

Emotional Intelligence—Key to Enrich Society

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the organizers, International House of Japan and the Japan Foundation Asia Center, for the opportunity to participate in the Asian Leadership Fellows Program (ALFP) 2015 as well as to all dear dynamic Fellows from various diverse and rich backgrounds.

During this priceless two months at ALFP, I felt inspired and grateful to have the privilege to meet, interact, and most importantly, listen to the pantheon of guest speakers, and to my ALFP cohort. In addition, even though I am Japanese, it goes without saying that the site visits were not only interesting and compelling, but also new because I had the chance to experience them through the lens of others with different backgrounds. This necessarily entails points of views from core interests of the Fellows, such as peace, religion, environment, linguistic, agriculture, and gender issues.

That leads me to a brief discussion of my core interest: to curate and to seize the essential gifted value to be synergized and optimized by harmony with other stakeholders from the micro level of individual thinking to the mundo level as ecosystem of global society based on the motivation of individuals remaining at the bottom line.

It was a truly enriched experience to listen to the points and interests of others that hit my new receptor and interest. Furthermore, I realized that best way to create a common vision is to cherish our respective emotional intelligences and to nurture tacit knowledge by communication and friendship. Tacit knowledge is often defined as “the knowledge in our heads.” It is intuitive and difficult to measure (see Figure 1).¹

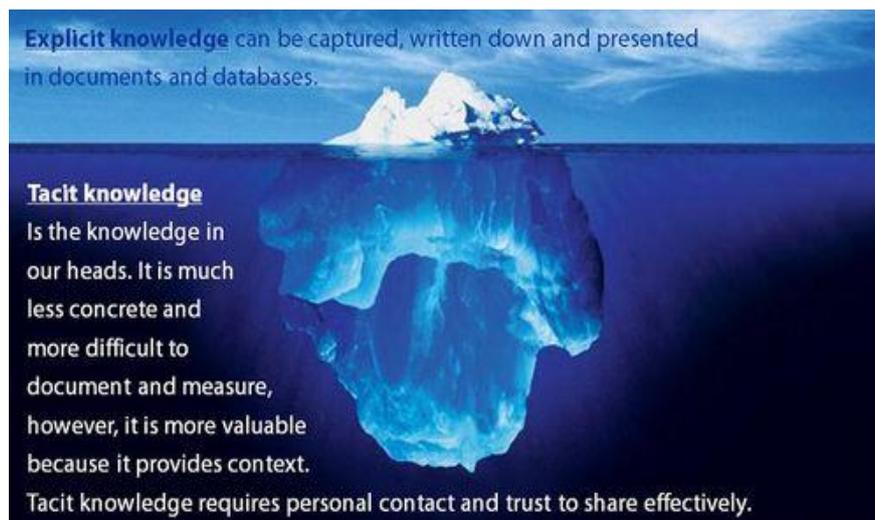


Figure 1: Tacit Knowledge.²

¹ Ikujiro Nonaka, “The Knowledge Creating Company,” *Harvard Business Review*, (July-August 2007), <https://hbr.org/2007/07/the-knowledge-creating-company/>.

² Matt Andrews, “How Do You Build Tacit Knowledge in Organizations?,” *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development*, TypePad, December 17, 2014,

In general, people raise interest in topics that are related to their own concerns which come across in crisis. In this sense, I believe that people who consider themselves as leaders come together to create a common vision with a sense of awareness and empathy.

Before sharing my findings through the ALFP, please allow me to explain my own background so that I can identify my standpoint not only being Japanese but also valuing interdisciplinary approaches. Ever since my childhood, my family moved to various cities almost every three years due to my father's work responsibilities.

I always perceived myself being minority or outsider or alien in every community I encountered. This emotion led me to explore and stretch my comfort zone in various cultures and continents. Based on my own will, I had opportunities to study abroad in countries including New Zealand, the United States, Mexico, and Vietnam in high school and college as well as Hungary for a master's program.

Every surrounding made me ponder the value of capital and dignity of human being which often fluctuates. For instance, medical doctor and university professor earn US\$20 per month while I, a university student, earned US\$500 per day for an interpreting job. Besides, having worked as an intern at Japan Society of Boston, the Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, and Children Museum in Boston led me to the realization that cultural exchange deepens the appreciation, understanding and empathy towards one's own identity, including the inheritance from the past, as well as that of one's counterparts.

My experience serving for VIP sponsors of CBS TV at Nagano Winter Olympics and the members of the Japanese Diet at the COP3 conference sharpened my thought that visibility and accuracy will have to be disseminated due to the responsibilities of public affairs. One of my first official jobs was to coordinate a conference called "The US-Japan Common Agenda" which aimed at jointly seeking solutions for global problems, such as increasingly pressing environmental degradation, overpopulation, and damage from both natural and man-made disasters.

Based on the recognition of the need to respond flexibly to the most pressing challenges, Japan and the United States decided to work cooperatively to address those economic and social issues across sectors, including public, private, academic, and civil society. Ever since, I have made sure that my approach has interdisciplinary perspectives throughout planning and execution in order to optimize the impact on every stakeholder.

Every single Fellow and speaker including those I had the opportunity to meet at site visits in ALFP 2015 convinced me that no matter what subject and area they are specialized in, many of their driving forces come from their strong emotion and the circumstances they have been in and these are needed to breakthrough and reach their own vision.

The enlightened comments from Mr. Ominami Shinya and Mr. Yokoishi Tomoji gave me the insight that every single person owns a special life story and he or she can utilize his or her own talents and experiences by ecosystem. For example, the elderly women in

Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima, who are engaged in the “leaf business” and pick maple leaves, are full of confidence because they know the value and the importance of being respected. Following Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,³ the majority of Japanese are struggling to identify themselves at the level beyond the “love/belonging” stage (see Figure 2).

In addition, I was impressed by Professor Ueno Chizuko who shared that her motivation to solve gender-related issues comes from anger which is self-actualization. Based on the economic growth as parameters, we as human can be motivated to shift our own needs subjectively and objectively. As common issues, other Asian countries experience the same phenomena and each individual acknowledges his or her own needs in his or her community or society where they have a sense of belonging.

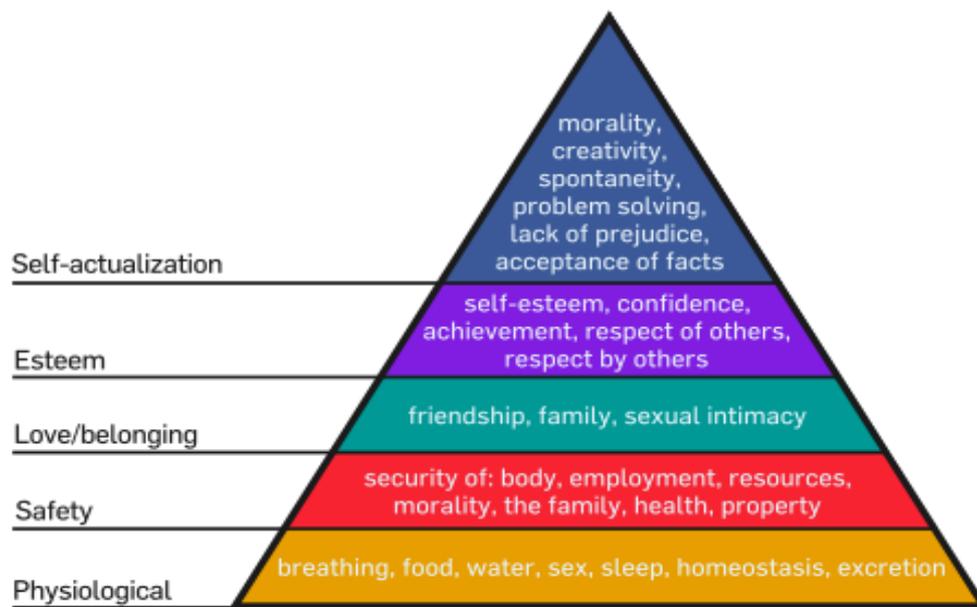


Figure 2: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.⁴

Through our intensive interactions among the Fellows on a daily basis, as well as with the distinguished guests we met, I realized that we were following the exercise and pattern of Theory U developed by Otto Scharmer.⁵ This theory explains how groups and organizations can create most accomplished leaders and innovators. The journey through the U develops seven essential leadership capacities by five movements.

³ “Hierarchy of Needs of Abraham Maslow,” *A First Look at Communication Theory* by Em Griffin, <http://www.afirstlook.com/docs/hierarchy.pdf>.

⁴ “Abraham Maslow,” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Maslow.

⁵ “An Executive Summary of the New Book by Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*,” http://www.presencing.com/sites/default/files/page-files/Theory_U_Exec_Summary.pdf.

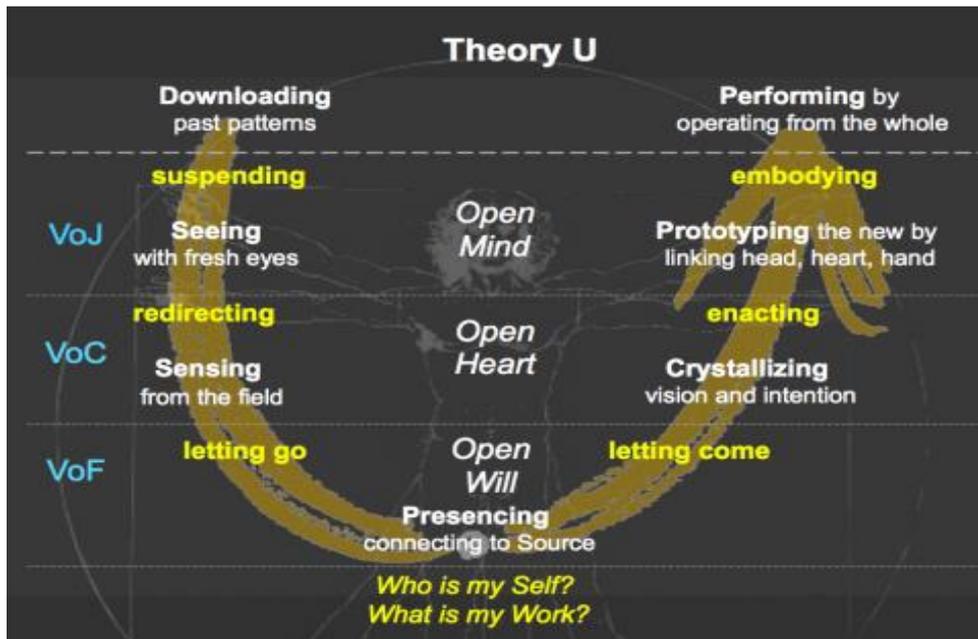


Figure 3: Theory U.⁶

Albert Einstein noted that “no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” Indeed, ALFP takes a great role in developing a new consciousness and collective leadership capacity to meet above challenges in a more conscious, intentional, and strategic approach through dialogue. The development of such a capacity allowed the Fellows to create a future growth and discovery of mutual understanding in paradigm.

Especially, when we have a chance to diagnose a situation, there are four “meta-processes of the social field” we need to take into consideration: (1) micro level with thinking individuals; (2) meso level with conversing groups; (3) macro level with structuring institutions; and (4) mundo level with ecosystem coordinating global systems.⁷

I strongly feel responsible to be equipped to grasp the motivation, mission, and activities of all levels—from individuals to ecosystem, so that I continue to be a driver or the so-called curator who connects individuals across market and society at every level of field to address social issues through creative solutions.

To apply pillars of social capital in emerging economic growth and younger populations across Asian countries, there is a tremendous room to take on roles for like-minded public intellectuals who demonstrate individual strengths to maintain self-esteem and intensity based on industrious efforts. In turn, these promote the view for empathy and appreciation, which then touch upon each emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge to

⁶ Presencing Institute, “Principles and Glossary of Presencing,” <https://www.presencing.com/principles/>.

⁷ “An Executive Summary of the New Book by Otto Scharmer, Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges,” 4-5.

cherish impact and dignity more than measurement of competitiveness and gap a concept which is wholly beneficial to society in the long run.