LEADSIMM: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership may be one of the most powerful and consuming words in our lexicon. "Leadership is such a gripping subject that once it is given center stage it draws attention away from everything else." (Gardner, 1990, p. 3). To be called a good leader is tantamount to being touched by Tinkerbelle's wand. It is a word that connotes greatness and wisdom and what we as mere humans should accede to. Yet for all the attention leadership attracts it has remained much like a magic elixir sold from the back of a horse drawn wagon. The power of its effects have been extolled and invoked as the cure for all our ills, even while its promoters gather around to sniff and taste the contents of the bottle never agreeing as to what it contains. Traditionally, the words leader and leadership have been more than synonymous they are one in the same, after all it is the leader who gives us leadership. And therein lies the problem, a paradox of sorts. As James MacGregor Burns has said "if we know too much about our leaders, we know far too little about leadership" (Burns, 1978, p. 1).

This paper has three purposes. First, it begins by discussing the basis of the industrial leadership models asserting that the traditional perspectives of leadership are no longer congruent for the challenges facing a knowledge based society. Second, it sets forth a perspective called collaborative leadership. Collaborative Leadership is a term derived chiefly by integrating the leadership models of Burns (1978), Rost (1993) and Foster (1989) and melding them with the characteristics of the learning organization espoused by Senge (1990). The term collaborative leadership is used to connote the extension and integration of these ideas into a practitioners model that is more congruent with the human intensive, organizational learning oriented, and interdependent intricacies and demands of a knowledge based workforce. It views leadership not as something the leader bestows or gives to his or her followers but as

the essence of a collective relationship wherein people do leadership together. While leaders remain embodied individuals, leadership becomes a shared and communal concept (Foster, 1989). Third, since the conception of leadership is changed from the industrial perspective, that of a unitary actor who gives leadership, to a more postindustrial point of view, that of leadership as a collaborative dynamic, a learning method which can demonstrate the efficacy of collaborative leadership and organizational learning is required. LeadSimm is discussed as one method that promotes this leadership and learning paradigm.

At this point I wish to acknowledge the work of David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson authors of Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference (1994). Chrislip and Larson's work provides powerful examples of the use of a collaborative leadership model, however their construct for such a model, in terms of leadership work done so far, is not detailed in their book. The collaborative leadership model presented here was based on an intensive study of leadership theories independent of their research and writing.

BACKGROUND

The Industrial Altar

The Industrial era is over! Ever since 1955, when the number of service workers surpassed the number of manufacturing workers the death null for the age of enlightenment began to sound (Toffler & Toffler, 1995, p. 23). This is an amazing change considering that a mere 10 years prior America stood, before the end of World War II, at the apex of its might, uncontested as the greatest industrial power in the history of humankind. The Industrial Revolution on which that power was based had taken some 200 years to run its course. By the end of the war, a shift from labor as a physical force to that of human knowledge as the prime mover of America had already begun.

But change is not easy, it has never been. The principles and practices of the industrial era are still with us. These industrial or "modern" times were a thing of beauty. They were evident in great buildings, automobiles, airplanes, homes, central heating, air conditioning, railroads, oil, enormous amounts of food and great wealth and they became the masters of our imagination. These gains did not come without a price. Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (1906), provides a vivid picture of that cost and its effect on those who became indentured to it. Our hope was to become more precise, more rational and to work harder, and hopefully someday share in the fruits of our toil. For many this dream became a reality. Modern times demanded obedience and rationality and we organized ourselves to do just that. Yet as we strove for greater precision, we paradoxically lost the reasons for doing so. We accepted that successful companies must be well managed, and therefore well led. "Leadership was management, and management was leadership" (Rost, 1991, p. 93). Generating success, revolved around the idea that all we had to do was find and harvest great men get them into the highest positions and follow their instructions.

