behaviors that feel most natural, even when everyone agrees that change would be good. One recent client, who heads up a national magazine, insisted that her staff use her process — the one that felt most right and most natural to her — to get each issue to bed. When asked to consider changing her process to make life easier for everyone

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<sup>5</sup> This means that we should not use being honest with ourselves as an excuse to turn away from the important questions of who we really are, what we really do, and why. For more information, see Harvard Business Review, ed. (2019, pp. 116-117).

else, she replied “Look. This is just how I work.” She was being authentic, staying true to herself — and blocking her team from moving to a happier, more productive place. Her excuse, “This is just how I work”, can easily be justified by the recent hype around authenticity that cautions leaders: “Don’t pretend to be someone you are not”. But hiding behind the authenticity excuse is a convenient way of avoiding the truth about who we really are, how we actually behave, and why.

Of course, the reason for addressing these points is not because Mr. Grunfeldt is in total denial of authentic leadership. Rather, it is because by pointing out its shortcomings, he can offer constructive opinions on how to overcome them and avoid falling into the “honesty-oriented trap”. The specific methods are said to include (1) “Knowing how you are viewed,” (2) “Argue in a private place alone,” (3) “Consider a different method, attitude, or wording,” (4) “Finish completely what has been done,” and (5) “Accepting the cost of failure” (Harvard Business Review, ed., 2019 , pp. 116-117).

### **The “ ‘true self ’ is impossible” hypothesis**

Finally, I would like to discuss the “‘true self’ is impossible” hypothesis by Ford and Harding. They critically examine authentic leadership from the perspective of “object relations theory”. Object relations theory is a psychological theory that focuses on “how to have a relationship with a being other than oneself”. From the perspective of object relations theory, the “true self” that the Authentic Leadership Model emphasizes is an unrealizable concept, and adherence to it endangers leaders and organizations. There are two reasons for this (Ford & Harding, 2011, Summary and Conclusions, p. 463; pp. 476-477).

First, Authentic Leadership, which emphasizes the leader’s “true self,” assumes the “perfect human being” that Positive Psychology assumes, but that such a human image is only an ideological one. Real human beings are considered to be rather imperfect, contradictory, and different from perfect human beings. In this respect, authentic leadership is a model that is far removed from the real human image.

Second, it is pointed out that any attempt to practice authentic leadership is dangerous, because it induces destructive dynamism against the individuality which exists within the organization. In other words, this model emphasizes that both leaders and followers find their “raison d’etre (identity)” in the “collective nature” of the organizational culture or corporate culture (Shafu, in Japanese) , but this attitude in turn leads to the abandonment of individuality and independence of each organizational member. Authentic leadership, therefore, takes the stance that all people should conform to the organizational group, and there is concern that it is approaching labor relations from the wrong direction.

As a model to overcome these problems, Ford and his colleagues propose an “organization created by interaction” in which participants support each other and are able to be who I am. The premise of this model is the viewpoint that “the self cannot be changed by others without specific knowledge of and empathy for their needs, feelings, circumstances, and history, and

without identification with those others. From this perspective, the perception of self in relation to others would be "self-righteous," as in "you cannot affect or deny my identity" or "you can only be the object of my claim". What is lacking in such self-righteous self-knowledge is the tension of recognizing "the external other as both different and similar". Such a tension will result in interaction, or exchange, between self and others, and an organization that encourages others to be more self-aware and less destructive of both themselves and others.

### **Summary of Criticism**

So far, we have reviewed three critiques of Authentic Leadership model. Each of them has questioned the Authentic Leadership model from a critical perspective based on a variety of theoretical foundations and has come to a variety of conclusions. In boldly summarizing these arguments, the authors argue that the concept of the "real self" emphasized in authentic leadership is too ideological, emphasizing that real people are more indeterminate, and in fact many people fall into a situation where they "don't know what their 'real self' is.

From this perspective, if we assume the existence of the "true self" as envisioned by authentic leadership, we should also be able to say that there is a "false self" at the same time. How can we distinguish between the "true self" and the "false self"? When we look back on our self-awareness, it is often the case that we cannot distinguish between the "true self" and the "false self," that we assume the "false self" to be the "true self," or that we assume the "true self" to be the "false self. This is because, by nature, self-perception is not simple, but is created in accordance with social and cultural backgrounds, and it changes from moment to moment over time. If we think through these issues, criticism of the Authentic Model will eventually lead us to the fundamental question, "What is the essence of human nature?"

It is extremely important in philosophical and ethical research to pin down theoretical considerations to such fundamental questions. Nevertheless, it is not easy to answer the fundamental question head-on. If we try to look at the "true self" within the self in order to explore the definition of the "true self" in the first place, we may be stumped by the meaning of the "true self" as a general and common understanding. Therefore, in this chapter, I would like to approach the answer to this question from a multifaceted perspective, using the technique of co-creation space.

### **2.3 Connecting "Be honest to my way" with leadership by developing the co-creative space**

The critique of authentic leadership model is highlighting the issues related to human nature, so that it can be said as ultimate goal of leadership study.

Here, we raise a question: **"Is the authentic leadership our goal to be attained?"** Or, **"Is it ideal model for leadership?"** For this, we use the CSD method to be aware of whether or not it has the blindspot embedded in the authentic leadership in order to make clear the problem lying in it.

Our question to be examined is: Is Bill George's authentic leadership really our goal? For this examination, we propose five questions relating to three critiques against his authentic leadership as follows. Q1~Q 3 is "Authentic paradox" hypothesis, Q4 is "Honesty trap" hypothesis, Q5 is " 'True self' Impossibility" hypothesis.

- Q 1 . I feel "**just like ME**", who is doing best to move forward to a certain goal. But, sticking to this type of self prevents ME to change at the time of job rotation or changing jobs. Applicable to ME? Yes No DK
- Q 2 . Even performing myself as expected in cross-cultural workplaces, I don't feel just who I am. Applicable to ME? Yes No DK
- Q 3 . Expressing myself in social media is contradicting my personal feeling of just who I am. Applicable to ME? Yes No DK
- Q4. To be honest by saying "This is my way" makes ME feel unpleasant and/or people around ME feel unpleasant. Applicable to ME? Yes No DK
- Q5. I know "my true self or my core self"(really who I am). Applicable to ME? Yes No DK

Out of these five questions, at first, we shared four questions(Q1~Q 3 and Q 5 ) and exchanged our views. Then, we focus Q4 based on what we found by exchanging our opinions. We will introduce how to develop the co-creative space by three-step dialogue of thinking Q4.

### **[Q 1 : Sticking to being oneself]**

**Ken:** Let us begin with "Sticking to being oneself". Is it impeding something?

**Sato:** One thing I would like say before this. May I? Think of "being oneself" by head and feeling of "being oneself" by heart are not the same thing. Regarding the question of "want or don't want to be oneself", heart is honest so that the answer is different according to how feel about oneself. On the other hand, thinking of it by head may impede "want or don't want to be oneself".

**Ken:**OK, let us consider this aspect also.

**Sato:** But, for me, no impediment whatsoever, since "being oneself" is thought to be positive and it's my goal in my life. So, "sticking to being oneself" is not impediment, but backing. In case of "sticking to being oneself" as impediment, something like deep-rooted fear or worrisome is pulling my legs no matter how positive I try. It may be coming from subconscious level.

**Ken:**So, "sticking to being oneself" has not only "Yes" answer, but also "No" answer as well.

**Sato:**Yes, but in either case, it is me.

**Yoshi:** The "sticking to being oneself" for a certain goal at workplace depends heavily upon how to think of a goal. If the goal is profound and wider perspective, job rotation in a company or changing a job may not be impediment to "being oneself".

**Ken:** I see, it depends on the way of thinking of a goal.

**Deepak:** This is a difficult question. From an Indian perspective, many people do not like job rotation. The Japanese work hard at everything they do for their jobs. This attitude is difficult for some Indians, and at such times they insist "This is not my job". I had been living in Japan for eight years and worked as part-time job in various places. When considering such workplaces, Westerners say they do not understand Japanese management. In comparison, the Indian way of thinking is somewhat a little different.

For example, Mr. Nishimatsu, the former CEO of JAL, cut his own salary in half, commuted to work by underground or bus, and had regular meals with employees in the canteen. When JAL had problems, the US press reported that this was a rare thing to do in a symbolic way. It is unthinkable in the US for the CEO of a large company to take this attitude. On the other hand, the CEO of the Indian Tata conglomerate is a bit like JAL's CEO case, but it seems unthinkable in the USA, where cost is paramount.

I also have a classmate who taught at an American university in the past and now teaches at my university in India, and he says that it would be unthinkable in the US to see so many people coming to my room and eating together at lunchtime. There are not only students but also staff as well. But, he says: 'Let's have our own room like in America'. Given these differences, it is difficult to answer this question, but that is why it is interesting.

**Jun:** Regarding the question about "whether being focused on a goal is a hindrance", working towards a certain goal is something within 'being yourself', so that the job changes or you are reassigned, basically, would not be a hindrance. If you are working towards a certain goal in your own way, there is no way you can remove yourself from being yourself. There is always an ultimate goal for any job, and there is also a goal that each of us must achieve, but only then can we say that we have a job. Therefore, sticking or focusing on the goal itself is a natural part of job.

**Ken:** I've just realised that there are situations where the goal with 'being yourself' cannot be achieved when the job rotation is taken place.

**Jun:** Indeed, the job rotation(reassignment) may be out of one's control. However, in the case of a job change, if a person is given a job that is different from what he or she wants to do, he or she will not stay at that company. But, if a personal goal is considered to be something 'specific' to that company, it may hinder changing jobs. Thus, this specific goal may prevent a person from changing job. Conversely, if it is a 'general goal', it will not hinder it.

**Ken:** So the job change depends on the nature of goal.

**Taka:** I personally have never felt hindered. I study compliance, but in general, I think it is hindered when the values of the individual do not match the culture of the organization and the workplace. The discussion so far has reminded me of the case of fraudulent loans at Shoko Chukin Bank (dedicated to SMEs) . In this case, they were providing fraudulent loans to companies that did not qualify for loans, and when one new employee asked his supervisor if it was okay to do this kind of thing, he was told that this was the norm. Even though the new employee felt uncomfortable at first, after three months, it starts to feel like a normal, natural

thing to do. And he or she will tell the new junior employee the same thing as his or her supervisor. Even if they feel uncomfortable and friction arises, many people adapt to their environment.

**Ken:** I am reminded of a student who was a first-term graduate of Reitaku University. He studied abroad in the United States while he was in Reitaku University. After graduation, he joined a company in Japan, but his immediate supervisor ordered him to commit fraud. He was not satisfied with the order and so quit that company. He now runs a restaurant in Hong Kong.

**Jun:** Recently, more and more companies are facing such problems regarding compliance. If employees feel that compliance is just something the company stands for and has nothing to do with them, the company will lose social credibility. Therefore, the more active a company is, the more seriously management must take the issue.

**Ken:** So the corporate culture is involved in the individual's decision, isn't it?

**Student:** I have only had part-time work experience, but I have experienced that when my boss changed, instead of my own reassignment, I was simply told to do this or that, and I lost all opportunity to show my personality. If you do as you are told without being yourself, things will look certainly go smoothly. However, many people who clearly think "I want it this way" will quit that job because they want to demonstrate what they want, even if they do not complain.

**Ken:** What you just told me reminds me of something. There is a seminar student of mine who got a job at a bank. He was quite assertive, so I advised him to "shut up and work patiently just a year or so for gaining a trust with his boss". But, he couldn't stand it, and when he had a conflict of opinion with his boss, he asserted himself out loud, and eventually quit.

## **「Q2 : Expected myself in cross-cultural workplaces」**

**Ken:** Let us move to the Q2 of "Expected myself ":Even performing myself as expected in cross-cultural workplaces, I don't feel just who I am.

**Sato:** There are many different cultures. It can be what is commonly referred to as a "foreign culture" or "a group of people from different cultural backgrounds". I tend to try to fit in with the people around me, and I tend to act out the image of myself that is expected of me in such a situation. However, in such cases, there are times when I don't feel like myself or feel uncomfortable.

**Jun:** Regarding cross-cultural experiences, if I limit myself to work overseas, I have had experiences in organizations in the U.S., Europe, and China. Through these experiences, I have spent a certain amount of time thinking about how to express my personality. When I was working at the Japanese company, I kept my mouth shut for a while after moving to a new workplace. I spent two to three months trying to get a sense of what kind of values existed in the actual work environment. The people in that workplace already have prior knowledge of that person. So I spend two to three months quietly and carefully observing that. Of course, it is very important to spend time on "how to express one's personality", so I spent time on how

to show my personality in appropriate situations. Even if I don't feel like myself at first, I think that's normal. In that process, it is necessary to change my words and actions in order to feel my own personality.

**Ken:** Do you feel more like yourself now?

**Jun:** Yes, I do. If I don't, I will lose my presence and be fired. If I don't have a presence, the company will not know why I was hired for. In the beginning, there is a gap between "the expected image when you are hired" and "your actual personality". It is important to know what kind of process you need to go through to show your personality.

**Yoshi:** I believe that what one felt was "true to oneself" when working for a domestic company can be changed by being exposed to and stimulated by different culture. People like Jun san, who have held top positions in foreign companies, can have some understanding of what kind of people companies are looking for and have a process to create their own identity, but for many people, I don't think this is easy.

**Jun:** I would do the same even in a Japanese organization. I think about "in what situations, in what form, and at what opportunities" I can show my personality. These vary quite a bit from workplace to workplace as well as company to company. In some workplaces, the boss may insist, "This is my way to do things!". So, it is very important to be able to judge such situations. If you think, "I can't work under this boss," you have to think about what you will do.

**Ken:** Whom we can't choose are "parents and bosses", can we?

**Jun:** Young people in these days have learned to work while valuing their own personality. In our time, however, most people who joined a company stayed there forever, so the environment may be slightly different.

**Yoshi:** As diversity increases, we will be involved with different cultures more often, so it is important to have a strong sense of "independent own thinking" and "being oneself".

**Jun:** Nowadays, diversity is the norm, with "each individual being different". This is why it is even more important to assess the atmosphere of a workplace as a whole. When I took my first lecture in the U.S., I was sitting at the front of the class, and the economics professor called me a "Jap". An American student sitting next to me said to the professor, "Correct what you said to him". At that time, I felt the atmosphere of the U.S. society, thinking "This is what this society is like". In other words, I was convinced that American society has the same values as mine.

**Sato:** I have often come across such situations myself. Few Japanese are willing to stand up and say such things. Americans consider it courageous to stand up in such a way.

**Deepak:** I think the same is true for Indians.

**Jun:** The only Japanese person who could say that might be Tora-san, who said "If you say that, it's over".

**Taka:** I agree with your opinions. For my part, I think "Q1 is the flip side of Q2" or perhaps it could be merged since it seems to be asking the same thing in the end.

**Ken:** Yes, I also agree.

**Deepak:** I had a similar experience with Jun san. When I was working part-time at a factory in Japan, my boss would say to me, "Hey, Indian". Sometimes he called me "Kochan" because my name is difficult, and I understand that it is difficult to call Indians by their names. But later, when other Indians joined the company, the Japanese attitude changed to "We" instead of "I". At that time, I did not keep quiet and got angry. However, I later became friends with that boss.

When I returned to India, I began to hear a lot about diversity. So when I was with women there, the subject became "We" instead of "I". But on the other hand, when it becomes "I" instead of "We," it becomes very much thinking about me. That's why unknown researchers want to publish their papers with top journal publishers, not with university publishers.

### **[Q3 : Expressing myself in social media]**

**Ken:** Let's move on to the next topic. Next is Q3 of "The Self as Expressed on Social Media". Is the self as expressed on social networking sites sometimes at odds with your perception of yourself as an individual?

**Student:** Yes, indeed, I used to be concerned about how people would see me. However, when I tried to make myself look good and showed my "exaggerated self," I realized that it was not my life-size self, and I got tired of doing so. So these days, I don't send out much information about myself because it's too much trouble, and even if I do, I do it as my "real" self.

**Yoshi:** I don't know much about social networking, but is there a big difference between real life and virtual life of social networking? To me, it is NO to this question, for it seems to me that it is possible to "make oneself look good" on both real and SNS life.

**Student:** With social networking, it uses only pictures and text, so the information is limited. Since we can control to limit what the other person can see, we can show them how different we are from them as much as we want.

**Ken:** Is it like creating a different self like cosplay in Akihabara? Then, you might be able to express yourself differently.

**Sato:** In my case, social networking does not particularly conflict with my self-perception. I don't often fake my feelings and press "like". But, I may press "like" because I want to be included in a group, but that is something I do it in my own will. So I do not pretend to be something I am not on social networking sites. When I look at my friends' pages on Facebook, some of them write about their personal problems and difficulties in a very naked way. This is a reflection of ourselves. I think it can be healing to put it in writing. Lately, I think many people tend to be more honest on social networking sites. Of course, these actions can be dangerous.

### **[Q5 : My true self]**

Q5. Do I know "my true self or my core self"(really who I am)?

**Ken:** Now let's move on to "Q5: My true self". Do we know our real or true self?

**Sato:** I think there is both a "self I know" and a "self I don't know". So I'll leave the answer as "No". I usually try to make this a "Yes" but I think I have a lot of blind spots so that I can't see behind me.

### **Developing the Co-creative space for testing the Deborah's "honesty trap" hypothesis that is Q4 of To be honest by saying "This is my way" (Deborah's "honest trap" hypothesis)**

So far we have covered Q1-Q3 and Q5 and exchanged opinions (pathwork). Based on this practice, as a journey to discover the charms and blind spots of "leadership that is true to oneself," we would like to take up Q4; To be honest by saying "This is my way of doing things" makes ME feel unpleasant and/or people around ME feel unpleasant. Then, let us want to develop a co-creation space for this question. This development will allow us to objectively test Deborah's "honesty trap" hypothesis. That is, "Have you ever been honest and made yourself feel bad or made others feel bad?" If yes, this would confirm Deborah's "honesty trap" hypothesis. However, if no (null hypothesis), then this hypothesis does not hold. In addition, we will discover a new axis of judgment that does not exist in this hypothesis, and we will gain new insights into the theme of "this is my way" type of authentic leadership. It is precisely this kind of opportunity to test hypotheses and discover new axes of judgment that makes the development of a co-creation space such a thrilling experience.

The development of the co-creation space here was done through the following **three steps**. See Figure 4-1,4-2 and 4-3 below for the results.

**The first step** is a "journey from the origin to the horizontal axis," and is to challenge **the horizontal question of Q4 "To be honest by saying 'This is my way of doing thing ' makes ME feel and/or people around ME feel unpleasant"**. Each member will express and share his/her answer with a magnet.

Next, **the second step** is the "vertical journey from the origin," unrelated to the horizontal question in Q4, we now face **the vertical question, "Do I want to lead in my own way?"**. The question was then shared by each member using a magnet, with careful consideration of whether or not **my own way was "right"**<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The following discussion (pathwork) confirms that "honest to oneself" does not always mean "I am right".

Oba: With regard to Q4, when I look at my way of doing things, I see both issues: being honest in my way of doing things and whether my way of doing things is the right way to do things. Being "honest" and "right" are not always equal, but have you ever experienced this?

Chaudhuri: Yes, I have. I probably don't have a chance to choose "being honest and right" when it comes to my job. So instead of saying "I just can't do that" or whatever, I shut down (I can't be honest about how I do things or what I think I'm doing right). Of course, in an academic setting, I have a choice to be "honest", but in the case of university work, I don't have a choice to be "right".

Then, **the third step** is the “journey to discover four views of “my way” leadership”. After listening to opinions on the both horizontal and vertical axes, we will identify the characteristics of the four zones A, B, C, and D, where the answers to the two questions (being honest with oneself and one's own style of leadership) emerge. We then named the zones A, B, C, and D. In doing so, actually jumping from the horizontal and vertical axes can bring about new insights and expand the possibilities for self-awakening.


**<Step 1> “Journey from the Origin to the line of the Horizontal Axis” Q4 (“To be honest by saying ‘This is my way of doing thing’ makes ME and/or people around ME feel unpleasant?”)**


**Each member will face this question and will express and share his/her answer with a magnet (stamp used in a ZOOM).**

**Ken:** Now, please put a stamp on each of them on the horizontal axis line. It can be just “I felt bad” or “I made others feel bad. It can be both.


