

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction to Learnership:
Total Learning, Knowing, and Leading as a Mindful Way-of-Being

*But learning requires not just genes to set the system up for learning,
but genes to operate it as well...learning is itself an instinct.*

Matt Ridley

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Learnership Defined

Learning. Learning is a process that is the cornerstone of all human activity. Without learning, there is no human growth and development – personhood is not possible. And, at the microscopic level, the genes of the human genome – the foundational recipes for both our anatomy and behavior – cannot develop without exposure to and influence from their human (host) environment (Genome, 1999, by Ridley). It is a fact that life itself depends upon the ability of the human organism to learn from the interaction of its ingrained predispositions (nature) and its experience with its surroundings (nurture). The ability for our genes to evolve is based on their capacity for microscopic change and mutation. For complex human beings, our ability to learn and develop is tightly linked to our capacity and willingness to engage, understand, and accommodate our environment.

*The successful person is always a learner.
Norman Vincent Peale*

Learners. Learners are people with an ability to learn, which makes everyone to some degree a learner. Most of us fail to learn to excel at the pace, depth, breadth and length of time required to be categorized as first rate learners. To continually discover new, worthwhile, and satisfaction-giving things to learn along life's back-roads, highways, and interstate transportation systems requires learners committed to open, inquisitive, proactive, and action-oriented ways of learning. That is their affective and cognitive modes of sensing/thinking, interpreting/deciding, and realizing/acting need to inculcate supportive personal attributes. Good learners are able to learn effectively within the context of increasing time constraints, constant change, and the increasing complexity of modern life. *Learning is essential for knowing.*

Leading thinkers and influential writers throughout history have constructed theories on the what, why and how of learning in an effort to assist learners in their personal growth and development. This book acknowledges those insightful contributions and provides a meta-cognitive approach for integration and use of many of those mutually supportive perspectives.

*All wish to possess knowledge, but few,
comparatively speaking, are willing to pay the price.
Juvenal*

Knowing. Knowing is a capability that results from learning. Efficient and effective learners know more useful information about the people, things, and situations in life that matter. Learners and learning are focused on knowledge and knowing. In particular, having in our brains (or at our disposal) the information and knowledge required to understand, plan, execute, and reflect on our life activities incrementally advances our own, and others, growth and development. *Knowing is essential for achieving.*

*The secret of a leader lies in the tests he has faced over the whole of his life
and the habit of action he develops in meeting those tests.*

Gail Sheehy

Leading. Leading is a process that has to do with our ability to use our knowledge to influence others' thinking and behavior. Because learning creates change, leading is also essential if the new state of knowledge is to be shared and actualized. The process of leading change includes creating a future vision, building a case for change, involving important stakeholders, and implementing compelling improvements – all of which should demonstrate the viability of the new knowledge and encourage early adaptation by those affected. Without effective leading little is accomplished – much like racing the engine on a high performance car but never putting the vehicle in gear. *Leading is essential for putting knowledge into action.*

*If your actions inspire others to dream more,
learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.*

John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States

Leadership. The distinguishing characteristic of *leaders* is that they are able to get others to travel to an unfamiliar location, accomplish a desired objective, or change a personal perspective without fully knowing all the information that might be relevant. Leaders create a sense of direction, motivation and trust in others so that their personal thoughts, needs or plans are considered and action is taken. Some of the traits positively correlated with effective leadership include being competent, focused, fair, objective and friendly; having a positive attitude, and showing good initiative. Peter Vaill (Learning as a Way of Being) suggests the concept of *learning leadership or leaderly learning* wherein leaders adopt a style of management that demonstrates that they are open to learning their way through issues and problems. Major focus is placed on effectively integrating the technical (content), purposeful (direction) and relational (meaningful) aspects of organizational matters through effective collaboration and joint decision making. This, unfortunately, is clearly not a dominant skill in today's competitive business environment.

*Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts, never fears,
and never regrets. It is the only thing that will never fail us.*

Leonardo da Vinci

Learnership. Learning is a complex process with the object of knowledge creation and use in virtually all human affairs. And, learners are people with an ability to learn – although the development of this ability and willingness to use it varies widely across the general population. It follows, then, that there should be a term to describe people who are exceptional and influential learners; their capabilities and their influence on others. Learnership is the suggested term, and it is derived from: (1) *learner* – one who seeks to learn or to gain knowledge through experience or study, and (2) – *ship (suffix)* – to show or possess a quality, state, or condition. Additionally, learnership captures the essence and skill of leadership in which people are skillful in influencing others.

Learnership is a process in service of knowledge: its creation and its application. Highly developed skill in learnership virtually assures highly developed and comprehensive use of knowledge across multiple interdisciplinary social systems. In today's terminology, it could be said that learnership makes the concept of "Total Knowledge Management" (TKM) a distinct possibility.

Learnership is about *learning*, and about being a *learner*. More importantly, it's about the journey that begins when we *learn to become a skilled and purposeful learner* and make a life-long commitment to create and realize our individual potential. It's about the resilience that grows when learning yields achievement even when faced with obstacles and inequities. It's about the possibilities we discover through personal reflection and social interaction. It's a journey whose pace quickens as we become more mindful of our experiences and relationships and begin to manage our co-evolution within the expanding universe.

Learnership is about *knowing*, and how lifelong learning leads to the acquisition and storage of information and knowledge that may be employed in a multifaceted manner to become an "intelligent and competent person." The more knowledge we can acquire, store, access, and apply in a timely and rational manner, the more efficient and effective we become in all aspects of our lives. Knowing is both a mentally cognitive and emotional ability; and it is a physical capability in that the body can be trained to perform a wide range of skills. People are known to have multiple intelligences (discussed in Chapter Seven) such as linguistic, mathematical, musical intelligence. Knowing more about a subject or situation is a positive indicator that appropriate action is likely to be taken, as appropriate.

Learnership is about *leading*, and about influencing action. Learning leads to knowledge but knowledge without action denies the learner and others the growth and development they may value. The ability of leaders to create a sense of urgency or opportunity focused on new levels of personal or organizational development is a significant attribute. Individual and societal aspirations can be realized when objectives are clearly identified, best practices are understood, collaborative teamwork is established, and persistent effort is applied. A commitment to higher performance and community service is only potent when learning is shared and applied through the efforts of learning leaders.

Learnership is a whole person competence. The objective of learnership is to be a significant catalyst in the pursuit of personal self-fulfillment, organizational high performance, community common good and societal enlightenment. From an introspective and feeling perspective, learnership is the lifelong crafting of our potential to become, to establish a presence that transcends our own existence, and to influence the development of future generations. From a performance-oriented and cognitive perspective, learnership is demonstrated by our steadfast pursuit of lifelong learning, knowledge management, and personal achievement in all areas of life's responsibility and opportunity. Learnership conveys "a way-of-being" in which lifelong learning and knowledge management are thoroughly integrated into one's goal-seeking behavior so as to invigorate our experience and performance. Learnership is not a new phenomenon, but it

is a new term and a more comprehensive articulation of the preferred attitudes, areas of knowledge, and constructive activities that give each of us the edge in planning and experiencing a more successful and satisfying life and career.