Since 1900 the leader has been viewed as a single unitary actor who dispenses, gives direction or guidance, or compels compliance from the followers. From him or her all leadership activity flows, and it is senseless to talk about leadership unless one talks about the leader only. Followers were viewed as passive and were only needed to carry out the wishes, mission or vision of the leader. This perspective has been the cornerstone of the major leadership theories of the industrial era and include the great man, group, trait, behavioral including contingency and situational, transactional, charismatic, excellence and heroic theories. The lion's share of the work in leadership has been to distill these factors into discernible elements or qualities, i.e., personalities, traits or styles which can be replicated or taught to others for the purpose of creating more and better leaders. The theme has been if we make better people, we get better leaders and the result is that we will get better leadership. It should serve as no surprise that the amount of resources dedicated to creating great leaders has been astonishing.

In the April 8, 1996 issue of Forbes Magazine in an article entitled Leadership Can Be Learned?, a Penn State Report estimated that organizations in this country spent \$15 billion (14.5 tons of US twenty dollar bills every week) in 1995 on leadership training, defined as training executives or the hierarchy (Rifkin, 1996). It is quite paradoxical to note, that along with the expenditure of these resources the apparent dearth of leaders and leadership remains a critical issue. Perhaps, it is because the money has not been spent on leadership development but instead on myths. "Leadership personality, leadership style and leadership traits do not exist" (Drucker, 1996, p. xi). With a world seemingly in chaos and mired in crime, drug addiction, child abuse, failing companies, adversarial politics, rapid technological advancements, overload, dissatisfied information employees, corporate downsizing, illiteracy, failing education, AIDS, cancer, and unsustainable environmental abuse, the concept of leadership in the 21st century suggests that one resource, the single leader, is no longer adequate to respond to such complex issues. More importantly, if one accepts the foregoing statement as truth, how can we as a society hope to engage complex issues in such a way as to generate hope for the future?

In that regard, the world of 1998 is very different from the times following 1945. Today public and private organizations and communities are faced with an environment that is extraordinarily diverse, ambiguous and turbulent, information rich and subject to continuous complex change. This hyper-dynamic environment requires the full support of creative and innovative people who are searching for intrinsic satisfaction from the work they do and are fully committed to the process of keeping abreast with and making change. In this environment, the job of leaders is changing dramatically because innovation and leadership at all levels of an organization are demanded. The hierarchical, command and control authoritarian approach to leadership is inadequate in its ability to address the myriad of complex issues facing In many cases this autocratic today's society. approach is being discarded for a new perspective in which the leader's job is to initiate and facilitate collaborative relationships by crafting an environment where leadership can flourish at every level of the

organization. Bringing the talents of a diverse community together into a meaningful relationship where information can be shared openly forms a rich decisional process, creates transforming change and comprises the foundation of leadership for the 21st century.

This collaborative view considers leadership as something that people do together. People do leadership together, because leadership is a relationship which celebrates diversity and thrives on collective involvement. This requires safety (to be one's self), trust and openness; which must be established if organizations and communities expect people to share and use information openly. A free community needs different perspectives from which a rich decisional environment can be created, one that unleashes creativity and innovation in individuals devoted to a mutual purpose in a society where complacency in the face of change is a recipe for disaster. MIT's Edgar Schein explains the importance of relationships for what he describes as the learning leader: "In a stable environment it is safe to be completely task oriented. In a complex, turbulent environment in which technological and other forms of interdependence are high, however, one needs to value relationships in order to achieve a level of trust and communication that will make joint problem solving and solution implementation possible." (Schein, 1992, p. 371)

Drucker agrees and calls for a change in the models a knowledge society will live by: "As every seasoned executive has learned, few policies remain valid for as long as 20 to 30 years. Nor do assumptions about the economy, about business, about technology remain valid longer than that. Yet most of our assumptions about business, technology, and organization are at least 50 years old. They have outlived their time. As a result, we are preaching, teaching, and practicing policies that are increasingly at therefore odds with reality and counterproductive. . . . Basic assumptions about reality are the paradigms of a social science. These assumptions about reality determine what the discipline focuses on. The assumptions also

largely determine what is pushed aside as an annoying exception. Get the assumptions wrong and everything that follows from them is wrong." (Drucker,)

The assumptions of the industrial times are dramatically different than those of the knowledge era. In that regard, assumptions about leadership have changed as well.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

A New Perspective of Leadership

Establishing a new perspective of leadership requires that certain fundamental underlying assumptions be made in order to provide a foundation point for the basic idea. To that end the underlying assumptions for collaborative leadership are contained in three simple assertions or statements. Those assertions are (1) people are good, (2) people are capable, (3) people will do good for themselves and their organizations if given the opportunity to do so.

