

CREATIVITY:

Source Code for the Human Operating System

By Megan Gaiser | *Principal, Contagious Creativity LLC*

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

For much of its existence, the game industry has been exclusive and homogeneous. Gamergate—the controversy centered on issues of sexism and progressivism in video game culture—brought the issue of abuse toward women to the forefront, but it didn't move the needle. The ongoing harassment against women went unchallenged by the industry leadership.

As a result, women had to go it alone, speaking out amidst regular online harassment and vitriolic language. For many, this toxic environment ranged from moments of chaos, hopelessness, depression, rage, anxiety, and fear. At one point, threats of rape, and even death, caused a few women to flee their homes. The FBI got involved. I asked some senior game colleagues why they weren't speaking out in support of these women.

Some believed doing so would hurt their brand and their bottom line. Others didn't think it had anything to do with them. Still others were afraid of being targeted themselves. One courageous leader, Dean Takahashi, brought the issue forward in his opening GamesBeat keynote in 2015, stating "I would not recommend the game industry to my daughters." These events brought to light just how warped our moral compass had become. The game industry would never be the same.

2017 ushered in the #MeToo movement, catalyzing a worldwide revolt against the longstanding subjugation and objectification of women. Who knew that most women across industries have been sexually assaulted or harassed at one time or another? It was the best-kept secret until Pandora's box busted wide open.

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP BY UPGRADING OURSELVES

Reflecting on the last century's atrocities—or at least, the disclosure of them—their sheer volume and frequency seems to lull us into the

acceptance of bad behavior as part of the "human condition." Yet this ongoing climate of hostility and disconnection provides the perfect opportunity to reexamine the culture we have unwittingly agreed to.

Business was designed for humans, yet profit is often valued over people, data over wisdom and money over meaning. On a monetary, technological, and intellectual scale, progress has increased dramatically. However, the mastery of heart intelligence has advanced very little over the ages. It's time for that to change.

If we agree that business as usual no longer works to lead today's diverse populace, the logical place to start is to redefine what it takes to become a 21st century leader. We have been told that leadership equals the right to authority. It doesn't.

Leadership isn't just about roles or titles. This new way of being, leading for the diversity of humanity, demands we replace the flawed belief in leadership as authority, with leadership as sage and benevolent behavior.

The opportunity before us is to break the conditioning of homogenized expression to become more finely tuned versions of ourselves. Encouraging what is possible for the greater good begins with the courage to embrace curiosity—the gateway to creativity.

This is a radical departure from the longstanding authority that tends to dismiss the more intuitive sides of the brain. It's not simply about implementing tactics or integrating diverse personalities, ethnicities, age, or gender. Becoming a leader for diversity is an inside job. It requires that we reject habitual mental, emotional and behavioral patterns to choose our thoughts—rather than being ruled by them.

Relearning how to access *all* of our intelligence is the path to adopt more wholesome behaviors. We upgrade computers when they are not operating at their maximum capacity. Why wouldn't we upgrade ourselves?

21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP FOR DIVERSITY

Many emboldened leaders within the game industry viewed this climate of chaos and dysfunction as an opportunity to catalyze positive leadership change. Organizations like The IGDA Foundation, Women in Games International, Games for Change, Global Game Jam, Girls Behind the Games, iThrive Games, Amplifying New Voices, Microsoft's 'Gaming for Everyone', Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center, Feminist Frequency, and The Venture Reality Fund, have stepped up to help create a climate of inclusivity, diversity and opportunity.

While we celebrate these inspired initiatives, we are also reminded that there are no quick fixes. More importantly, there is something far bigger going on. Before we can begin to realign our moral compass, it is necessary to understand the root causes for this less than humane state of consciousness, often passing as leadership.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

As children, we used pure, sensory information to access *all* of our senses. We lived in the moment, reveling in the act of play. We were empowered by an unbiased, open heart and mind. Unfortunately, the influences of social, cultural, religious, political, educational and/or governmental systems condition us to accept prescribed behaviors at an early age—limiting creative freedom.

Boys are taught 'to be a man', to essentially shut down their hearts by the age of ten. Conversely, girls are taught to defer to and please in a system designed without them in mind. Girls 'pretty up.' Boys 'soldier on.' All of our psyches—girls, boys, women, and men—eventually become damaged; short-circuited in the process. The result is the adoption of an artificial set of biases in favor of or against certain people or groups, their behaviors and/or beliefs.