Learnership can be practiced by just about anyone. Many people throughout history have had the understanding and courage to become lifelong learners, doers, and contributors. They have charted their unique course, realized their own purpose, and enriched the lives of countless others as they pursued their particular journeys. Unfortunately, the world's history has been that the vast majority of people in all societies and cultures have missed what the "accomplished elite" have experienced. Maybe by adopting the learnership learning-to-learn strategy, many more of us can learn to manage our learning, our knowing, our leading, and our achievements.

The concept of Learnership: Total Learning, Knowing, and Leading as a Mindful Way-of Being is intended to inspire the same generative perspective towards personal development, higher performance and social contribution expressed in such seminal works as Carl Rogers' A Way of Being and Peter Vaill's Learning as a Way of Being. The attempt, herein, is to establish a gestalt-like description of how our own cognitive development and personal performance can not only serve our own purposes, but also be an inspiration to others' growth and achievement. A life worth living is informed by skillful reasoning, reflective learning, and the application of knowledge to desired ends. Learnership is meant to convey an optimum lifestyle in which efficient learning and effective leading are the behavioral hallmarks of lifelong learners determining their unique and successful "ways-of-being." What also needs to be understood is that the connective link between learning and leading is knowing (our mind's knowledge repository) – and it is this storehouse of information and knowledge that provides the "content" that is created and put to work within the process of learning and leading.

At a summary level, learnership is an interpersonal capability distinguished by:

1. *A synthesis of learning and leadership process skills* in which the patterns of reasoning and behavior demonstrated by "learning-leaders" guide and motivate the performance of individuals in their pursuit of personal, organizational, community and societal accomplishment.
2. A focus on the what, why, and how of societal *knowledge creation and application* so individuals may (1) take responsibility for their own life-long learning and knowledge creation, and (2) be motivated to achieve extraordinary results by discovering their unique purpose and crafting their journey so as to *apply their increasing knowledge toward meaningful personal and social objectives*.
3. A desire to participate and lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy for lifelong societal learning, knowing, and leading that leads toward holistic and integrated human social systems development.

The real leader has no need to lead – he is content to point the way.

Henry Miller

A Learnership Philosophy. Learnership is a component of one's life philosophy on what is worth knowing and doing and on how human needs are accomplished. Viewed from a broad perspective, learnership practitioners maintain a distinctive worldview that frames their thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and behavior. Their inclination to determine the: who, what, when, where, why, how, and for whom on a wide range of societal issues and human activity signifies a sense of personal responsibility for contributing to the welfare of themselves, their organizations, and their communities. When seen in action, learnership practitioners impact others as learning-leaders. When they are in leadership roles, they display what Peter Vaill calls "leaderly learning" in that they learn within and through the situation in which they are involved.

For learnership practitioners, living and learning are inseparable and they enjoy the daily opportunity to grow, learn, and evolve as described by Peter Senge, et al, in their book entitled Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society (2005). These lifelong learners hold deeply held core beliefs and exude personal confidence that through inquiry and dialogue they will "learn to grow and to transition to a higher level-of-being."

From an epistemological viewpoint, learnership contributes to the individual learner's ability to construct their own knowledge of social reality and to succeed within that structure (Reference: The Social Construction of Reality by Berger and Luckmann). Meta-cognitive reflection provides the learner with opportunity to reframe personally held views and modify ingrained programs for thinking and behavior. On the philosophical level, learnership may be understood and appreciated as enthusiasm to participate in life and contribute to human progress by engaging in a broad set of mutually supportive and symbiotic practices that enrich peoples' knowledge and understanding. *Learning to learn, and to use what is learned for the betterment of humankind is an essential characteristic of the learnership philosophy.* Emphasis is on:

1. Purpose and Meaning – A commitment to engage with others in answering life's basic questions:
 - a. What do I stand for? (A sense of purpose);
 - b. How do I fit in with what has come before? (A sense of history);
 - c. How am I related to other people/events/objectives? (A sense of order); and
 - d. What can I hope for as I take action? (A sense of outcome)
2. Societal Development – A willingness to embark on humanity's journey toward an understanding of life's mysteries, definition of human purpose, and equalization of societal opportunities.
3. Higher-Level-of-Being – A desire to motivate oneself and others to pursue a unique purpose, confront personal challenges, develop enlightened perspective, and experience mindful accomplishment.
4. Goal Achievement – A synthesis of skills in lifelong learning and knowledge management that lead toward the accomplishment of the universal human goals of self-fulfillment, high performance, the common good, and human enlightenment.

5. Responsibility and Motivation – A focus on the what, why, and how of lifelong learning and knowledge management so individuals may (1) take responsibility for their own learning and development, and (2) be motivated to achieve extraordinary results by first discovering their unique skills and purpose.
6. Role Performance – A capacity to improve human performance by applying the skills of kinship, fellowship, leadership, followership, stewardship, citizenship, statesmanship, and philanthropy.
7. Use of Dialogue – An appreciation for interpersonal dialogue anchored in open inquiry, rapid learning, interpersonal understanding, reasoned decision-making, and constructive action that achieves consensual results.
8. Knowledge Management – A willingness to participate in knowledge development focused on issues and challenges in the political, economic, social, technological, ecological, and geological spheres of societal knowledge and endeavor.
9. Adult Life Cycle – A developmental perspective on one’s own lifetime that recognizes that individuals, organizations, and communities pass through phases of development, each with its own objectives, responsibilities, and rewards.
10. Self-Renewal – An understanding of life’s uncertainty, complexity, and temporality – and the value of transformative learning for occasional reinvigoration of one’s life and career.
11. Learning-to-Learn – A willingness to learn and apply contemporary skills and methods designed to increase the quality and speed of one’s learning.
12. Secular Reasoning – A commitment to participate in the public sphere using fact-based objectivity and authentic subjectivity as opposed to supernatural appeals and dogma.
13. Future Orientation – A desire to explore and discover new knowledge and innovations that can enhance the lives and careers of current and future individuals and societies.

A Learnership Architecture. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that “Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood.” Of course, the problem here is that by the time we live long enough to understand what is worth knowing, it is often too late to chart an informed course of action meaningful for the life we are now living. How then is it possible to capture the wisdom of exemplars – borne of time, experience and reflection – and make knowledge both discoverable and usable in our expanding, fast-paced world? Is there an agile but systematic process for thinking, learning and knowing that can empower more of us to discover our unique purpose and to accomplish our respective goals, needs and contributions?

The thesis of this book is that we can learn to manage ourselves – and to even lead others in their own development – towards the intellectual and emotional maturity that makes significant personal accomplishment probable. And, this may be done regardless of our personal histories or social status. The theoretical construct through which this occurs has *two major propositions*:

1. That systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational learning, knowledge management and adaptive leadership are foundational mental activities that serve as building blocks for managing what is worth thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and pursuing to select and achieve a holistic set of life goals.
2. That to understand and accomplish these life goals, an architecture consisting of the five competencies and four interdependent social systems requires our thoughtful reflection. These social systems consist of our personal social system, our organizational social system, our community social system, and our perspective on societal social systems among nations and geopolitical networks.

Figures 1-1 and 1-2 are, respectively, static and dynamic illustrations of the relationship among these major reasoning competencies and social systems. These models will evolve during Chapters One through Six and become incorporated into the final Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) for application in Chapters Seven through Ten.