**Figure 4-1: Testing Deborah’s “honesty trap” hypothesis : To be honest by saying “This is my way” makes ME and/or people around ME feel unpleasant ?**



**Megro:** I disagree. So, my position is  on the left of the horizontal axis line. I would never state in front of others, “This is my way”. Because that would be imposing my own way of doing things. I do things my way, but I do not impose my way. In my experience, this is a method often used in American companies, but it is sometimes considered “intrusive” in light of Japanese sensibilities. This may be because we have different ways of thinking about organizations. But in any case, I don't think leadership can be achieved by saying, “This is my way of doing things”.

**Sato:** I, too, “disagree”  on the left. I put it in this position while thinking about “what is Authentic Leadership?” and “what is its definition?”. I will first ask for other persons’ opinions and then suggest “let's do it this way,” so I will not impose “my way” on them, and I don't think it will make others feel uncomfortable.

**Ken:** I think the person who says “I disagree” would be the authentic leader here.

**Taka:** Well, for me I “agree”  on the right side of the horizontal axis line. So, I have tried not saying, “This is my way”. But, to be honest, in various situations, I may not agree with the people around me, but when I cannot compromise, I sometimes stick to my own way. Of

course, there are times when I get into trouble for doing so.

**Deepak:** This is a difficult question to answer, but in my case it is ➡ a little 'agree' on the right". When I came back to India from Japan to work in India, I was shocked at the difference in the way work was done. When I did so, I once said, "This is my way. In some cases, I would say, "Please do it following my way," even if the other person did not like it, whatsoever. I think the way of working is very different in Japan, the U.S., and India.

**Student:** I "agree", so I put stamp ▲ on the right side of the horizontal axis line. I don't have much social experience, but when I am asked to take on a little responsibility, I make a suggestion. But, if it doesn't match the other person's ideas, it can lead to a confrontation. My values and the other person's values are not necessarily the same, and in that case, I think we would both end up feeling bad.

**Ana:** I am on the right side. But I think it depends on whether "my way" here means "method" or "way of thinking".

**Ken:** I think "my way" means a "way of thinking or mindset."

**Ana:** OK. Then, I agree ◆ on the right. Even replacing the word "my way" with " my way of thinking," the answer still depends on the subject matter. If it is about my principle, I will stick to my own way of thinking because it is non-negotiable. Then, people around me may feel bad about it, but on the other hand, if I don't stick to my way of doing things, I will feel bad about myself. However, if my way is methodical, I am not committed to my own way. I can compromise with other people's ways. It is better to do so, so that the atmosphere does not become acrimonious. Since there is a wide range of meanings of the word "method," it is difficult to generalize, but when it comes to principles, I stick to my own way.

**Yoshi:** I "disagree", so I put stamp ● on the left side. I often think about this in my work situations. In the course of our work, we have a goal in mind. However, the way to reach that goal is different from each other, so I think it is important to consult among the members as we proceed. Without close communication among the members, it becomes difficult to proceed with the work. I don't think we are making others feel uncomfortable because we are doing things that way. However, when we get close to the goal and are in the finalizing stage, there are certain things that we must adhere to, and I think there had been times in the past when I have to get through my way.

**<Step 2> Co-creating the question of "Do I want to take leadership by my way?" : "Journey from the Origin to the Vertical Axis line" Irrespective of the horizontal axis question of Q4**


**We now challenge the vertical axis question, "Do I want to take leadership by my way?" and each member expresses and shares his/her answer with a magnet(stamp).**


**Ken:** Now let's move on to the next question expressed on the vertical axis. The question is: Do I want to take leadership by my own way or not? For your answer, please put your respective stamps on the vertical axis line.


Figure 4-2 Co-creating the question of “Do I want to take leadership by my way?”


Want to take leadership by my way?



**Ana:** My answer is “No”. So, I put a stamp  on below of the vertical axis line. I put it here because I don't want to involve others in my way of doing things. Each organization has its own way of doing things, so I think we should do it according to that way. If it is not a matter of my own principle, I think it is OK to take leadership by the way of organization. Anyway, I don't want to be a leader because it is too much trouble.

**Deepak:** My answer is “Yes”. My stamp  is a little bit above. Sometimes, I think I need to take a little bit of leadership by my way because I think it is necessary to show the Japanese way to the Indians. Japanese people's motivation for work is different from India (and also in the West). There is a Japanese philosophy and a way of doing things based on it, and when I was in Japan, I was troubled by the differences. But there are times when I have to do something and have to be aggressive by taking a leadership by my way. In those cases, I sometimes tell the other person, “You have to do this”. But in such cases, we need to have trust. Because if there is trust, you can take leadership.

**Yoshi:** My answer is “No”. So, I am below  . If the question is whether want to take a leadership by my way or not, I don't really want to take it. However, when I have to proceed in my work, I have to take a leadership role. That is why I put it near the origin.

**Taka:** My answer is “Yes”. So, I am above  . I can't take a leadership if it's not my way. I would like to learn how others do things, but if I am trusted, I have the right to self-determination, and I think it is wrong to leave that to them. Of course, I do believe that there are times when we can delegate to others and their way will work better. To do so requires leadership skills, including values. I would like to take a leadership role in terms of methodology

and way of thinking, but I think that the reason I am unable to do so is because I do not have the ability to lead.

**Student:** My answer is "Yes" so I am a little bit above ▲ . I didn't want to take leadership, but when I had to, I could do it my way, but not someone else's way. So I thought it would be better to do it my way.

**Jun:** My answer is "Yes" and I am above ♥ . This is the direction I want to take. There are situations in which I take the leadership and situations in which others take the leadership, but basically I want to take the leadership. I think it depends on the situation whether it is better for me to take the leadership or for others to take the leadership.

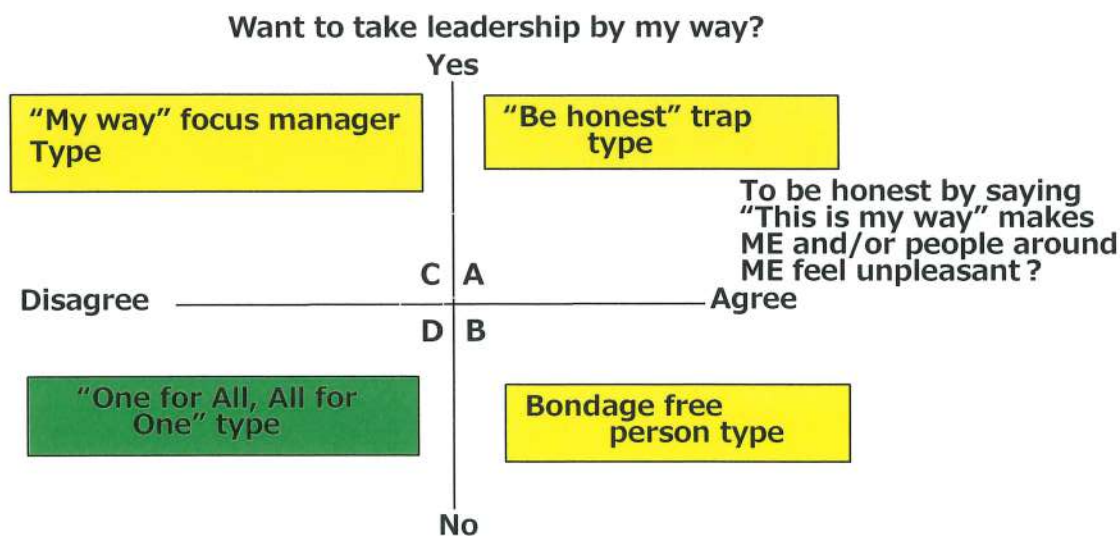
**Ken:** My answer is "No". So, I am below ★ . Why "No"? It is because I don't want to lead in the "I" way. I want to lead in the "we" way. It is exactly the idea of co-creation.

**<Step 3> After listening to the opinions on the horizontal and vertical axes, we will identify and name the characteristics of the four zones, A, B, C, and D, where the two questions (being honest with oneself and one's own style of leadership) intersect.**

**Ken:** So, at first, let us listen to a person of the origin and then fly to zones A, B, C, and D. Let's think about what characteristics each zone has and name them. From our co-creative exercise, probably type C may be the Authentic Leader.

**Ken:** If so, would C type (Want to take leadership in my way, but not imposing it others) be the authentic leader?(Discussed later)

**Figure 4-3 Findings by connecting "Be honest to my way" with leadership in the co-creative space**



### **[Origin]**

**Sato:** The reason I put it in the middle(origin) is because I am in that position when it comes to leadership. There are many different needs in an organization, such as critical needs and ethical needs, so for needs of the work that must be done, I move instinctively. Ethical needs are institutional, but if they must be changed, we take leadership and change them. At that time, regardless of "what the other person thinks" or "what I think," and regardless of "whether I want to take the leadership" or "whether I don't want to take the leadership," I instinctively take the leadership. In particular, when they feel that the way they are doing something is wrong with an order that comes from above, they will take that direction. In such cases, I try to move to the perspective of the organization as a whole, rather than from my own self. So, I have never wanted to make the situation the way I want it to be. I think that in many cases I am a person who lives in compromise.

**Ken:** Then you might go to A from origin. Or you might be C. You might go either way.

**Sato:** Yes, it may happen all the time. I am convinced that I live with compromises in many things. Sometimes I have to be patient by closing one eye.

### **[A Zone] "Be honest" trap type**

**Taka:** My current job requires a lot of work that I do alone, so I have to put my own way forward, which might make people around me uncomfortable.

**Deepak:** I feel the same way. There are three associate professors at my university. I have been asked by the president to be their mentor. So I sometimes complain to them and tell them to do this or that. My university is new, about 10 years old, and I have been here since the beginning, so I take on the role of facilitator. I teach about 3 hours every day, and I also have classes on Saturdays. So I have trouble getting time to write my own papers and so on. However, I consider self-sacrifice to be inevitable because private universities are very hard to get into nowadays. In India, only the children of elite families can enter universities, not the general public. My goal is "to teach and educate the general public about what is good and right," but I have not been able to achieve this goal.

### **[B Zone] Bondage free person type who don't want to be constrained.**

**Ana:** I don't want to take on leadership because I like to live life in a daze on my own. However, that doesn't mean I don't have my own way. I work freelance, so I have to do things my way. And that might make other people feel bad, so I made it to Zone B. I can say that I am a free spirit type who does not want to be constrained.

**Yoshi:** My work is professional in nature, but I do not want to take leadership by my way. Rather, if I am working in a project team, I can relate well to leadership. I hope the leadership is such that diverse values are recognized.

### **[C Zone] “My way” focus manager Type**

**Jun:** I want to take a leadership without being honest to oneself, it is because I make a premise of a company as the organization. I do agree with Taka san’s idea as a researcher and I hope that you will value such a position. However, from the standpoint of corporate management, everything is changing at a tremendous pace, and we must give priority to the survival of the company. People who are different and heterogeneous from the past are constantly being brought into the organization. As this happens, different ways of thinking will enter the organization, and I would like to take a leadership role in order to keep the organization moving while adjusting to this new way of thinking. In particular, unpredictable and unexpected things will happen, and I think the role of a leader is to avoid giving stereotypes to the members of the organization at such times.

**Ken:** What is the naming of type C?

**Taka:** I think C is a “My way” focus managerial type.

**Sato:** Some managers care too much about their employees. One wonders where such people feel they want to place themselves. In that sense, leadership is like morality, and there are many ways to interpret it.

**Ken:** I'm going to ask each of you to take charge and summarize, and I think Type C would probably be conventional authentic leadership. However, I don't think that “be oneself” authentic leadership is thought to be unique.

**Deepak:** Which zone is JAL's Nishimatsu san in?

**Taka:** He is honest to himself and is one who has always been concerned about the motivation of workplace people. So, if pushed I'd rather say Nishimatsu san may be a D type.

### **[Zone D] “One for All, All for One” type**

**Ken:** We want to name the D-Zone type as “One for All, All for One”. Because we want to grow it into our way of doing things. I will share here with the idea of “We”.

**Jun:** From the perspective of a corporate organization, I think A and B types are as follows: Type A is the professional type, who are researchers and live by their own way of doing things. Type B is the internal critic, and there are always people like this in a company; this type is the person who gathers information and listens to others, but does not take a leadership role. In a word, they are the “old man of general affairs”. However, this is also an important role. You can consult with this type of person about anything.

## **2.4 Classifying in patterns of “Be honest to oneself” authentic leadership by the co-creation space method**

In this chapter, after summarizing the significance and criticisms of authentic leadership that is true to oneself, the blind spots that this model does not assume are revealed through the development of a co-creative space. Many well-known scholars have developed their own

criticisms of Authentic Leadership that is true to oneself from their own perspectives. But in this chapter, we have discovered the concept of “true self” that Bill George’s authentic leadership model claims is too ideological and that real people are more indeterminate, and that many people fall into a situation where they do not know what their “true self” is.

Based on this understanding, here we have exchanged opinions through a co-creation space and revealed four different types of perspectives related to “be honest to oneself” authentic leadership. As a result, we then drew up a variety of “Be honest to my way” leadership types that are not envisioned by Bill George’s authentic leadership model. This can be summarized as follows.

**“Be honest” trap type** (Type A) is the type of person who wants to “take the leadership” and has “gone out of his/her way to do things that made or caused him/her or others to feel uncomfortable. This type is exactly the Deborah’s “honesty trap” hypothesis. This type is appropriate for professionals who have a lot of work to do on their own and whose duties require them to put their own way forward. This type can work in the style that is most efficient for them, especially when working individually, but since they may not be able to do all the work alone, it is important for them to be self-sacrificing at times and adapt to the style of those around them when necessary.

**The Bondage free person type** (Type B) is the type that “does not want to take leadership” and has “gone their own way and made themselves and others feel uncomfortable or made others feel uncomfortable”. Compared to Type A, this type seems to apply to occupations that are more oriented toward a more liberal style of work. While the aforementioned Type A needs to adhere to their own style, it is often more likely to be in line with their style as a job. In contrast, Type B, like freelancers, is likely to tend to adhere to their own style in many of their job-related processes.

Type C of **“My way” focus manager Type** can be considered as Bill George’s ideal authentic leadership model that “wants to take leadership” and “has never had or made others feel bad about themselves or others by doing things their own way. This type is expected to take on the role of an overall leader and guide the organization, like a manager in a large company. They have firm values and beliefs, and they are the ones who bear the brunt of the organization's efforts to overcome difficulties. At first glance, this may seem to be the only ideal leadership image, but it is important to note that this is not necessarily the ideal leadership model for everyone, as it requires a great deal of knowledge and experience to become this type.

**One for All, All for One Leadership** (Type D) is the type that “doesn't want to take leadership” and “has never been uncomfortable or made others feel uncomfortable by doing things his or her own way. This type is considered to play the role of a facilitator, not being limited by their own ideas, but finding ways for members of the organization to share and empathize with each other. In a relatively small organization, although there is no formal, conspicuous leader, sufficient communication among members is necessary to create an

atmosphere in which each member can move freely. To this end, the facilitator is expected to play a role in encouraging the exchange of opinions among members, and this type D would be the one to take on this role. This type plays an active role in an organization when they serve as the so-called "general manager's know-it-all. They gather information and listen to others, but they do not try to force others to do things, making them a valuable resource for members of the organization who can consult with them about anything.

Thus, the benefits of the co-creation space were successfully utilized in this chapter to obtain diverse perspectives to overcome the perceptual weaknesses of "Be honest to my way" authentic leadership, and to extract multiple leadership models from them. Although authentic leadership of "Be honest to my way" is ideal, one weakness is that the number of highly competent people who can make it happen is limited in reality. In order to overcome this weakness and achieve more realistic leadership, it is thought that organizational members should be able to understand their own characteristics and those of the organization through dialogue, and be able to play leadership roles (roles within the organization) that suit them. To this end, we hope that the co-creative leadership model presented in this chapter will serve as one indicator.

### 3. Authenticity and "True North"(Yamashita)

Let us take the co-creative action for authenticity and "True North", one by one, which are core concepts of Bill George's Authentic leadership model as follows.

- 3.1 Co-creative action for "What is my authenticity?"
- 3.2 What is Bill George's definition of "True North"?
- 3.3 Co-creative action for "True North (inner compass) "
- 3.4 Sharing our findings based on co-creative action for True North

#### 3.1 Co-creative action for "What is my authenticity?"

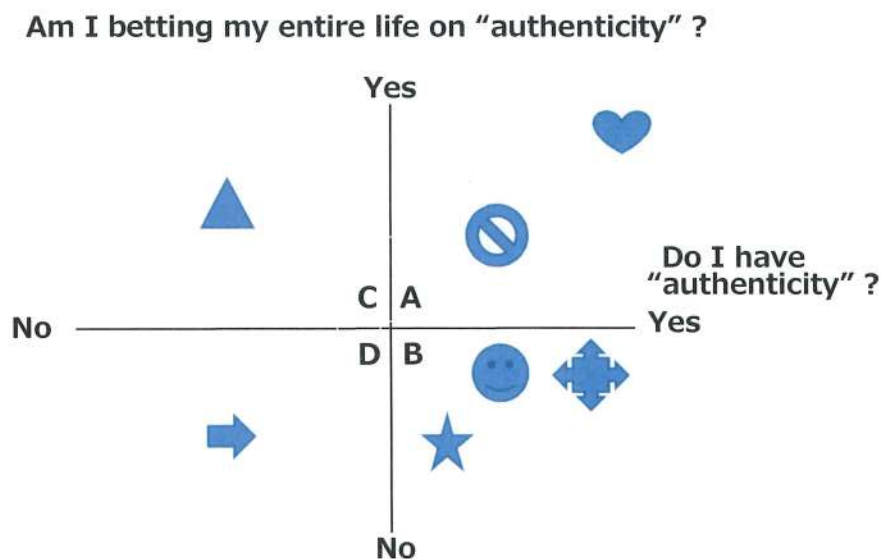
The Co-creative action for "What is my authenticity?" begins with two questions, which are constituting two axes of the co-creative space are as follows:

**Horizontal Axis:** Do I have "authenticity" ? Yes or No

**Vertical Axis:** Am I betting my entire life on something that will become "authenticity"?


Yes or No

Figure 5 "Authenticity": Have it? × Betting my entire life on it?



**Ken:** I think we have a good balance of opinions. There are going to be a lot of different opinions. Let's share them.

#### [Zone A](Having "authenticity" and betting my entire life on it)


**Jun:** My position is shown as . My answer is "Yes" to the question of whether or not I have an authenticity. I myself have been clear about what I want to do and what I want to achieve. Regardless of the influence of Corona pandemic, I have been working for 30 to 40 years in a corporate business society, trying to realize how to change the structure of healthcare

in Japan and how healthcare should be. I have spent my time with that as my objective. Even now, in times like these, the idea is to continue to do so.


The vertical axis of whether I am betting my whole life on it is a matter of interpretation, and it depends on the age of the person. In my case, I have narrowed it down to this theme over the past 30 or 40 years, so I feel like this is the only way. I accept that this is the work I dedicate.

Authenticity can be defined in many ways, but I think it is to just honestly and simply realize what I want to do and what I think is right. I have been involved in practical matters such as home medical care, but I would like to further improve the efficiency of medical care in Japan and create a system of technological innovation to increase the effectiveness of medical care.


### **[Zone B](Having “authenticity” but NOT betting my entire life on it)**

**Taka:** My position is shown as . I sympathize with Jun san, but not yet betting my entire life on “authenticity”. After all, I too really think that authenticity is gradually being refined through my work, and I am just beginning to realize its importance. In general terms, the use of AI is effective for home healthcare, but sensitive information must be used. So, there is a risk of personal information being misused. To avoid losing my identity or true to be myself is to avoid doing things I don't want to, and to avoid having my interests controlled online through social networking sites and so on. I think it is important to maintain my identity by using behavioral psychology and other methods just like our CSD method.

