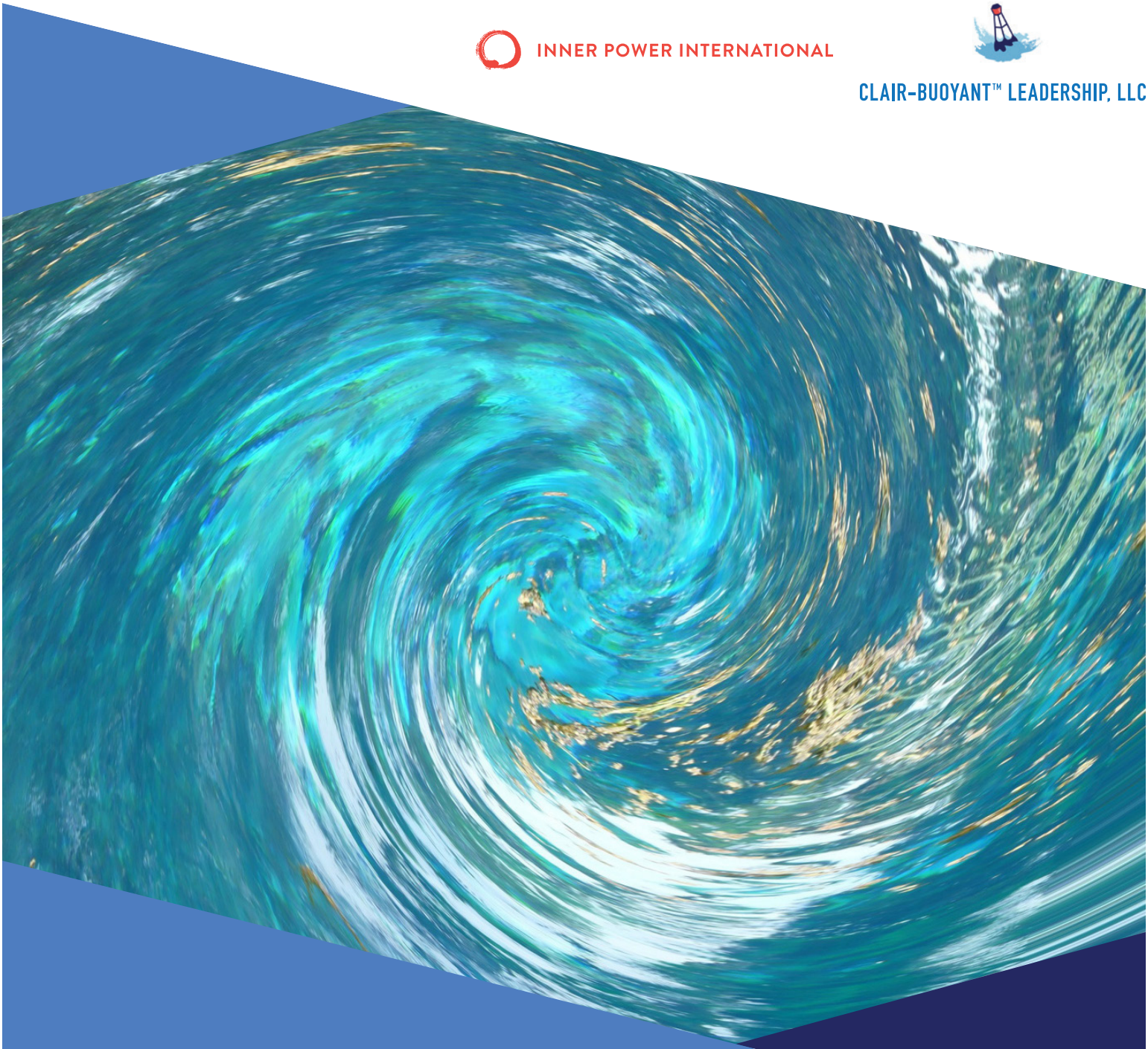
INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL

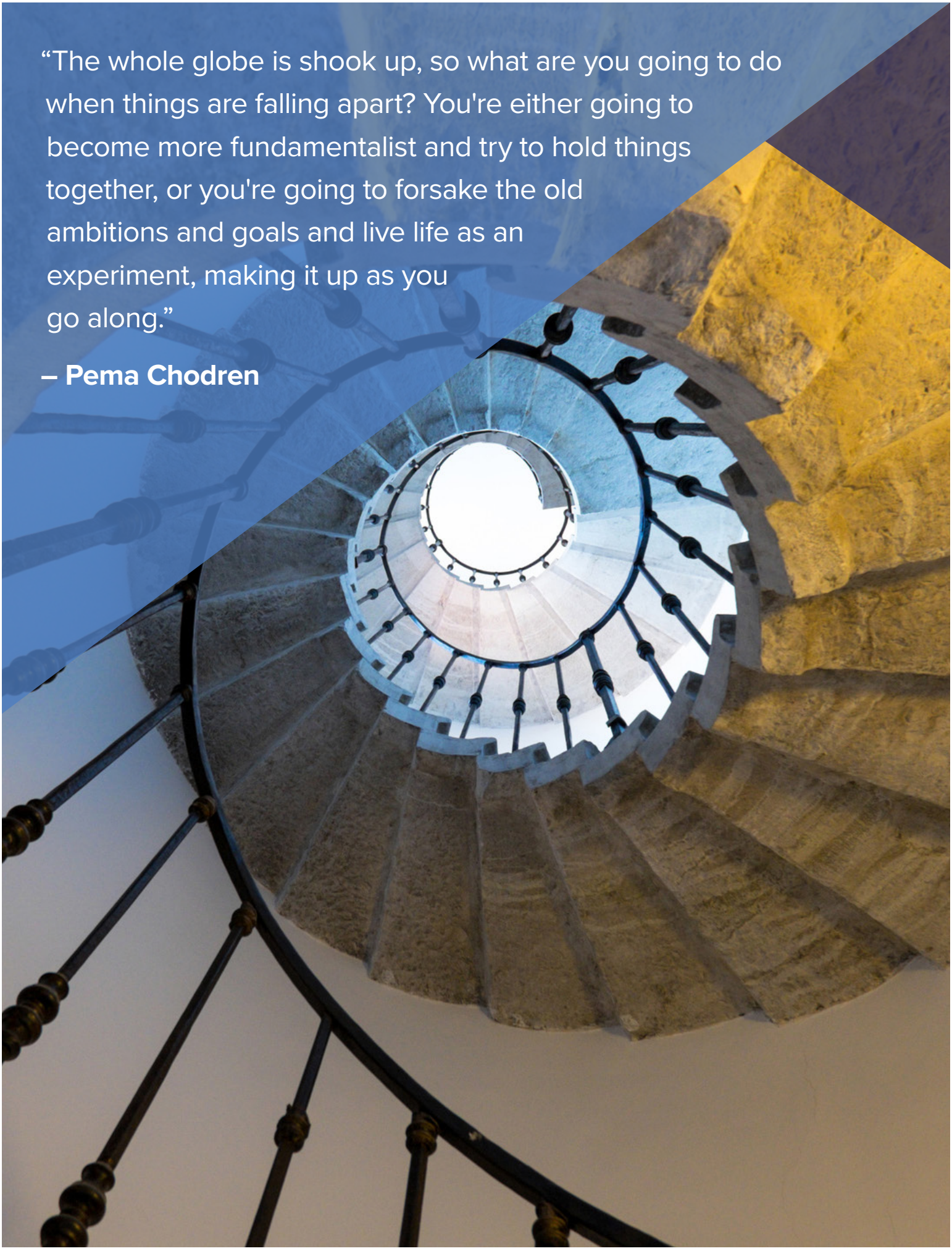
CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC



HOW CAN WE DEVELOP LEADERS FOR EXPONENTIAL TIMES?

By: Lee Ann Del Carpio and Karen Walch, PhD.

©2016 Clair-Buoyant™ Leadership, LLC and Inner Power International Inc. | All Rights Reserved



“The whole globe is shook up, so what are you going to do when things are falling apart? You're either going to become more fundamentalist and try to hold things together, or you're going to forsake the old ambitions and goals and live life as an experiment, making it up as you go along.”

– Pema Chodren

THE WHOLE WORLD IS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

We live today in a globally interconnected context that is changing by the moment, rife with rapid political, economic and environmental disruption and discord. We face perhaps more volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity than any generation before in recent human history. As we head into what is being described as "exponential times," the remarkable rate of change fuels the chances of being caught by surprise in the marketplace or in leadership now more than ever. By "exponential", we mean your industry and organization is living in a world where changes in technologies and aspects of your business model are disrupted almost daily. Disruption ultimately means that people are thinking, acting, relating and purchasing in entirely new manners that "interrupt" the heretofore predominant business models and transform the very systems in which we interact. This, in turn, impacts how we consume, how we produce, how we organize our supply chains, how we grow, and how we lead.

The challenge with the exponential function of our times is that it's incomprehensible. We get it cognitively – up to a point – and then our brains cannot process it. This constant disruption and speed of change together are destabilizing traditional pathways to personal and organizational leadership success, and challenging our ability to adapt at a rate that keeps pace with the change afoot. To not just survive, but thrive, in this environment, our thinking must be equal or superior to the complexity of the environment in which we interact. And to foster the capacity to create new success stories in the face of change, we must be resilient and adaptive in the face of this relentless pressure.

But, as the Navy SEALS saying goes, under pressure, you don't rise to the occasion; you sink to the level of your training. The problem is, our education and traditional approaches to thinking and leading have not prepared us to handle the level of disruption we face. Applying yesterday's logic to today's disruptive environment — let alone tomorrow's -- will not yield sustainable results. Repetition without progress produces incapacity as a result.

Einstein makes the challenge clear: "The significant problems we face cannot be solved from the same level of consciousness that created them." We need new ways of thinking, learning and leading, and we need them fast, as the exponential pace of change further exacerbates the gap.

The Challenge Posed by Exponential Times

The problem is, the exponential pace of change is incomprehensible to our human brains. As Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee claim, "The great shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function. Linear goals will not be successful in a world that is changing exponentially."[1] We "get" the constant acceleration of technology, advancement and change cognitively – up to a point – and then our brains cannot process the rest.

This is in part due to the fact that, historically, our Western cultures (both nationally and organizationally) have reinforced linear, cause and effect processing versus exponential brain processing. Primariily linear neural networks worked for a certain time in history, but now we cannot process beyond a certain point for exponential change – ***our brains literally are not conditioned to see it***. However, with the new discoveries in neuroscience today, the brain is much more elastic and adaptable than first believed, and we may be able to "train our brains" into exponential processing.