Reasoning Competencies

It is best to consider your options from different perspectives.
Caterina Rando

The practice of learnership emphasizes five critical competencies that enable us to reason more efficiently and effectively, and to be emotionally and psychologically balanced. Specifically, they enable us to better manage our thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and goal-seeking activities. These competencies serve as catalysts in our efforts to manage and improve our performance in the four major social systems we inhabit – the personal, organization, community, and societal social systems of life. The competencies are defined below, and are then succeeded by descriptions of the four social systems they enable.

System Thinking (ST). A system perspective on social matters that illustrates the interdependency and mutual support among the personal, organizational, and community subsystems within which we learn, develop, and strive for success. The *system thinking competency* helps us develop a broader, more integrated outlook, and to expand the contextual environment of our thoughts and decisions. The use of system thinking inspires us to be integrative thinkers and discover opportunities to synthesize our learning for better understanding. Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR) combine to assure more effective Situational Learning (SL).

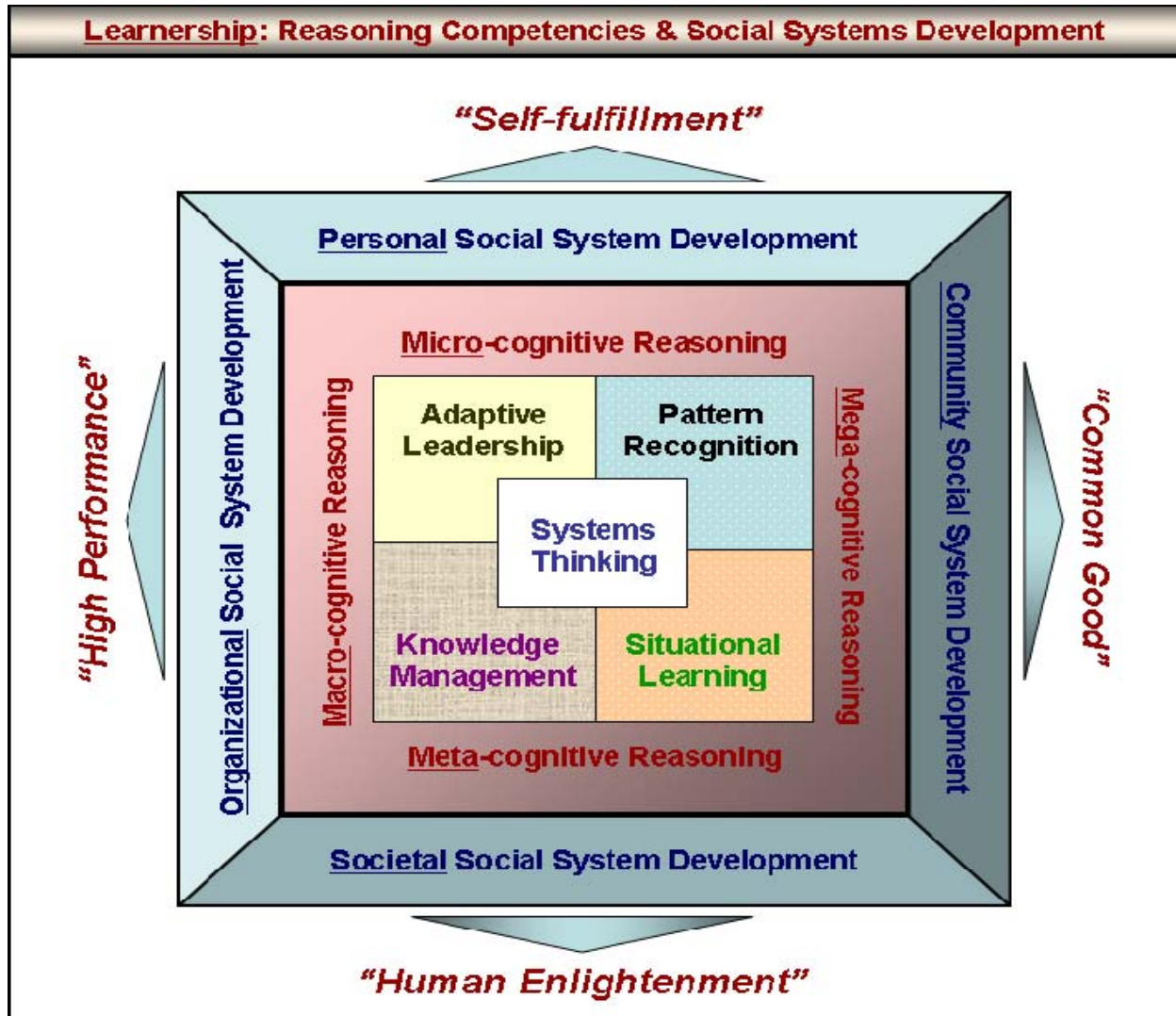


Figure 1-1

Pattern Recognition (PR). By definition, a pattern can be an archetype, a model, an ideal worthy of imitation, a representative sample of some thing, or a composite of traits or features characteristic of individuals. All biological life forms maintain and exhibit patterns of activity; and, the social development of humankind is inextricably anchored to our thought processes as revealed in our behavior. The cultural expectations, documented methodologies, and established practices that form our human experience and interpersonal and organizational relationships are the artifacts of inherited tendencies and learned values, beliefs, and experiences previously programmed into our computer-like minds. The *pattern recognition competency* focuses on our ability to recognize those preprogrammed aspects of ourselves and others, and on the need for us to better manage our reasoning based on the why and how we think, learn, know, lead, and pursue certain objectives in all our societal endeavors. Pattern Recognition (PR) combines with Systems Thinking (ST) to ensure more effective Situational Learning (SL).

Situational Learning (SL). A major life activity is dealing with the wide variety of situations we encounter on a daily basis. Some situations are routine and need little attention while at the other end of the continuum they may be significantly life and/or career threatening. What is important to understand is that every situation we encounter requires some amount of information gathering and analysis followed by decision making and action. And, every situation is a potential learning opportunity. The situational learning competency is a significant element in human capital development and in becoming a learnership practitioner which makes it a foundational anchor in the practice of learnership. Situational Learning (SL) benefits from the support provided by Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR) – and, it is an essential foundation for the practice of Knowledge Management (KM).

Knowledge Management (KM). Human development can only proceed as far as our combined knowledge will allow. Whether we view ourselves as individuals, organizations or communities, we are both empowered and constrained by our current knowledge, and our willingness and ability to acquire additional knowledge. Contemporary studies and writings indicate that knowledge may be systematically created, managed and used to enhance human development and to produce the products and services we need and desire. The *knowledge management competency* is the core element in becoming a learnership practitioner. It is the knowledge repository for situational learning artifacts, and in turn, it is the storehouse for the tacit and explicit knowledge used by adaptive leaders in advancing personal and social initiatives. Knowledge Management (KM) is enabled by Situational Learning (SL) which itself is supported by Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR).

Adaptive Leadership (AL). No amount of knowledge has practical value until it is applied to human needs or concerns. Someone needs to articulate what is known, show relevancy to the situation or challenge at hand, and propose a course of action that can create a meaningful result. It is the work of leaders to craft visions and futures that inspire others to accept change and become participants in the journey forward. The *adaptive leadership competency* is another foundational anchor in the learnership discipline because it moves knowledge into action. Theory is turned into practice, and practice leads to meaningful accomplishment for individuals and social organizations. Adaptive Leading (AL) applies Knowledge Management (KM) which has been enabled by Situational Learning (SL) which is supported by Systems Thinking (ST) and Pattern Recognition (PR).

