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New Perspectives on Organizational Coaching
and the Questions to be Addressed by Leaders*

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Coaching and the Societal Unconscious: New Perspectives on Organizational Coaching and the Questions to be Addressed by Leaders

Vicki Foley and William Bergquist

The authors offer two case studies that illustrate the powerful role played by deeply-embedded societal values that are often religions in origin. Foley and Bergquist have used the social analyses offered by Max Weber about the Protestant ethic and capitalism to create a link between the personal conscious (business practices) and personal unconscious (religious perspectives, beliefs and values). The authors provide coaches with a different context and perspective from which one can coach leaders through highly complex issues and dilemmas that cross the boundaries of conscious and unconscious life.

When leaders make important decisions that impact many stakeholders who are in some way affiliated with their organization, these leaders inevitably find that they must consider many factors and must listen to many different (and often discrepant) voices. Furthermore, these leaders, faced with the complexity, unpredictability and turbulence of 21st century environments (for example, Bergquist & Mura, 2005), must often work ultimately in isolation from their colleagues within the organization—knowing that no one with whom they work is likely to be dispassionate about the issues that this decision will address. As the American president, Harry Truman, observed, the “buck” truly stopped at his desk. He had to take full responsibility for the decisions that he made (including conduct of the Korean War, firing of a revered general, playing a major role in the rebuilding of Europe and guiding the United States through major social transitions). Many of these decisions were very unpopular and Truman’s own ratings in the public opinion polls were often very low. While he listened to the excellent advice offered by many wise counselors (including Marshall and MacArthur), Truman had final say about what was to take place in the Executive branch of the American government.

When working in what might be described as the “the splendid isolation” of power and authority, where does a leader turn to find at least somewhat dispassionate perspectives and someone who is willing to ask the difficult, but clarifying, questions that best inform the decision-making process. Many of us believe that organizational coaches can often meet these leadership needs and provide a safe context (sanctuary) for the generation of and reflection on

alternative perspectives leading to thoughtful decisions. But, what is the nature of the role to be played by those who serve as coaches to organizational leaders? What type of coaching questions should be asked that truly invite deep and critical reflection, and what type of coaching strategies best serve the long-term interests of the leader who is being coached? We propose that the answer to these fundamental questions resides at least in part in the probing of the societal values and perspective that have informed the leader's career and life—and even more fundamentally the deeply-seated religious (or more broadly spiritual and sacred) traditions in which these values and perspectives are rooted and which still help to nourish and at times revitalized these values and perspective.

Greg only begins to think strategically about this broader issue of social responsibility when he contemplates his own retirement.

In essence, we are proposing that an effective organizational coach must take into account not only the often unconscious personal history of the leader being coached, but also the broader (and just as unconscious) societal and religious context within which this leader's personal history is situated. Ironically, we have a social theorist to thank for this approach, someone who lived and worked in a world that was far different from that in which 21st century leaders now operate. This social theorist was Max Weber, who authored one of the most influential books of the 20th century: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In this article, we shall seek to demonstrate how Weber's analysis might inform coaching questions and strategies and shall anchor this demonstration in an interview one of us conducted with the CEO of a major corporation in the United States and in the case study of an organization with which one of us has consulted.¹

GREG: CASE STUDY

It is always a privilege to be given the opportunity to interview major organizational leaders about the challenges they face in their life and work—especially when these leaders offer a candid portrayal of the issues they are now facing. Greg was one of the special people who agreed to be interviewed and provided us with grist for the mill in our reflection on the conscious and unconscious lives of the men and women we coach.

Greg is a very successful corporate executive. He serves as Chief Operating Officer for the North American division of a multinational power generation and transmission company located in Germany. In addition to serving as COO, Greg occupies the position of President of the U.S. operations located in the Eastern

¹ While we thought we were offering a unique perspective when first preparing this article, we have recently discovered that others have joined us in seeking to connect the analyses of Max Weber with contemporary organizational and societal challenges. We have noted, in particular, an article featured on the cover of a recent *Atlantic Monthly* (December 2009) that is titled: "Did Christianity Cause the Crash?" The author writes about the "prosperity gospel" and links this gospel to traditional Protestant doctrine. A recent article in the Sunday edition of *The Boston Globe* (November 15, 2009) was titled: "Satan, the great motivator." The author of this article similarly pointed to the influence of Protestant theology on contemporary economics and organizational practices. reputation as a problem-solver—especially with regard to engineering and operations. He has never spent much time thinking about where he wanted to end up in his career. He only consistently cared about two things: (1) the welfare of his family, and (2) job security.