We have, essentially two choices: Continue responding to external disruptive reality with old, comfortable logic, creating corresponding, often unconscious, inner discord, stress and eventual incapacity, or find a way to shift from linear to exponential thinking and leading.

We believe that exponential change means we need to embrace Exponential Leadership: a way of thinking and leading that helps us navigate through the challenging questions of our time and avoid the trap of linear thinking to proactively reinvent ourselves in the rapidly accelerating marketplace. Exponential leadership means empowering mindsets and skillsets to transform fear into positive outcomes. It means re-training our brains with the help of what we call, "the three C's"— Forging ***clarity*** in the midst of ambiguity, allowing ***congruence*** with exponential thinking in the face of prevailing linear logic, and embracing leadership ***courage*** to proactively drive transformation.[2]

1 Brynjolfsson, McAfee, The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies, Norton, 2014

2 Clarity, Congruence and Courage™ are what we call leadership guideposts for transformation (Source: Inner Power International, Inc. ©2015-2016).

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who can't read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."
– Alvin Toffler, Futurist

HOW MIGHT WE ADAPT?

THE SHIFT TO EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Over the past 20 years, we have had the incredible honor of working with thousands of executives across multiple industries from over 50 countries, strengthening their global leadership capabilities. Increasingly, we have noticed a widening gap between those leaders seeking to adapt and model ways to face the complexity and exponential change of our times and those who are clinging to yesterday's logic with equal intensity.

The thing is, personal change precedes systemic change. Organizations or communities cannot organize at an exponential level if their leaders are operating from a mostly linear perspective. Until a critical mass of an organization's leaders shifts into more exponential leadership, the larger collective will be hindered in navigating new terrain in an evolved and sustainable fashion. The good news is, new discoveries in cultural anthropology, neuroscience, genetics and evolutionary biology offer us the tools to accelerate the adaptation process.

Facing this challenge of fostering collective adaptation, though, means that ***leadership is not only a personal practice, but a collaborative relationship and a shared process of transformation that fosters the collective capacity to create new realities.***

Let's break that down:

- Leadership is something that can be expressed **personally**, uniquely through the prism of each individual's personality, culture, capabilities, meaning and subjective experience.
- Leadership is a **practice**, as in something you strengthen every day, through routinely applying the mindsets and skillsets, and learning and growing through both successes and failures. To the extent that you are intentional about your practice, your growth will follow.
- It's a **collaborative relationship** with diverse groups of people you seek to engage and inspire to achieve meaningful, shared outcomes together. Innovation, for example, requires an inclusive and vibrant engagement of diverse values and viewpoints within teams, partnerships, and across functional units in an organization.
- Leaders create the culture around them, which is a **shared process** not only in the sense that you can't be leading and engaging others unless someone is following. In today's highly networked, global world, leadership can come from the collective energy of groups and expectations of new norms, which also shapes the culture around us. It was a collective process in Egypt, for example, which toppled Mubarak, not some single heroic leader. A shared experience and shared process of leading change drove towards a new reality. Leaders today who can tap into

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |

that power of the collective consciousness and urge to create something meaningful together will forge more possibilities than standing alone.

- Leadership is about **transformation**, deep change that means shifting to higher levels of personal and organizational effectiveness. Transformation requires making our invisible values and beliefs visible through personal exploration, and helping others make the unconscious conscious to better navigate forward. It also involves making the "unseen" forces of all dimensions of our human experience, i.e. cognitive, emotional, spiritual, social, physical, more "seen" to better collaborate and innovate together.
- It's about **creating new realities** in the sense that leaders help us move from our current challenges to a desired future vision by navigating through the natural discomfort of change of values and behavior.

So if leadership plays a key role in our collective ability to respond to exponential change, then what is the process that accelerates that transformation of leaders?

HOW MIGHT WE ACCELERATE THE SHIFT?

Since the 1990's, most practitioners in the field of leadership development have been guided by leadership growth models which map six or more key transitions that leaders must navigate to successfully rise to greater heights and scope of responsibility The concept of Leadership Transitions[3] is an extremely useful model to: 1) clarify talent requirements by role or level within an organization, 2) identify future leaders, and 3) assess their competence, plan their development, and measure results. In the past 20 plus years of global executive education design and delivery, this framework has served as a central operating model. It helps leaders focus and develop the mindsets and skillsets that must be developed to progress forward on a career path, as well as to add greater value to the organization. However, as useful as a leadership transitions framework of any sort is, it essentially sees growth as a linear progression, primarily building cognitive capabilities, adding new skills, and awareness of new work values anchored in an ever-widening scope of practice.

What we have found, in practical reality, in hundreds of executive education programs and executive coaching engagements, are two things: Leadership growth is not as linear as we might think, and linear development is no longer enough.

Leadership Growth is not Linear, but a Spiral

The idea of linear growth prevails in Western culture, as evidenced in our notions of biological evolution, the continual advancement of civilizations, and in the way we organize formal education. Progression may appear orderly as we ascend levels of leadership, very much like the building blocks mastered when moving from childhood to adulthood or from simple math to calculus. Once you learn fractions or percentages, for example, it no longer presents itself as a problem. Each step is a building block for the next step. From a very early age on, we learned that once we understand or resolve something, we move on to the next thing.