Social Systems Development

Hell is a place where nothing connects to nothing.
Dante

A fundamental purpose of learnership is to direct attention to the challenges and opportunities we in society have before us as we reflect on the past, contend with the present, and plan for the future. The subject is structured in terms of a meta-system architecture that allows us to systematically focus attention on personal systems development, organization systems development,

community systems development, and societal system development in an increasingly expansive, but inclusive manner. Figure 1-2 is a dynamic flow model of the potential, cumulative, societal effect of the five *reasoning competencies* on the meta-system social development framework. A description of this dynamic relationship follows:

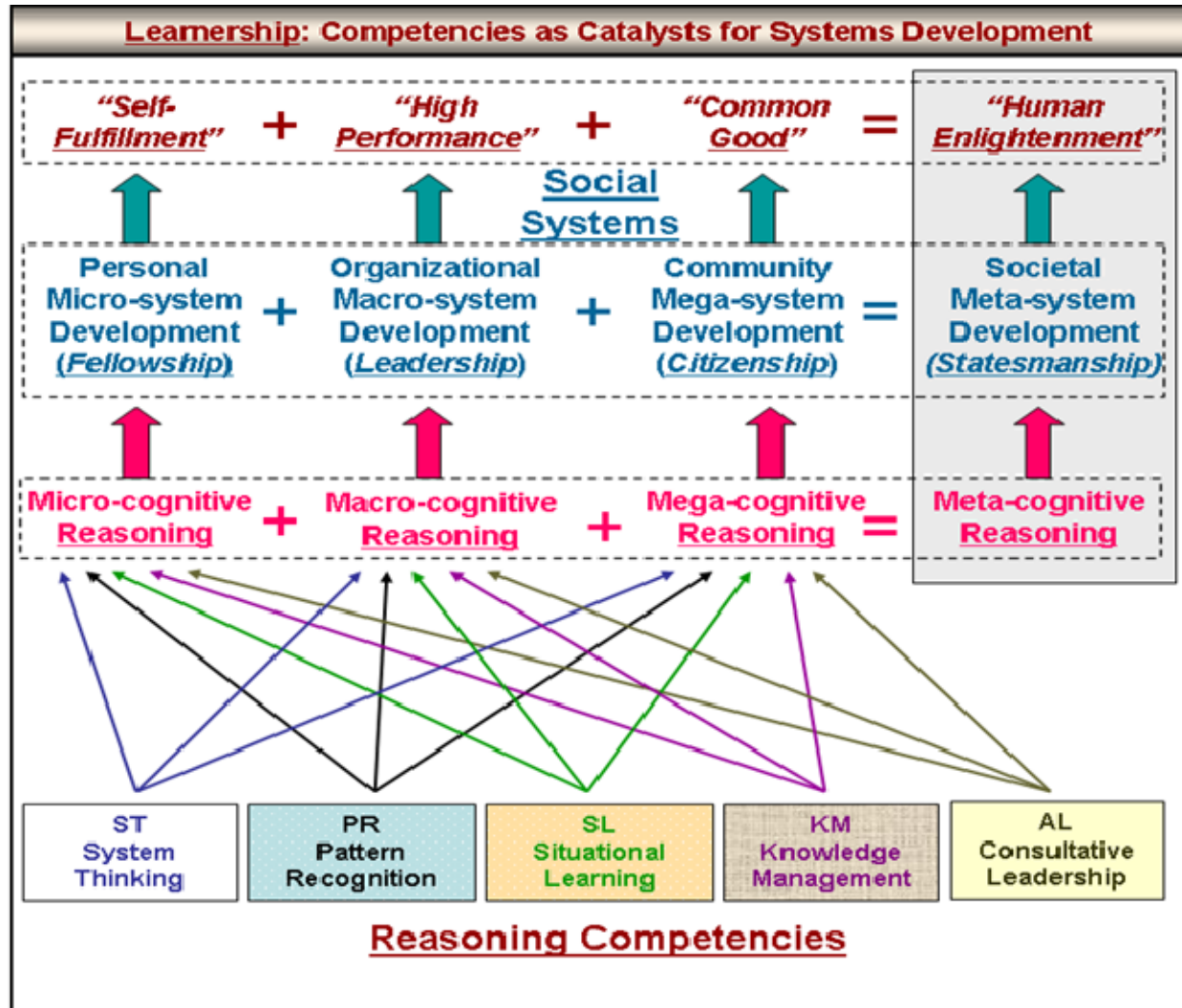


Figure 1-2

Personal Systems Development (PSD). PSD, also depicted as Personal Knowledge Management P(KM), is social synthesis at the micro-cognitive level, and is the starting point for managing the quality of our individual lives. Priority at this level is focused on continuous improvement of our *health, character* and *ability*. The universal goal selected for individuals is *self-fulfillment*, and the key role to be played is that of *fellowship*. Learning, knowing, and leading inform and activate PSD.

Organizational Systems Development (OSD). OSD, also depicted as Organizational Knowledge Management O(KM), is social synthesis at the macro-cognitive level, and uses recognized benchmarks for achieving highly efficient and effective organizational performance. The organ-

izational elements selected for intense management focus are the organization's *direction*, *operations* and *performance*. The universal goal selected for organizations is *high performance*, and the key role to be played is *leadership*. Learning, knowing, and leading inform and activate PSD.

Community Systems Development (CSD). CSD, also depicted as Community Knowledge Management C(KM), is social synthesis at the mega-cognitive level, and is conceived as the pathway for experiencing a rewarding community life. The community elements under development at this level are the institutions of *government*, *education* and *business*. The universal goal selected for communities is the *common good*, and the key role to be played is *citizenship*. Learning, knowing, and leading inform and activate PSD.

Societal Systems Development (SSD). SSD, also depicted as Societal Knowledge Management S(KM), is social synthesis at the meta-cognitive level, and consists of fully integrated reasoning and development across all four levels of social synthesis. SSD strives to capture the spirit of John Sullivan's To Come to Life More Fully (1990), and suggests milestones for our timeless journey towards holistic personhood. The universal goal selected for the societal level is *human enlightenment*, and the key role to be played is *statesmanship*. Learning, knowing, and leading inform and activate PSD.

Human Capital Development

*Wisdom is the ability to use data, information, and knowledge
in support of values, goals, plans, and projects deemed good.
Robert Krone*

Human Capital (Personal). Having come this far, we as individuals might already think to ask the age-old: "What's in this for me? The answer could well be "Learnership offers us an opportunity to enhance our own self-worth, to advance our quality of life, to increase our productive value, and to build our quotient of human capital." *Personal human capital* may be defined as the investment that we ourselves and others have made in becoming potentially valuable participants in our personal, organizational, and community lives. The more we learn and know, and the better we contribute, the greater is our acceptance and respect by others.