### **[Zone A](Having “authenticity” and betting my entire life on it)**

**Sato:** My position is . Having “authenticity” reminds me of a song that came to mind at first was Sinatra's “My Way”. Its lyrics of “having no regrets in my life” feels good. When I am passionate about what I do, I feel fulfilled, like I am in the process of reaching my mission. No matter how difficult the situation, if one door closes, I proceed through another. Even in the midst of war and pandemics, I believe that authenticity (a song “My Way”) is the driving force that keeps us going if we have the same conviction that Jun san mentioned. Authenticity may be found in what excites you, what makes your body and mind move, not just your head.

### **[Zone D](Neither having “authenticity” Nor betting my entire life on it)**

**Deepak:** I understand what Sato san meant. But, I put a stamp  at zone D. In my life, when I meet people and have conversations with them, I know my stage. I am low, they are high. When I understand that relationship, my way of thinking changes. I don't know what I am. I don't know who I am or what my purpose is. That's why I chose D. Maybe there are many D's. I wear a mask pretending who I really am. I lie because I don't want to show who I really am. When I think in terms of a leader, I am a selfish. I think only about myself. But I say, “I am thinking about everyone. I ask, “What is your purpose?” “What do you want to be in society?” “Will you be a president?” “Will you be a good husband?” In the midst of all this,

authenticity may emerge. What will inspire those around you?


For example, why did I choose Reitaku University (for my Ph.D work)? My friends studied in the U.S. and the U.K., but I chose Japan. A person from Reitaku came to India and I guided him. He asked me, "What do you want to do?" I answered, "I don't know yet. Then I asked him the same question, "What do you want to do? He said, "I want to be a teacher. I want to be a professor. He said, "I want to be like the teacher who taught me. So I felt inspired.

When I came to Reitaku campus, I was surprised to see everyone saying "Good morning" and "Hello" in a loud voice to strangers. It is wonderful. When I went back to India and did the same, I was surprised.

What do I have to do to make people want to be like me? Do they want me to be a father to their children?. Finding my goal is what I am doing right now. Yes, I am striving for it.

**Taka:** "Purpose" is getting a lot of attention, isn't it? It is very important in existentialism.

### **[Zone B](Having "authenticity" but NOT betting my entire life on it)**


**Yoshi:** Well, it is difficult to understand what the word authenticity means. The reason I put a stamp  in zone B is that I have been working for more than 30 years and there is a research theme that I feel like true to be myself. It is a theme like diversity, multiculturalism, and I go abroad to do research. When I went to a city in England where many immigrants live, there was a project called "Young Mayors", in which people under 18 years old were elected to solve problems in their community for one year. They were supported by professional consultants and mayors. That left a great impression on me. What I want to do is to promote diversity and multicultural themes in my research.

But, it is difficult to say what kind of person I want to be based on such experiences. Not clear as yet what is my true desire and what is true to be myself. I have not reached the point where I can bet my life on it. There are themes that I feel authenticity in them, but I haven't found anything that will allow me to continue. I am searching for that direction.

**Ken:** Yes, indeed. It is difficult to say what kind of person I want to be.

**Sato:** I think it depends on the occasion (context).

**Taka:** I don't think there is an essence. I think there is a purpose, a context, and the true meaning is found in that context. Everything is a copy of something, and you can see your originality in the direction of the combination.

**Ana:** I put a stamp  on zone B. Authenticity is viewed as a value for each of us. When we think about a person's life span of being born, living, and dying, we feel the importance of life. The importance of one's own life and the lives of others are irreplaceable. It is important for me to live, for the human race to live, and, to a greater extent, for all living things other than human beings. Because I feel the importance of life, I want to fight against actions that prevent it. Specifically, I want to fight against violence, war, and nuclear power.

But, if I were to say that I am betting my entire life on such struggles, I would not be so sure. I am not that serious about it. I like to have fun, watch movies and plays, and listen to

music. I think those things are important too. I am a mixture of many elements. At worst, I am halfway; at best, I am well-balanced. I have been editing and writing for a long time, and have written according to the themes and concepts of requests, but recently I have started to want to express myself in a more personal way, and I am trying my hand at something like a novel. I am just now hitting a wall, realizing that I have no talent. I am living each day in a daze without having to bet my whole life on it.

**[Zone C](NOT having “authenticity” but betting my entire life on it)**

**Ken:** I put a stamp ▲ on the zone C. I put it there because not “no one else was there”, but I found true myself there by reminding my hard experience of moving from zone D to C. When I was about to graduate from university in Tokyo, I was lost without any direction in life. I couldn't find a job that I wanted to engage. My father had become blind and physically handicapped person due to overdose medication and I had to make my own money. If I didn't get a job, I had a choice: go to graduate school in Japan or study abroad. I chose the latter. But, if it was study abroad, it had to be somewhere where I could get a scholarship. Austria was conditional for music, Brazil was also conditional, but India was the only country that didn't have it. So, India was only option.

I originally did not plan to go to India, but I went to India for not only studying, but also looking for purpose of life. My mentor told me that I should go to a developing country and see the poverty. For India, to be honest, I would have never gone there unless I was young.

But when I went to India, from Day 1 I became panic. All the values I had until then were destroyed by facing Indian reality. I had an experience like being thrown into a washing machine and spinning myself round and round. What I had thought I wanted to do was completely upside down!

Later on studying in India became clear to me that this(my ambition of so-called self realization) was actually act of sin. But, in the year 2000, I met Lord Jesus Christ in the very difficult time who saved me by mercy. I heard the word “Be joyful always”(1 Thessalonians 5 : 16, Good News Translation,GNT) as a voice. He spoke to me,“I am always with you” and I cried. This is a moment of being saved, which is beyond understanding. Since then, I have found more and more things of nature of sin in me(my selfishness) from words of the Bible that I didn't want to see. But, the death of Jesus on the cross delivered from unforgivable sins. I realized by experience that what the Bible was saying was real. I found authenticity in the words of the Bible. That's where I'm betting my entire life now. So I bet my work, my family, everything on it.

So, in the co-creative space, I was moved from zone D to C by the love of God. **NOT having “authenticity” in myself, but it is in the living Bible which I am betting my entire life on it.** Prayer is for me a weapon for a struggle against sins since I am a saved sinner. I am very encouraged by the love of God every day. Even when I am down and out, I am saved to have peace. Now I want to live my entire life according to what the Bible says.

### **[Why betting our own entire life on authenticity?]**

**Taka:** Why are we betting our own entire life on authenticity?

**Ken:** It is because this question was inspired by what Deepak san talked about his commitment to his doctoral work in Japan. I thought it was important to commit if he is really risking himself or his life. Nowadays, I feel that genuine education is not emphasized and just say, "Oh well.", and that authenticity is rapidly disappearing in the rise of AI world. That is why we are looking for what is real or authentic. Life is not that long, so I want to be in touch with something authentic. It is as if life is a moment of time, so I want to have times of feeling joy without being carried away and without compromise.

**Taka:** Nothing could be more important than life.

**Ken:** Yes, I agree. I think it is important to bet our lives, as shown on the above question of the vertical axis.

**Jun:** Maybe it may be the same as wondering whether there is meaning in surviving, but recently, I have been feeling how I have survived. I want to take responsibility for ending my own life. When it comes to risking my life, I understand it as "surviving my own life."

**Ken:** Taka san, what kind of image do you have?

**Taka:** I have not yet been able to bet myself in the job, as this is my third year on the job and I have not yet been able to bet myself in the job.

**Ken:** Yes, it happened to me as well. I used to pretend to be a teacher without betting my whole life.

### **[Visualizing oneself of Past, present and future in the Co-creation space]**

**Taka:** May I think about the future, given that my present self is based on the past?

**Jun:** Unlike the work of teachers, in my case I joined a company, but it was not until more than 20 years after I joined that I found what I thought was the right thing to do in a company. I wanted people around me to know who I was, how I lived my life, and who I was. I had been in zone D for about 10 years after I joined the company. I experienced many things, met many people, and this co-creation space teaches me to think about that anew. If you look at it on a time axis, you can see that I am in zone A now, but I used to be in zone D. I was often told to "value honesty". So, I have tried to be honest in each and every job.

**Sato:** After all, the present is based on the past. Peter Drucker's book says, "Don't look at the past because it is one lens, focus on the present. I think Jun san's emphasis on honesty means that we should not be bothered by the fact that honesty is not cool or that we have failed, but rather treasure it. What are we doing now? That is where authenticity lies.

**Jun:** I think you're right, we say "**Be Here Now**". I think it's not about being interested in the past as the past, but about the present. I am not bound by the framework of the past. I am doing honestly in a given situation where I am now. Perhaps that honesty is what makes me who I am.

### **[Purpose is a keyword]**

**Ken:** Purpose means mission for a company. It is different from what Economic says the profit maximization as a purpose. People think that a company's purpose is profit-making, but it is not.

**Deepak:** There is purpose of organization. There is a mission in it. There is your purpose, there is the purpose of the organizer, and if they are aligned, it is OK. It is called social contract business. We make good products and do not tell lies. In India, however, many women want to have whiter skin, so there is a bogus business that sells cosmetics that make your face whiter. If you work for that company, you have to tell a lie, "If you use this cosmetic, your face will become whiter. This is a problem.

### **3.2 What is Bill George's definition of "True North"?**

Bill George's definition of "True North" is found in two books, *True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership* by Bill George and Peter Sims, translated by Yura Umezu (2007) and *Discover Your True North* by Bill George, translated by Kosuke Ogawa and Maya Hayashi (2017). In the 2007 Japanese edition, its Preface states that it is defined as "True North" is your true purpose in your career in the following four elements: 1) the most important things you do, 2) the values you hold most strongly, 3) your passion and motivation, and 4) the source of satisfaction in your life" (Ibid., p. 1).

In the 2017 Japanese edition, it is worded a bit differently, as follows.

True North is the foundation of your life, the foundation that guides you in the right direction and keeps you a great leader in a fast-changing world. It is your inner compass, unique to you and who you are at the deepest level. True North points you in the direction of the leader's purpose, just as the needle of a compass points you in the direction of the earth's magnetic pole (N = North Pole). True North will point you in the direction of your leadership goals. When you follow your inner compass, leadership becomes uniquely yours, and people will naturally want to walk with you. Someone else may try to twist your True North in a different direction, but your True North can only come from your own life story (Ibid., p. 29).

Why is the True North, or inner compass, so important? Bill George has answered to this question in conversation with Nathan Joy (see Nathan Jaye[2017]). He used the expression "inner compass" to explain why True North is important. He said, "True North is one's inner sense or call (heavenly voice) to what one has accomplished in one's life. It is the union of one's values, one's beliefs, and one's purpose. It is the straight and narrow path that keeps you true to who you are. The compass of this life is different for each of us, and no two people have the same compass".

### 3.3 Co-creative action for “True North (inner compas) ”

#### 3-3-1 Exploring unknown perspectives of “True North (inner compas) ” based on Bill George’s definition of 2007 version

**Ken:**Let us examine “True North (inner compas) ” based on Bill George’s definition of 2007 version. He defined that **True North** has four elements: **(1) the most important things, (2) the most strongly held values, (3) passion and motivation, and (4) the source of satisfaction in life.**

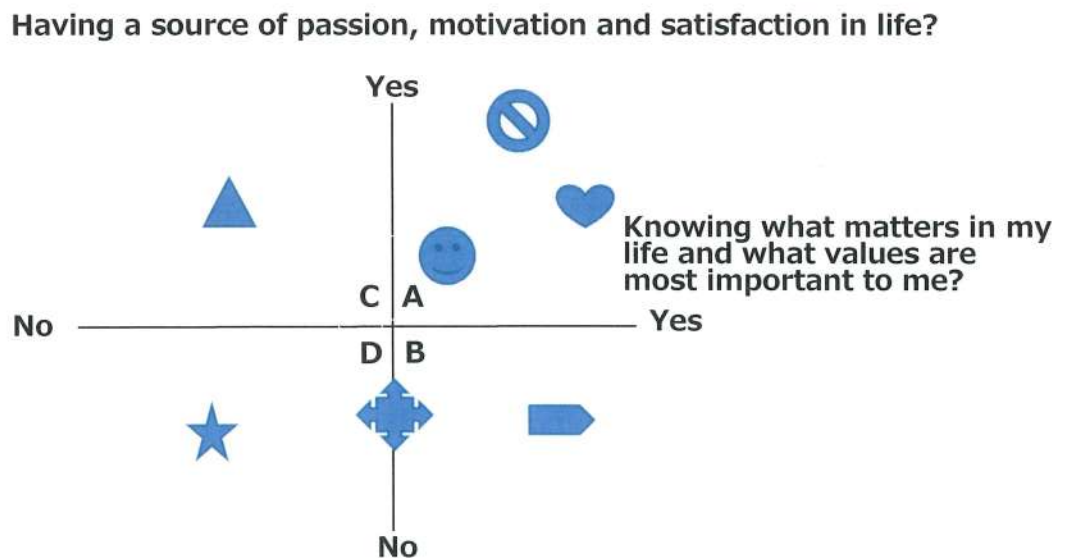
Let us co-create unknown perspectives from these four elements of the inner compass that is the True North by consolidating them into two questions. That is, the question on horizontal axis is (1) and (2) and the question on vertical axis is (3) and (4) as follows:

**Horizontal axis :** Do I know what matters in my life and what values are most important to me? YES or NO


**Vertical axis:** Do I have a source of passion, motivation and satisfaction in life? YES or NO

The example of the horizontal axis question is such as “do you put the quality of life first, or do you put your career first?”

**Figure 6 Co-creating “True North (inner compas) ” of Bill George’s definition(2007 version)**



**[On the vertical line between B and D]**

**Ana:** I introduce a movie called “**True North**” which I saw in 2021. This movie makes me neutral to what is important in life, and does not give me a source of passion, motivation and satisfaction in life. So, I placed it on below the vertical axis, between B and D shown by a stamp .

It is an English-language 3D animated film directed by a fourth-generation Korean resident in Japan. I thought it was a depiction of the reality of North Korea, but the flyer said, “TRUE NORTH is a film about the “True North. TRUE NORTH is an English idiom that refers to “a truly important goal. The compass needle always points north, no matter what position you are in, so it came to mean 'the direction to aim for that never changes, the right direction,' or 'the meaning of life. This is an animated film about the reality of North Korea's concentration camps, based on the facts heard from people who experienced the camps and former guards who escaped from North Korea. One family who came to North Korea in the 1960s under the return home program advertised as a “Paradise of Dreams” was put into a harsh camp without just cause, forced into hunger and forced labor, and in despair.

While watching people die, the family survives without losing sight of hope. In the depths of despair, the protagonist begins to ponder the meaning of life, and his struggle engulfs others. The director seems to have included the meaning of “True North” in the film. If I were placed in such a harsh environment, would I really be able to carry out my values like the protagonist in the film? Would I give up immediately and die?

I put it on below the vertical axis because I felt I was in danger of not having confidence. There are many films about Nazis, but not many that feature North Korea. Moreover, North Korea is a real thing that is happening. The issue of the abductees remains unresolved, and the question now is how we should fight against it. I wish I had the passion and motivation to do so, but I find myself too hesitant to take action.


**Ken:** Is this the story of political prisoners?

**Ana:** Yes, this is the story of a family that immigrated to North Korea under the “Paradise of Dreams” return home program. After the disappearance of their father, the mother and two siblings left behind were suddenly taken to a prison camp for unknown reasons. It has been spent 10 years interviewing people who experienced what happened in the camps and made an animation of it.

**[Zone B]**

**Deepak:** I am always negative. I think there are probably a lot of negative people in India.

**Ken:** There are many negative people in Japan as well.

**Deepak:** I put a stamp  at zone B. The reason I put it here is that if my motivation is low, I cannot act on **human dignity**, which is considered to be most important to me. If I spend all my time donating money and volunteering, I won't be able to live my own life. I can teach my students the importance of human dignity, but it is very hard to do. I adore Bill Gates who


is extremely busy, but he does good things for human dignity.

**Ken:** It reminds me of the co-creation activity of a fair trade issue that I conducted in a class at Reitaku University, which is connected to **human dignity**. We talked about fair trade and whether we are actually taking fair trade actions. For example, there was a discussion about whether global companies, including Japanese companies, are doing fair trade business in Bangladesh. Fairness is a judgment on the production side: In 2013, a sewing factory burned down and people died. The products are cheap, but the people who make them work in terrible conditions and sell them to consumers. At that time, there was a discussion about dignity for workers. This is an important point. In Japan, there are concepts such as SDGs and producer responsibility, but they are not really being implemented.


**Jun:** A French NGO has accused UNIQLO, Inc. They are accusing UNIQLO of forced labor and human rights issues in China's Uyghur region. UNIQLO claims that there is no such fact, but Japanese companies are becoming more and more conscious of fairness and human dignity.


**Ken:** It seems that such things are not easily conveyed to consumers. Consumers cannot tell if a product is fair or not because they do not know the production process. That is important issue.

#### **[Zone D]**

**Taka:** I put a stamp  at zone D. I have still rather negative feeling for the question of most important values in life, since the most important values are probably not clear, I think there is a conflict between the two values. One value is important, but the other is also important. When you get into a double bind, motivation suddenly disappears and you can't move. I think the same thing happened with the UNIQLO problem mentioned earlier. When one benefit is lost, the other is also lost. I think the ultimate value is to solve that. But, since that is not clear to me, I put it rather on the negative side.

#### **[Zone A]**

**Sato:** I put a stamp  at zone A. I recently proposed to make our **own vision** with my students in my Global Leadership class. By having a vision, preserving it, and keeping a small flame in our hearts lit at all times, we may be able to fulfill our new aspirations.

**Jun:** I also put a stamp  at zone A. The reason I put it here is that I intend to **uplift the value of my own life** under the specific historical background. Especially in the last two years, we have seen a global pandemic that is changing the way medical care works, and we have also seen problems in the way Japanese medical care itself works that were not supposed to be like this. I am aware of this. I have been able to research new systems in Europe and the U.S., and I am motivated by the fact that they have become important in Japan as well.

In terms of value, I don't think there will be any change in the future in the sense that my sense of value is based on how much I can uplift the value of my own life. I wonder if there is

an opportunity for a major change in our mindset. If there is a place where there is a challenge, we will take on the challenge. I think what Taka san said earlier is an important point. I myself used to experience that kind of thing for decades. I have experienced situations where I was even asked what to do about values themselves, and there were also situations where I had to make decisions without knowing which way to go. In every situation, I have had to think about what to do with sense of values. I think this is what we have been facing. What makes me very important is not the personalities of each of these people, but to understand what kind of situation they are in, and I think that kind of information is also necessary to some extent when sharing in this co-creative space.

**Taka:** What I said about conflicts between the two purposes is precisely because I think that Purpose and Value are on different levels. Purposes are more practical and values are ultimate. When a conflict arises between the two purposes, I believe that if the Values are clear, a path can be found to resolve the two.

**Jun:** I agree. It is a structure for underlying values of the goal or purpose. When there is a contradiction in the actual problem, we are sometimes driven to the point where we have to decide which one should be prioritized. Where is my original self at that time? It is a bit exaggerated, but as you mentioned dignity as a human being, I think it is important to take responsibility up to the human dignity.


**Sato:** It is important to think about our own compass and how we want to be. The goal tends to be something we cannot envision for ourselves because of many factors. Even if we are working toward a goal that we want our team to be, we may not be able to reach the goal.

**Jun:** When I say "goal," I mean something like a numerical target in the business world, such as a very short-term sales goal, such as "in three years, we will do this". This is based on the premise that our company is such a company, and that we are proposing this kind of structure to create this kind of society. Sometimes, discussions come up about using this kind of method for extremely short-term or medium-term goals. At such times, I have experienced quite a number of situations in which, in light of what the company should be, what it should be heading toward, and what values I have, I would say that this is not the way to go, or that we should stop using such methods. I think that values are fundamental, and there should be shades of what is a priority.

**Taka:** Perhaps managers who can make bold decisions in pursuit of long-term goals, cutting short term gains, have such fundamental values.

**Jun:** There are many situations, and I do not know them all, but there were quite a few people in the Japanese, American, and German companies where I worked who thought that short-term profit was the reason for the company's existence, as well as the profit of its shareholders. However, I think this has been changing since around 2000. One of the reasons is the reality that a company cannot exist unless its customers accept its products. The global competitive scene has become tougher, and if you don't pay attention to your customers, you won't survive. The problem of pollution, the problem of labor. The discussion is now moving on to labor that

violates human dignity. For instance, the issue of mining in Africa. The extraction of resources is almost entirely done by enslaved people. Underlying values are being questioned.