Bias stems from a disconnection from the heart, resulting in fear-based thinking. Conscious bias is intentional. Unconscious bias however, is not. It is a blind spot, a bad habit we all suffer from. Because it is unconscious, we often don't even realize that it festers within us. It fosters a sense of entitlement, arrogance, superiority, and judgment on one end; and blame, shame, inferiority and guilt on the other.

Despite the smokescreens, a lack of consciousness perpetuates bias—a major source of human *dis-ease*. It is so deceptive that both genders have been unwittingly set up to become perpetrators or victims of bias—or in my case, a combination of both.

As a female and a creative leader in an environment that deemed girls less than game worthy, I experienced the feeling of being dismissed, placated, and unwelcomed. What had eluded me is how many times I was unconsciously doing the same thing in my life. Once one blind spot revealed itself, it opened the floodgates.

In retrospect, the most dangerous bias I suffered from was the assumption that I didn't have any. I realized that my biases had one thing in common: fear. Accepting my role as a victim of bias *also* set me up to be a perpetrator. It was the perfect wakeup call.

On a positive note, the experience led me to conduct multidisciplinary research, coursework, meditation and yoga for six years with two questions in mind: (1) Why aren't we leading with our heart in partnership with our brain and (2) How do we stay in our truth when consumed with fear?

I learned more about creativity, unconscious bias, ethics, consciousness, heart and emotional intelligence, neuroscience, history, mysticism, psychology, and quantum physics. The research served to bridge the gaps between science and spirituality. This wisdom—coupled with a determination to overcome the invisible enemy of bias—put a kink in my programming. It broke the spell of amnesia. Slowly, surely, and sometimes painfully, I've been reassembling the remnants ever since.

The research also compelled me to initiate many conversations with diverse thought leaders. I came to better understand the historical context and strategies designed to create social division and self-isolation—the illusion of duality. I've heard that earth is the school for late bloomers, a euphemism for slow learners. If so, then one thing is true. I'm in the right school.

COMING BACK INTO ALL OF OUR SENSES: UNEARTHING BIAS

What I learned is that a large part of our human intelligence remains untapped. Out of three billion base pair chemicals in the human gene code, only sixty million are active. Our subconscious mind is one million times more powerful than our conscious mind. It governs 95% of our behavior. It works through habit by repetition, running much of the show without our explicit conscious awareness.

It is like an immersive, mixed reality (MR) adventure experience, a massively multiplayer video game, designed to look real. This adventure game mirrors our own fragmented consciousness, preventing manifestation of the player's DNA—their unique soul blueprint.

Fear is the game mechanic of this programmed reality, the trigger to keep us off balance—out of touch with our inner guidance. This steady control system clouds the ability to sense the truth at the core of our experience, creating abbreviated versions of our selves. The player is unaware of their true origin and the power of who they really are. That is the set up.

It resembles a computer program coded to distort all sense of unity, connection and belonging, to one of disharmony, disconnection and fear. It is achieved in part by the distribution of scarcity and hate through "fear porn." It takes form through the dehumanizing systems of gender/racial inequality, addiction, economic disasters, predictive programming, bio/geo-engineering, poverty, war, pedophilia, homelessness, human trafficking, and more.

The goal of this game? Reconnect with the motherboard that runs our pure operating system—genetically sequenced, unique in expression and purpose. The rules of the game unfold as awareness expands. The challenge? Players hooked to the drip feed of fear rely on pre-programmed thoughts, resulting in biased behaviors. Though this energy is within us, it is not who we truly are. To be what we are not in any moment, no longer self-steering, is to live the conditioning.

This deception hologram feeds and breeds the *dis-ease* of bias. Under these conditions, it is not possible to genuinely welcome diverse people and perspectives. We have been told that this is 'how the world works', to accept these things as 'human nature.' 'That it's just the way it is.' Except it isn't.

We have become so disempowered by the inescapable presence of fear we are unable to evolve as a species. We have put our trust into an

untrustworthy system of authority at the expense of our innate power(s). The purity of our consciousness has been hacked. We've all been played. So how do we move forward?