Figure 1-3 is a graphical illustration of the importance of getting an early start on building personal human capital. The horizontal axis defines a typical adult life span, and the vertical axis depicts the increasing ability of individuals to acquire the essential reasoning skills (thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and achieving). These skills are valuable for each of us in crafting a full and rewarding life, however, few of us ever really "get our act together and take in on the road" as effectively as we should. The good news is that the five *reasoning competencies* just introduced are an aggregation of hundreds of best practices that have consistently been shown to be important factors in effective life and work management – and, they can be learned. Some important questions we might ask are: "What have we accomplished in the past? How are we positioned to succeed now? What future state of being would we like to achieve?"

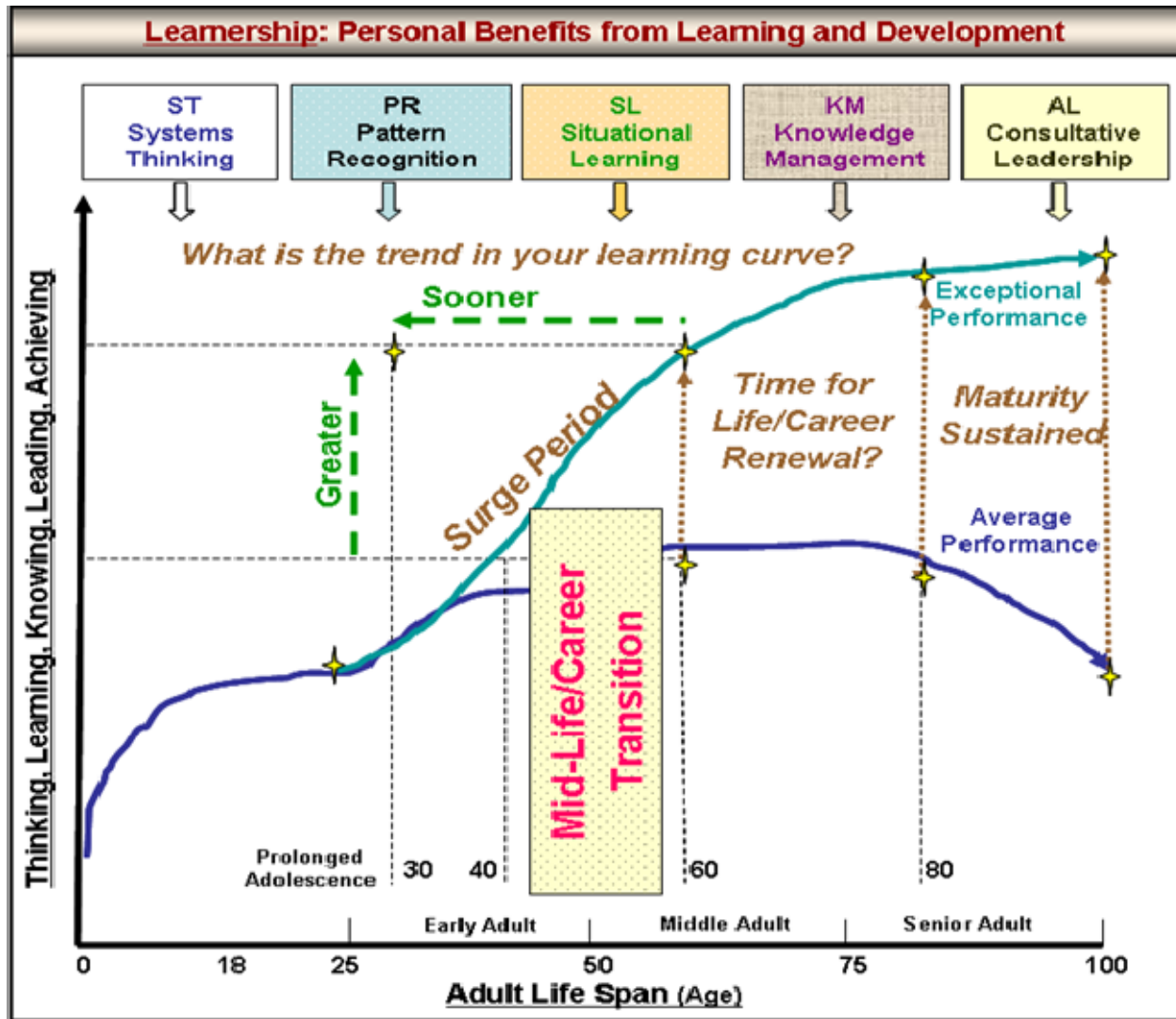


Figure 1-3

Any reasonable interpretation of the U.S. or world social, economic or political situation tells us that many fellow citizens experience a lifetime of below average performance in which limitations in heredity, education, health, location, social position, or personal motivation has consigned them to the lower of the two lines on the graph. Additionally, those who are in the proverbial “mid-life crisis” may be wondering “Is this all there is?” and “Maybe I should re-think what I am doing with my life?” “Is there time for me, too, to make this life journey memorable and meaningful?” “Can I, too, experience self-fulfillment and high performance?”

As for the smaller percentage of people at the other end of the achievement continuum, they have either had fewer of the limitations already mentioned, or have developed more of the personal success skills that have enabled them to accumulate the reasoning, learning, and action skills that have brought them recognition and success. When it was time for them to “surge forward” and learn to perform, they were ready. Rather than being average or below, they followed the upper curve and became exceptional performers. Of course, it is also important to recognize that some

of us start with many limitations and succeed very well, while others who have all the advantages, sometimes squander our inheritances. This situation will not be resolved in this text, and yet a truism does seem appropriate. That is, the sooner we learn how to succeed, the sooner we will succeed – and the greater our possibilities for success. Learnership practitioners automatically increase their own personal human capital – they can feel it happening to them.

Human Capital (Organizational). Viewed from the perspective of the organizational manager, we might be tempted to ask “What’s in this for us?” The answer could well be “Learnership is an opportunity to build the skills, knowledge, and contributions of the workforce to a firm’s mission or business results. Organizational capital is the term applied to the organization’s long-term investments and productive assets; and in today’s knowledge management vernacular intellectual capital in the form of human, structural and customer capital is a major asset for long-term high performance. Figure 1-4 illustrates the relationships among an organization’s various forms of capital with special attention to its need for intellectual capital.

Human capital is the term used to direct attention to what is often called the most important asset of an organization – its workforce. Typically, human capital development activities focus on improving the operation of the personnel office, e.g. recruitment, training, performance measurement, and termination. In more advanced organizations, additional effort is spent on career development which attempts to link employee training to the evolving needs of the organization. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that this level of intervention has much effect on the long-term stability and performance of the workforce in a world churning uncertainty, complexity, downsizing and a new found employee independence. The learnership principles and practices synthesized in this text have distinct advantages in establishing the systematic reasoning, collaborative dialogue, and learning leadership necessary for quantum improvement in workforce competence and performance.

[Author’s Note: The term “human capital” has particular relevance in the contemporary discipline of knowledge management which is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. And, when personal and organizational human capital is grouped into one conceptual entity, we have the early stages of the human investment component of the Total Knowledge Management (TKM) subtext in this book.]