With that as the basis, the departure point for creating a new perspective of leadership is chiefly the result of the work of three people, James MacGregor Burns, Joseph C. Rost and William F. Foster. Burns, author of Leadership (1978) and considered by many as the patriarch of leadership thought, introduced scholars and practitioners to the concept of transforming According to Burns, transforming leadership. leadership occurs when "one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). The importance and subtlety of this statement is, I believe, often overlooked. What Burns is saying is that transforming activities occur in a collective i.e. "raise one another to higher levels of motivation." This represents a very different perspective from the concept that leadership is done by only one unitary actor (industrial model) and his or her actions alone are the implement of transformation.

Burns' work was further reinterpreted, refined and extended by Joseph C. Rost author of *Leadership for*

the 21st Century (1991). Rost introduced his readers to the concept of postindustrial leadership. Postindustrial leadership is an interdependent relationship among leaders and followers, now called collaborators, (Rost, 1993)who hold a mutually agreed upon purpose, and who have equivalent involvement in the transforming process. Rost's prescriptive definition of postindustrial leadership i.e. leadership is a influence relationship among leaders and collaborators who intent real change that reflects their mutual purposes, provides substantial material for the development of a new leadership mental model.

William F. Foster of Indiana University, a critical leadership theorist, clarifies the difference between being a leader and leadership. Foster says that a leader is an embodied individual and leadership is a shared and communal concept. He advises us to look to the collective interaction among a community to truly find leadership. Foster writes: "Leadership, in the final analysis, is the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a more perfect union. Leadership is a consensual task, a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities, where a 'leader' is a leader for the moment only, where the leadership exerted must be validated by the consent of followers, and where leadership lies in the struggles of a community to find meaning for itself' (Foster, 1989, p. 57). In 1998, the groundbreaking work of these three authors seems confirmed by other authors. David L. Bradford and Allen R. Cohen in Power Up: Organizations **Transforming** Through Shared Leadership (1998) describe the collaborative leader as Post-Heroic. "Extraordinary results require a new system of leadership and followership in which leaders and team members act more like partners. . . The leader must create the conditions where team members develop their ability and commitment to sharing management, where interpersonal and group problems can be resolved through open, creative and toughminded collaboration" (Bradford & Cohen, 1998, p. 47).

Burns, Rost and Foster provide a foundation upon which a new perspective of leadership can be constructed. As already mentioned, this bedrock supports the view that leadership is something people do together because the fundamental element of collaborative leadership (my more descriptive term) is the establishment of relationships built on safety, trust and commitment. Dealing with chaotic change requires the melding of diverse interests and the talents of many people so that organizations can respond timely and effectively. The accompanying graphic depicts the model of collaborative leadership espoused.

However, to do this requires that the concept or notion of power must also be transformed. Retaining a perspective where power is viewed as positional stifles and inhibits the ability of leadership to flourish at every level of an organization. In this regard, the organization



must owe to a philosophy of subsidiarity. As political philosopher Charles Handy puts it "subsidiarity ...means that power belongs to the lowest possible point in the organization...and requires, instead, that (managers) enable those subordinates, by training, advice, and support to take those decisions better" (Handy, 1992, p. 64). In effect, people are imbued with the responsibility, the means and the license to achieve a particular purpose.

Collaborative Leadership and Double Looped Learning

Harvard Professor Chris Argyris describes learning as

"a process in which people discover a problem, invent a solution to the problem, produce the solution, and evaluate the outcome, leading to the discovery of new problems" (Argyris, 1982, p. 38); "that which occurs when we take effective action, when we detect and correct error" (Argyris, 1993, p. 3).

As already mentioned, the learning that Argyris and Senge speak is not what we traditionally view as It is not about route memorization of procedures or protocols which provide a formularized approach to problems. Dealing with complexity demands risk taking and collaboration in an effort to bring a myriad of talents and knowledge to bear on critical issues. Learning which will be the foundation of creative expression in the 21st century has been explained by Argyris in the formulation of Model II learning systems and his distinction between single and double loop learning. Argyris describes single loop learning as "relatively straightforward because the errors are usually attributable to defective strategies or actions" (Argyris, 1982, p. 104). When an error is detected an inquiry is made and diagnosed; a response is invented, produced and implemented. If evaluated as successful, learning ceases and the error has been corrected.