Leadership, however, as we explored, is not an orderly linear routine, but a collective practice and process of transformation. We do not "get the learning once" and never face the same challenges again, at a more complex level. We do not graduate from one set of difficulties to another. Advancement is not measured by leaving behind old problems and working on new ones. In fact, as we progress in leadership, it's much less about solving problems (as our education system trained us to do) and much more about managing paradoxes, or the tension of opposing forces that must be kept in dynamic equilibrium together: drive growth AND manage costs; deliver short-term AND long-term performance; execute AND engage others at the same time.

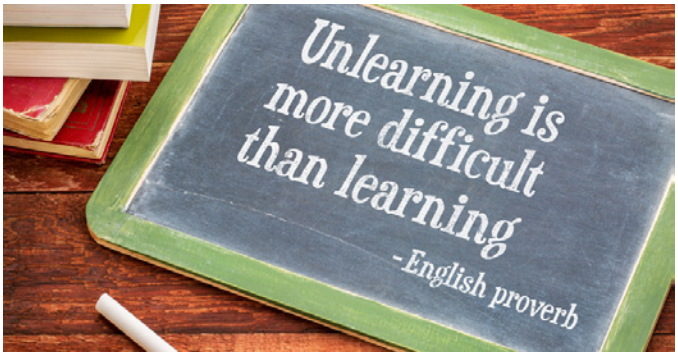
Thus, personal AND leadership growth is not a linear process of expansion. Growth and change, especially during exponential times, is much more akin to a spiral and successive feedback loops since:

1. We come up against the same challenges repeatedly, only at more complex levels.
2. Progress is indicated by upward movement or expansion of thinking.

As we advance, we may believe we have overcome some challenge, and yet there it is again, only subtler this time, and the response that is called for is much more nuanced. But with altitude, we see these challenges from a broader

3 Originally based on career development research and furthered significantly by Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel, in their seminal work, The Leadership Pipeline, Jossey-Bass, 2000 and 2011, additional research around Leadership Transitions has been conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership, the Corporate Executive Board and other organizations.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



perspective, and integrate feedback from earlier experiences to modify our approach to the current challenges. It's an ongoing, continuous and dynamic process.

This spiral of growth happens at both an individual and collective level, and yet we can choose to resist the upward expansion. There is often an unconscious resistance to change, since the deeper, primitive and mammalian areas of our brain were designed to protect us. When any change in our forward progression takes us out of our comfort zone, our brain sends out a signal which we experience as doubt and fear. Our brain interprets this signal as a potential sign of danger or a threat, and it sends out a jolt of epinephrine prompting us to steer back to our old set-point. This is called the psycho-cybernetic mechanism. It's like a thermostat—a kind of autopilot that will always kick in and seek to protect you, keep you out of danger… which unintentionally can keep you from advancing forward up the spiral of growth.

At the same time, the groups we are part of also tend to maintain the status-quo in mindset, behaviors or skills and resist change. A group typically has a dynamic that develops reinforcing habits to keep things static – basically staying within a "collective comfort zone". In order to maintain this comfort zone, human groups and our individual brains use feedback loops in which each part of the system provides information to the other parts of the system, which then adjust accordingly. That is, leaders and the group will influence each other with their reinforcing behavior – healthy or Imbalanced – holding a group in status quo position.

If we wish to navigate through these built-in neural mechanisms maintaining the status quo and move up the spiral of growth, we must consciously seek to rewire our brains for exponential adaptability. At an individual level, scientists have shown that we replace limiting thoughts with positive, expansive thoughts and control the constant chatter in our brain's default state through trained focusing techniques. We can literally strengthen the brain's chemistry, structure, and functioning, enabling us to achieve more, faster. In fact, we can actually cause neurons to fire in different ways that support positive growth and behavioral change. In this way, we can use the natural feedback loops in our brains and human groups to drive upward progression on the spiral of growth or scarcity vs. abundance mindset.

At the group level, our experience is that moving beyond a set point to expanded levels of play can begin through multiple entry points. If change is required, it doesn't matter where you begin to examine and transform the imbalances or ineffective behaviors – anyone in the system can begin to change the habits and drive movement forward, up the spiral of growth. Coaches, for example, can help leaders identify: 1) changes necessary for more effective leadership results; 2) behaviors they are willing to change; and 3) others who can also facilitate behavioral changes in the group or organization. As new mindsets and behaviors are practiced, feedback loops from various members in the group provide reinforcement of new neural functioning and strengthen the collective ability to respond to exponential change in a healthy manner.

Spiral Learning and Using the Brain to Accelerate Change

Linear development is no longer enough - Growth happens with addition, subtraction and multiplication.

When faced with the pressure of rapid disruption and exponential change, many leaders seek to "add on" new skills, new approaches to the increasing pace and challenges. This is a linear, step-by-step additive approach to development. While buttressing ourselves with new knowledge, skills and awareness will assist us in navigating the constant barrage; it's no longer enough. Research[4] shows beyond adding new skills and knowledge, we must expand our way of thinking. In our experience, that means we must subtract or let go of outmoded beliefs and embrace principles that will positively multiply or accelerate the collective ability to create new responses.