United States. Many customers are not even aware that this company is actually owned by a German institution—hence they view Greg as the formal leader of this company.

Yet, because Greg's company is part of a bigger conglomerate, Greg is facing several major dilemmas. Fortunately, Greg likes dilemmas and views his role primarily as one of making the "hard decisions." For example, Greg tells us a story about a \$20 bill. If he sees someone unknowingly drop a \$20 bill on the floor he would, of course, pick up the bill and return it to the owner. He asked us if we see that as ethical behavior. We indicate that we do. Yet, Greg says he does not see this as an ethical issue. Greg says, "It's not a test. I don't know if you know your true ethics until you are tested. The \$20 means nothing to me. I think there are a lot of false ethics in the world. One of my core beliefs is that there are only certain points where you get really tested... I want to be judged on the meaningful stuff when faced with a difficult situation." Greg reflects on his father's influence on his ethics. Greg was raised in a fairly religious home and admits that some of these values are deep within him as a result of this influence. Greg reflects that his Dad has influenced his values a great deal, in particular the values of working hard, taking advantage of opportunity and always doing your best.

For Greg there is a fundamental ethical dilemma concerning the goals of his personal life and the goals of his organization. This pull between two goals is actually multi-faceted—involving a number of factors; furthermore, several other dilemmas are nested within this major dilemma. Let's start with the major dilemma. Greg is very much a family man. He has accepted the position of President and throughout his work life has chosen jobs that enable him to spend quality time with his family. On the other hand, as President of his company (we will call it "Exemplar Energy") Greg is faced with many challenges that understandably are taking up his time and attention.

Greg has been working at Exemplar for many years, starting as an engineer with the firm, and serving most recently as Chief Technology Officer. He made a name for himself several years ago when he successfully assisted the German ownership with a major technical problem. He soon found himself being promoted to President and COO. This has been a pattern in Greg's career. He has been something of an "opportunist" – in the best sense of this term. When a challenge arose, Greg met it and gained a deserved reputation as a problem-solver—especially with regard to engineering and operations. He has never spent much time thinking about where he wanted to end up in his career. He only consistently cared about two things: (1) the welfare of his family, and (2) job security.

Within the cluster of personal goals, Greg is caught between the need to devote time to his career and devoting time to his family. Like many successful corporate leaders, Greg has always had to

work extra hours at the office and at home. Yet, he has still found time to attend the sporting and performing arts events of his sons and daughters. Greg has attended every recital and concert in which his children have performed. In recent years, Greg has even flown with his children to the university from which Greg graduated (and where his oldest son is now enrolled) to attend football games. Over the short term, Greg is focused on his career and avails himself of the opportunities that his company has opened up for him. Over the long term, however, Greg always keeps his eye on the main prize—namely his family and their welfare.

There appears to be a much greater tension with regard to the cluster of organizational goals in Greg's life. On the one hand, he works in an organization that primarily values profitability and return on investment for its major stockholders. This concern for the financial integrity of his company is certainly understandable. Yet, Greg doesn't seem to gain much gratification from these financial achievements, nor has he received much recognition from the parent corporation. They have not provided Greg with a substantial performance bonus, even though the North American operations over which Greg presides has been the most successful of all ten units. Furthermore, the parent organization doesn't seem to care much about anything other than profitability. Its philanthropic activities are meager (given the size of this multinational corporation) and it asks for no metrics from its many subsidiaries other than the financial top and bottom lines.

Greg only begins to think strategically about this broader issue of social responsibility when he contemplates his own retirement. Rather than conceiving of his organization as a contributor to the social welfare of the communities it serves, Greg contemplates early retirement (hopefully at age 48) and working with both children and senior citizens. While Greg has never really given much consideration to working in nonprofit settings, he has over the past ten years provided some community service through coaching his own children's sports teams and would like to contribute eventually to his community through these post-retirement services.

With all of this, there is something troubling Greg. Like most of us, he is still trying to come to terms with the pull between his personal and organizational life and the obligations inherent in both of these lives. And he is pulled between career and family in his personal life and between profitability and community benefit in his organizational life. The personal pull between career and family is very apparent to Greg. He can readily articulate this pull and is doing a good job of balancing out this dilemma. The pull between profit and community service is less apparent to Greg and he has done little to address this pull, other than planning for some time in the future when he can give back to his community, not through his organization but rather through his personal, post-retirement engagement.

