



COLLABORATION *and* AUTONOMY

We often think of autonomy and collaboration as an inverse relationship—with *more of the one* comes *less of the other*. But collaboration without autonomy often creates cultures where nobody directs or assumes personal accountability. And autonomy without collaboration is stripped of the power of relationship and is starved of resource. Autonomy without collaboration ultimately ends in utter isolation—in starvation. Collaboration without autonomy ultimately ends in a watered-down amorphous soup—in diffusion. In the healthiest cultures, everyone becomes *more collaborative* as they become *more autonomous*.

COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE. The co-intelligence of a group greatly exceeds the intelligence of any one person. And collectively we have a broad perspective not attainable by a single individual.

THE SHADOW—GROUP THINK. Groups may suffer from mental laziness when too many people assume *somebody else has it covered*. In its extreme, this shadow may produce group consensus on something nobody would agree to if left to make the decision on their own.

DISTINCT ACTION. Highly autonomous domains can act quickly and distinctly. They have the authority and resources necessary to simply do it on their own. Ideally, a domain can become *increasingly independent* and *increasingly relational* at the same time—always aware of how it relates to every other domain.

THE SHADOW—INSULARITY. With high autonomy comes the risk of acting outside of the larger context. So what makes sense from a limited perspective makes no sense at all from a more inclusive perspective.

ONE MIND. Groups can attain such high resonance they have collective intention—and they begin to act as one mind. Every emanation of *the one* takes every other emanation into account. With high resonance comes high collective efficiency and a reduction of missteps and redo's.

THE SHADOW—ACCOMMODATION. In its shadow, group mind devolves into accommodation—simply *going along with it*. The power of diversity is lost, and the contrast necessary for good decisions fades. The shadow of accommodation also produces shallow buy-in.

CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY. With greater autonomy comes simpler accountability. Everyone knows *who* is supposed to do *what*. Complex projects can be distributed to an array of high-functioning, smaller domains—producing a whole that's the sum of clear and individually accountable parts.

THE SHADOW—SELFISHNESS. In its shadow, individual accountability becomes selfish—putting the wellbeing of one part above the wellbeing of the whole. This happens when in the process of becoming *increasingly distinct* something also becomes *decreasingly relational*.

COLLECTIVE ABILITY. The composite skill set of an organization is immense. To fully tap this potential, we must transcend the limits of titles and departments and understand that the broader abilities of every individual are far greater than what's most easily recognizable.

THE SHADOW—DIFFUSION. When everyone has to be involved in everything, collaboration suffers from diffusion. The concentration needed to *push it through* is never achieved because everything is too spread out.

CLEAR VALUE. Highly autonomous domains often have a clear sense of purpose and value. They are sure *who they are* and *why they matter*. They often have high self-esteem and are rarely paralyzed by doubt.

THE SHADOW—INDISPENSABILITY. In its shadow, a clear sense of value may degenerate into an inflated sense of importance—indispensability. A person may even begin to manipulate circumstances so a project, department, or even the organization would fail without them.