Let's first explore the subtraction of old ways of thinking.

When we feed ourselves disempowered, limiting or stressful thoughts grounded in old ways of coping, recent brain studies using MRIs and other tools have shown the dramatic

4 A good summary of the research in this area is: Nick Petrie, "Vertical Leadership – Part 1: Developing Leaders for a Complex World", Center for Creative Leadership, 2014.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |

impact on our brain. Extensive research[5] has been done on the effect of stress on the hippocampus, which makes connections among other parts of the brain, and is also one of the few regions able to produce new neurons. Unfortunately, the hippocampus is also highly sensitive to negative stimuli. These studies have shown that exposure to a stressor -- such as continually thinking negative or limiting thoughts about our chances for new results in work and life -- for more than 30 minutes at a time -- leads to elevated cortisol levels that hamper synaptic connections and speed up cell death. Over time, repeated bouts of limiting beliefs, negativity, criticism, or judgment will cause the hippocampus to shrink, resulting in declines in cognitive function, including the ability to retain information and adapt to new situations.

In fact, in one study conducted with both corporate executives and leaders of startups[6], the entrepreneurs were able to embrace conflict and switch to the part of the brain that moves into creative problem-solving more quickly than executives of legacy organizations who had hard-wired restrictive beliefs about what was possible. Those leaders who can move beyond limiting beliefs and switch more rapidly and easily between *exploration* [creating new approaches, products or processes] AND *exploitation* [improving the quality of existing approaches, products or processes] and back again are those who perform and innovate the best.

So, here's the thing: With repetition of limiting, often unconscious, stressful beliefs in the face of disruption, we actually weaken our own ability to cope with change, process new information and progress. If we want to keep pace with exponential change, we literally need to consciously and proactively excavate and release old beliefs that limit our way forward. Slowing down is vital to reflection on how we originally "learned" the beliefs, attachments and preferences to begin with. This then helps us think about how to let go and "unlearn" for new circumstances. The good news is that with awareness and tools about how we can "use our brain to change our brain", we can consciously use coaching, practice, and debriefing to accelerate unlearning and relearning for the exponential age.

Beyond releasing, subtracting or letting go of older beliefs that hinder our way forward, we can also train our brain to multiply or accelerate our ability to relearn and become more exponential.

Relearning can be accelerated by directing our focus to positive, expansive thoughts and images. In doing so, the brain's chemistry, structure, and functioning all strengthen, enabling us to achieve more, faster. That means we can actually cause neurons to fire in different (exponential) ways that support positive growth and change in our lives.

Whenever you learn something new, or create a new intention, a new grouping of cells comes together to form neural associations between them. When you hear certain words or see certain images, and respond to what you see and hear in different ways, for example, your brain automatically forms new associations. With repetition or practice, these connections thicken and strengthen, meaning the behavioral response is more likely to be repeated. With each association, there is actually a tiny bit less electrical resistance to that thought, which makes it easier and easier to have that thought; to hold that intention; to try new approaches.

In this way, the exponential leader can become more effective in decision making and leading others by using both sides of their brain. By utilizing both the left brain (logical - learning by instruction) and the right brain (reflective – learning by experience), leaders can accelerate their thinking and behavior quicker than mere linear thinking.

Of course, leaders and their groups experience discomfort when they are adapting their neural pathways from old 'habits' to more effective ones. This is a natural process of human adaptation. But new knowledge about neuroplasticity means that we can actively shape our brains and accelerate our own development through empowering beliefs, visualization and practices.

Bottom line, in the face of constant disruption, the old approach of linear, additive growth is no longer enough. What we call empowered, whole-brained exponential thinking strengthens our brain's chemistry, structure and functioning by releasing beliefs that hinder our progress and then anchoring into patterns of thought that accelerate us forward. To jump the curve from linear to exponential thinking, we believe leaders must combine unlearning (subtracting) and relearning in an accelerated manner (multiplier effect). As Alvin Toffler predicted, ***"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who can't read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn".***

5 See, for example, the National Geographic and PBS documentary, Stress: Portrait of a Killer, (2008) by Dr. Robert Sapolsky. A leader in research on the effect of stress on the brain, Sapolsky is a Professor of Biological Sciences at Stanford University and Professor of Neurology and Neurosurgery in Stanford's School of Medicine.

6 Cited in "A Way into the Hearts and Minds of Managers", Delia Bradshaw, Financial Times, July 6, 2014

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |

HOW CAN I BEGIN THE SHIFT TO EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP MYSELF?

When neurological systems begin to be disrupted and dissipate, we reach a point where there will either be an upsurge to a more complex system or a downshift to a less complex one.[7] In our experience, if leaders want to progress forward up the spiral of exponential growth, they must face the natural fear that disruption generates, and purposefully excavate their old beliefs in order to accelerate effectively through the adaptation to, and acquisition of, new mindsets and skillsets. This requires re-training our brains to forge **clarity** in the midst of the ambiguity often heightened in times of disruption. It also means allowing oneself to align, or be in **congruence** with, exponential thinking in the face of prevailing linear logic. Finally, it means embracing the leadership **courage** it will take to proactively drive the kind of transformation to thrive in disruptive and exponential times.



