



7 Levels of Effectiveness: An Energetics Influenced OT (Organizational Transformation) Approach

By Ann Betz

Recently, I was sitting around the fire having a glass of wine with five other talented, brilliant, high-powered Organizational Effectiveness/Development experts. As the conversation progressed, we all found ourselves sharing stories of the toxic organizations we'd worked in. Stress, illness, sleepless nights, anger, loss of self-confidence, and general disillusionment in the very idea of organizations were common themes. We looked at each other at one point and someone said "Well, where are the healthy ones?" We shook our heads and noted that most of us were working as consultants.

We are programmed for community, and truly, we long for connection. Like many of you, I have worked individually with hundreds of leaders and trained/consulted/intervened in dozens of organizations. The pain is widespread, but no one intends—or wants—to create it. There are many explanations that can help us begin to make sense of this conundrum: Turbulent times, the prevalence of self-deception, old structures bumping up against new ideas (and generations), the list goes on. And yet, many of us in the field are longing for deeper understanding and more elegant, long-lasting, truly effective solutions. Is too much of what we have been doing simply rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic? What is the core of the problem? At **BE^{above}** Leadership, it's these questions that have led us to stop talking about *Organizational Development* or even *Effectiveness* and start looking deeply into *Organizational Transformation*.

Seven years ago my business partner and I found ourselves on a journey of discovery that has led us into an exploration of energy fields and how they impact human experience. For example, many of us have had the sense on occasion of feeling that a certain office or organization simply

feels heavy or light. We might try to figure this out by looking at the physical environment, policies, leadership, etc., but what we have come to understand is that the organization is embodying—and being used by—an energetic field that is either helpful and productive or unhelpful and destructive. All of the above factors, of course, play into the generation of this field, which becomes a dominant force that shapes human behavior. To alter the effectiveness of an organization, this field is what must be addressed and transformed. At **BE^{above}** Leadership, we have identified 7 major fields of personal, group, and organizational effectiveness (please note that we are not attempting to claim an absolute definition for any of these labels, as we know and respect that others use them in both similar and different ways):

1. **Hopelessness**—Fundamental inability to see or work towards a positive future.
2. **Fear**—Belief that one must protect against almost certain loss, attack or disappointment.
3. **Frustration**—Focus on fighting and jockeying for position against (not with) others; the feeling that the external world (both people and circumstances) must be resisted.
4. **Courage**—Willingness to take a stand against previously held negative or disempowering beliefs and actions, trust in the possibility of a positive future (often despite current evidence that a positive future is not likely or predictable).
5. **Engagement**—Desire to bring value, to be a contributor; basic enjoyment of the enterprise; focus on assets and strengths rather than limitations and detriments.

6. **Innovation**—Ability to set aside ego, personal agendas, and perceived restrictions and explore possibilities from all angles; quest for, seek, and focus on the most effective solution to the problem or goal.

7. **Synchronicity**—Working from a true understanding that what is *within* creates what is outside; focus on creating a positive experience for all; the ability to see the gift and possibility in anything.

In each energetic field, certain behaviors are predictable while others are rare. The field drives the behavior and compels people to conform or leave. It's common knowledge that ineffective organizations chew through talented people, who either become bitter or jaded like everyone else or simply quit. In addition, communication as well as what people hear is determined by the field. What a highly effective organization hears as helpful ideas, an organization in Frustration or Fear levels can hear as disloyalty.

In fact, we believe the ability to focus on rational, thoughtful analysis is the hallmark of an organization calibrating at level 4 (Courage) or above. It sounds harsh, but organizations in the fields of Hopelessness, Fear, and Frustration are quite irrational. For example, if you have an organization in Frustration (level 3), where most of the energy is focused on internal competition and personal (not organizational) gain, few will be able to engage in planning a new organizational structure in the way that makes the most sense for the organization. They will say they are, but the process will be about power, not effectiveness, and this will most often not be consciously done. Whereas in an organization at the level of Engagement (level 5), open and frank

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discussion can be had around what makes the most sense for the overall success of the enterprise.

So what do we do? At **BE^{above}**, we are developing an assessment of the levels of effectiveness so that organizations can begin to understand where they are—and look to where they want to be—in terms of the energetic field that is shaping their actions, behaviors, and results. We believe that effective Organizational Transformation begins with knowing as much as we can about the energetic field predominating in the organization so that it can be named, addressed, and shifted. To do this, the only way out is *through*. A forced focus on “being positive” will not get an organization out of Fear; it will only annoy people. To move through any of the energetic fields to a higher state, the organization must have the courage to be present to where they are, fully honoring *what is so right now* before focusing on where they want to go.

In addition to honoring the current energy state, we think each level needs to be met with a different energy intervention in order to move to the next level, with courage being present in any upward movement. As we work with this model, discovering more about what makes a difference in shifting an energy field, we are also looking to you, our fellow practitioners, for your wisdom. So far, we think it looks something like this:

1. **Hopelessness** needs healing
2. **Fear** needs honesty

3. **Frustration** needs aligned vision
4. **Courage** needs affirmation
5. **Engagement** needs passion unleashed
6. **Innovation** needs higher purpose
7. **Synchronicity** simply needs room to express itself

We offer this introduction with the intention of being in conversation with our fellow pioneers and healers, who are as passionate as we are about the possibility of healthy organizations, empowered employees, and authentic leaders. We know that this is a somewhat simplistic view of organizations and their needs, but hope that it spurs thought, curiosity, and a spark of recognition. At **BE^{above}** we are also passionate about connection and community, and the power of multiple perspectives. We believe there is a crying need for all of us to help organizations transform, and we share these ideas in the hope that they contribute in some way to the healing of our world. We welcome your thoughts, stories, and advice!

***BE^{above} Leadership** was co-created by two life coaches, change management trainers, and transformational leaders: Ann Betz, CPCC; and Ursula Pottinga, CPCC. The vision for the organization arose from a shared passion for heart-centered leadership and living with joy, combined with a deep desire to help others remember their innate capacity to lead and live “above the line.” www.beaboveleadership.com*



Ann Betz

Ann Betz, CPCC, has both a passion and a gift for making teachings and theory real, understandable, and powerfully applicable in

day-to-day life. A certified coach and experienced trainer, Ann currently leads the Certification Program for the Coaches Training Institute and is on contract as a leadership coach and trainer in Cargill’s High Performance Management Program. Ann is the co-founder (with Ursula) and former executive director of the non-profit organization AmeriCoach, which provided leadership development and training for young leaders engaged in community service. Over the past ten years, Ann has developed numerous workshops on using coaching skills in the workplace, effective leadership, the power of living from love instead of fear, and creativity. She has worked extensively with Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations, school districts, and volunteer programs on strategic planning, team building, and leadership. Ann recently relocated to Minneapolis from four years in Costa Rica. Her email is ann.betz@gmail.com.

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