**Yoshi:** I put a stamp  at zone A, but closer to the origin. I always think about myself, but since yesterday I have started working at a different workplace, though the job description is the same as before. For nearly 30 years, I have been conducting research based on specifications provided by government agencies. I chose this field of work because I believed it would allow me to understand how local governments are addressing issues that are currently problematic in society, given its public nature. I sometimes wonder whether we are actually able to fulfill the requests we receive from government agencies.

In recent years, I have come to realize that we must compile survey results in line with the current administration's agenda, and I have been working with considerable doubt as to whether we are actually engaged in work that can solve the issues facing society. Depending on the theme, I have interviewed many people, including those overseas, and at that point, many of them were highly motivated, which inspired me and led me to believe that this was the right approach. Starting yesterday, I have shifted from commissioned work to research on what society truly needs, and I have taken on such work, though I am still unsure whether it can be realized.

However, I want to tackle themes that can solve social issues as much as possible, which is in line with my values. Since it is public work, surveys are conducted using tax money for the benefit of society, but after doing it for a long time, I have many doubts, and I don't think this will change even in the present job.


**Jun:** I think the reality is as you have just explained, but it would be nice if you could suggest to those in charge that even if the government is creating scenarios, there are other ways to approach them.

**Yoshi:** There are good tools for this like CSD method that what we are doing , and I hope we can take advantage of these.

**Jun:** I have dealt with people from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and there are quite a few who are thinking hard. It would be nice to be able to do this while teaming up with people who are aware of what they are doing.

**Yoshi:** If I am immersed in it, though, I will not be able to see it. It may be a good idea to have a balanced perspective.

### **[Zone C]**

**Ken :** I put a stamp  at zone C. It is because I did not know what did matter in my life and what values were most important to me before I met Jesus despite I had passion to explore the Truth in life.

The most satisfying source for me now is the one who does not lie, rather than what I want to be or who I am. But people including myself are bound to lie. Only source that tells the Truth

is, in my case, **the words of the Bible**. I am encouraged by them, as I am working with people by the co-creative space. I cannot live without them in my life. There is so much love pouring unto me through living words of the Bible, and I am so grateful. My former office was a surprisingly messy place like jungle(☺), but when once a student asked me, "If you have to choose one book from this plentiful books, which one would it be? I immediately answered, "It's the Bible!!". I think the Bible (words of living God) is amazing, regardless of Christian sects or religion.

### **3-3-2 Are we finding and/or heading for "True North (inner compass) " ?**

Next, based on the above co-creative action, what questions shall we raise and share for the topic of "True North (inner compass)"? How about like this:

**The horizontal axis is "Do I want to have True North (inner compass) or not?" or "have I found it or not? The vertical axis is "Am I heading toward a true purpose or goal that is a prerequisite for leadership?**

**Taka:** I think values and goals are different.

**Ken:** Yes, indeed. So, since "goal" or "purpose" is not included in Bill George's four elements, it is worthwhile to consider this as a different judgment axis for True North.

**Ana:** "Heading?" For WHAT are we heading?

**Jun:** It might be "**true purpose in life**". So, how about if I am heading for the **true purpose** in life as a premise of leadership?

**Taka:** There are four elements of the inner compass. Wouldn't it be easier to see about each of them? Why not do it for each of the important things, values, etc. one by one?

**Ken:** Yes, it is good to think of True North one by one; the most important things, strongly held values, passion/motivation, and then the source of satisfaction. It may be possible not to have discovered these as yet.

**Deepak:** We can be satisfied and motivated without having True North. Bill George is American, so perhaps the idea might be that power and money lead to satisfaction. If I were Bill Gates, I would be interested to know where he would stand on zone A, B, C, and D. Our values and Bill George's values would be different.

**Ken:** Bill George has said that each of us has a different inner compass.

**Deepak:** Of course yes, but 80% are spiritual values and Bill George might have a sense of economic values.

**Taka:** It's very Marxian, isn't it?

**Jun:** I guess the vertical axis question would be whether "I am heading for my true purpose" or not. I interpret the "true purpose" is an individual's desire and objective in life. The background behind its purpose is self-awareness, motivation, a support team, or values. I think this vertical axis is about what we are trying to achieve in our life. The horizontal axis is whether

we have found True North(inner compass) or not. I think it is a little bit ambiguous what the difference is between the vertical and horizontal axes.

**Ken:** The vertical axis is what I am going to do to achieve my goal. The horizontal axis is whether or not I have a clear True North (inner compass) in my mind to support it.

**Taka:** If we think about it that way, if the vertical axis is the goal, then the horizontal axis is the values.

**Ken:**Yes, it is. It's a compass of values. But, as Bill George mentioned, it's not just about values, but also passion and motivation.

**Taka:** I don't understand.

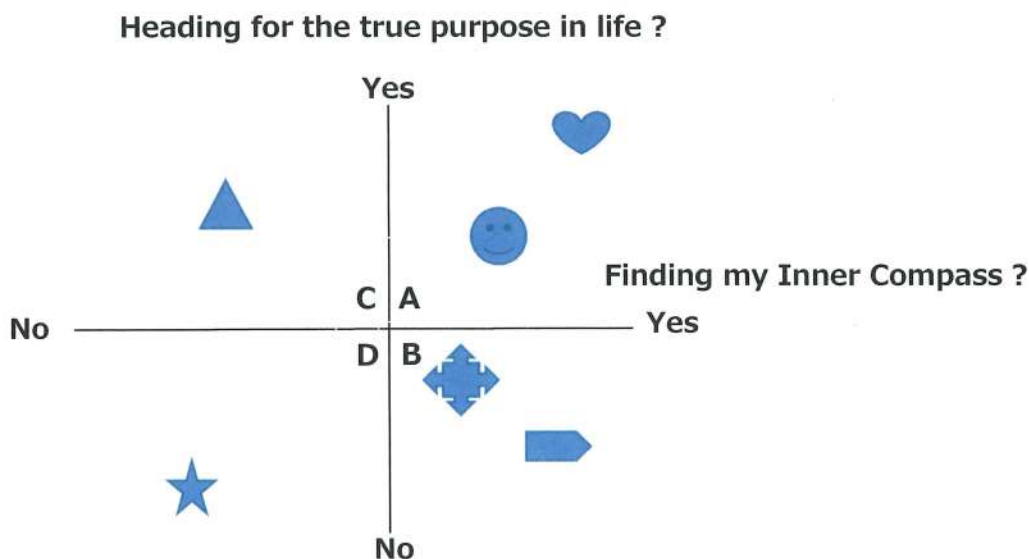
**Ken:** Well, we have done enough co-creating the questions for True North. Exploring different answers to the questions of True North in this co-creative space makes us aware of unknown ideas. So, let us share its questions as follows:

**Horizontal axis :** Am I finding my True North(inner compass)? YES or NO


**Vertical axis:** Am I heading for the true purpose in life that is the premise of leadership? YES or NO

Let us begin with the person of the stamp ★ in zone D, please.

**Figure 7 True North (Inner Compass): Finding it ? ×  
Am I heading for the true purpose in life that is the premise of leadership?**




**[Zone D] Neither finding my inner compass nor heading for the true purpose in life**

**Taka:**  is showing my position. I cannot say that I have a compass. I don't necessarily have a purpose both in life and in my work, and the two are not in alignment. For example, one reason to work hard is to make money. Even though my compass includes spending time with my family, sometimes I can't balance it with work. If I can balance both, I feel I am on my way to my goal, but when I can't, I don't feel like I am on my way. The same thing happens in management in relation to stockholders.

**Deepak:** Yes, not everyone can be satisfied.

**[Zone A] Finding my inner compass and heading for the true purpose in life**

**Yoshi:** My position is shown by a stamp  in zone A. I am still thinking from a work standpoint as well, and I have found themes that I have the passion and motivation mentioned earlier and that would bring satisfaction to my life. For example, my theme is **diversity**. It is difficult to say whether the theme I want to do is my inner compass, but I think I have found it because I can have motivation in what I want to do. Toward that, yes I am, but I am not quite sure if I am heading for the true purpose that is the premise of leadership.

**Deepak:** Yoshi san, your theme makes me really interesting.

**Yoshi:** Yes, it is. But, different countries have very different ideas of diversity.

**Deepak:** Such a society cannot be realized without women like Yoshi san as leaders.

**Yoshi:** But, it is difficult to do so in Japan today.


**Deepak:** Yes, there are few female members of parliament in Japan.

**Yoshi:** I do have my own interest in whether or not we are heading for my true purpose.

**Ken:** You're doing it because you're passionate about it.

**Yoshi:** What exactly are we doing? First of all, I think we need to change our consciousness and have people interact with each other, as well as with this **co-creative space**, in order to create a society of diversity.

**Ken:** That's wonderful! It is truly an inner compass.

**Jun:** I chose zone A, shown by a stamp  based on my own interpretation of the vertical and horizontal axes. Let me tell you why I chose zone A from my life story. What I have been thinking about in my work is "**quality of life**". It goes to the dignity of each individual, it is a compass value, and it is a matter of extreme importance to me. It is the driving force and source of my work. How to improve the quality of life has been my compass direction. Quality life is often translated as quality of daily living, but my interpretation is the quality of each individual's life by itself. I believe I have lived my life to improve the quality of life. I think I have only been able to achieve about half of that in concrete terms. Recently, I have come to this level because I feel that there is more to be done, and I would like to do more if given the chance. In other words, the time when I myself was able to work in the healthcare area was from the 1980s to 2000, so the technology is completely different from now, and because of the great advances in ITC, there should be a quality-of-life system that leverages that. We are

in this position in the sense that we have not had the opportunity to challenge that. The current response to corona pandemic, the current medical care is a mess. Even if there is technology, it is not being used properly. There is no scientific basis for what is being said. It is unclear what the government is trying to achieve. What would happen to the Olympics? We have become a society that simply stands by and watches such things happen. What is missing? It is important to think about this “quality of life” issue now.


### **[Zone B] Finding my inner compass but NOT heading for the true purpose in life**

**Deepak:** I chose zone B, shown by a stamp . I know True North(inner compass) is the important issue and have found it, but I often can't do it, and that cannot be helped.


**Ken:** Please describe more specific about the important issue. You know that, don't you?

**Deepak:** In my job, I have to say “yes” to orders from the top, even though I know it is the problem. What matters to me about the important issue is the “(human) dignity” of people. It is a bit different from economic values. For example, even if I knew where the corona virus came from, how it was discovered, who paid for it and where it was studied, there is nothing I could do about it. How much money does Bill Gates' Microsoft, Facebook, etc. make? Those companies could probably buy India in a year. Should we buy shares in world-renowned pharmaceutical companies? How can we save the lives of children in Africa and India? There is nothing we can do. Companies are investing in the response to Ebola and other viruses, becoming godlike entities. The WHO remains silent. Human dignity does not exist in their dictionary. That is the problem. Profit comes first in everything. So, for human dignity which can be True North as important thing, I have found it, but I am not heading for this true purpose in my life.

**Jun:** That is exactly right. Dignity for people is lacking in Japan as well. We need to go back to the starting point and think about it. The disparity is becoming more severe every year in Japan. Globally, it is said that about 2,000 people earn the income of 4 billion people in the world. Japan is also full of people who cannot make a living. This needs to be fully considered.

**Ana:** My position is shown by a stamp  in zone B. Human life is irreplaceable because it is connected to the human dignity of what we have shared. Precious lives are being taken by violence, war, discrimination, nuclear power, poverty, corona pandemic, etc. The society we are aiming for is a free society without discrimination where each person's human rights are respected. But, I am not fully committed to this goal, so I lack confidence and specificity. That is why I am not acting in a leadership role. I feel like I am living my life by a process of elimination, avoiding anything that goes against my own compass.

### **[Zone C] Heading for the true purpose in life but NOT finding my inner compass**

**Ken:** I chose zone C, shown by a stamp . In the past I was eager for self-realization. I thought it was my true purpose in my entire life despite not finding my inner compass. But, the more I was heading for it, the more I felt vain. As a result, I lost myself. I was troubled by

emptiness and the question of whether this was my true purpose or not. I had passion, but I lost sight of my true purpose. But, good news is that I find myself in the zone A, by shifting from zone C. I love to share this wonderful news with all of you (please read my testimony of zone C of “authenticity” in the chapter 3-1 and in the following chapter 4-4).

**Deepak:** We all do not know our true purpose. Even if they do, they cannot do anything about it. It is the same in temples, churches, hospitals, and schools. We have become robots. We are telling things that are not true. This is a problem. I think both the prime minister of Japan and the prime minister of India know this personally. But they are proceeding with politics as if they can't help it. What can we teach in schools? We have to think about what we should do. The people in the university president level might have known what to do, but they don't want to do anything. They don't even discuss it. That is the problem.

**Ken:** What exactly is the purpose of university education? Now, the focus is on increasing the employment rate. Is it true?

**Deepak:** What is authentic and what is authenticity? I think this is our question. Can authenticity really be done?

**Ken:** Americans and Asians might be different in perspective, so try to see things from the other person's perspective. That may reveal their authenticity. It is important to be able to distinguish between what is real and what is fake. I think this is a question that we all need to ask ourselves.

**Deepak:** There is a Japanese word, “ikigai,” which means “reason for living.” I think it differs slightly from the American concept of authenticity. Ikigai is created through mental strength. Are values limited to economic value? Dignity also comes into play. I teach at a business school, but I think it is dangerous to let money decide everything. I believe balance is important.

**Ken:** That's right. When I ask students, “What is the most important thing in the world?”. They say, “Money.” Money is important, but what other values are there? If we love money, we become a slave to it.

**Deepak:** We are already like that.

### **3.4 Sharing our findings based on co-creative action for True North**

Have we found our True North (inner compass) within ourself? Our answer is Yes, but No. **Yes**, it is because True North (inner compass) is found in one's own heart. But **No**, because it is not sufficient to realize **True North** embodied in Bill Geoge's four elements. That is, **true purpose of life** should not be gained unless one would move forward to it. Therefore, we need a “co-creation space” with two axes of decision-making, one on the awareness axis and the other on the action axis of not only finding out True North, but also moving forward it.

Here, next two questions arise: One is if the True North is individually different, are we not heading forward to the same direction? So, in the next chapter, we are going to demonstrate the important finding of **True North** which is the shared common goal for all humankind.

The other question is: With WHOM are we sharing different ways of looking at **True North(inner compass)** as referring to Bill George's approach for it? Our finding is that unlike Bill George's approach based on the interview of successful business persons, True North issue should be shared also with young generation (and/or along with them). The following is the co-creative dialogue of the second question we have proposed.

**Jun:** Good idea. Bill George's four elements(the most important things,the most strongly held values,passion and motivation,and the source of satisfaction in life) of true north were compiled from interviews with a good number of successful people or executives. This is based on data from their life stories and this is how they looked back on their lives. But,the True North should be shared with not only those successful business persons, but also younger generation who is making the future. To be honest,I never thought about that when I was a student and,I didn't know about values (the most strongly held values) .

**Ken:** We want to share our thoughts with the general public, including those who are about to enter the business world.

**Jun:** Bill George has done a good job of summarizing the process by which the different values have been formed. I can see this as the greatest common denominator, and my own experience has convinced me of this. But,how are we thinking of it?

**Ken:** The target audience is not only successful people or people who have had a long experience so far, or people at the top. I think it is worthwhile for more ordinary people to think about it, so I would like to create a space that not only CEOs but also ordinary people can enter. Let us make a question that students can enter easily. Bill George has an eye of looking down on someone from above.

**Jun:** I agree. I think four elements of True North(inner compass) are applicable. But, I think there are shades of gray. I believe he interviewed in the 1990s. In terms of the historical background, it was not necessarily a time of great transformation, unlike the present time. It is important for us to find out, or rather, to recognize in some way what kind of sense or consciousness the students of today have regarding this kind of thing. They must feel the changes of the times in their own way. I would very much like to know what the situation is.

**Sato:** Data was collected on students' perceptions of leadership qualities.

**Jun:** That is a very important part of our Co-creation project. I don't know what kind of interests students have today.Are they interesting,for example,what is the leadership of Japanese politicians? I don't know if they are interesting in such a question,but I am afraid

students today think the current leadership style is good. They are beginning to feel what a leader should be and what kind of person a leader should be. I think the teachers who are in contact with the students know this, and I think it is important for Japan in the future.

**Deepak:** Context is important. The assessment that Bill George may have come up with when he did his research may change his conclusions. We don't know how many people are dying in India from the pandemic. I don't think the number of people that the government announces is true. I think it is about 10 times that number. In this situation, students are collecting donations to buy oxygen cylinders and provide them free of charge to poor people in the countryside. There is a student union that provides various kinds of support. He took the entrance exam for an American university and passed, but now he can't go. He thinks: "What is my duty to do now?" I take care of others and my career can come later. Do what is necessary now. Priorities change depending on the case.

## **4. Co-creative leadership as authenticity (Oba)**

### **4.1 Against Bill George's hypothesis and necessity of Co-creative leadership**

#### **4.2 Co-creative action for "true self"**

#### **4.3 Co-creative space for facing autonomous <self> and social <self>**

#### **4.4 Authentic co-creative leadership and common goal of "True North(inner compass)"**

### **4.1 Against Bill George's hypothesis and necessity of Co-creative leadership as authenticity**

The crucial issue raised in this final chapter is that, through our co-creation experience, we have found it necessary to take a stance against Bill George's hypothesis of authentic leadership. This is because his model of authentic leadership lacks the concept of co-creation. Specifically, his model involves aiming for one's "True North" (inner compass), expressing one's "authentic self," and leading others. However, the authenticity revealed to us is neither the existence of the individual as "one's true self" nor the "True North (inner compass)" through which one expresses that "true self." It lies in aiming for the "True North (inner compass)" of "everlasting love"—a truth common to all human being—within the "co-creation space" where co-creation with others is realized. In other words, the co-creative leadership as "authenticity" we practice lies not in pursuing oneself or one's individuality, but in aiming for the Truth (everlasting love), by constantly engaging in a dynamic exchange with others or playing catch ball with others in the "co-creation space".

Therefore, in the next three sessions, we shall examine the concept of "true self", which is the core of Bill George's hypothesis, by sharing feelings and thinkings for this concept in the co-creative space(CCS). This will reveal that authenticity does not exist in it, and be necessary to have the co-creative leadership as authenticity. More specific, by sharing how we think about the "true self," posing the question "Do we understand or know what 'true self' is?", and uncovering diverse, conflicting opinions (answers), we reveal that the self, which harbors both good and evil, does not possess a "true self"(4.2).

Next, as an answer to the question of "Who am I?" (one's *raison d'être*—what it means to be oneself—), Bill George's reliance on autonomy (being true to oneself) is insufficient. We objectively demonstrate that the answer lies in the co-creation space, where the autonomous self and the social self engage with one another(4.3).

Finally, we propose the co-creative leadership as authenticity that aims for the universal "True North"—not an extension of individual beliefs, but the Truth revealed in the Bible (4. 4) .

### **4.2 Co-creative action for Bill George's "true self"**

In Bill George's authentic leadership model, emphasis is placed on facing "true self". But, in the first place, we hardly face the question of "what is 'true self'?", and do not at all make sense its connectivity with leadership. Why is it important for the leadership by knowing "true self"?

So, in this section, we shall share our thinking and feeling towards Bill George's "true self" and take the co-creative action for it.

### **What is "true self"?**

**Ken:** Let us build the judgment axis for sharing participants' own thinkings and feelings.

**Jun:** Before this, is there any definition for "true self" ?

**Ken:** Yes, there is. In his 2007 book, translated into Japanese, Bill George uses terms like "true self," and "real self." According to him, the "true self" or "authentic self" is understood as the integrity—the core beliefs and values at the very center of one's being—that lie at the deepest layer when peeling away the layers of the onion that is oneself [Bill George, 2007, pp.111~113]. Furthermore, in his book Bill George [2018], available online, he interprets authenticity as "being genuine and true to yourself." He then defines authentic leadership as encompassing the following five points (ibid., pp. 12, 20).