7 See for example, the work on Chaos Theory and Complexity Science by Ilya Prigogne, Professor of Physics and Chemical Engineering at the University of Texas, Austin and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1977 for his work on the thermodynamics of non-equilibrium systems.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |

We start with **Clarity** because in our experience leaders need to widen their view of what is and what's emerging in the face of ambiguity, rather than the more reflexive, linear response of seeking problems to solve. This crucial step of reflection of where we are now serves as a reckoning, a facing of the truth of the current situation, and an acceptance of the current state—however daunting--with honesty, humility and compassion.

We once interviewed sea captains and ship builders for a project one of us was leading, to understand what distinguished successful sea-faring teams, like the America's Cup teams. What allowed them to succeed? How did their vessels and teams withstand the pressure of the constantly shifting environment?

While the vessel itself had to have structural integrity to withstand the volatile sea environment, the one factor that every sea captain shared was essential to success was that every team member had to be living and embodying vigilance… an ever-present awareness of what was happening, not only in the realm of their day-to-day tasks or routine, but *out ahead*, *around* them and *on the horizon*. If all did not consciously scan the edges of their environment with vigilance, then the entire voyage could be jeopardized.

Vigilance is not just a skillset, it's a mindset and an energy that says, "I want to see what I cannot see now. I don't want to make any assumptions. I want to explore with new eyes and see what I may have been blinded to before."

In a sense, the act of being vigilant is a deeply disciplined practice of observing and listening to what might be, what differs, what confounds, what teases, what challenges.

When one CEO and COO of a mid-sized contracting services firm recently received late-breaking word that their core operations were missing quarterly targets by more than a million US dollars, with virtually no internal red flags, change in processes or calls to action, they realized they had a deep issue of complacency and lack of vigilance on their hands.

Reflecting on the constant state of disruption and exponential change in their industry, and wanting to help more people see clearly the need for running the business differently, John, the CEO, called a 6:30 am meeting the next morning for all the company's key players and asked that the room be cleared of all chairs. The meeting invite went out and immediately people began poking their heads in the office of the COO, Steve, asking if John knew that he scheduled the meeting for 6:30 am, and if they knew there were no chairs in the room. Steve nodded yes to both, to quizzical looks from all.

The next morning, as people filed into the empty room before 6:30am, they all found a place to lean against one of the walls and settled in to listen to what the meeting was all about. John began with the harsh reality of the financial miss and then sought to widen the perspective of all in the room regarding the state of the industry, the levels of disruption, and emerging competitive threats. Beyond simply a traditional "burning platform for change", he gave examples of weak signals that were challenging the basic foundations of the business, and that indicated that more change was coming in areas of the business that they had long assumed were "safe" from huge waves of disruption. He shared that things were being disrupted at such a phenomenal rate at present that this was the era of "no normal" and exponential change, and that if the leaders didn't get comfortable being uncomfortable, then the very viability of the business was at risk.

Financial misses like the one that day were troubling on a purely economic level, but more deeply troubling because they showed him that the organization was not used to being uncomfortable and had buried their heads in the sand vs. being vigilant about what was changing. The chairs, John said, were removed from the room for a purpose. If they had been there, they would have all walked in, taken a seat and expected a "business as usual" business update. Even now, he reflected to them all, they were standing at the edges of the room, leaning up against the wall to find comfort. The truth, he said, was that there was power in discomfort.

He then called them to action: Today, they would be spending the day in the conference room, widening their vision to see what they hadn't seen before, detecting the weak signals that were impacting the business and figuring out how they needed to work differently to close a $6 million gap by the end of the year. Assumptions would need to be challenged, beliefs flipped on their heads, and clarity of a new vision forged. Stunned, the leaders got to work.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



What ensued over the day was an organization discovering that sometimes a harsh reckoning is necessary to awaken people to see with deeper clarity, to face the current state with honesty and humility, and to unearth old, linear beliefs that were getting in their way.

Once we free ourselves up from the blinders we typically wear, the next step up the spiral of exponential leadership is releasing and allowing ourselves to be in alignment with the vision. **Congruence** is about alignment and harmony, inside and out: If you want to create an innovative new approach to your marketplace, you must *be* innovative yourself, *be* the innovative energy that brings the innovative energy to your team, to your processes, to the business. If you want to change course and help your team embody more personal power to solve their own problems proactively, you must become the proactive, empowered leader that calls that forth in others.

If you want to demonstrate more inspirational leadership day after day, you must inspire yourself, live inspirationally, in an authentic manner that emanates that inspiration in every interaction.

At one organization where we led a leadership development experience, there was a need to develop greater innovation to keep up with market changes. As we worked with the market-dominating legacy player, we explored the unconscious beliefs around innovation when we met with the senior leaders. Thoughts such as the following came up:

- "If we are more innovative, then we stick our necks out and get them cut off"
- "If we are more innovative, then we are not rewarded; we are actually punished"
- "If we are more innovative, then we risk losing respect"

The number of phrases that we heard around the office like "stick your neck out", "go out on a limb", "stand apart from others" showed the deep fear about taking any kind of risk to innovate that resounded within the organization. With all those beliefs as the backdrop, you would have to be downright insane to demonstrate more innovation.

