

Inspired Leap Consulting Inc.
It's All About Me!
By Dianna Amorde
January, 2003

It's All About Me!

It's true. It is all about you! That doesn't seem appropriate for building successful business relationships, does it? But it is. That doesn't seem to fit with the Inspired Leap approach that encourages you to use your intuitive or spiritual intelligence, does it? But it does. Let me explain.

First, here's the basic concept: ***Everyone you come into contact with "mirrors" back to you exactly what you need*** for your soul or spirit's growth. Second, you always have a choice in how to respond to what you see or "get." ***You can take responsibility and control or be a victim. It's all up to you.*** I realize this may sound unbelievable, but please keep an open mind. What if the universe is as intelligent and organized as this concept of mirroring suggests? Some examples from science might make the idea of an intelligent universe more believable. Chaos theory demonstrates that an inherent order and boundaries exist even when what we "see" looks chaotic, while field theory suggests there are energy patterns of emotions, beliefs, behaviors, and so on that we cannot see, but that are incredibly powerful. For example, Rupert Sheldrake's Theory of Morphogenic Fields indicates that learning any new behavior, like operating a Palm Pilot, becomes much easier after the first few people have done it. We unconsciously pick up on the knowledge gained by others to help us learn this new behavior. In the world of sports, you can see how this works. When a long-held record is finally broken, one often wonders why it took so long to break, because soon after, other athletes also manage to consistently break through this same invisible barrier.

The next time your coworker makes you see red because you caught her embellishing the truth once again, take a deep breath and ask yourself what this intelligent universe might be trying to tell you. Why do you, more than any of your peers, react so strongly to this flaw of hers. Might you also have this flaw? The more vehemently you deny that you have a particular trait, the more likely it is that you do have it (it may be buried in your subconscious, but it's there). You wouldn't react so negatively to this trait in someone else unless you had embellished the truth in the past.

For example, if you've just finished having your third heated argument this month with the vice president of sales, ask yourself why you always get so angry every time you talk to him. No one else in marketing seems to have this challenge. Maybe he's not the idiot you think he is. Maybe it's something as bizarre as the fact that he looks so much like your deadbeat dad who left you and your mom when you were a kid. You don't even consciously realize it, but all of that unresolved anger you feel towards your father keeps coming up

when you meet with the VP of sales. Perhaps he's in your life to mirror back to you your dad's image and the buried emotions associated with him, so you can release them. An "ah-ha" moment of acknowledging this would be a huge release of negative energy. If you follow it up with doing whatever feels right—in the form of forgiving your dad, for instance—you will be amazed at the increase in energy you have and the dramatic improvement, over time, of your relationship with the VP of sales.

The universe, in its wisdom, will keep sending people into your path to help you acknowledge and claim all of those traits, past experiences, or emotions you expend a great deal of energy to bury or deny. In addition, this mirroring process will help you heal old, buried hurts or wounds. This means *there are no accidents in our universe*. Everything happens to you for a reason. As Gary Zukav and Linda Francis say in their book, *Heart of the Soul*, you're in the Earth School. Everything is a lesson for your growth. The more you can accept and love all parts of you—the good, bad, and the ugly—the more you grow and the more truly powerful you become. Spiritual wisdom suggests that this mirroring process exists because we are all on this planet to strive to become whole and enlightened (to reconnect with the "Source"). It doesn't really matter whether or not you buy into that idea, or even if you believe in a higher power or source. All you need to do is keep your mind open to the possibility that this is an intelligent universe.

In order for this concept of mirroring to be believable, we need to agree that the universe and all that's in it (including you) is made up of energy. Even your thoughts and emotions have energy associated with them. Think about those negative people you come into contact with—the ones with a little black rain cloud hanging over them. Unless you are feeling as negative as they are, you quickly move away from them because you intuitively know that you will become negative or depressed if you stay around them for too long. That wouldn't be possible unless their negative emotions were in the form of energy that your own energy could pick up. In Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence* (pp. 114–115), he talks about research that shows the power and contagiousness of emotions, providing further support for the idea that everything is energy. He relates an amazing tale told by Vietnam War soldiers of the effect some monks had on an intense battle with the Vietcong. "Suddenly a line of six monks started walking along the elevated berms that separated paddy from paddy. Perfectly calm and poised, the monks walked directly toward the line of fire." After that, the fighting just stopped. The peaceful energy of the monks had such a powerful effect on both sides that no one felt like fighting!

If we're all energy, then our energy attracts (or gets back) exactly what we give. Or, as Issac Newton taught us, "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." However, keep in mind that the response will not be instantaneous in most cases. It's like the Eastern concept of Karma (loosely, that the actions of the past affect your future or your destiny), but even the Bible says you "reap what you sow" (Galatians 6:7).

At this point, I hope you're willing to consider this concept of mirroring as *possibly* being true (only your own experience working with this concept is likely to make it true for you). Assuming that's the case, let's get back to this idea of people, and the conversations you have with them, being exactly what you need. A quick way to move up the ladder of success in business relationships is to assume "it's all about me" before, during, and after

each encounter with a coworker, boss, customer, or client—any individual you come into contact with during the day. What do I mean by that? Well, let's take an example of Joe Fearful being reprimanded by his boss, Alice Alwaysright.

"You wanted to see me about the Caldicott project?" said Joe, as he poked his head into Alice's office.

"Yes, Joe. Come in and shut the door behind you."

Uh oh. What's this all about? thought Joe, as he sat down in the chair closest to Alice's desk.

"Joe, I'm so disappointed in your performance to date on this project. Your team has consistently been late in delivering progress reports to me and when I do get them, they always show further delays in the delivery date. I have to insist that we meet every week, immediately following your team's meeting, to review progress and to get this project back on track. I must also insist that your team's update be delivered to me by end of day Thursday instead of the usual end of day Friday. Any comments?"

At this point, Joe has likely gone into fear mode and is about ready to say or do something he shouldn't. Here are some examples of ways he might process Alice's comments:

- 1) Joe feels the anger slowly rising throughout her speech, so that by the end, he can't begin to think straight. *She didn't even ask me for an explanation. It's not my fault! I can't control development!* Pure emotion is pumping through his veins and in his brain: the emotion is anger, which is another form of fear.
- 2) Joe feels a sick lurch in his stomach and only half listens. *She's right. Oh my God, he thinks, I'm going to be fired. We just finished an add-on to the house. How will I pay my bills?* Again, pure emotion: fear and worry.
- 3) Joe completely shuts down and tunes Alice out. *Here she goes again, he thinks. She doesn't see what I have to deal with in those team meetings. It's not my fault that development can't get their act together. I'm just here to get my paycheck. That's what this job is about. Just listen to what she says and get out of here.* Depending upon the person, this may be apathy or simply denial (both forms of fear).

Now, there are many more ways to respond, but you get the idea. But what if, instead of reacting one of these ways and then saying or doing something inappropriate, Joe acted as an observer of the meeting and his reactions to the meeting? What if Joe reminds himself of the following *before* going into the meeting:

I need to listen carefully. There's a lesson or message for me in this meeting. I don't have to be able to figure it out while I'm in the meeting, but be able to thoughtfully process it afterwards. Then Joe might take a few, deep, centering breaths and walk into the meeting.

Now the beginning of the meeting goes exactly the same way, only this time Joe concentrates on being an *observer*. All the emotional intensity is reduced because Joe is simply observing his reactions and listening to Alice's speech. **He's actively looking in the**

mirror: What am I to get from this? What is my reaction to Alice's speech and behavior supposed to teach me?

A key point here is that Joe is now focused on himself, not on Alice's behavior. Why is this important? Because **you can never change your boss or any other person you come into contact with**. Now, many of you reading this will say, "Yeah, I know that." But think about it. Do you really know and act as if you know that? How many times have you made a statement like, "He's such a jerk. If he'd just pay attention when I talk, instead of reading e-mail while I'm presenting something, I'd be more productive and get better support from him." Oh really? Guess what? He's never going to change because of you. *If your boss changes his behavior, it will be because he's good and ready to. Aren't you the same way? We all make changes when we're good and ready to, and no amount of persuasion from another person will make us do it if we're not ready.*

Now let's get back to Joe. Joe Aware (he's changed his last name since reading this report) has listened attentively, watched or observed his stomach do weird things, and noticed his face getting a bit red. He thinks, *Wow, she's really pushing some buttons for me. I wonder why? I'll figure that out later.*

After Alice finishes her speech and asks Joe if he has any comments, Joe pauses and takes a few deep breaths before responding. Or, if he senses that she won't wait for that, he says, "Yes I do, but I need a few moments to clarify my thoughts. Give me just a minute." "Sure Joe," Alice says, and turns to her computer to keep busy, or, if she is confident enough, she just sits quietly waiting.

Meanwhile, Joe, in a much calmer frame of mind, has thought about what she said. He knows she's right and he regrets not proactively talking to her about the issues first. He'll think about why he made that mistake afterwards. He likes the idea of meeting with his boss right after his team meeting. She'll become invested in the project and ultimately more supportive. In addition, Joe would love to get Alice's perspective on some of the team players. However, Joe doesn't agree with having his report due earlier than his peers' reports. There were legitimate reasons for the previous delays.

"Okay, I'm ready," says Joe. He looks Alice straight in the eye and says, "I understand your reaction and appreciate your telling me now instead of at the end of the project. I regret not talking with you earlier about the challenges of this project. I am happy to meet with you after my team meetings. They're on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Do you want to set up a weekly 30-minute meeting at 4:30 p.m.?"

"Sounds good," says Alice. "I'll enter it on my calendar right now." She turns to her computer and blocks the time off.

"As to the due date for the weekly update," says Joe, "I ask that you give me another chance. There were some legitimate reasons for the past delays, but I erred in not giving you a heads-up on the delay. How about if I commit to getting them to you on time on Fridays? If I slip up without giving you a very good reason *before* the slip, then I agree to the requirement to delivering them on Thursdays. How does that sound?"

“Very reasonable and a good solution. Great. I’ll expect this week’s report on time on Friday afternoon and look forward to our discussion on Tuesdays. I do want you to succeed, Joe. Hopefully, our meeting will help you break through some of the roadblocks you’re facing now,” says Alice.

“Thanks for the help,” says Joe. “I appreciate it.” He opens the door and walks back to his desk.

Now that Joe has successfully concluded the meeting, he can ponder why it took place (why didn’t he proactively talk with her about his struggles with the team?) and why her tone of voice was so antagonistic in the beginning. Did he project that energy onto her? Maybe. Or maybe she hadn’t slept well for a few nights and that piece of the conversation (her tone) had nothing to do with him. The point is that *Joe now takes the time to figure it out.*

The great thing about this approach is that you can’t dwell on negative emotions, responses, or attitudes if you are busy analyzing and understanding the hidden message of an encounter. Your brain can only think about or react to one thing at a time. The gift of this focus on “me, me, me” is that it gets you out of the cycle of blame/shame/guilt/fear/worry/anger that most of us spend an inordinate amount of time on. Removing all of that negative energy from your thoughts and thinking about the hidden message for your soul’s growth will do amazing things for your attitude and performance at work. Good things *must* start to happen because your new, positive, proactive energy will naturally bring them to you (but don’t forget that you’ll still face challenges to help you grow and accept yourself).

Hopefully you’re now intrigued by this idea, even if you don’t buy that it’s true all of the time. How do you successfully implement it into your life? Here are some suggested steps:

- 1) Start listening to your thoughts. Imagine that you are not your mind or your body. You (the real you!) are the *observer* of the constant chatter in your head and the sensations of emotion or stress in your body. Pay attention to what you are thinking and feeling. Practice observing your thoughts when you’re alone or in a relaxed social setting. Don’t start with an important meeting or event.
- 2) After you’ve gotten the hang of observing your thoughts, start to evaluate your day. Go over the conversations and people you talked with. Are there any messages for you? A simple example is if a number of people told you how great you looked that day. What good things might have been happening in your life to enable you to send out such positive energy? People noticed. You likely didn’t change anything major in your appearance. It was your energy that changed. Note that. Use the experience to remind you of the power of your thoughts and energy. Start doing this after every important meeting. If you’ve been able to play the role of observer of your thoughts and behavior for even part of a meeting, you’ll have better recall of what actually happened in it.

- 3) Do what Joe did in our example. Start to give yourself a “pep” talk before key meetings. Make a vow to observe yourself and your reactions while listening. Take time before responding to questions or comments. Will you be able to do this throughout a meeting the first few times? Of course not. So don't set yourself up with unreasonable expectations. It is a process that takes some time to learn. But again, remember that energetically you are already making a big change just by trying out these concepts. So even if you don't think they're working for you, they are. Stay with it.

- 4) Be kind to yourself. Do whatever you have to do to keep yourself feeling good about the changes you are making. If you can't stop beating yourself up for making mistakes and not getting this process “right,” then take some time to figure out why you feel the need to do that. For me, it usually means that I'm scared of making a change, even if it is positive, so I beat myself up to keep from succeeding. Strange, I know, but I bet a few of you do the same thing for the same reason. Our egos hate to be observed and to lose control. Your higher Self is in control when you are the observer, not the ego. Know that there will be resistance to positive change and welcome it. Just laugh when that negative voice starts talking and go about your business—the business of seeing what your mirror has to show you today!

Sources and suggested reading if this topic has sparked a desire to learn more:

Debbie Ford, *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers*, Riverhead Books, New York, 1998

Gary Zukav and Linda Francis, *The Heart of the Soul: Emotional Awareness*, Simon & Schuster Source, New York, 2001

Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York, 1995

Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, 1994