1. Understanding your purpose
2. Practicing solid values
3. Leading with heart
4. Establishing connected relationships
5. Demonstrating self-discipline

Additionally, True North refers to the guiding principle of life—an unchanging compass that steers us in the right direction and enables us to remain leaders even in a rapidly shifting world. It arises from the core beliefs, values, and principles we hold deep within our hearts and adhere to. It is an inner compass, uniquely your own, and defined as your deepest self at the most fundamental level [Bill George, 2017, p.29]. According to him, this is the straight path to staying true to yourself. This life compass is different for each person; no two individuals share the same compass.

However, what constitutes one's own unique self or one's honest self remains unclear, and the true self—or the real self—still feels ambiguous. Moreover, we think each of our members may have different thoughts on this. So, how about we share our understanding of the "true self" in terms of whether we know it or not, understand it or not? Which question would be better: "knowing or not knowing it?" or, "understand or not understand of it?"

**Taka:** For me, "understand or not understand?" is felt stronger than "knowing or not knowing?"

**Ken:** Then, shall we do "understand or not understand?"

**Taka:** Yes, please. In that case, I believe whether one understands the definition of "true self" is one thing, and whether one can recognize their "true self" as a personal matter after understanding that definition is another matter entirely.

**Jun:** Right. It's difficult without sharing a common definition of the term. The meaning or

definition of the word is unclear. I don't understand the definition used by Bill George who mentioned the "True Self."

**Ken:** Then, regarding the definition, shall we first try to be more specific about what it might be?

**Jun:** I think we need to clarify his definition of True Self. Before doing that, though, at this point, if I were to describe how I currently understand its meaning, I'd say it's something like a self-image or a sense of self.

**Ken:** Jun san, please choose next person.

**Jun:** Taka san, please.

**Taka:** As for "true self", what makes me interesting personally is Viktor Emil Frankl's existentialism. In his book, "Psychotherapy and Existentialism (1967)", Frankl seeks human existence for meaning. Meaning is nothing but same as existence. It looks like too extreme, but is a practical thought. If I am standing on the existentialistic viewpoint, "true self" is no meaning and does not exist. Therefore, instead of pursuing "true self", the question should be how "self" can be made meaningful in the real context of human life course.

**Ken:** It is not "true self", but "Meaning-laden self"? , right?

**Taka:** That's right. I have tried to argue by syllogism, but really difficult to explain it.

**Ken:** Yes, it's tough, indeed.

**Jun:** Agree with what Taka san has felt about it. "true self" is something "worthy", but if so, sometime, I feel puzzling whether there is a difference between "true self" and "worthy". Is "worthy" the same as "meaning"?

**Taka:** But, if it is something worthy, it is not the same thing as existence. So, "true self" can be understood as "worthy self".

**Ken:** The "true self" is one of core concepts in Bill George's authentic leadership. The more we have been focusing it, the more we have felt obscure. So that, we have to make it more clear picture.

**Jun:** Yes, we need to have much more concern about "true self" in the authentic leadership. It is because, in the time of turbulent world including impact of Covid pandemic, both companies and individuals are questioned to ask how to survive, which, I feel, lead to question of meaning and worthy of how to live by ourselves.

**Yoshi:** As Kaushik san said previously, 'I want to be a person like Ken san', and I believe striving to become the person you aspire to be is what authenticity is all about. I don't think there's any other way to get closer to your true self than by continually asking yourself what kind of person you want to be. To put it extremely, it's quite difficult to pursue your "true self" while living, but at time of dying it can be possible to find "true self" by looking back "enjoyed or was happy in my life". (True self = the person you want to be, the self you strive to become, the self that achieves self-realization?)

**Ken:** At time of dying?

**Yoshi:** Yes, looking back my own life, if I can say "My life was happy and something

meaningful”, that would be “true self”. From a viewpoint of feeling happiness in facing the death, persuing whom I want to be is getting closer to “true self”.

**Ken:** Then, “true self” is “want-to-be self”

**Yoshi:**There is no other way to approach to “true self” by asking continuously myself what kind of a person I want to be.

**Ken:**Are you not approaching it right now?

**Yoshi:** No, I am trying to approach it.

**Ana:** For thinking of self, there are “past self”, “present self” and “future self”. The “true self”, I think, is “present self”. The “present self” contains many elements like briefs, value and so forth, which have been attained by the “past self”, and are creating “future self”. The “present self” is like myself seeking whom I want to be, or I want to go somewhere strange way of life. This is “true self”. But, it may be impossible to know it by myself alone. It is because it may not be true even if I think of “This is ‘true self’”. The “true self” can be found in the surrounding people and world affairs.

**Ken:** Does “the true self” mean “the self without lies or deception”?The “true self” may be ‘genuine self’ without lie and false, right?

**Sato:**There is a phrase “finding or discovering myself”. I think I can change myself anything no matter what. It’s true everyone has his or her own briefs, but they may be changing by external factors. Therefore, it is not certain whether “true self” exists or not.

**Ken:**So, it is like constantly changing, isn’t it?

**Sato:**What is true or truth, anyway? Is it something or someone absolutely unique? Humans are vessels whose contents change daily. Truth changes for each person. I believe truth and the self are separate. I am a vessel, and I change depending on what I put inside. (There is no truth—no one absolute thing—within the vessel that is me.)

**Ken:**Then, what is the Truth? Very important question, isn’t it?

**Taka:**Is Truth the entity problem? Entity or Ideal? “To be” or “Ought to be”?

**Ken:**Probably it is neither ideal nor “Ought to be”, but the problem of entity or “To be”. That is, the Truth as entity is completely different from “vessel self” of holding the question like “I am who I am” or “I am now thinking of whom I want to be”.

**Taka:**In order to reach the Truth, there is saying “Ego-less state or self-negation (Jiga,bo-kyaku)”.

**Sato:**In this case, self is ego, isn’t it? (Is there no truth in the self that possesses ego?)

**Taka:**If “vessel self” is ego, then it needs to have the ideal.

**Sato:**Pursuing the ideal by ego may not be the true one. It is like “I am forced to go, even though I don’t want to go”.

**Ken:**Let us make it simple. The “true self” is “no lie, no false self”. If so, then the question topic might be different. Which definition of “true self” shall we be proceeding, “no lie, no false self” or “present self”?

**Sato:**How about is the more specific question like “Is ‘present myself’ moving toward my own

ideal?"

**Ken:**It sounds nice. But, this question is closely linked with True North, so that we will do it in the next session of True North. Instead, here, let us make a co-creative space for the question topic of "no lie, no false self" as "true self". How about this?

**Jun:**In this case, how about is two questions of "true self" like "What extent do I know 'true self'"? and "What extent do I understand it?"

**Ken:**It's simple and a good question.

**Jun:**Adding one thing. Our co-creative exercise can be applicable and effective for "360-degree evaluation" used widely in business world, specially American and European companies. This evaluation focuses on meaning-making of self and helps to draw a picture of yourself by answering the questions of "who am I?". This self-check questions are answered not only by myself, but also the same questions for the persons concerned, about 20 including my boss. The perception gap between myself and others is focal point of this evaluation analysis. This analytical tool is good for leading what extent we know 'true self' or "Have we ever thought of 'true self'?" Therefore, our co-creative exercise may be good for exploring "true self" as a gateway.

**Ken:** It is very much encouraging. Ok, let us make a co-creative way of a question topic like "Do I understand 'true self'(='no lie, no false self')?" Yes or No. Shall we?

(Let us put stamp as a dummy on the horizontal axis)

**Figure 8 Do I understand "true self" (= "no lie, no false self")?**



**Neutral position(central point) for understanding "true self" (= "no lie, no false self")**

**Ken:** Who is speaking first? Let us begin with Taka san, a person of neutral position.

**Taka** ★:To be honest, I don't know myself so that it is difficult to say whether I understand or not "true self". That's why I put a stamp on the middle.

**Ken:**So, then, what is opposite to "true self"?


**Ana:** It's "lie self". I think we never understand "lie self" unless we understand "true self".

**Ken:**It may be so.

**Taka:**It's hard to decide when I don't understand my "true self". I think making a critical

decision is impossible unless I understand my "true self". I put a stamp in the middle because I face two opposite cases of both making a decision by knowing myself and not making a decision by not knowing myself.


### **"Yes" position for understanding "true self"**

**Jun** : About 70 percent I understand my "true self". That's why I put on "Yes" position. Putting it the other way around, there are some parts that I didn't understand. As I already told about "360-degree evaluation", there is a big perceptual gap for certain questions between myself and others. Others' perception may not always be true, but I am sure I will not capture 100 percent myself. One more thing why I said about 70 percent. It is my future life line. I don't know what is going to happen in my future, but there is a possibility of different image of my "true self" and as a result, of my "true different self".


**Ken:** You understand 70 percent of your "true self". If so, what is it?

**Jun:** It's hard to say because there are many aspects of "true self" born by how I think and judge.

**Ken:** O.K. I understand why it's so hard. Though it is said that the authentic leadership guided by "true self" is ideal, we come cross full of mysteries from it.

**Ana** : The "true self", I think, is changing in the past, present and future. The "true self" of the past may not be the same as that of the present, or of the future. It is because the "true self" can be found NOW irrespective of time line. Therefore, it may be "Be myself", which contains fundamentally my own brief, justice, like or dislike and so forth. But, in my case, it almost does not change so far, and will be so in the future as well.

**Ken:** It's amazing that you have something essential, which remains unchanged over time.

**Yoshi** : In my case, what remains unchanged over time ("true self") is aesthetic feeling of myself. Such as, way of being impressed, of sorrow, regrettable, stressful and so forth.

**Ken:** Well, what has made you impressed? How about the best three in your life?


**Yoshi:** I can't help but think of a work scene. It was about 20 years ago, probably in 2004. I went to India at the first time in the research project, which Ken san was one of members. I was so impressed by experiencing the fervent environment which was unknown to me at all and something created by Indian people. Experience in India gave me great impact which could never have such experience in Japan. Impact is much greater in foreign countries like India than in Japan. It is because Indian culture, religions and so forth are so different from Japan where I have been grown up. What I know India by reading literatures and inputting information is overwhelmed by my experience in India. This is how I am impressd. Also, I am impressed by people being happy and by coming across something to be created.

**Ken:** It is said that people are impreseed by touching Truth, Virtue and Beauty.

**Yoshi:** In my case, I am so impressed by the moment of light out of a tough situation in human activity. Lots of example I can explain for it.

**Ken:** I think these awakening dialogue by playing a catch style have not been carried out in the discussion of authentic leadership by “true self” so far. That’s why sharing by the co-creative way gives us the meaning for opening our eyes. OK, then, let us move on to the person on the “NO” position.

**“No” position for not understanding “true self”**


**Sato**  : I always think that I don’t understand myself, and thereby my “true self”. There is a perception gap between what I see myself and what others see me.

**Ken:**No, it seems to me that you understand yourself.

**Sato:**Oh, no, really I don’t understand myself. Others may see me clearly, but within myself, I have a large blind spot where I cannot see myself. This large blind spot reveals how little gratitude I have for myself. I lack gratitude for simply being here.

**Ken:**OK. Let us thank to live together now.

**Sato:**I am trying to do it, but cannot, because the lust of “complaining self” prevents me to do so.

**Ken**  : The my “true self”, which is “gratitude true self”, may be understood by others, but I cannot. The reason might be that my own desires act as a barrier, preventing me from seeing the true self that feels gratitude.

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So far, we have shared our ways of thinking and feeling to the question of “Do I understand ‘true self?’” . The co-creation for finding different answers needs to have three viewpoints, “Yes” position on the right, “No” position on the left and Neutral position(origin). This co-creative excise has revealed that there are different perceptions on “true self” among our members. That is, the “true self” is perceived as “unkown(blindspot) self”, “no lie, or honest self”, “unchangeable self”, “impreseed self (by touching Truth, Virtue and Beauty)”, “egoistic self”, “ and so forth.

Therefore, regarding these diverse forms of self-awareness, Bill George's assertion that the “true self” is the one possessing an “inner compass” deep within the layers of the onion-like self, and that this constitutes one's “authentic self,” is accurate but not necessarily sufficient.

Is there a common question that cuts through these multifaceted notions of the “true self”? It may lie in the question of the meaning of one's existence and the purpose of one's being.

**4.3 Co-creative space for facing autonomous <self> and social <self>**

In the previous session, by creating together for “true self”, we have become aware of the essential question:What is the meaning or purpose of my being or my existence?

This finding has brought us that Bill George’s hypothesis of “true self” as holding “inner

compass(or be myself)" is necessary for this question, but not sufficient. And, the "inner compass" may exist in each individual person, but also a universal "inner compass" which is common for all human being may exist.

Therefore, in this section, we co-created based on the perspective that the "true self" lies not in the "authentic self" = autonomous self that Bill George relies on, nor in the social self, but in the "co-creative self" that emerges in the space encompassing both (conducted on November 5, 2021). Below, we introduce the insights gained from this co-creation process.

As a result, it objectively demonstrates that the autonomy (selfhood) Bill George relies on as an answer to the question of one's *raison d'être*—what one truly is—is insufficient, and that the answer lies in the co-creative space where the autonomous self and the social self have a face to face with each other.

#### **4.3.1 Exploring the questions of autonomous <self> and social <self>**

**Ken:**What is the important question by co-creating Bill George's focus on "true self" is the question of "Who am I?" as the meaning of my existence. For this, a literature on Somogy Varga, Charles Guignon[2020] *Authenticity* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy) gives very thoughtful suggestion to us concerning the relationship between authenticity and self. That is, authenticity indicates the existence of "true self" and can be found by the criterion of whether "true self" is autonomous self or not and/or social self.

Bill George sees authenticity from autonomous self, whereas critics are based on social self. However, we are standing on neither of them and think authenticity lies on the co-creative space by covering both criteria of autonomous self and social self.

We shall find out the questions expressing those criteria, shall we?

Let us begin with the criterion of autonomous self which is the core of Bill George's hypothesis. He has proposed practical five dimensions of (autonomous self focused) an authentic leader as follows.

- 1. Do you understand your purpose?**
- 2. Do you practice your values?**
- 3. Do you lead with your heart?**
- 4. Do you establish connected relationships?**
- 5. Do you demonstrate self-discipline?**

It's important to judge authentic leadership by those questions. A fundamental, but simple question underlying these five questions is to face these questions sincerely or not. That is, it is the question of "To be honest to myself". Obviously, in some case, we can be honest to ourselves, but not always. Therefore, let us share the question of "To be honest to myself" in the co-creative space. The question is: Am I honest to myself in the co-creative space? Yes, or No. Shall we?

One more criterion is social self. This idea is based on Heidegger's viewpoint of humanity which has been highlighted in the world of ontology. That is, the human does not exist by itself, but does exist in the relationship and sociality. This leads to the fundamental question of who we are, coming from where and where to. So, based on this idea, we shall create one judgment axis by which authentic leadership can be judged. As a question for expressing the social self, we shall propose the question: Do I feel I am alive in the relationship with others in the co-creative space? The answer is Yes, or No. Shall we?

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**Jun:**I haven't read that article (Somogy Varga, Charles Guignon[2020]) ,but it looks interesting to me. It hits to the point. To be honest, the definition of authenticity is quite ambiguous which makes me troublesome. I think that Bill George had an idea of "autonomous self" focused authentic leadership from his own experience over long period of time which was to lead the organization by what he would think and decide by himself. Therefore, the vertical judgment axis is Bill George's hypothesis.

On the other hand, it seems to me that leadership of focusing social change in the organization has been highlighted specially at the outbreak of Corona pandemic. As a result, facing drastic changes, the argument of solely relying on the "autonomous self" or "be myself" focused authentic leadership may not be applicable.

**Ken:**That's right. Let us do co-creation by bearing this in mind.

**Jun:**Another issue is in the social aspect of the "autonomous self" focused authentic leadership which does matter. For instance, in USA, social issues such as socio-economic inequality and meritocracy have been taking place due to the social system built by the "autonomous self" focused authentic leaders, which are succeeding to younger generation.

This system is now fiercely under attack. Similar things are happening even in Japan. Therefore, Bill George's "autonomous self" focused authentic leadership has to be reconsidered.

**Ken:**It's wonderful, isn't it! It gives the meaning to do co-creation.

**Jun:** Getting into the bottom of those thoughts, the ethical issue in diversified society is compelled to appear. As I mentioned the case of USA as for allowing for diversity, I feel the argument is shifting how to overcome the negative effects of running to the extreme as consequence of self-centered thinking in the name of "autonomous self" focused authentic leadership.

**Ken:** Absolutely right. By creating two judgment axes of autonomous self and social self, some connectivity can be found. This is exactly what we would like to make contribution.

**Taka :** By listening dialogue about ethics, I am thinking how it can be dealt with in my field of specialization (business ethics) . Thinking of diversity thoroughly brings about the idea such as human rights, duties. What I am doing research for ethical issue is that in a diversified society, there are majority and minority so as to raise a question of how the minority is protected and what is the duty of the organization in its distributing rights. So, from a view

of my research interest, it seems to me that what has been discussing is something different. Jun san, please tell me more specific about what is your image of the ethics.

**Jun:**My image of ethics or ethical issue is inequality or dividing society which is arising from liberal view of self-centered thinking in the name of “autonomous self”. The “autonomous self” justifies its own right, which brings about so-called diversified society. It needs to be associated with social values as well. This is making our society chaos. As Adam Smith’s basic idea is ethics, our present age needs it. Without the ethics, our society is corrupted and is going to be out of hand. Look at Japan now. Enormous inequalities such as income gap, education gap, regional gap and so forth are appearing. This should not be. Chaos will appear if diversity and right are stressed too much. Something needs to control it. Here, ethics comes into picture. In USA, the study on bad impact of anime or animation upon children is going on. But, in Japan, the animation is considered to be “freedom to express” or “time limit to the use of smartphone” for children. I am not saying all anime and manga are bad. This is the consequence of too much focus on autonomous way of thinking. Then, how to control it? I think we need to have socially common value or rule.

**Ken:** The social value or rule you have said just now is exactly what the co-creative study is aiming to realize it. This study or method is to examine one judgement axis by crossing another one. The individual freedom such as freedom of expression is on one judgement axis. If we stick to this axis only, then individual responsibility is disregarded and is gone somewhere. As I have been telling students very often, freedom based on individual autonomy is very dangerous if it is not crossed and checked by another judgement axis such as responsibility. But, this danger is becoming conscious once the co-creative space is created and we are in it.

**Jun:**Yes. The social value or rule will be realized by entering the co-creative space as a method.

**Ken:**If this discussion about authenticity is carried out beforehand, the co-creative exercise will be implemented more effectively.

**Sato:** Ethics as a whole, as Jun san has just said, may include humanitarian, human trafficking, human experiment. They do because they think OK(right). The ways of perceiving ethics may be different by country. So, what we need here is crisis management (of our perception) rather than ethics. So, by using case studies, we can be aware of perceptual gaps and be an authentic leader of being aware of these perception gaps.

**Sato:**When I think of a case of that kind of authentic leader, I remind of Naomi Osaka, a world famous tennis player. She is a daughter of Haitian father and Japanese mother. She has also received lots of attention as a pioneer of “Black Lives Matter”. The conventional image of female leader is masculine type of woman and without emotion. But, nowadays, it is not for young generation. “Be true to my heart” is appreciated and may take care of self and others. So pleasant that Naomi Osaka is expressing her own opinion straight.

.....

**Ken:** It was exciting about talking authenticity, wasn't it? We have been staying neutral to both sides of Bill George and his critiques. The authenticity(=true self) can be captured by

neither standing on autonomous self nor standing on social self, but by both of them in the co-creative space. That is, if this space does not exist, both sides never face each other and never reach the truth. It is because both sides stick to its own standpoint.

**4.3.2 Co-creation for the questions of autonomous <self> and social <self>**

The autonomous <self> or “Be myself”, which is one aspect of true self, is leading to a question of “Can I be honest to myself?”. So, let us begin to create the co-creative space with this question: “Can I be honest to myself in the co-creative space?” which is set in the vertical axis. Next, in the horizontal axis, the other aspect of social <self> for true self is set up by raising a question: “Do I feel I am alive in relation with others?”