Learnership Practitioner Development

We should be the envy of the world.
Dr. W. Edwards Deming

The Learnership Practitioner. Learnership practitioner is the term used in this book to give distinction to a special class of artful learners – those who immerse themselves in a lifelong quest for relevant learning, meaningful knowledge, and personal achievement. These are people who systematically increase their understanding of life’s opportunities and challenges; develop their

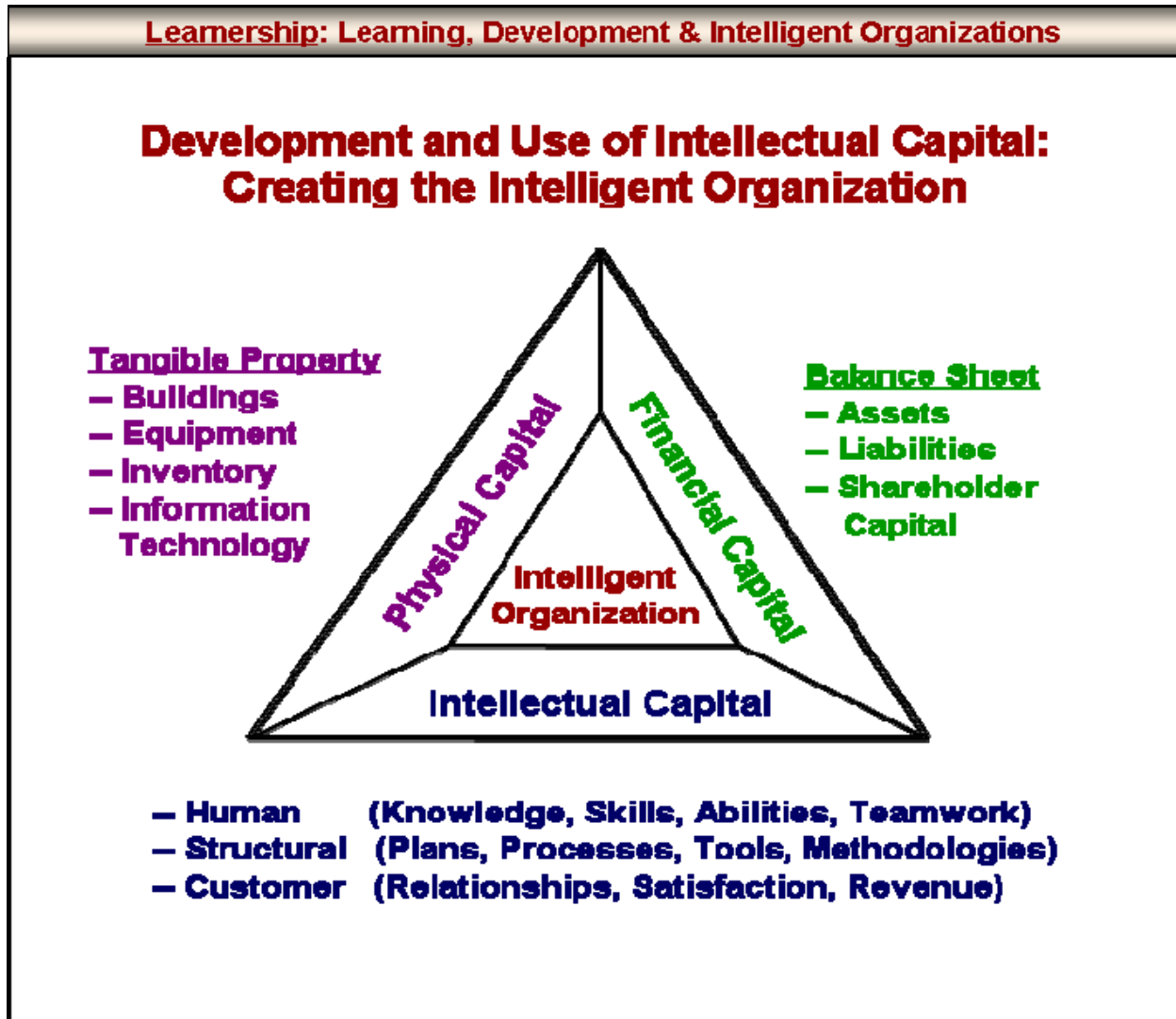


Figure 1-4

skills through questioning and learning; and produce products and services of value to themselves and others. Learnership practitioners have historically been contributors to societal development due to their innovation and problem-solving proclivities. They are people who have eclectic learning interests, enjoy rapid learning within both formal and informal social networks, and acquire the skills and technologies that enable their achievements. Learnership practitioners are also knowledge managers in their own right in that they continually identify, acquire, organize, use and share new found knowledge within their respective social systems. They learn and lead within their personal social system, they develop and apply knowledge practices and tools in their organizational roles, and contribute as informed problem solvers within their local communities.

Learnership practitioners understand and appreciate the fundamental theories in their fields of interest and education. However, they are primarily committed to the practical application of what they need to learn and know in order to pursue their goals and achieve their priorities. In

particular, these highly interdependent personalities appear to have a high degree of resilience and resourcefulness in acquiring new knowledge and in their ability to learn from practical experience. Learnership practitioners have good cognitive and reflective skills, but unlike their more academic counterparts, those skills are valued to the degree they align with their need to turn knowledge into action in a timely manner. Learnership practitioners have “learned-to-learn,” they get psychological rewards from the process of learning, and they do it all their lives. They may be distinguished from the majority of others who are bound by the excessive differentiation and lack of integration of the traditional educational curricula that fail to connect theory to practice, and have little motivational impact when taught in formal classroom settings.

Learnership practitioners operate as “free agent learners” and may be distinguished from many others in that they are not bound by the limitations of the traditional educational curricula taught in formal school and classroom settings. Instead, they are, and have been imbued with the “adult learning,” “learn-as-needed,” “just-in-time-training,” and “virtual knowledge worker” practices encouraged by the rapidly changing social, economic, and technological work practices of the last two decades. Free agent learners have eclectic learning interests and pursue “cycles of rapid learning” across formal and informal boundaries and social and electronic networks. Instant messaging, internet scanning, and Blog participation are viewed as sources of potentially useful information, while cell phones, laptops, and Blackberrys are essential tools for communications, learning, and knowledge-building.

Learnership practitioners possess a curiosity concerning the world around them that enables them to achieve important career and life objectives through all phases of their adult lives. Their working level knowledge of a symbiotic set of reasoning competencies assures their personal growth, development, achievement, and overall satisfaction from a life well-lived. Throughout history, learnership practitioners have been people with distinguished lives and careers. They are here today working among us in large numbers, and will be valued for their unique contributions by generations yet to come. Learnership practitioners relish the opportunity to “fully absorb their experiences and to learn from them.” They also become influential through their ability to put their knowledge into action. In addition to the six characteristics just mentioned, the learnership practitioner demonstrates fourteen additional characteristics or commitments:

1. A willingness to embark on humanity’s journey toward mindful growth and an understanding of life’s mysteries and human purpose.
2. A desire to motivate oneself and others to discover life’s opportunities, pursue a unique purpose, confront personal challenges, develop enlightened perspective, and attain a higher level-of-being.
3. An appreciation for interpersonal dialogue based on open inquiry, rapid learning, interpersonal understanding, and reasoned decision making.
4. A capacity to improve human relations by exemplifying the principles of leadership, followership, stewardship, citizenship, fellowship, and statesmanship.