Back in the contracting services firm, as the leaders got down to work on how they might close the $6 million gap

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |

between now and the end of the year, it became evident that old ways of thinking were getting in the way and had to be let go in order to be congruent with the fast-moving, agile, creative organization they needed to become. Some teams pulled out functional budgets and began a line by line item review of every item, debating if they could save $20 on paper, $50 on printer toner, etc., imprisoned in their own sense of comfort, and tyranny of efficiency.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the room, Steve and the Operations team mapped out core assumptions of the business, examined the gap, and by the end of the day had come up with $3 million of the $6 million and more than 25 positions that could be eliminated. Most importantly, they turned some long-standing industry assumptions upside down and came up with a creative proposal for a key client that would not only help close the gap, but transform the way those business deals were structured, deepen the relationship with key clients, and potentially emerge as a source of tremendous competitive advantage. It was truly a demonstration of acting in congruence with the fast-moving, agile, creative organization they needed to become.

Yet helping the rest of the organization see more clearly and then act in congruence with the more exponential thinking required would be a longer journey than could be accomplished in one day. Old beliefs around core processes that must be protected would be need to be released. Assumptions around how value was created and what made partnerships in the industry strong would need to be turned upside down, or at least expanded. As the work continued in the following days, John and Steve realized the depth of the change challenge on their hands: Congruence ultimately demands release – release of outmoded thinking, letting go of comfort and allowing space for creativity to emerge.

And this, in turn, means deep personal change. Staying on a path forward to new outcomes means steadfastly moving through our own unique organizational and personal levels of social conditioning, stress and fear. How we face that inevitable fear, in ways big and small, and experiment with new approaches is where we access Courage.

Courage is not about heroics. It's everyday bravery that means facing fears on the path to creating excellent new outcomes and holding the space for experimentation, seeking out differing perspectives, and dialoguing in ways that embrace diversity and inclusion, not shunning it. When we hold that space, and whole-heartedly move forward in spite of the fear, people around us feel full of courage themselves – it is contagious. They are encouraged, not discouraged to experiment with new ways of approaching the challenges at hand.

In fact, an experimental mindset is often the key that unlocks more leadership courage. Yet as much as there is increasing evidence that experimentation is critical for surviving the turbulent marketplace, few leaders and companies seem to be able to truly embrace this approach. Why is that?

To experiment, to try and to fail, means we must suspend judgment and the certainty that lies behind our opinions. It means we must shift from the comfort of certainty to valuing the learning that can come through exploration of possibilities. And it means we must be curious about the challenge at hand, letting go of our expert opinion just long enough to probe for what we might be missing.

In the case of the contracting services firm, as Steve unpacked the core assumptions around the central business deals with their key clients and reshaped the deal from a position of abundance, he uncovered nearly $2.5 million in upside potential and the opportunity to drive deeper partnership with the client organization. As he walked through the new logic he was proposing that they test with a key client, several colleagues challenged him, saying that his proposal was too risky, unheard of and untested. As he explained the reasoning, he demonstrated how it was too risky to NOT take action in this manner. The disruption in the marketplace meant that if they did not fundamentally rethink their approach, they stood to lose much more business, quickly. That day, Steve stepped forward in Courage, pulling together a revolutionary bid to a major client that also served to transform the thinking inside his firm.

As John and Steve's story demonstrates, making the shift to exponential thinking and leading is not easy. Yet with strong intention, reflection and discipline, **Clarity, Congruence and Courage™** can serve as guardrails in the process of transforming fear into positive new outcomes.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



THE CALL TO ACTION: EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Today, we have an unparalleled challenge and opportunity amidst the highly disruptive marketplace to create new responses and new results. Yet facing our current reality with humility and transforming fear into new outcomes can be both exciting and daunting.

Indeed, in the face of constant turbulence and disruption, we have the choice to either let our outer reality shape us, or transform and disrupt ourselves faster than the environment – or our competitors -- around us. For most of us, the question then becomes: How can we disrupt ourselves fast enough? How can we move upward on the spiral of exponential leadership growth?

While the path forward will vary from individual to individual, organization to organization, following the guideposts of Clarity, Congruence and Courage™ can accelerate that path of growth. We are committed to supporting more leaders to take on that challenge and continually grow through the spiral of exponential leadership.

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



OVERVIEW

This white paper is part of a new series focused on navigating through the Era of Disruption and the Dawn of Exponential Times. The aim is to illuminate the opportunities available in this extraordinary era and to clarify the unprecedented transformations needed at the organizational, leadership and individual level in order to meet the challenges at hand and thrive. Papers in this series include:

1. **What Got You Here Will Leave You Here** — Explore how this Era of Disruption is dramatically different than living in a "VUCA" world – where volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity reign. The dawn of exponential times promises to deliver 10x and higher benefit only if we can reinvent our organizations and ourselves for new ways of leading, thinking, and relating.

2. **Strategies for the Disruptive Era and for Exponential Times** — It's already been established that the core strategies and strategic thinking pathways of the last half-century will no longer suffice in the era of disruption and exponential times. It's also clear that digital native companies leading the disruptive charge operate within radically different strategic guiderails. Digital 2.0 incumbents across nearly all industries will require a mix of the two approaches to navigate the transition from the linear to the exponential era.

3. **The Gift of the Humble Incumbent** — What is a "Humble Incumbent"? Many incumbent companies in digital 2.0 industries will fail to make the transition to the exponential era, and many factors that contribute to determining that. Our experience is that those that we call "Humble Incumbents"—organizations fundamentally infused with, and built around, humility—will have the strongest base to work from.