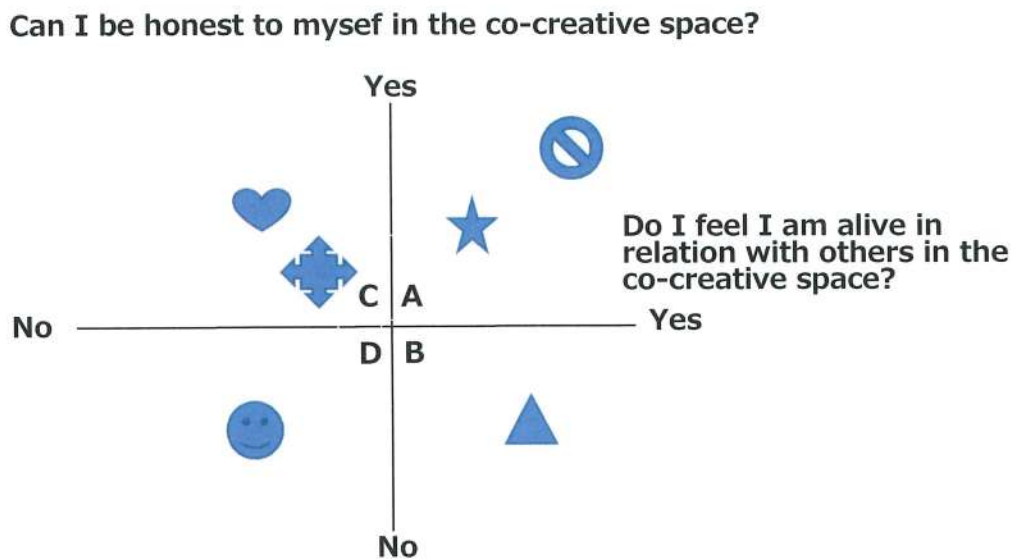
**Vertical axis: Can I be honest to myself in the co-creative space?**

**(Autonomous <self> or “Be myself”:value judgment of Bill George’s hypothesis)**

**Horizontal axis: Do I feel I am alive in relation with others in the co-creative space?**

**(Social <self>:value judgment of critics)**

**Figure 9 Myself in the Co-creative space : Be honest to myself? Feel I am alive?**




D : CCS itself is threatened by the threat of violence. B : Abandon the self that is in zone A.

The Co-creative leader is to lead oneself towards the Truth by overviewing both A and non-A zones.

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**Ken:**Let us put on stamp in the co-creative space by means of expressing what we think and /or feel about two questions. (This is shown in Figure 9, which was carried out in November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

**A Zone: "Can be honest to oneself and feel I am alive with others"**

**Taka**  : I have a feeling that this A zone gives a special atmosphere of speaking freely myself. So, no doubt to be honest in this zone.

**Ken:**Yes, this zone has such an air, because we feel it like a dialogue.

**Taka:**Absolutely. It gives sense of security.

**Ken:**It is a real voice heard from a student who experienced the co-creative space. At the beginning, she couldn't say even a single word as she was afraid to be attacked. But, she changed her mind-set and talked a lot as soon as she knew this co-creative space was not playing a dodge ball(causing violence),but playing a catch ball(non-violence).

**Taka:**Yes, indeed.This space creates a sense of acceptance. In another word, it's accepting diversified values. I think this space looks like the one "we can say anything freely", but there is the invisible norm in it. I think that is social contract(rule) which everyone is recognizing to control its own right. If this social value judgement is removed, it will be chaos of insisting its own right.


**Ken:**It's social contract(rule) of "NO to playing a dodge ball(causing violence)", isn't it?

**Taka:**Yes, it looks free to express individually but is based on clear social value (of non-violence). As for formulate social rule, the consensus building as a community have been discussed fairly well. So, it might be interesting how our co-creative space method is applying to it.

**Jun:**Our method is also applicable in the community of corporate organization.This is urgent important challenge, isn't it?

**Taka:**"To be honest to oneself" may not be as a result of "Alive oneself with others",but it is other way round("Alive oneself with others" makes "To be honest to oneself"). OK, then, next is Ana san of C zone, please.


**C Zone: "Can be honest to oneself, but don't feel I am alive with others"**

**Ana**  : I can be honest to myself in the co-creative space, it is because I feel more and more intimacy with our team as we have been experiencing this method. I have sense of security whatever I can speak and feel all right to expose myself. But, I don't feel I am alive with others, it is because I don't have confidence whether what I have said is appropriate or not.

**Ken:**It's all right even if you don't have confidence about it. Speaking out by itself is worthy in the co-creative space.

**Ana:**Well, next is Sato san of A Zone, please.

**A Zone: "Can be honest to oneself and feel I am alive with others"**

**Sato**  :I can be honest to myself because of being alive with others in the co-creative space. The reason why I feel I am alive is I have stimulus to listen different opinions, to move to different focus and back forth. I cannot move myself alone, but can do it by playing a catch

with others. Therefore, it's better to move as more persons participate in it. It's okay to say something crazy. In this space, no correct answer is found, and some answers look like away from the question topic, but later on they will be known to be connected. This space is driven by human being. Next is Yoshi san of D Zone, please.

**D Zone: "Cannot be honest to oneself and do not feel I am alive with others"**

**Yoshi** 😊 :To be honest, I want to put a stamp on A zone, but try to challenge by putting it on D zone. In this zone, I can say the opposite opinion of A zone, can't I? This zone is not safe. That's why I cannot be honest to myself. If I don't feel safe, it's hard to listen others and no place to live there, so that I don't feel I am alive with others.

**Ken:**Yes, there are people in D zone. It is important to make clear why they are there.

**Yoshi:**One reason why they cannot be honest to oneself and don't feel I am alive with others is for new comers in the co-creative space. They may feel scary and are afraid of speaking out despite they are told this space is carried out by the invisible norm of prohibiting playing a dodgeball(non-violence).

**Ken:**Yes, this zone is totally opposite to A zone, isn't it?

**Yoshi:**What kind of people are standing on this D zone?

**Ken:**Handicapped persons?

**Yoshi:**No. I feel they may be more honest. I am puzzling about what kind of persons are not honest to oneself and don't feel confidence that I am alive in the co-creative space.

**Ken:** Perhaps this person in D zone holds a rigid worldview—a fixed notion—that is incompatible with the concept of co-creation. Because of this, in the world of co-creation spaces, he or she may not be able to be true to oneself, nor do he or she feels truly valued. Next is Jun san of C Zone, please.

**C Zone: "Can be honest to oneself, but don't feel I am alive with others"**

**Jun** ❤️ :I think A zone is ideal zone. But, C zone is used to be my place and continue till today. At the stage of proceeding what I think, my self(ego) will come out in any way. As a result, I don't feel I am alive with others. That's why I need to shift to be A zone from now on. I think for facing many important issues such as environmental issue, the co-creative space of "be honest to oneself and being alive with others" is quite necessary and urgent.

The way of thinking and feeling of C type is not aware well of the relationship with divergent persons and how to proceed with them. Therefore, as for collaboration, A type and C type are not the same. A type's collaboration is based on equal footing. But, C type is collaboration with a leader of directing. Here, what type of leader matters in C zone. A type is open innovation, but in reality, most of companies are not there, but in C zone. Even they try to challenge open innovation in A zone, they don't know how to proceed to it. This is a reality of Japanese company.

**B Zone: "Cannot be honest to oneself, but feel I am alive with others"**

**Ken ▲** :Ideal is in A zone, but reality is in C zone, isn't it? Interesting! My place is in A zone, but I challenge to put a stamp on B zone, because no one is there. B zone is that I cannot be honest to myself, it is because my bad part(egoistic self) is revealed if I am to be honest. Focus is more on relationship with others by oppressing such a self. This mind-set or attitude is quite common in a reality world, isn't it? And, in B zone, this type is to focus social self rather than autonomous self. It's so-called "following blindly", which is quick to tune in to the words and actions of others.

**Jun:**Unfortunately, this B type is considered most important.

**Ken:**We have so many inspirations, haven't we? Our co-creative exercise makes aware that authenticity of autonomy is necessary, but not at all sufficient. The whole picture of authenticity cannot be captured unless the element of sociality or relationship is included along with autonomy.

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It seems to us that a leader cannot be authentic unless he or she is "being honest to his/her self and feeling alive with others". So, it looks an authentic leader is on A zone. But, what we have been aware of in our co-creative exercise is real authentic leader is not the person who is confined to look only A zone, but overview all zones of the co-creative space. That is , true authentic leadership is the person who is standing on the co-creative space and making a decision with bird' eye view.

Next question is: where is the authentic leader heading for? We shall think together this topic in the following section.

**4.4 Authentic co-creative leadership and common goal of "True North(inner compass)"**

Finally, what is **the co-creative leadership as authenticity**? It refers to **the skills and qualities of leading others with an open ear, recognizing one's own self-centeredness, and striving toward the Truth(eternal love) found in the Bible.**

The following three-step questions will make this clear. First, what kind of influence does this leader exert on others? Second, who exactly is this self that observes others and reflects back? Third, where is the co-creative leader heading for? Let us consider these together. These three questions, as illustrated in the diagram below, point in different directions. The index finger represents the first question, directed toward others. The three fingers represent the second question, directed inward toward oneself. The thumb represents the third question, directed toward an absolute being (the universe or the Creator who created humanity).



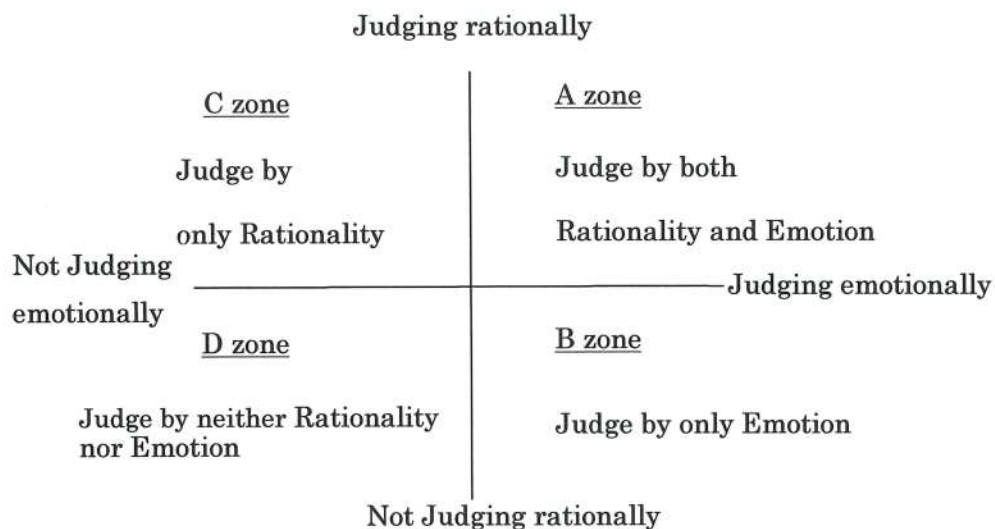
## What kind of influence does the Co-creative leader exert on others?

Let us, at first, think what kind of influence does this leader exert on others in an organization. Previously, we have been sharing the questions: Do I understand “true self” (=“no lie, no false self”)?(4.2) and Can I be honest to myself? + Do I feel I am alive in relation with others? (4.3). These co-creation activity has brought us amazing awareness. This “awareness” is, indeed, the answer to the influence of the Co-creative leadership to other people. More specific, the Co-creative leadership is to **leading toward a non-violent “co-creation space” that respects free-will** by playing a catch ball with others. And, in this space, it supports to think and feel together at free-will, and encourages to express what we bear in mind and to listen carefully to opinions of the others.

As shown in Figure 10, the “Co-creative space” is a free-will space to discover a question(judgment axis) **worth sharing** about any topic (subject of recognition) and create together diverse answers. In this space, own rationality and sensitivity are refurbished and felt alive in the relationship with others.

**Figure10 “Co-creative space(CCS)” and Rational and emotional Decision-making in CCS**

**CSD: Innovative method of renewing my own reasoning and emotion**



Note: Rationality includes not only logic(merit/demerit), but also moral judgement(good/bad). Emotion includes love/hate, intuition etc.  
Obligatorily judgement and legal judgement are carried out in D zone.

## What is the “Co-creative space(CCS)”?

“Co-creative space” is a space of creating together Kata (various ways of thinking and feeling) at free-will. It is a space for having a sense of living together by renewing and

revitalizing my own reasoning and emotion. This method is called the Co-creative Space Development (CSD) method.

This is an innovative & Kaizen method by working together with a different mind-set, which triggers inspiration, creating shared value and synergy effects on both individuals and groups or organizations. Specifically, ① it generates questions (judgment-axis) to be shared among different mind-sets and exploring diversified answers (new findings). ② It leads to discovering “problems” in a visible fashion, and analyzing their causes and finding solutions (Action Plan). Figure 10 demonstrates this method.

Experiencing CSD will acquire Core life skills (shown later in p.87) and discover the gateway to the eternal love through mission sharing.

(mind-set : a mental attitude or inclination, a fixed state of mind.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mindset>)

### Who exactly is this self that observes others and reflects back?

The second question is to make clear the question of who really I am (indicated as three fingers pointing to myself). The self awareness is a core concept for the Bill George’s authentic leadership. No doubt our co-creative leadership is stressing it as much as he does, or even more than his focus. But, do we really know true self? As we did in the previous sessions, answering the question of “true self” is actually extremely hard.

However, we have come to know that Bill George’s “peering onion skin” hypothesis, which mentioned earlier in 4-2, is not sufficient at all to argue since it is based on only positive side of “true self” and ignores the negative side of it. And, his view on “authenticity” is “being genuine and true to yourself”. Surely, it may say so if, only if “true self” is known and understood. But, if unknown self does exist, it is impossible to say for unknown self as “being genuine and true to yourself”. So, we cannot help but say his authenticity is narrow perspective.

Therefore, we have come to a clear picture by taking the co-creative action for “true self”. The “true self” cannot be reached unless it covers not only “known self” but also “unknown self”, and both positive and negative side. Namely, it has to be connecting positive side of “true self” as **integrity** (being of core value such as belief, expressed by Bill George) with negative side of egoistic being (expressed by our co-creative members). We will see “true self” as “ambivalent self” holding both positive and negative nature. And, if “unknown self” does exist, it is impossible to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

If “ambivalent self” and “unknown self” does exist in a deep side of peeled onion, then, there is a need to ascertain what it is. By doing the co-creative activity, we come to notice that the “true self” as authenticity is not ‘individual self’ pursuing Bill George’s way of “true to myself”, but ‘social self’. In this ‘social self’ or the relationship with others in a society, the question we would like to focus is which relationship with “others” makes as a reference point. All the

members who participate in the co-creative space may be “others” for myself.

But, since all of them are “ambivalent self” and “unknown self”, they cannot be a reference point. Then, what should we do? A reference point should be the “other” knowing perfectly such a human nature. Such reference point cannot be found any books except only one book that is written from the viewpoint of an absolute being who knows who we are. That is the Bible. The Bible is considered the holy book of the Christian religion, but it has nothing to do with this religion at all. It is a love letter that shows God's love for all mankind that transcends cultural and religious differences.

Let us get straight to the point. The co-creative space is a space where you face your true self. One's thoughts and feelings are projected in this space, where light is shed and we realize that our true selves are sinners who are separated from the living God. But, good news is that these sinners have received forgiveness of their sins through the Lord's love. The only book that contains this truth is the Bible. According to the Bible, the “true self” or deepest part of peeled onion is that all human being is to **“be loved” despite we all have selfish or the self-centered nature disobeying the Absolute Being creating all heaven and earth.**

This truth is written in the book of Isaiah, Bible (written more than 2600 years before) as follows:

**But he(Jesus) was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.** (Isaiah 53:5,6 NIV, bracket and dots by author)

The Bible says transgression is called sin and reveals true character of the human being as walking a selfish way. But, this truth is never awared, and even if it is awared, it is thought as none of my business so as not to face it. It is because, as Andrew Murray[1888] pointed out, the Bible clearly mentions human being has three parts; body, soul and spirit and spiritually speaking, all human cannot see by eye, listen by ear due to the nature of SIN.

The concept of spirit and soul is commonly used in Japan. For instance, when Samurai Japan became a winner of WBC(World Baseball Classic) held in March 2023, “Samurai spirit or Samural soul” was heard on the air. It was in the quarter-final with Italy, Shohei Otani did sacrifice bunt by swallowing his pride. For this, Kuriyama head coach said in the interview after game, “It was really Shohei time. He is a genuine baseball boy. He has a soul to win by

swallowing his pride.” Here, there is no difference between spirit and soul. And, hardly unaware the truth that, from God’s standpoint, all human soul is dead due to sin.

The human being appeared in above-mentioned book of Isaiah is true self who has turned to our own way by transgressing from Creator of Almighty. This true nature of human being is appeared in our Co-creative space.

The “Co-creative space” in two dimensions created by horizontal judgment axis and vertical judgment axis is a mirror for looking at oneself. My real self will be revealed by looking at magnets (opinions) of other people. Pointing to the other people by Index finger makes us aware, at the same time, of pointing oneself by other three fingers. In specific, to the opinions and feelings of the other people in the co-creative space there is oneself of “Yes, I agree”. On the other hand, stubborn self is also there even hearing the opinions and feelings of the other people. In either case, self-centered self remains unchanged. This self-centered nature of human being is exactly what the Bible says the one who walks away from true God by sin of transgression. This is true identity of “true self”.

The true identity of oneself (sin of transgression), as shown in Figure 11, has four types; Arrogant self in A zone, Blind self in B zone, Closed self in C zone, and Deaf/Dead self in D zone. The “true self” as self-centered, egoistic being is: Spiritually **A**rrogant in unconscious level, **B**lind to the Truth despite having eyes, **C**losed to his or her own shell of thought, emotion and will, and **D**eaf to hear voice of Almighty God who considers he or her as Dead to sin. That is, the “true self” is not outer self in conscious level, but inner self in unconscious level. The outer self is physical self and the inner self is soul and spiritual self. In the unconscious, spiritual level, all humans are walking their own way, by considering them as a god, which disconnected the Person of everlasting Love and has been wandering in the darkness.

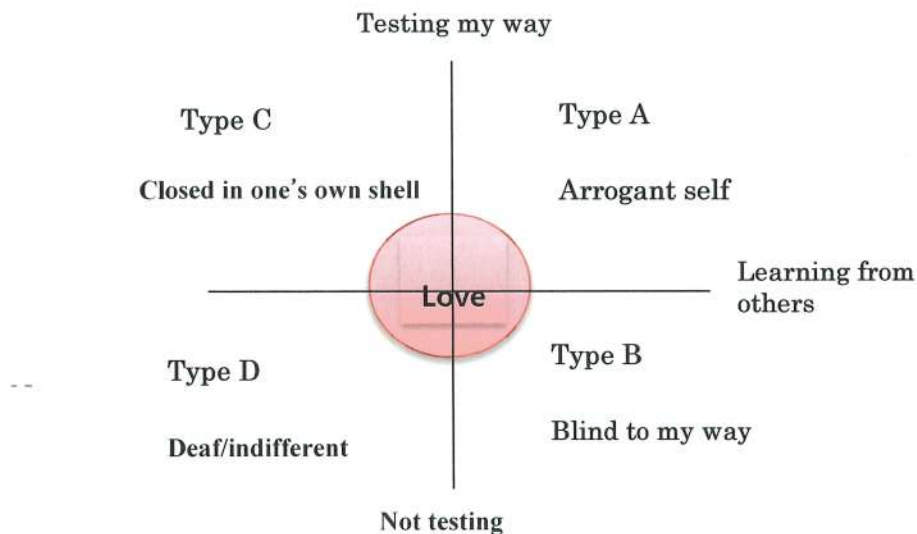
## **Figure 11 “True Self ” and Everlasting Love in the Co-creative space**

### **CSD: Kaizen method of mind-set <assumption> at free-will**

This CSD method is not only to visualize objectively (to share) my way of thinking and feeling toward the topic or theme (object recognition, but also to show the meaning for being aware of my own blindspots by shedding light on own set of values and fixed idea. This is illustrated below.