5. A willingness to participate in issue resolution in the political, economic, social, technological, territorial, and ecological domains of societal knowledge and endeavor.
6. A developmental perspective on how individuals, organizations and communities progress through their respective phases of development – each with its own objectives, challenges and rewards.
7. A systems perspective on societal learning and development that balances the human need for both stability and change to achieve higher levels of societal development and performance.
8. A focus on personal learning and knowledge management as key capabilities in the development of social systems: personal, organizational, community, and societal.
9. A desire to replace differentiation with integration as a lifelong perspective – and the ultimate foundation for a mindful journey through life.
10. A commitment to use knowledge, science, and practical experience to overcome reliance on mysticism, superstition, and supernatural intervention.
11. An advocate of the means between the extremes – weighing personal rights with social responsibilities in order to negotiate adequate, inclusive outcomes.
12. An appreciation for balancing inquiry and advocacy in all one attempts to accomplish. No one knows all that could be known to reduce potential risk and to guarantee success.
13. A capacity to perform multiple roles such as consultant, coach, facilitator, student, mentor, thought leader, and project manager as situations require.
14. A willingness to apply the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) model at all levels of personal and social systems development.

Thomas Friedman, in his recent book The World is Flat (2005) suggests a few new thoughts that integrate well into the above learnership practitioner description. When explaining what will be required for those individuals worldwide to remain vital and competitive during the rapid changes in the immediate future, Friedman emphasizes: (1) learning-to-learn, (2) pattern recognition and problem solving, (3) striving to become untouchable, and (4) becoming a “versalist.” Learning-to-learn is a fundamental anchor in learnership philosophy and practice. It is the capacity to recognize individual, organizational and societal patterns of thinking and action. Problem solving and decision-making are essentially learnership reasoning practices. Striving to become an “untouchable” in the new world economy requires that we keep ourselves well educated and skilled in order to remain marketable in the international marketplace. Lastly, the manner in which many more careerists will stay competitive will be to strike a balance between being a specialist and a generalist – both of which have their place in the economy. Those of us who become *versalists*, however, will progress through our careers by continually

adding new specialties to our respective repertoires thereby allowing us multiple opportunities for gainful employment. Two additional learnership practitioner capabilities should now be added to the above list:

15. A personal commitment to learning reasoning competencies that improve systems thinking, pattern recognition, situational learning, knowledge management, and adaptive leadership.
16. An expectation that personal development depends primarily on being responsible and responsive to the ever-changing political, economic, and social forces occurring locally or on a global scale.

If there is a new social contract implicit between employers and employees today it should be this: You give me your labor, and I will guarantee that as long as you work here, I will give you every opportunity – through either career advancement or training – to become more employable and more versatile.

Thomas Friedman

Learnership Practitioner Development. Figure 1-5 is a high level illustration of the learnership practitioner development program supported by the perspectives and models presented and advocated in this book. The perspectives, knowledge and skills implicit in the learnership philosophy and the learnership architecture are available to everyone who wishes to significantly optimize his or her life and career performance across a wide range of topics and issues. The use of a system/process model is particularly germane to the purpose of this book, and it directly supports the system thinking discussion that follows in Chapter Two.

1. Input – *Reasoning competencies* are an ensemble of specific practices that enable and energize process activity, and develop the knowledge required for systems improvement.
2. Process – *Social systems* are the meta-system components that benefit from and contribute to human interest and management. *Universal knowledge spheres* are the contextual environment within which human social activity occurs.
3. Output – *Universal Goals* represent the long-term, integrated state-of-being that many people, both individuals and social groups, overwhelmingly support.
4. Feedback – An essential process model component that illustrates the need for continuous review and evaluation of performance to assure steady progress. A purposeful effort toward incremental improvement is necessary for societal development.

[Author's Note: It is useful to recognize at this juncture that Figure 1-5 is more than just a learnership process model; it is also a framework for knowledge development and application. Chapters Two through Six, while describing the five reasoning competencies of learnership, also illustrate critical capabilities that energize our ability to understand and perform knowledge

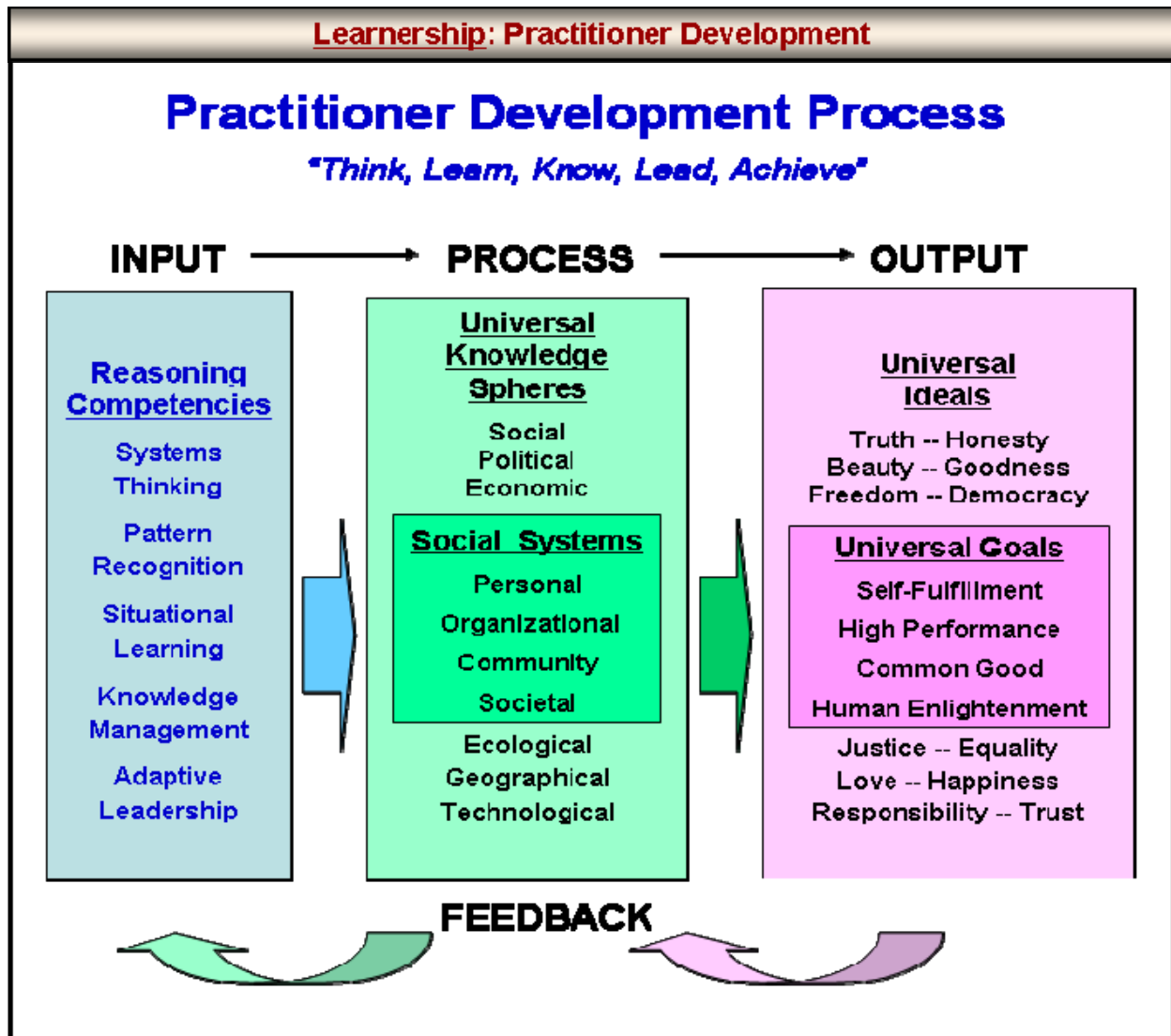


Figure 1-5

creation, management, and application in service of our personal, organizational, community, and societal objectives. The overarching subject of learnership contains an important subtext on Total Knowledge Management (TKM). TKM in this book is conceived as the process of identifying, acquiring, organizing, analyzing, synthesizing, using, sharing, and applying information and knowledge in the pursuit of personal, organizational, community, and societal goals and ideals. As such, TKM is inextricably embedded in the five reasoning competencies and four social systems components of the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA).]