On the otherhand, double loop learning occurs when an error is detected and is diagnosed as an "incompatibility of governing values or as incongruity between organizational espoused theory and theory in use" (1982, p. 106). This requires the invention of a response which approximates the organization's espoused theory. Bringing the actions of the organization into close proximity with what the organization says provides a learning process which "should decrease dysfunctional group dynamics because the competitive win/lose, low-trust, low-risktaking processes are replaced by cooperative, inquiryoriented, high-trust, and high risk taking dynamics. . . .the results should be that participants will experience that double-loop learning is possible for themselves and their organizations, that organizations can change. . . hence we have a learning system that is simultaneously stable and subject to continual change." (Argyris, 1982, p. 106).

Simply stated organizations require opportunities to practice what it is they preach. A training and development strategy which models, to the greatest extent possible, the double loop learning detailed above will foster acceptance of not only learning methods but of new mental models such as collaborative leadership.

The Current State of Leadership Development

Imagine for a moment that you are the coach of a professional football team. Every week instead of the team practicing together; you have decided that what each of the starting offensive and defensive players needs is direct individual tutelage. Therefore, you send each of the 22 starting players to 22 different practice fields to practice with competent and capable people who are experts at their positions. On Sunday, you bring the team back together to play in the real game. Do you think the team will do well? After all, they have been trained by the best. Clearly, this philosophy of practice will not work. A team needs to work together as a team, in realistic practices, in order for the team to *be* a team.

While this training analogy might seem ludicrous, this individually focused approach to team/ organization/ community effectiveness is exactly how leadership development has been conducted. This reasoning corresponds to the basic industrial philosophy already mentioned that leadership is something only the leader does. It has been and remains the most prevalent thread running through almost all leadership development programs.

LEADSIMM: A PROCESS APPROACH TO CHANGING LEADERSHIP MENTAL MODELS

From the Case Study to Simulations

For years, the case study methodology pioneered at Harvard University has been the preferred learning technique for teaching advanced analytical skills. In their book, educator Rita Silverman, businessman William Welty and researcher Sally Lyon state: "The educational value of case method is in the analysis of

the problem or problems, in the development and evaluation of possible solutions to these problems, and in the application of appropriate educational theory to the problem analysis, solution, and evaluation" (Silverman, Welty, & Lyon, 1992, p. xv). In other words, the case method has traditionally used the rational model for devising solutions to problems by adhering to the following format: case description, situation analysis, development of options or solutions, selection of the preferred option, implementation of the preferred option, and summation of expected outcome. For the most part, case studies offer single loop learning opportunities because the "error" which is being addressed is attributed to a defective strategy. What is required is a different option which will make the strategy viable.

Simulations go further than cases because they routinely offer double loop learning opportunities. During simulation play the results of actions taken can be examined as to the validity between what stakeholders say and what they actually do i.e. the congruency between theory espoused and theory in use. Simulations create context for the development of collaborative leadership practices through the use of realistic scenarios. In effect they are the stage, the script and the action within which the actors can create and inhabit experience. These experiences and actions form mental models from which meaning is derived and engagement with others occurs. Simulations can provide opportunities for decision makers to foment understandings which develop confidence in leadership relationships that bridge the gap between organizational effectiveness and the needs of the postindustrial society.

Additionally, simulations represent an extension of teaching methodologies. Case studies are essentially historical recounts of particular situations and, as already mentioned, primarily use the rational model of resolution. In case studies the results of the actions taken are already known. In interpersonal simulations the actions are work in progress.

Simulations as an Instrument for Learning

Everything we consider important, vital or dangerous in our daily lives we simulate. Whether training pilots, running a nuclear power plant, training emergency response teams, or in this case establishing a new mental model for leadership, simulations provide a way in which human beings can experiment or play with processes or outcomes in hopes of creating effective approaches to the real or potential dilemmas they face. Today if you say the word simulation what immediately comes to mind are pictures of computers, incredibly real graphics, and joysticks. Yet simulations have been around for decades. The most frequent users of simulations have been the military services, who have used them to experiment with and teach tactics and strategy or develop proficiencies in the more inexperienced.