My way of value judgment whatsoever will lead the ultimate question of “Who really am I?”. The answer to this question is given in the Co-creative space of “Learning from others or not” (horizontal axis) and “Testing my way or not” (vertical axis). This reveals real Me as a sinner shown as Arrogant(A), Blind(B), Closed(C), Deaf(D). Despite all these, real Me is loved and blessed by the living word of Bible below.

## “True Self ” and Everlasting Love in the Co-creative space



**The Co-creative Space is: “One for All, All for One”, “Uplifting motivation and commitment”, “Facing ME”, “Gateway to the Truth(=L: everlasting Love)”.**

But, good news is that we all are loved despite egoistic being. None of all human teachings is telling this truth except the Bible. In the Bible, the “true self” as self-centered, egoistic being is called a sinner, and this sinner is loved one. This truth is in the aforementioned book of Isaiah, said as **“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.** (Isaiah 53:6 NIV, dots by author) . “Lord” is Father of God creating Heaven and Earth and “him” is his son of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross in replace of our sin and iniquity(mistake, failure) more than 2000 years ago and this fact had been prophesied 600 years before he died. His replaced death on the cross is revelation of love of God. This truth is found in 1 John as follows:

**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (Jesus) as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4-10 NIV)**

His love has no fear at all as said **“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ” (1 John 4-18 NIV)**

### Where is the co-creative leader heading for?

The third question is: Where is the co-creative leader heading for? This is indicated by the third finger, thumb which is showing the direction of “True North(inner compass)” . Our goal

of “True North(inner compass)” is common to all Mankind, including those participating in the co-creation space, and it is different from Bill George’s definition of individually different beliefs and sense of values. This common “True North(inner compass)” is “Everlasting Love” which shows the origin in the co-creative space, as indicated in Figure 11. This true love is approachable from anywhere in this space.

Therefore, our “co-creative leadership” is not striving to be myself which brings about emptiness and annihilation, but aimed at Truth(Everlasting Love) by leading you and me to the co-creative space with playing a catch without cease.

As regards the Everlasting Love in the Bible(NIV), it is testified in Jeremiah and Isaiah (The Old Testament), and Romans(The New Testament) as follows:

Jeremiah: The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying:

“I have loved you with **an everlasting love**;  
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah31:3)

Isaiah: “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but **with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,**” says the Lord your Redeemer. “To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet **my unfailing love for you will not be shaken** nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54 : 7~10)

Romans: Who shall separate us from **the love of Christ**? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from **the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** (Romans 8:35~39)

By accepting and fulfilling “Everlasting Love” which is a Person, Jesus Christ, as shown in Figure 11, all humans of essentially self-centered, selfish being are completely changed into the co-creative leader as follows:

A:the **Arrogant** consciously and unconsciously(I am right) is given insight and turned into the an **awakened** leader with humble heart and modesty.

B:the **Blind** to move on my way is shined by light to be a **brightened** leader.

C:the **Closed** in own shell with stubborn heart is broken to be a **cleansed** open and broad-minded leader.

D:the **Deaf** or indifferent is given ears-to-hear to be a **dialogue type** leader with staying close to those who are suffering.

Samurai Japan became world champion in WBC(World Baseball Classic) in March,2023 which gives us impressive and courage. Not only WBC, but in this world, if there is a winner, always there is a loser. But those who take refuge in Everlasting Love, as the aforementioned words of Bible declare, will be the overwhelming victors. But, if anyone is avoiding to the, as said the above words of, he or she will be overwhelmingly victory. The word of Bible is alive, light shining the darkness, life, and love. Holding tightly this authentic words, let us live together with hope as

**Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you.** (Isaiah 43-5, 4, NIV)

Let us answer to the the question of ‘true self’ or “What does ‘true self’ mean to us?” which is the core concept of authentic leadership. As clarified in the previous section, the “true self” refers to an autonomous self that possesses social significance. More specifically, it denotes a self that is honest with itself and feels genuinely alive within its relationships with others. Such a self is one that makes value judgments using both reason and sensibility.

## Concluding remarks and future challenges (Oba·Chaudhuri·Luff)

We have re-considered Bill George 's authentic leadership model(hypothesis) by the method of the co-creative space development (CSD) . What are our major findings and threoretical & policy/practical implications?

### <Our major findings are as follows>

1. Based on Bill George 's authentic leadership model, we have taken the co-creative action to find out the connectivity between "true to be oneself" and leadership. For two questions indicating the authentic leadership (namely, **Am I showing "true to be oneself" in an organization to which I belong now?** and **Am I taking a leadership role?**),we discovered different perspectives for this connectivity. That is, there are four types of leadership perspectives existed in the co-creative space. Four types are:Type A ("**true to be oneself**"<**Authentic**> **Leader**), Type B(**Self-seeking Leader**), Type C (**Mask-covered Leader**), Type D (**Hang-on to the organization**). With these findings, we have proposed a strategy of shifting from Type D to Type A through Type B.

2. After identifying the appealing points, criticisms, and blind spots of the authentic leadership model, we took the co-creative action for the Deborah Hypothesis (the honesty trap), which is critical of Bill George's authentic leadership model.

This hypothesis is that honesty of "This is the way I do things" makes others feel uncomfortable, so we asked questions to test this hypothesis. We also developed a co-creative space to test the relationship between this question and the question of whether or not one wants to lead in one's own way.

As a result, it became clear that there were not only cases that supported the Deborah hypothesis (appeared in Type A: "Be honest" trap type), but also cases of three types(Type B: internal critic type),Type C: "My way" focus manager Type, Type D: One for All, All for One type) that did not support it.

3. Regarding the concepts of "authenticity" and "True North," which are the core concept of Bill George's authentic leadership model, they were examined by setting up the questions in order to develop the co-creative space. The questions as for "authenticity" are; do we have "authenticity" personally? and are we willing to betting our entire lives on it? The answers of these two questions were the following four types of different perspectives.

The first is that Type A has its own authenticity and bets its entire life on it. Specifically, this is the type that considers authenticity to be honestly self-actualizing and passionate about something, and bets one's life on it. The second is Type B, which has authenticity but does not bet own life on it. This view is as such of having a job that makes oneself feel like oneself, but he or she does not have yet reached the point where oneself is willing to bet own life on it.

Oneself also values the importance of life, but has not yet reached the point of risking own life for life-threatening violence, war, nuclear power plants, etc. The third type is the C type, which has something to betting own life on, but does not have authenticity. This type does not have authenticity because oneself is selfish and sinful person. However, after meeting Jesus Christ, he has learned through experience that the words of the Bible have authenticity, and he bets his whole life on the words of the Bible. The fourth is the D-type, who does not have authenticity and has nothing to betting his or her own life on it. He or she does not have authenticity because one does not show own true self to others and is a liar (mask person). He or she does not know what one's goal is in life, so one has nothing to betting own lives on it.

As regards to Bill George's definition of "True North" (shown by the four elements), we have related the question of what the most important things are in one's life with the question of the elements that bring passion, motivation, and satisfaction.

As a result, this co-creative exercise revealed that the core values of indicating "True North (inner compass) are quality of life(well-being), emphasis on health management, value of human dignity, co-creation space, and words of living Bible.

However, at this stage of the co-creation process, even if the participants have personally found their "True North (inner compass)," they may not necessarily be moving forward toward it. Therefore, the challenge for the future is to develop an action plan for how to move forward toward "True North (inner compass)".

4. The importance of co-creative leadership as authenticity is clarified in the following four points.

First, Bill George's Authentic Leadership Model relies on the concepts of "True to be oneself" and "True North," which are individualistic and fall into the trap of unconscious bias of losing sight of the big picture. Therefore, our co-creative model is needed to make this bias visible and break free from this trap.

Second, the co-creative action was taken for Bill George's argument of "true self", which is the "inner compass (beliefs and values deep in the heart)" in the depths of the onion called 'oneself or who I am'. The question for the co-creative action is: "Can you understand your true self?". The results showed that there was a person who was neutral, saying "I don't know such true self," suggesting there may be a different kind of "true self" regardless of whether one has an "inner compass" or not. This brings that his argument has limitations and lacks persuasiveness.

Third, the two dimensional co-creative space was developed by relating Bill George's the autonomous self (the real self) to Heidegger's the social self. The former question is: "Can I be honest with myself?" and the latter question is: "Do you feel alive in your relationships with others?"

As a result, it became clear that the authentic self is neither the autonomous self (Bill George's

theory) nor the social self (Heidegger's hypothesis, on which critical theorists rely), but a self that combines both. If we call this self the "co-creative self," when this self enters and acts in the co-creative space, authenticity (the self as it is, without pretense) emerges, and the answer to the question of who is the "real self" can be discovered.

Fourth, this finding has revealed the reason why the co-creative leadership is authentic. It is because despite a leader holding self-centeredness as the true nature of the "co-creative self", he or she is loved not by human love, but by the everlasting Love of God as "True North" who is taking the initiative toward it. That is, the "co-creative self," which is interwoven with the autonomous self and the social self, is led and driven toward the "True North" by the everlasting Love. In other words, for others, they are led into a co-creation space with a spirit of non-violence, not coercion, and they can freely express themselves with an ear to hear. And, for own self, to renew one's reason and sensitivity, to bring awareness to the unaware self, and to generate innovation. It is to realize that one's true self (self-centeredness possessing the nature of sin), is disobedient to God, the Absolute Being. Despite this evil inheritance, the disobedient self is the object of true love, which is the "True North" common for all humankind and is loved by Jesus Christ, who is a Person of everlasting love. The ultimate goal of co-creative leadership is to support each other and lead altogether with the conviction of this Truth.

### <What are the theoretical and practical & policy contributions ?>

These findings have brought out theoretical and practical & policy implications.

#### **[Theoretical contributions]**

The CSD method and co-creative leadership model we implemented are theoretically considered to have five major contributions as follows.

**1. We have positioned the co-creative leadership model utilizing CSD method as an authentic leadership theory.** Specifically, based on Bill George's authentic leadership theory—a valuable reference point—we clearly distinguished the meanings of its key concepts: "the real self" and "true north."

**2. As an inductive model, this framework can be applied not only to leadership theory and management studies but also to exploring research questions and discovering hypotheses within existing disciplines across other social sciences and human sciences.**

Within the social sciences, it is particularly valuable in fields such as moral and ethical studies, social psychology, cognitive science, behavioral economics, and intercultural communication theory. Furthermore, within the human sciences, it can be utilized as a tool for re-examining views of humanity and worldviews. Moreover, it proposes a new human model: **Homo Concretius** (the co-creator model), which emphasizes creativity as collective intelligence, rather than the individualistic rationality of Homo Economicus that modern economics

presupposes.

### **3. The CSD method is a technique that dramatically boosts motivation by participating in a “co-creation space.”**

Through experiential learning in the co-creation space, participants gain insights and a tangible sense of the meaning of their current existence, leading to a dramatic increase in motivation. The theoretical basis for this lies in four key theories introduced in prior research: (1) Lewin's group dynamics theory, (2) the mirror neuron theory promoting empathy, (3) the social ego theory emphasizing our existence as social beings, and (4) the enlightened self-interest theory<sup>7</sup>.

Why does learning in co-creation spaces dramatically boost motivation? The reason lies in these spaces being “value-free<sup>8</sup>” as Max Weber advocated, with three key points: First, adhering to the dodgeball prohibition rule (no attacking others or own self: the catchball principle) eliminates any violence against participants' authentic selves. Second, because it is a space where participants with differing values face each other, it provides “insights” and generates synergy effects. Third, it liberates individuals from preconceptions (fixed ideas), allowing them to encounter a new version of themselves. Therefore, the CSD method is also beneficial as an active learning method that refines individuality and enhances learning effectiveness<sup>9</sup>.

The CSD method is specifically implemented across six stages, as shown in Figure 12.

Stage 1 (1S) is the stage where topics are introduced and shared through ball passing. Stage 2 (2S) is the stage where “questions” are discovered from the shared topics. These “questions” compose judgement axes of the co-creative space. Stage 3 (3S) is the stage where each participant uses magnets or similar tools to attach their own answers (opinions, thoughts, feelings) to the shared judgment criteria (questions) within the co-creation space (one-dimensional or two-dimensional), making them “visible”. Stage 4 (4S) is the stage where, based on the diverse answers dispersed across the co-creative space, problems (gaps between quadrants or within quadrants) are discovered and shared. Stage 5 (5S) is the stage of formulating and sharing an action plan that clarifies the causes of the chosen problem and proposes solutions. Stage 6 (6S) is the stage of seeking one's authentic self and exploring

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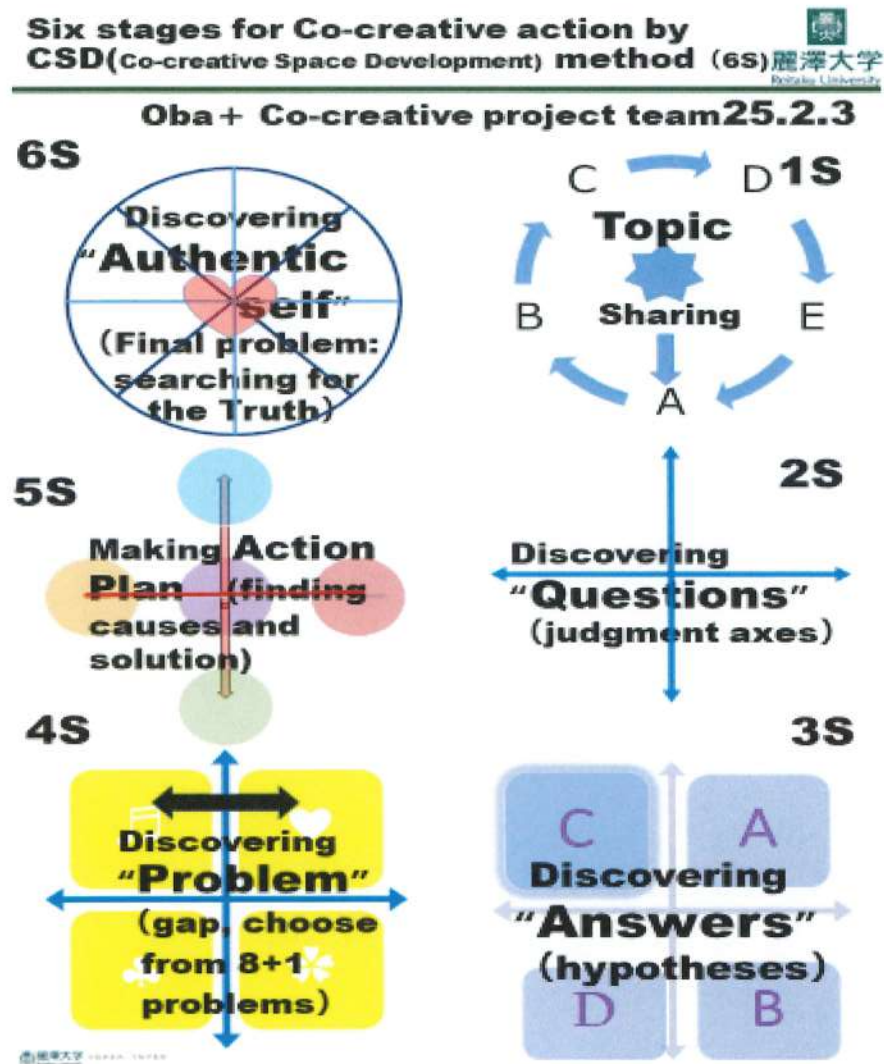
<sup>7</sup> For details on these hypotheses, please refer to Hiroyuki Oba, Miki Yamashita, Kaori Tsuyuki, and the “Co-Creation Space” Development Project Team [2017], pp. 60–66.

<sup>8</sup> According to Max Weber [1972], value-free refers to a free attitude that distances itself from value judgments (Werturteile) of self and others, and he argues as follows: He distinguishes science—purely logical clarification [inference, deduction] and empirical fact determination—from practical, ethical, or worldview-based evaluations, insisting that the latter must be rigorously clarified not only for listeners but also for oneself (ibid. [1972], pp. 19–22). For the significance of co-creation spaces as a value-free discipline, see Hiroyuki Oba + Lifestyle Research Group [2015].

<sup>9</sup> For details on this method as a means to dramatically boost motivation, please refer to the same source [2017], pages 68–71.

purpose of life and the Truth by experiencing the 1S~5S. At this stage, it is beneficial to share within the co-creative space the various questions we have practiced through authentic leadership arguments.

**Figure 12 Six stages for Co-creative action by CSD(Co-creative Space Development) method**



**4. As a falsifiable method, it is beneficial for empirical research such as hypothesis testing.**

The Co-creation Space Development (CSD) method we rely on can test hypotheses within the co-creation space, which is a falsifiable space, making it a Popperian falsifiable technique<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Falsifiability is the concept of whether or not a hypothesis can be denied or refuted (disproved) by experiment or observation. It was proposed by Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902 -1994), a

In this paper, we made Bill George's hypotheses concerning "authentic self" and "true north"—core concepts of his Authentic Leadership model—as well as the critical Deborah Hypothesis (the trap of overemphasizing honesty) falsifiable within the co-creation space. The answer to why this space is falsifiable is as follows.

In the CSD method, each participant freely expresses their own opinion (answer) to a shared question by placing a magnet or stamp in the co-creation space. Crucially, this space allows for the expression and respect of both one's own opinions (judgments) and those of opposing participants. Professor Yoshiro Hayashi (Professor Emeritus, Aoyama Gakuin University), who experienced the co-creation space, aptly described it as a space that is **"mutually contradictory, but equally compelling."** Thus, the CSD method ensures the quality of academic disciplines through its falsifiability. The co-creative action of "visualizing" affirmative and negative opinions regarding a single question unfolds in the third stage (3S), as shown in Figure 12. At this stage, affirmative opinions as a hypothesis and negative opinions as a null hypothesis appear on the horizontal axis. While objectively observing both opinions, a new judgment axis can be created as on the vertical axis.

## **5. The co-creation leadership model based on CSD methodology is a scientific theory that stands up to Kuhn's Five Ways.**

It is a technique designed to conform to Thomas Samuel Kuhn's (1922–1996) Five Ways, a framework for assessing the quality of scientific work<sup>11</sup>, as follows:

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British philosopher of science. <http://weblio.jp>(Sanseido Daijirin) etc. <http://weblio.jp>

<sup>11</sup> Please read Thomas S. Kuhn [1981]. Kuhn (1977, 321–2) identifies five characteristics that provide the shared basis for a choice of theory: 1. accuracy; 2. consistency (both internal and with other relevant currently accepted theories); 3. scope (its consequences should extend beyond the data it is required to explain); 4. simplicity (organizing otherwise confused and isolated phenomena); 5. fruitfulness (for further research). <https://philosophy.stackexchange.com/questions/53930/where-does-kuhn-talks-about-the-five-characteristics-for-the-choice-of-theory>

Kuhn developed his 'no algorithm' argument [for theory choice : GT] most thoroughly in a 1977 essay entitled 'Objectivity, Value Judgment, and Theory Choice'. In that essay, he identifies five criteria that provide 'the shared basis for theory choice', namely accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness (Kuhn 1977a, p. 321). These five, he says, are 'the standard criteria for evaluating the adequacy of a theory', widely agreed on by mainstream philosophers of science. Kuhn has no quarrel with the standard view that these criteria play a key role in scientific theory choice; indeed, he regards them as partially constitutive of what science is. However, he argues, using examples from the history of science, that the criteria fail to uniquely determine theory choice, for two reasons. Firstly, the criteria are ambiguous — it may be unclear which of two theories is simpler, for example. In some respects Copernicus' theory was simpler than Ptolemy's, Kuhn says, but in others it was not. Secondly, there is the problem of how to appropriately weight the criteria when they pull in different directions. How should simplicity be traded off against accuracy and scope, for example? Kuhn says that 'no progress' has been made towards solving this problem (Kuhn 1977, 329). (Samir Okasha, 'Theory Choice and Social Choice: Kuhn versus Arrow', *Mind*, Vol. 120, No. 477 (January 2011), pp. 83-115 : 85.)

**(1) Accuracy:** Do the theory's predictions (hypotheses) match observed results?

The CSD method is a falsifiable technique that enables the introduction of observable phenomena (evidence) supporting both the hypothesized and null hypotheses in one- and two-dimensional spaces. Using magnets, it verifies whether these hypotheses match or not.