Conclusion

A Learnership Leap Forward. Much has now been said in this introductory chapter about *learnership*, the *learnership* philosophy, the *learnership* conceptual architecture, the potential of *learnership* theory and practice in developing intellectual (specifically human) capital, and the development of *learnership* practitioners. In preparing to move forward, a final commentary is provided to illustrate specific challenges that the five competencies and four social systems in the developing *learnership integrated systems architecture* (LISA) are meant to overcome.

Decades of study and experience have been reviewed in an attempt to understand why the entreaties of so many experts in a wide variety of fields have so little practical effect on the quality of our personal, organizational, and community lives. As individuals, workers, and citizens it seems that too many of us are slow learners and even slower implementers of what is known to be superior practices in thinking, learning, knowing, leading, and achieving. *Learnership* practitioners are those who have forever demonstrated their knowledge and skills consistent with the factors addressed herein, and the rest of us who are now ready to seize the opportunities before us to proactively manage our own development in response to the *personal and social performance weaknesses* summarized below.

Reasoning Competencies – Internal factors to be overcome:

1. Systems Thinking – A *limited interest and skill* in open thinking and dialogue – thereby failing to understand the contextual forces that must be accommodated in order to properly scope problems and issues for effective decision-making.
2. Pattern Recognition – An *inability to discern* the differences among peoples' preferences, temperaments, and intentions as well as being inadequately skilled in organizational and community procedures, processes, and methods through which work is efficiently accomplished.
3. Situational Learning – An *inability to apply critical analysis* to life and work experiences, and to reflect on those experiences in a systematic manner to acquire timely cognitive and emotional learning.
4. Knowledge Management – An *unwillingness to perceive knowledge as a manageable commodity*, and to learn the tools and practices currently available for improved performance.
5. Adaptive Leadership – A *shortage of knowledge and skill* in understanding pervasive drivers for change, and an inability to plan and facilitate group learning strategies that can assure organizational relevancy and competitiveness.

Social System Development – External factors to be confronted:

6. Personal Social System – The *unwillingness to review one's own accomplishments and weaknesses* in the areas of health, ability and character to determine what immediate changes are required to craft a life worthy of respect and recognition. A lack of a respectful relationship among family, friends, and associates is also an indicator of weakness.
7. Organizational Social System – An *unwillingness to assess organizational direction, operations and performance* against best industry practices; determine opportunities for improvement; and steadfastly participate in the implementation of corrective measures. A lack of educated and skillful leadership of teams and functions contribute to this dysfunction.
8. Community Social System – *Being indifferent to the benefits of trustworthy, responsible and collaborative dialogue* among the education, government and business sectors and institutions that can lead to thoughtful community relationships. Similarly, the lack of an informed and active citizenry willing to provide for the common good is a deficiency.
9. Societal Social System – *Being insensitive to the deteriorating effects of social, political, and economic inequity and excess* that threaten humanity's health, freedom, and overall well being. The lack of statesmanship among states and cultures that could prevent the occurrence of misunderstanding and hostility were it to be available.

The learnership objective is to help us plan and manage our own lives to achieve optimum performance and happiness within the limits of our unique circumstances. Learnership provides a synthesis of expert opinion and best practices. Learnership practitioners are people – many like us, who are willing to develop ourselves and engage in constructive social activity.

While it is obvious that not everyone has the same level of inherited capabilities or environmental support, everyone has the ability to make better choices and pursue worthwhile objectives. Everyone can experience personal progress, self-esteem, and significant accomplishment. The time is now for us to learn, lead and act. Interlude One that follows introduces a skeletal model of the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) that will be developed as we proceed through Chapters Two through Six which will serve as a catalyst for driving personal, organizational, community, and societal progress.

Implications for Total Knowledge Management. The comprehensive Learnership Process Model (Figure 1-5) and the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) provide an all-inclusive framework suitable for both the book's primary subject of Learnership: Total Learning, Knowing, and Leading as a Mindful Way-of Being, and the symbiotically related subject of Total Knowledge Management (TKM). TKM's materialization is based on the premise that

“*total learning, total knowing, and total leading*” are a natural triad of activities in human evolution and development. The TKM concept is anchored here in Chapter One and further develops in each subsequent chapter until completion in Chapter Six. There it is activated as adaptive leadership and applied in the four learnership domains of social systems development (Chapters Seven through Ten).

Personal Reflection. This topic appears at the end of each chapter and is meant to serve two purposes: (1) be a reader’s guide to main points and “takeaways,” and (2) to encourage everyone to take a moment to engage their mental cognition and intuition on what the chapter means to them – especially at this time in their lives. Questions for chapter reflection follow immediately below; and for those readers inclined to maintain a self-assessment, your thoughts may be recorded in your Learnership Journal for Life and Career Reflection and Renewal which is located at the epilogue.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you often wonder why so many people appear to resist any major new life or career learning? If so, why is this so, and what can be done about it? Please explain.
2. Are you beginning to understand the learnership philosophy and learnership architecture; and how it might be of benefit to you? Please explain.
3. Can you list two to three major learning points from this chapter that you want to keep in mind to improve your ability to manage your life and career?
4. What do you think the impact of this chapter’s information might be on the personal, organizational, community, and/or societal systems to be discussed later in the book?
5. Can you identify two to three topics, models, or perspectives in this chapter you would like to learn more about?
6. Should you be making an entry into your learnership journal at this time?

FIRST INTERLUDE

Now that we have the benefit of the Chapter One introduction, we can begin a chapter-by-chapter presentation of the five learnership reasoning competencies. The knowledge and skills learned will, in turn, be used by experienced learnership practitioners to learn and lead:

1. Personal Systems Development (PSD) based on Personal Knowledge Management (P)KM in the pursuit of self-fulfillment.
2. Organizational Systems Development (OSD) based on Organizational Knowledge Management (O)KM in the pursuit of high performance.
3. Community Systems Development (CSD) based on Community Knowledge Management (C)KM in the pursuit of the common good.
4. Societal System Development (SSD) based on Societal Knowledge Management (S)KM in the pursuit of human enlightenment.

The figure below is the first iteration of the Learnership Integrated Systems Architecture (LISA) – a skeletal framework into which selected elements of each reasoning competency will be added as we proceed through Chapters Two through Six. Some initial indicators are shown, however, the reader is advised that there are subtleties and mutually supportive overlaps embedded in this model that will become clearer by the time we reach the final (Third) Interlude at the end of Chapter Six.