What is meant by the term simulation? Simulations are problem based exercises. Simulations have two criteria. "First, a specific issue, problem or policy is posed that precipitates a variety of actions. Second, roles are defined that interact with the proposed problem or issue in particular ways". In other words, "simulations involves the experience of functioning in a bona fide environment and encountering the consequence of one's actions as one makes decisions in that role . . . second, the participants address the issues and problems seriously conscientiously" (Gredler, 1992, p. 14). There are two basic types of simulations, content and process. For the most part content simulations are hosted on computers and explore the "what" of actions taken. That is to say, if an individual makes a decision and implements it, what will happen? On the other hand, process simulations examine the how and why of actions taken. In other words, the focus of the simulation considers the outcome as it pertains to the congruity of the interpersonal processes and motives used, the how and why, a particular decision was reached. Process simulations usually precede content simulations because effective processes for decision making should be explored first. Process simulations are more interpersonal by nature. Developing effective strategies among various stakeholders requires that people experiment with and validate their needs for information and coordination using a facilitative process wherein consensus on a particular decision can be reached.

In our postindustrial world computers and technology have greatly overshadowed the benefits and uses of process type simulations. Yet computers are unable to provide the requisite environment for the development of human processes. In speaking about crisismanagement type simulations, Gredler provides the reasoning for this. "Crisis management simulations in which the participants interact exclusively with a computer are not recommended. The problem is, of course, maintaining reality of function for the participants. Computers are not the root cause of crisis situations (unless, of course, they crash). Thus, the possible disadvantages of a computer-delivered exercise for crisis-management simulations are a) the lack of interaction among decision-makers; b) the false sense that time in not a variable; and c) the possibility that the exercise will be perceived as a game" (Gredler, 1992, p. 81). Interpersonally based process simulations provide an intensive cognitive learning experience which reach deep into the human psyche to effect change in habits and mental models. understand this better one must understand the basic working of cognition in human beings.

Simulations and Their Cognitive Effect

Harvard's Jerome Bruner describes cognition as being divided into two parts, logical arguments and stories. Logical Arguments convince one of their truth, while stories of their lifelikeness (Bruner, 1986, p. 11). . Logical argument is the continuous search for objective truth until the very argument itself has been rid of meaning, of lifelikeness, of its sense of connection with the participants (1986, p. 13). On the other hand, stories possess a duality which creates a landscape of action and consciousness upon which learning or knowing is achieved. "A story must construct two landscapes simultaneously. One is the landscape of action, where the constituents are the arguments of action: agent, intention, or goal, situation, instrument, something corresponding to a 'story grammar.' The other landscape is the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think or feel, or do not know, think, or feel. The two landscapes are essential and distinct" (1986, p. 14).

Stories provide to participants connection and meaning to events and are the basic building blocks to rewriting the beliefs and understandings for organizations and their members. In effect, simulations provide to interactive story participants an making opportunity in which they interact within a bona fide environment to examine the consequences of an individual or group's decisions. Old experiences are replaced by new stories, new models for success.

LeadSimm, a New Approach to Leadership Development

The halls of experiential training in leadership and management are stacked with varying types of exercises which are labeled as simulations. Exercises such as MIT's Beer Game (a marketing and distribution simulation), the Center For Creative Leadership's "Looking Glass", and the volumes of materials produced by Pfeffer and Co., now a division of Jossey-Bass, have provided to trainers a list of experiential exercises where participants are given a set of circumstances and challenged to provide responses or decisions concerning the particular situation. Learning comes in the form of seeing the results of their decisions, examining whether or not those decisions seemed successful for the challenge at hand and hopefully applying the "moral of the story" to their own mental model. Outward bound exercises, which have been particularly applied to leadership development, place participants in a wilderness type environment where people must learn to work together to face the challenge of living, working and surviving in nature. Many of these exercises have merit. However, the merit they bring to leadership development is tantamount to the difference between graduating from grammar school and getting a Masters degree. The reason is found in Gredler's explanation of simulation criteria when she speaks of creating "a bona fide" environment. Senge too acknowledges this in his description of microworlds which, as he says, are "microcosms of reality where it is safe to play". In that regard, the question that remains to be answered concerning most simulations is what is the level of authenticity or realism of the

simulated environment compared with the real organizational environment? For example consider these:

- What are the leadership challenges that are faced by a software company whose senior management has changed and who has lost the innovative spirit upon which it was founded?
- How can a manufacturing company, who has depended on quality service compete in the marketplace when a substantial number of its over worked service employees leave for a better offer?
- How can a police department imbued with a community policing concept meet the demands of rising crime in its jurisdiction if the public lacks trust in its motives?
- How can trust between a community, its city council and a hospital be reestablished after the hospital suffers a human made tragedy?
- How can a financial institution rebuild its reputation for not meeting the purposes for which it was created?

These complex questions offer the basic inquiry into the creation of realistic scenarios that are and real, authentic and require a concerted and involved application of leadership. They are real and authentic not only in terms of the specifics of the situation but the political, symbolic, rational or structural, and human resource constraints which pervade every organizational and community environment as well.

The LeadSimm simulation is composed of two parts, scenario development and scenario facilitation. LeadSimm is a simulation methodology which has been designed around real and authentic contexts because each simulation is unique and custom designed for each application. Simply put, LeadSimm is a collective learning and cross-functional leadership development tool designed to put participants in authentic organizational simulations giving them the opportunity to practice leadership under varying degrees of complexity. In a LeadSimm simulation participants are immersed, as different members of varying stakeholder groups, into realistic complex situations (stories) where they can assess and learn about the efficacy of, and practice collaborative leadership. During this immersion process,

participants engage in an interactive story making process because they become the actors in a real life drama and each person begins to rewrite and create new stories of success for themselves and their organizations. As each person and each group are presented with emerging challenges, where the application of leadership is required, their effort to meet these challenges causes a mental shift as old mental models are revealed and many times discarded as ineffective. New mental models are formed wherein new beliefs result in new actions. LeadSimm is consuming in that the participants recognize that the simulation is real and truly pertains to their everyday work experience. Other features of a LeadSimm simulation include the following. As already mentioned, during simulation play the current decisional models of participants are revealed. It is a simple fact of life that people do what they know how to do. Once revealed participants can examine their decisional models as to its efficacy in the scenario. Using an online and offline play methodology, participants engage in the simulation as players and then are provided the opportunity to step back and critique their own and others actions. In so doing participants engage in a qualitative self assessment. Following scenario play participants become aware of and acknowledge their own weaknesses and usually seek out training remedies which enhance their capabilities. In this regard, future development activities i.e. facilitation and collaboration or communication training can be targeted to meet the specific needs of individuals. The events which are portraved during the simulation can be about past. present or future contexts. This gives LeadSimm a unique capability to examine issues which are anticipated and have not occurred.

LeadSimm demonstrates a learning organization. Playing through a scenario, participants learn the importance of learning together. Because LeadSimm is itself a process simulation, participants learn new processes by actually participating in a process. LeadSimm also uses a series of moves which provide to the participants the opportunity to place the simulation back online with new information and developments providing the impetus for a growing level of systemic complexity. LeadSimm can also

help a team coalesce. Many times new teams are formed and the members have not worked with each other before. LeadSimm can "kick start" a newly formed team because simulation play provides a real, albeit compressed, opportunity to work together.

CONCLUSION

We live in a complex, ever changing and ambiguous The simple and general approaches to leadership development are ill suited to meet the demands of developing leaders who can engage in collaborative processes and who are capable of bringing a myriad of talents to bear on the complex issues of our times. Leadership development, which has traditionally been associated with creating great people who give us leadership, is being transformed to a perspective wherein leadership is about the collective and collaborative efforts of people imbued with a mutual purpose in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Leadership development programs must reflect the realistic challenges that 21st Century leaders must face in order for them to be fully prepared to go into the world to make change. The simulation methodology presented here, LeadSimm, is a unique step in creating an environment which is suited to training and developing collaborative leaders who are able to create a whole which is greater than the sum of the parts.

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