4. **What is Exponential Leadership?** While many organizations have been focusing on developing greater adaptability and agility in leaders in the face of increasing turbulence, our experience is that this approach does not go far enough. Disruption and exponential times are already demanding a more extreme expansion of the way we think and lead, so as companies disrupt and reinvent their business models, so too must leaders reinvent themselves.

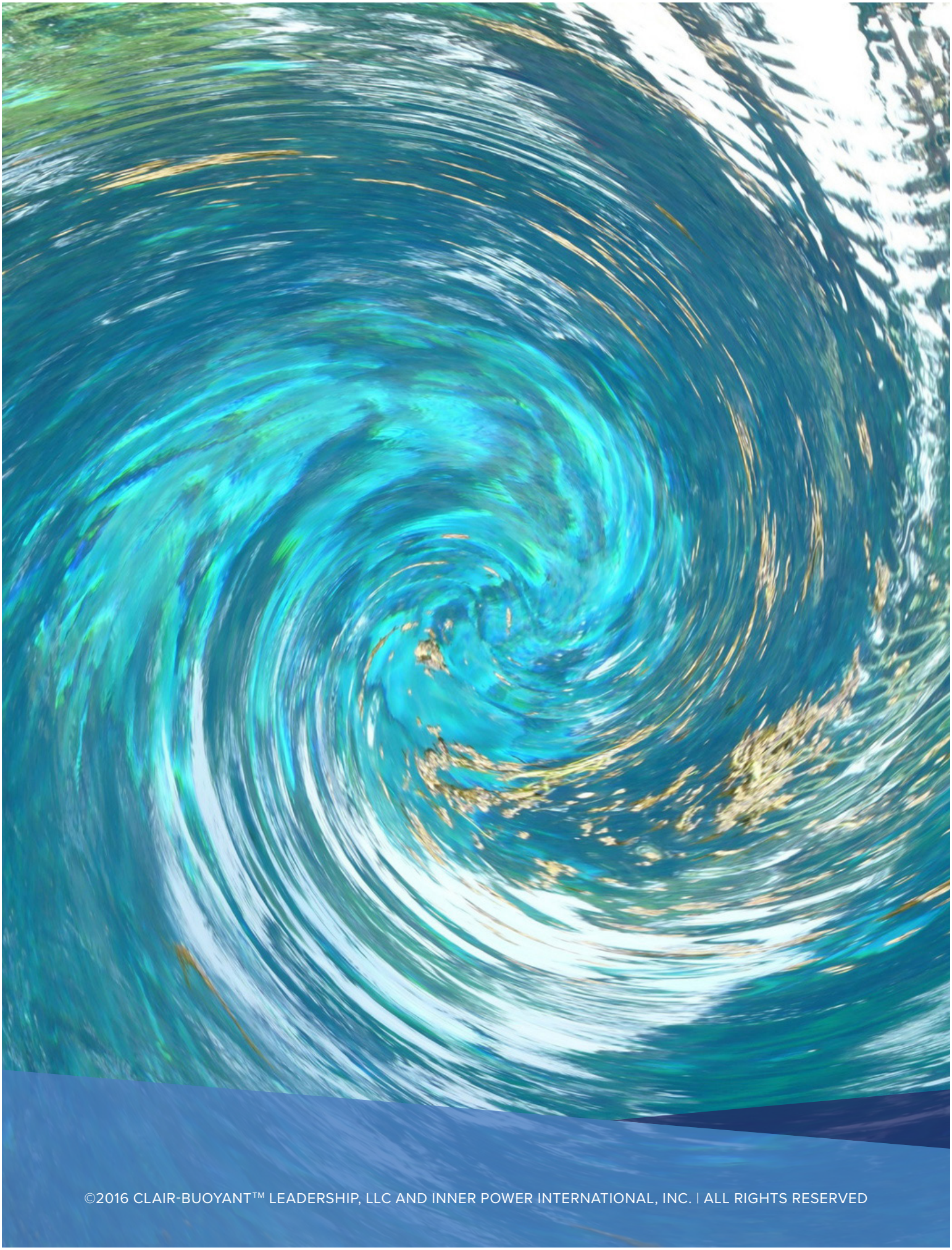
5. **How Can We Develop Leaders for Exponential Times?** The ways we have developed leaders in the past will no longer be enough to face the unprecedented challenges inherent in this era of disruption. Not only must the leadership skills for this era be reimagined—we must also reinvent how we develop leaders for exponential times.

6. **The Key to Conscious Reinvention for Exponential Times** — We are at a stage of human evolution that demands elevated levels of thinking and collective reinvention to thrive in the face of constant disruption. As individual leaders, we must slow down to unearth personal beliefs that hinder rapid transformation and then accelerate new practices to move exponentially forward. This will require identifying key accelerator beliefs and practices that each of us can utilize to advance our thinking and development.

For more information on the other articles in this series, please visit us online: **http://innerpowerintl.com/our-latest-ideas/** or **http://karenswalch.com**

Or, join us for further dialogue on LinkedIn: **https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4490735/profile and https://www.linkedin.com/in/leeanndelcarpio**

©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED |



©2016 CLAIR-BUOYANT™ LEADERSHIP, LLC AND INNER POWER INTERNATIONAL, INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED