

# Ontario Children's Mental Health Summit

Leading Spectacular  
Organizational Performance

26 November 2007

# Some Objectives Today

- Provide a framework that helps enable extraordinary performance
- Build a business case for an abundance approach to leading innovation and growth
- Introduce some practical tools that enable extraordinary performance

# Criteria for Content

- Empirical foundation – validity
- Theoretical grounding – explanation
- Successful application - utility

# Comparing Approaches To Change

SOURCE: Cooperrider, 2001.

## PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

### **Define the Problem**

Specify problems or needs

### **Analyze Determinants**

Identify symptoms and root causes

### **Identify Solution**

Generate alternatives that address problems

### **Plan and Implement**

Design interventions that address or solve problems

### **BASIC ASSUMPTION:**

**Our job is to overcome major problems and obstacles.**

## ABUNDANCE APPROACH

### **Identify Peak Performance**

Recount spectacular experiences

### **Explain Success**

Identify enablers of the best past successes

### **Create Sustainability**

Identify what should be continued in the future

### **Design a Future**

Design interventions that create an ideal future

### **BASIC ASSUMPTION:**

**Our job is to embrace and enable our highest potential.**

# A Continuum Illustrating Positive Deviance

## Negative Deviance

## Normal

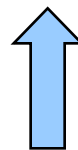
## Positive Deviance

### Individual:

<b>Physiological</b>	Illness	Health	Vitality
<b>Psychological</b>	Illness	Health	Flow

### Organizational:

<b>Economics</b>	Unprofitable	Profitable	Generous
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Ineffective	Effective	Excellent
<b>Efficiency</b>	Inefficient	Efficient	Extraordinary
<b>Quality</b>	Error-prone	Reliable	Perfect
<b>Ethics</b>	Unethical	Ethical	Benevolent
<b>Relationships</b>	Harmful	Helpful	Honoring
<b>Adaptation</b>	Threat-rigidity	Coping	Flourishing



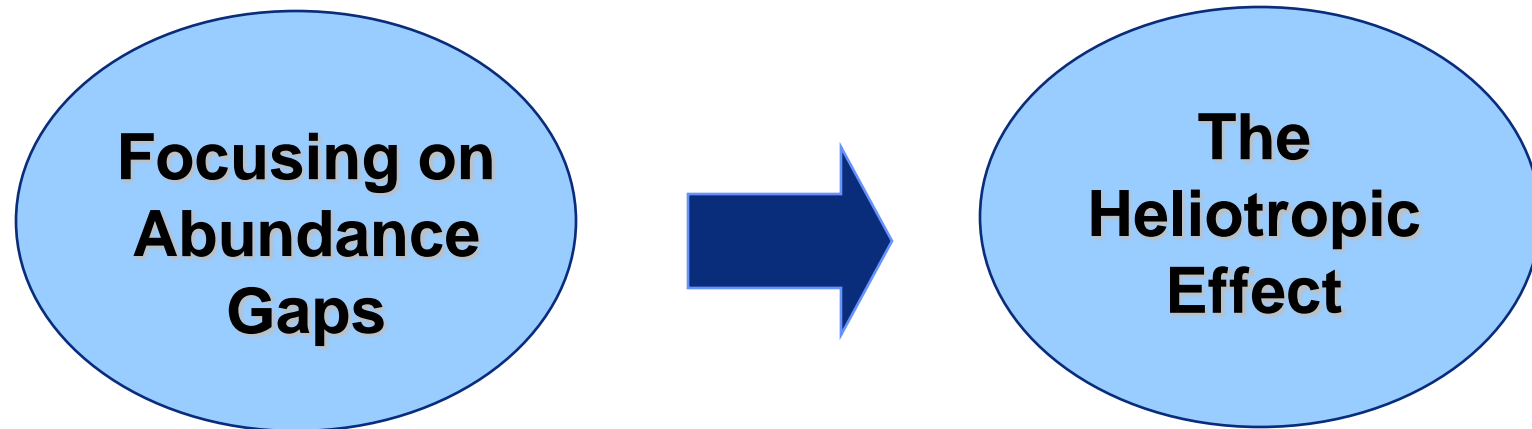
**Deficit gaps**

**Abundance gaps**

SOURCE: Cameron, 2003.

# Explanation

The theoretical and empirical foundation for abundance.



## Research Illustrating the Heliotropic Effect

- **The Placebo Effect**
- **The Pygmalion Effect**
- **Positive Emotions**
- **Positive Imagery**
- **Groups of Gratitude, Positive, Approach Goals Versus Ingratitude, Negative, Avoidance Goals**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Emotions**
- **Positive Energy**
- **Strengths Orientation**
- **Collective Efficacy**

SOURCES: See Cameron & Lavine, 2006; Cameron, 2007 for references

# Illustrating the Abundance Framework

## Step 1

- Think of three people in the room to whom you will give feedback based on your interactions with them so far. We will all stand up, and you will be paired with another person of your choice. You will be given 60 seconds to address the following two items:
- ***(1) Here is what I have noticed about your leadership strengths; or, here is what I admire. (2) Here is an incident that illustrates those capabilities and strengths. That is, here is when I think I have seen you display your best.***
- This process will be repeated three times, with three different people, in minute segments. At the end of 60 seconds, you will move on to the next person.

# Illustrating the Abundance Framework

## Step 2

- Write down what you heard. Draw a conclusion about your own leadership strengths based on the feedback you received. Identify at least one action implication of that leadership strength which you can implement at work.

# Outcomes

- **Energy:** What happens to the energy in the room when people provide this kind of feedback to one another?
- **Emotions:** What was your own emotional reaction to receiving this feedback from others?
- **Connections:** What is the impact on interpersonal relationships?

# Positive Energizers

SOURCE: Baker, 2003.

- Those who positively energize others are higher performers. Position in the *energy* network is four times the predictor of performance compared to position in *informational* networks.
- Positive energizers tend to enhance the work of others. People who interact with or are connected to energizers also perform better.
- High performing firms had three times as many positive energizing networks than low performing firms.

## Yeah, But . . .

- Aren't most organizations fraught with problems?
- Can any leader or manager afford to ignore difficulties?
- Is a positive approach to change just a white-wash of serious challenges?
- Won't any organization fail if it fails to focus on its weaknesses and liabilities?
- In light of major challenges faced by most organizations and most leaders, what is the relevance of virtues and an abundance approach to change?

## Why Do Negative Factors Get Our Attention?

A systematic bias exists in people that shows that the occurrence of negative factors are more powerful than positive factors—**“Bad is stronger than good.”** SOURCE: Baumeister, et al. 2001

- People are more affected by one traumatic or negative event than by one positive or happy event.
- People are more affected emotionally and do more mental work from a single negative piece of feedback than from a single positive piece of feedback.
- Evolutionary theory suggests why: If people ignore negative information, it could cost them their lives. If they ignore positive feedback, it only causes regret.
- Therefore, it is not surprising that negative phenomena get more attention than positive phenomena. It takes conscious effort to focus on abundance.

# The Business Case for Abundance in Organizations

# An Irony

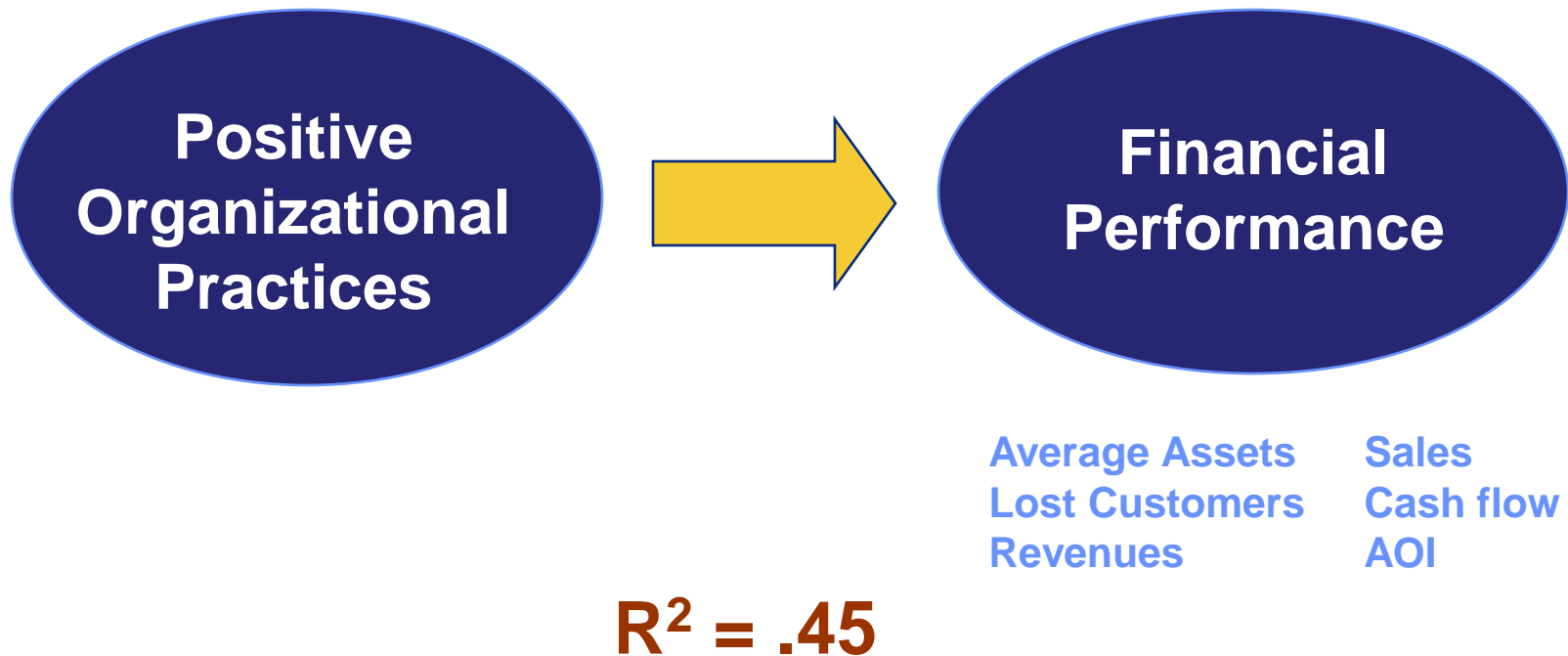
- Adopting an abundance approach—i.e., enabling the best of the human condition, displaying virtuous behaviors, pursuing human thriving—has inherent value. We think of this as fundamentally the right thing to do. All cultures identify the same inherent goodness. Doing good is its own reward. Receiving a payback negates the goodness.
- **On the other hand . . .**
- If an observable, bottom-line impact is not connected to an abundance approach, it becomes subservient to the very real pressures for improving organizational effectiveness—e.g., higher return to shareholders, profitability, productivity, and customer satisfaction. Without visible payoff, most managers ignore it.

## Some Research Findings – Organizations

- Communication patterns in 60 organizations
- Seven matched organizations within a parent corporation
- Intervention studies aimed at an abundance culture change
- Public and private companies in 16 industries
- The airline industry after 9-11
- Financial services performance
- The clean-up of a nuclear arsenal

**Conclusion:** An abundance approach, organizational virtuousness, and positive organizational practices are significantly and positively related to effectiveness (e.g., profitability, productivity, quality, innovation, customer satisfaction, employee retention).

# Predicting Financial Performance



# Problems at Rocky Flats in 1995

- **FBI Raid and Shut Down in 1989**
- **1995 - Dangerous materials**
  - 21 tons of nuclear grade materials; 100 tons of plutonium & enriched uranium solutions in leaking tanks; 258,000 cubic meters low level radioactive waste; 15,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste; 11 “infinity rooms;” most dangerous buildings in America
- **Hostile attitudes**
  - Government, environmentalists, regulators, communities, workforce, protestors
- **Culture**
  - Secrecy, life-long employment, insularity
- **Safety**
  - Worse than industry and twice as bad as other DOE sites
- **Workforce**
  - 900 grievances, heroes to criminals, loss of mission

SOURCE: Cameron & Lavine, 2006

# Costs

- Expenditures totaled \$700 million per year to keep the facility operating—for security, water, air conditioning, maintenance, and so forth.
- No clean-up or closure of a nuclear weapons production facility had ever occurred anywhere in the world, so no precedent and no known operating procedures existed.
- **The Department of Energy's estimate of closure and clean-up in 1995: 70 years and \$36 billion—to be completed in 2065.** Thirteen other sites received similar estimates.