Traditional leadership tends to primarily value our 'thinking'; analytical intelligence, (literal, logical and linear) as the primary driver, which may or may not include heart (creative) intelligence, our 'knowing.' And while our brain serves an important role, we also need our intuitive and sensory powers to function optimally.

Creativity enables us to transcend traditional rules, behaviors, and systems in favor of fresh ideas, meaningful approaches and progressive interpretations. This creative intelligence (perception, intuition, sensing, feeling and imagination) is the body's most sophisticated navigational system. So why aren't we leading with it?

Historically, creativity has been relegated to making art or creating products. It has been underestimated because the value it brings wasn't adequately quantified. That's no longer the case. The science of creativity has been proven. The value of creative intelligence as a force for leadership that inspires the collective is undeniable. The good news? It's teachable.

Word of this *game* is spreading fast via walkthroughs, cheat codes, Easter eggs, and social media. Once critical mass levels up, it will end. Though it served as a longstanding distraction with a debilitating hold on human consciousness, the game will ultimately be remembered as a futile attempt to inhibit the powerful diversity of humanity.

RADICAL CREATIVITY

Creativity is the most valuable leadership skill of the 21st century. It represents the most radical act of freedom. If human evolution has been hindered by our inability to access full sensory intelligence, consider what's possible when we reconnect our creative and analytical intelligence—to make the business of life, fully human.

- Imagine starting with a clean slate—learning to experience life more authentically—instead of picking up where we left off.
- Imagine leadership teams as wisdom keepers, inspiring us to reach for what is possible and in doing so, serving the greater good.
- Imagine using our creativity to intentionally eradicate the pervasive psychological warfare within and around us.
- Imagine reshaping the role of HR to become HIR (Human Inspiration Resources).
- Imagine a game industry where men and women feel safe enough to bring their entire selves to truly collaborate.
- Imagine the primary purpose of products and services geared toward human evolution instead of productivity alone.

This evolution happens from the inside out. It shifts the very core of our being, forever altering our psyche for the better. There is nothing about a caterpillar that tells you it's going to become a butterfly. And yet within the cocoon hides the promise. At some point, the caterpillar realizes it has a much more powerful purpose. In that moment, dormant cells biologists had the genius to call "imaginal cells," begin to transform. Once the shape shifting is completed, a butterfly emerges in all its glory.

Human imaginal cells are at least as powerful. The uncomfortable act of shedding our skin seems more than worth the investment. Revealing our best selves beneath the conditioned veneer inspires others to level up. Achieving this state of presence defines both the path and mark of true leadership. It's like coming home.

WE ARE THE TECHNOLOGY—THE HUMAN RE-BOOT

Human evolution is not industry specific. It is a worldwide event unfolding in real time. While the veil is being lifted for bad behavior globally, it is also exposing the unexamined sides of our own beliefs and biases, still hidden from us. The fight we are fighting is not out there. It never has been.

The consciousness cleansing game is in full swing. Though not formally invited, we are all participants in the greatest reality show on earth—hidden in plain sight. As androgynous, sentient, creator-beings playing a role and a gender, we are here to experience the distortions of consciousness to break free from bias.

We are at a crossroads, witnessing the unprecedented implosion of a longstanding paradigm, and the creation of a new one—*unity in diversity*. Collective intelligence is the only acceptable reality to catapult the collective forward.

It is not possible to create an inclusive reality on top of a toxic one. We must reimagine it. The obsolete socio-economic and cultural approaches, systems, rhetoric, and practices designed with only half of the population in mind, are ripe for redesign.

Therefore, *we can't wait* for the game industry, or any industry, to reimagine itself—because *we are* the industry. We are being called to become consciousness catalysts—architects redesigning business as a human enterprise, in a fully conscious reality. What better moment to summon heartfelt intent to positively transform ourselves.

Whether victims or perpetrators of bias, or both, we can reject the deception of fear to take control for the full rendition of ourselves. No one is guilty, just reawakening.

We are the technology we've been waiting for. Our subtle, sacred senses are surfacing. Like city lights switching on at sunset, we are self-activating—retuning our human instruments from one way of knowing, to another.

Some call it flow. Some call it light. Some call it source. I call it creativity, the human operating system.

It's time to reunite our creative and analytical intelligence to lead for the diversity of humanity—stepping into innate wisdom as authority, to reclaim our true identity.

The power is within us *and it will* take all of us.

Let's go home.