**(2) Consistency:** Does the theory itself, and with other already accepted theories, maintain consistency? It is consistent with Max Weber's value-freedom. (For details, refer to Hiroyuki Oba + Lifestyle Research Group [2015])

**(3) Scope:** Does it extend beyond existing observations, laws, or principles?

Based on the principle of agape love, it transcends the market principles of economics and the organizational principles of management. Co-creation (with customers) is well-known in the business world. However, this discipline encompasses not only co-creation with customers, workplace colleagues, and local communities, but also co-creation within the individual's inner world.

**(4) Simplicity:** Does it provide a certain order to previously chaotic phenomena?

The ability to objectively grasp the distribution of diverse viewpoints under a shared, common framework for judgment. Furthermore, to develop spaces that foster nonviolent order—free from violence—while respecting each individual opinion.

**(5) Fruitfulness:** Does it provide further research topics?

Aiming to establish a new academic discipline called **Co-creative Studies** using the CSD methodology. As future challenges, as described later, we will practice concepts such as IKIGAI (a sense of purpose reintroduced to Japan), SDGs, well-being, peace, AI and “what changes oneself and one's life” within co-creation spaces. Furthermore, by practicing this discipline, we aim to form an education and co-creation society that integrates knowledge and virtue, shifting emphasis from knowledge alone to knowledge plus virtue (co-creation power).

### **[Practical & policy contributions]**

From a practical and policy perspective, the CSD method is important for developing leaders who possess not only the ability to discern truth and falsehood, which is considered most important in ongoing AI society, but also having the authentic and sustainable mindset. In today's society, where DX (digital transformation) and GX (green transformation) are rapidly advancing, the CSD method is an innovation technique based on collective intelligence that can renew mindsets, and can also be called **MX (mindset transformation)**.

Specifically, it enables the acquisition of the ten core life skills advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The ten core life skills are: **Problem-solving skill, Decision-making (judgment and execution) skill, Critical thinking skill, Creative thinking skill, Communication skill, Interpersonal skill, Self-awareness skill, Empathy skill, Stress coping skill, and Emotional coping skill.** It is genuinely useful and effective as a technique for “finding oneself” and rediscovering one's way of life.

It is also beneficial as a technique for effectively implementing so-called “inquiry-based learning” aligned with the OECD's Learning Compass 2030 (“Active Learning: proactive, interactive, and deep learning”) <sup>12</sup>.

At Reitaku University, the “Co-creation Space Development (CSD)” method is already being applied across diverse subjects including Management Theory, Japanese Management Theory (in English), Indian Economics, Lifestyle Theory, Cultural Studies (in English), Global Economics & Management Field Exercises (in English), Leadership Theory, African Economics, and a student-led seminar (on gender-co-creative society).

The CSD method is not only used at Reitaku University, but also at Reitaku Open College, Reitaku High School, Nagareyama City Yuyu University, Asia University, Takushoku University, Aomori Public University. It is also implemented at the Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), AOTS (Association for Overseas Technical Scholarship supported by METI), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Thailand's Thai-Nippon Institute of Technology (TNI), and Kashiwa City Hall and so forth.

### **[Future challenges]**

Reitaku University established **the Center for Co-creative Studies (CCS)** in April 2025. A key future challenge is to use the CCS as a hub to promote and advance the co-creative leadership model and co-creative activities based on the CSD methodology both in Japan and overseas. The purpose and activities of **CCS** are as follows.

#### **1. Purpose of Establishment: In launching CCS, we have three aims.**

(1) To bring new awareness to each individual by practicing the “Co-creative Space Development (CSD)” method. To master this Kaizen and innovation technique for mind-set

in order **to realize “Live together and grow together” with mind of uniting intelligence and morality.** And, co-create the future with the next generation and disseminate CSD method from Reitaku to all Japan and the entire world.

(2) To establish **“Co-creative Studies (CS)”** as a new academic discipline using CSD method. **CS** is the study of scientifically examining and exploring the human mindset (ways

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<sup>12</sup> The Learning Compass is an outcome of the “OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030” project launched in 2015. It is a **“learning framework”** published by the OECD in May 2019. (<https://www.bing.com/search?q=oeed+learning+compass+2030+>)

It signifies navigating uncharted environments independently, finding the right direction, and steering one's course. The destination of learning is **well-being (a state of fulfillment physically, mentally, and socially)**. It aims to cultivate individuals with the will to take action to achieve their own well-being and that of society.

of thinking and feeling, beliefs and attitudes, values, standards of judgment, assumptions & prejudice, etc.) using CSD method. Specifically, themes of shared value, e.g., IKIGAI (purpose of life reimported to Japan), SDGs, wellbeing, peace, etc., are examined and explored in the co-creative space.

(3) Develop authentic Co-creative leaders and facilitators who have mastered the CSD methodology.

**The “Co-creation space”** is a space to search for what is true by discovering questions and diverse answers to be shared on a certain theme (e.g., education, peace, AI, etc.). This activity is carried out by respecting the freewill of each individual and playing catch with words based on non-violence principle. So, the co-creation space is a place for not only self-expression at freewill, but also inspiration and innovation that bring “awareness” to blind spots that one cannot see, and widen and deepen perspectives. In this space, we discover the equation  $1+1=2$  is not the only answer but, other answers exist. For example, adding the flame of one candle to the flame of another candle results in the same flame, so  $1+1$  is not 2, but 1 is also an answer. The object of “creating together” in this space is neither MONO (a thing, or goods) nor KOTO (service), but rather the creation of a “Kata”. “Kata” refers to a “way of thinking” or “way of feeling,” which connects to quality of life, “ways of living,” and the well-being that is the focus of much attention today. This CSD method enables the mastery of all **ten core life skills** advocated by the WHO (World Health Organization) as shown the previous section.

## **2. Activities in CCS: Specific activities will include research and practice in the following eight areas.**

(1) Setting and implementing themes that connect the five faculties of Reitaku University (including the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Business Administration, which were newly established in 2024). Promoting the sharing of the Reitaku philosophy of “Chitoku Ittai : uniting intelligence and morality”.

• Promote and strengthen the high school-university collaboration.

• Applying CSD method as a support tool for “Tankyu: Exploration based-learning” classes (Reitaku High School and so forth).

• Collaboration with other universities (Co-creation with Jishu-kikaku/students’ initiative planning seminar: Kanda University of International Studies, etc.)

(2) Establishment and implementation of themes that connect the region (Kashiwa City, Nagareyama City, etc.). Tie-up with university regional cooperation.

Collaboration with The Center for Preventive Medical Sciences, Chiba University (Social Welfare),

Kashiwa City Hall and the Council of Social Welfare.

(3) Establishment and implementation of themes that connect generations (young generation and senior generation). The Jishu-kikaku/students' initiative planning seminar(Intersection of Ideas,IIS) has been launched in April, 2025. This seminar is held at the University library, 4<sup>th</sup> floor(The PIT). IIS is inviting not only university students in different faculties, but also members of Reitaku Open College in Kashiwa, ROCK) and students of Reitaku High School and neighboring high schools.

(4) Theme setting and practice connecting with overseas. After acquiring CSD method, undergraduates will participate in overseas internships organized by AOTS (The Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships) for career advancement. In addition, faculty members will practice CSD method online with overseas research and educational institutions (Harvard Business School in the U.S., Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology TNI in Thailand, etc.) to widen and deepen research exchange.

(5) Theme setting and practice for effective use of libraries. Practice strategies to revitalize libraries in the face of declining library users. New perspective of Reitaku Library:"space that change who you are and change your life!". Propose "Library Day"and implement co-creation events.

(6) Train co-creative coordinators and co-creative leaders who can master CSD method.

To this end, we will develop a learning curriculum based on the CSD method.

First, we will create a curriculum for university students, followed by curricula for elementary, junior high and high school students.

(7) Research and co-creation practices on SDGs, well-being, authentic leadership, peace, AI etc. (once a month). The Co-creative studies connecting music, work and culture, which have been practicing over years, needs to be published in the near future (Peter Luff/Hiroyuki Oba).

(8) Launching a NPO corporation in CCS to establish a framework for promoting co-creation.

## **Reference 1 : The voice of a participant; Characteristics and usefulness of CSD method after participating in “Co-creative space” by Meguro, Shoichiro**

Recently, the term “co-creation” has become widely used. It is generally accepted as “a space where various people communicate and create ideas. Co-creation in “co-creative space” is defined as “the concept of creating new value together through dialogue with stakeholders from diverse perspectives,” and “space” here refers to the physical space. In other words, in a co-creative space, various people gather and work based on the ideas appeared in this space. Simply put, it is a space where people can get together and have fun. An increasing number of large companies are realizing environments suitable for such spaces by making major changes to their workplace designs.

But, the “co-creation space” in the “Co-creative Space Development (CSD) method” developed by Dr. Oba is quite different from the above-mentioned “co-creation” of this lively, gaggle-like atmosphere. To use CSD method, it is a prerequisite that the rules(non-violence principle) of CSD are shared by the members of a group of people who are willing to solve some problems. There are no group leaders or followers in these spaces. There is no division into groups of people who agree or disagree with each other regardless of their own opinions, as in debates, and there are no referees. In CSD, everything is left to the autonomy of the participants.

In fact, I think I was able to confirm some of the following characteristics by participating in the “co-creative space” by the CSD method. For example, the magnet(or stamp in the Zoom) chosen by each participant is both a symbol and a sign of the person himself/herself. The presence of the magnet(or stamp) separates the person himself/herself from his/her ideas and concepts to a certain extent. In other words, the idea or concept itself becomes independent and acquires a sense of existence. Direct confrontation with the person in the flesh is avoided, and the ideas and concepts themselves can be confronted head-on.

The verbal “catch ball” is meaningful because differences in quadrants reveal differences in thought space. Even within the same quadrant, even the slightest difference in the position of the magnets(or stamps) can lead to a deeper understanding of the content of each side's argument by understanding each other's meaning. This is even more so in different quadrants.

This catch-all allows us to understand each participant's way of thinking from the standpoint of the other members. At the same time, we can see where we stand in our own thinking and concepts from where other members stand. Even though there is a sense of tension in not knowing when the ball will fly, it is neither peer pressure nor superior pressure. It is an extremely democratic space. By opening a window to diversity, the self-enclosed perspective is removed and a breakthrough to creative ideas is opened.

In CSD, participants may suggest changing both horizontal and vertical axes, or changing one or the other. By changing the horizontal/vertical axes, the aspect of the space changes completely in terms of phases and dimensions, as if it were a revolving stage. Each of the four quadrants can expand or converge, become dense or sparse in the participants' consciousness. The focus of the participant's thinking shifts to a new and different space. As this process is repeated, participants become aware of the diversity and multifaceted nature of ideas and concepts. Furthermore, by changing the vertical/horizontal axis, a new space is created, and the thinking space becomes multi-layered. This creates additional space for participants to think.

Participants will consider and speak to the speaker's ideas and evidence that reinforces them, new applications, generalizations, and modifications that respect the original intent. Here, a request for clarification of the conversation does not necessarily mean a position of disagreement. This environment encourages people to make sharp points. This is because they can expect that their views will be heard. This CSD is also supported by people in developing countries, such as Asia and Africa, perhaps because this democratic space is valuable to them.

In CSD, the ability to listen attentively to the words of others is cultivated. In other words, many people learn to listen carefully to what others have to say. There is no room for the bluster, sophistry,

and passive-aggressive behavior that is so common in corporate meetings.

The most important feature of this CSD is that it allows each participant to recognize or discover opportunities for value creation. No amount of mere yes-or-no questions will get you into the process of value creation. And the CSD method is easily accessible to everyone. There is no need for special prior training, and after a few experiences, you will understand how to proceed. It is especially useful for students and new employees who are not accustomed to discussions in an organization, and for participants from various fields. It is a forum in which their thoughtful vitality can be frankly expressed in its original form.

What is important is for all participants to look back on the process of how each discussion evolved, and to confirm something new by tracing the trajectory of the discussion. This is where the potential for value creation is recognized.

## **Reference 2 : Sharing and discovering by CSD method for a question:What is a way of life that is *true or unique to be yourself?* (Answers given by Reitaku University students in the lecture on Lifestyle in 2019)**

A way of life in which **one chooses what is truly right for oneself so that there will be no regrets when one dies.**

A way of life that is **true to one's ego.**

A way of life that **cannot be found without listening to the opinions of others.**

A way of life that **makes the most of knowledge and experience gained from multiple perspectives** (a way of life that has multiple perspectives and puts them into practice).

A way of life that **makes vivid who I am as I am (putting my own feelings first).**

A way of life that **takes risks and challenges new things.**

A way of life that is **positive and serious about everything.**

A way of life that **confronts oneself.**

A way of life that is **self-affirming** (a way of life that does not negatively think that you are clumsy or a bad person)

A way of life that is **not influenced by one's surroundings and environment (a way of life at one's own pace), Live with one's own will.**

A way of life in which **one grows oneself while absorbing from others.**

A way of life **to discover a new self.**

A way of life that **doesn't restrict others.**

A way to **live for oneself and love oneself** so that one can have compassion for others.

A way of life that **makes both oneself and others feel good.**

A way of life in which we **do not rush, but do my best even when I do not want to do so.**

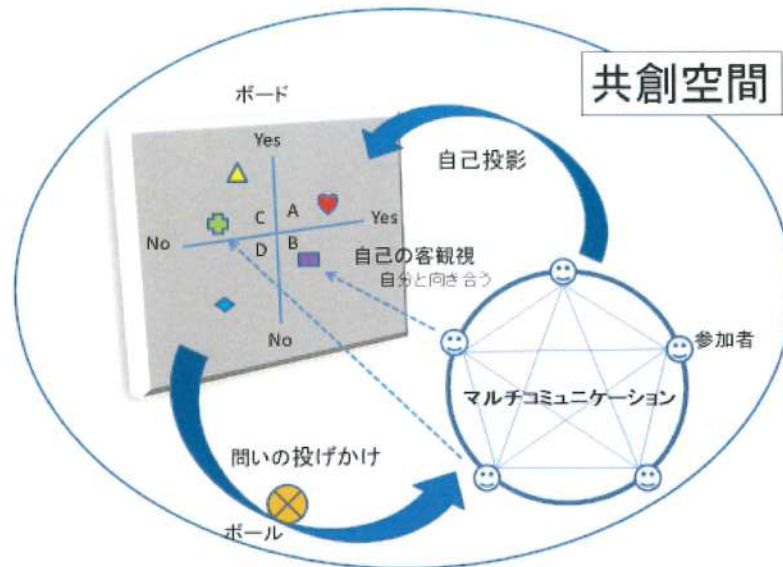
A way of life that **makes the present better for our children.**

A way of life where I am **not afraid to take risks and challenge myself.**

A way of life in which I **never give up**, never be conceited, **be grateful to others**, and be useful to others. A way of life that is **loved by others.**

A way of life in which I can **be natural without getting tired.**

Illustration of Co-creative space designed by Kiyoko Tomine



共創空間開発プロジェクト・チーム (Co-Creative Spaceship project team), 麗澤大学 (Reitaku University, Japan) 2012

The logo designed by Soma Sugiyama



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### **Members of the Co-creation Space Development Study Group:**

Hiroyuki Oba, Kaushik Chaudhuri, Shoichiro Meguro, Miki Yamashita, Kaori Tsuyuki, Aki Ishiwatari, Shinya Fujino, and Peter A. Ruff.

### **Transcription of the implementation results in the co-creation space:**

Aki Ishiwatari

This project started in 2019 at the initiative of our member Shoichiro Meguro to co-create on Authentic Leadership. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Bill George of Harvard University, who served as our point of reference in co-creating the project. His deep and thought-provoking insights, inspiration, and essential questions about authenticity have been the foundation and great encouragement for our co-creation activities.

The research activities were conducted in the midst of the Corona Disaster, and only the first meeting was face-to-face, but mainly in ZOOM. Although we were deprived of the face-to-face opportunity for awareness through co-creation, it was refreshing to be able to catch up online and utilize CSD method on the basis of trust among the members. We were also pleased to have Kaushik Chaudhuri from India join ZOOM, providing a stimulating and eye-opening perspective. Furthermore, in addition to our members, Aki Umemura and Sumika Shibuya, former students at Reitaku University, also joined us, and it was meaningful to hear the voices of the young generation as well as intergenerational exchange.

Thank you so much!

This paper features scenes from our co-creation space; to convey the atmosphere of those moments not only to the members but also to the readers, we have included the conversations exactly as they occurred. I(Oba) would like to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the Co-creation Space Development Project for their abundant life experience and generosity in facilitating the co-creation.

We are deeply grateful to Aki Ishiwatari, who meticulously transcribed the chaotic scene of our collaborative decision-making process—where diverse opinions flew about in a dizzying whirl. During the editing phase, members divided the work among themselves, bouncing ideas back and forth primarily via the internet and phone, enabling us to complete it successfully. This brings me immense joy. We thank Professor Peter A.Luff for proof reading.

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Through this paper, may we discover hints that guide us from misguided paths toward the right direction as co-creative leaders. Even within an opaque, turbulent global society where anything can happen, and amidst the advancing information revolution represented by AI, may we move forward toward eternal love. May we also, even as humans possessing an “ego-driven sense of self,” cultivate a co-creative mindset, connect with what is authentic, and walk joyfully with hope even amidst seemingly hopeless situations.

Furthermore, may this opportunity foster greater interfaces between education, families, and businesses as co-creative leaders, utilizing co-creative decision-making models. May universities and local communities connect more deeply, becoming catalysts for building new universities that bridge generations within local societies.

These are the heartfelt wishes of us, the members of the Co-creative space development study team.

We eagerly invite you to join the “Co-creative space,” not just as a reader, but as a fellow traveler who will journey through life with us in the near future.

We sincerely look forward to welcoming you.

March 31, 2026

Hiroyuki Oba and Co-creative space development study team

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**Reconsidering the Authentic Leadership model:  
Co-creative leadership as authenticity**

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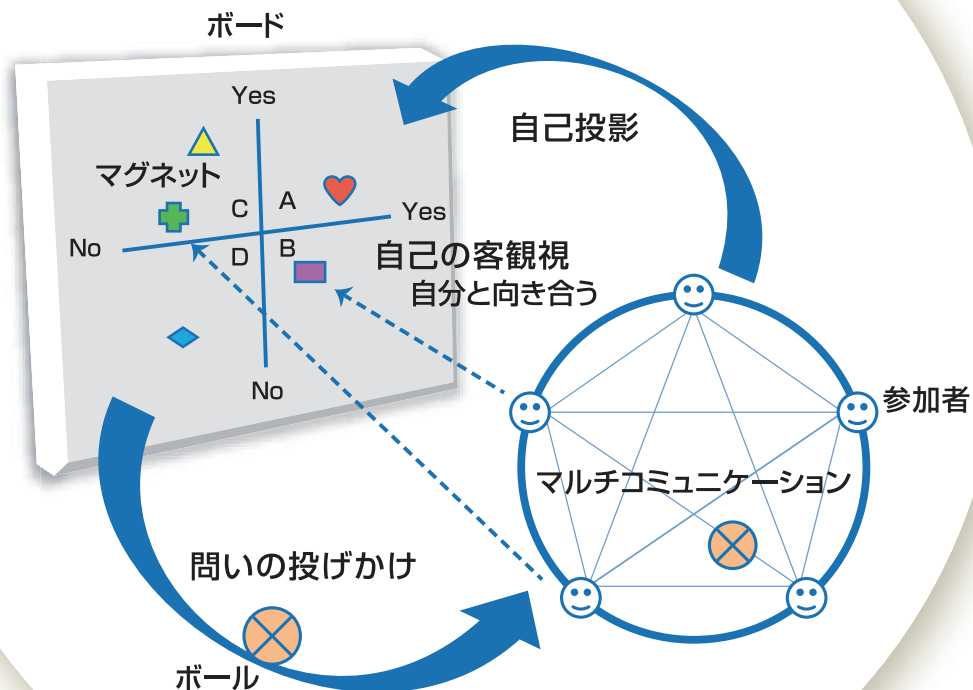
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