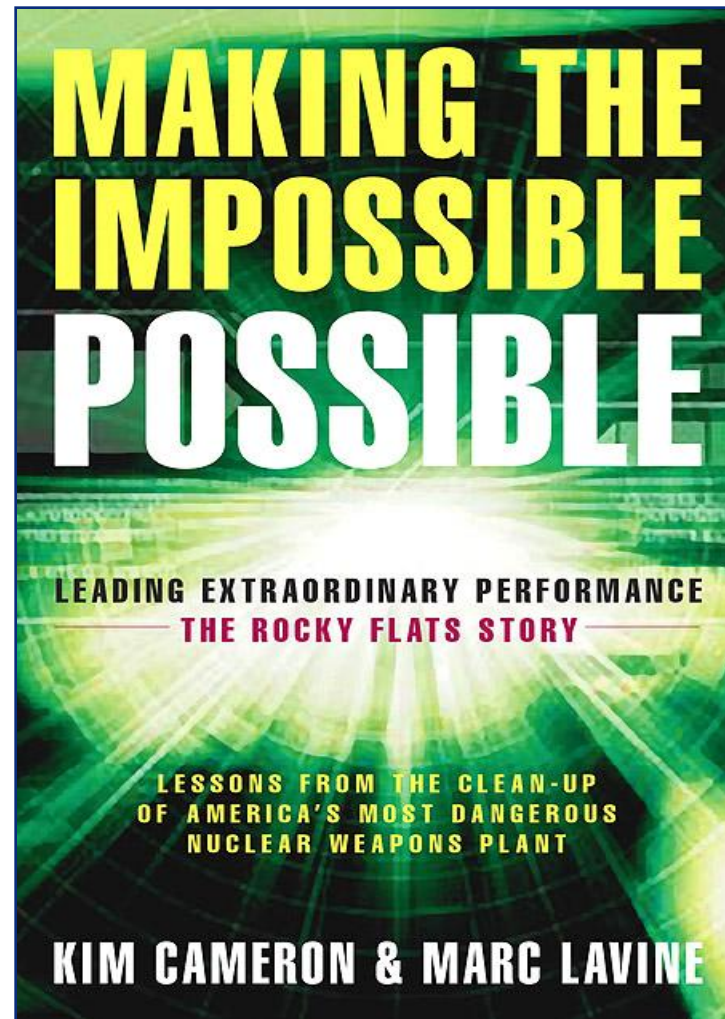
# Positive Deviance

- Completed 60 years early (10 October 2005)
- \$30 billion under budget
- 13 times cleaner than required
- Adversaries and antagonists are, by and large, advocates and supporters
- Labor relations “the best in my career”
- Safety twice as good as the industry average
- Unions enthusiastically worked themselves out of a job
- 200 technological innovations
- Other DOE sites are on-time and on-budget

SOURCE: Cameron & Lavine, 2006

# Explaining the Results

An example of  
leaders applying  
an abundance  
approach to  
change



# Some Abundance Tools

- **Reflected best-self feedback process**  
A personal feedback tool that provides descriptive stories of individuals' best-selves—when they created extraordinary value. This results in a best-self portrait and action plans designed to capitalize on personal strengths.
- **Positive energy networks**  
A tool to identify positive energizers and the positive energy network that exists in an organization, along with hints for capitalizing on the energy network.
- **PMI program**  
A tool based on one-on-one meetings between managers and their direct reports designed to foster continuous improvement, accountability for performance, and developing employees into extraordinary performers.
- **Supportive communication in difficult circumstances**  
A technique for delivering negative feedback in ways that foster stronger, more collaborative relationships.
- **High quality relationships**  
A set of techniques for fostering high quality connections—temporary interactions in organizations—as well as longer-term relationships among co-workers.
- **Engagement of employees**  
Techniques for fostering high levels of engagement among employees by managing ideological capital, social capital, intellectual capital, and financial capital.
- **Empowerment of employees**  
A set of techniques for enhancing the empowerment of employees through self-efficacy, self-determination, personal consequence, personal meaning, and trust.
- **Customer loyalty**  
A technique for diagnosing levels of customer commitment and helping to create life-long customer loyalty.
- **Everest goals**  
A tool for identifying organizational and individual goals which extend beyond normal SMART goal setting and lead to extraordinary levels of achievement.
- **Positive practices assessment**  
A diagnostic survey instrument identifies 38 dimensions of positive practices that are highly predictive of financial performance in organizations.
- **Reciprocity ring**  
A tool used to create a network of generalized reciprocity in which members of an organization acquire assistance and resources that were previously unknown and/or unacknowledged.
- **Gratitude journals and gratitude visits**  
A tool used to help individuals experience a gratitude condition daily as well as to experience the impact of a profound interaction based on thanksgiving.
- **Ideological capital**  
A technique for highlighting and managing the profound purposes and meaningfulness associated with work.
- **Leadership of positive deviance**  
A set of steps that guides leaders to achieve positively deviant change, primarily driven from the top-down.
- **Fundamental state of leadership**  
A set of techniques that lead individuals from a normal state of functioning to a state in which leaders are internally-directed, externally-open, others-focused, and purpose-centered.

# Some Additional Resources