We know that when coaching through mysteries, the coach must be clear that they are addressing issues that might have no solutions and that often lie outside of the person's control.

COACHING GREG

What do we say and do as Greg's coach to help him address these problems? It might be helpful to review a coaching taxonomy at this point. In a 2003 *IJCO* article, John Lazar and William Bergquist proposed a taxonomy that has since been modified by Bergquist and his colleague, Suzi Pomerantz (see Table 1).

Table 1. Organizational coaching taxonomy

	Performance Coaching	Executive Coaching	Alignment Coaching	Business Coaching
Focus of Coaching	Behavior	Decision-Making; Cognition/Thought and Affect/Feelings	Fundamental Beliefs, Values, Purposes	Overall Business Performance
Nature of Issue Being Addressed	Puzzle: Uni-dimensional, quantifiable, internal locus of control	Problem: Multi-dimensional, complex ("messy"), mixture of internal and external locus of control	Mystery: Unfathomable, unpredictable, external locus of control	Challenge: Specific and focused, yet involving multiple dimensions and multiple stakeholders, internal but broad-based locus of control
Examples of Issues Being Addressed	Providing a subordinate with feedback Building the agenda for a meeting Preparing presentation for board meeting	Determining when to give specific feedback Identifying primary purpose for specific group's existence Understanding the leadership style one prefers in group settings	Determining whether or not to remain employed in an organization that places a low value on human welfare Identifying the ethical and appropriate action to take in a particular setting Clarifying values and perspectives with regard to career advancement and personal autonomy	Determining the best procedure for engaging in a strategic planning process Designing a specific job in the organization for high level performance Creating an effective marketing plan to launch a new product
Sub-Varieties of Coaching Strategies	Engagement: Preparing for difficult and important interaction with one other person Empowerment: Preparing for difficult and important work in a group setting Opportunity: Preparing for major event in one's life	Reflective: Deliberating about options, assumptions, beliefs Instrumented: Gaining clear sense of personal preferences and strengths Observational: Gaining greater insight regarding one's own actions and the impact of these actions	Spiritual: Discerning spiritual directions Philosophical: Critically examining fundamental frames of reference Ethics: Identifying and consistently acting upon one's own values and ethics Life and Career: Identifying and acting upon broad life and career preference patterns	Strategic: Creating and executing a strategic planning process Tactical: Implementing various components of a strategic plan Design: Reviewing and modifying job and organizational structures to create high performance Operational: Reviewing and modifying policies and procedures of organization to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, and ensure equity

We propose that our coaching engagement with Greg focuses on issues of alignment as well as executive decision-making processes. The reflective tools of executive coaching that focus on the decisions to be made by the client are interwoven with the probing questions associated with the alignment (or misalignment) of the client's personal values and aspirations with the values and mission of the organization in which the client works. We further propose that coaching focused on business practices (Business Coaching) and the tactical elements of life as a manager and leader are inevitably directed primarily toward those aspects of the client's thoughts and feelings that are conscious, fully-accessible and readily modified—the secular dimension of life and work. Conversely, we propose that the complex, interwoven thoughts and feelings associated with strategic thinking, executive decision-making and the alignment of personal and organizational values inevitably involve an exploration of elements and dynamics that are often unconscious—and may eventually lead to an exploration of underlying societal assumptions and expectations and even deeply-embedded religious traditions, beliefs and perspectives—the sacred dimension of life and work.

Back to Greg and his coaching. Greg's issues can be considered both problems and mysteries. The problems are multi-dimensional and inter-disciplinary. The mysteries concern fundamental values,

purpose, beliefs and assumptions. We know that when coaching through mysteries, the coach must be clear that they are addressing issues that might have no solutions and that often lie outside of the person's control (Lazar and Bergquist, 2003). The use of "why" questions allow the person being coached to reflect on purpose and feelings leading to what we hope is a greater understanding of ultimate purpose. A strong sense of trust between the coach and the leader is essential when proposing a series of "Why" questions. For Greg, we propose the following:

- Why do you remain at Exemplar Energy? Why are these reasons compelling enough to stay? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine underlying assumptions regarding his work ethic and motivation.]
- Why do you think it is important for there to be equity in compensation plans? Why haven't you expressed your views to the parent company? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine underlying assumptions regarding his work ethic and motivation.]
- Why do you think your Dad believed in hard work? Doing your best? Why do you think these were his fundamental beliefs? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine even more deeply the sources of his underlying assumptions regarding work ethic and motivation.]
- Why do you want to retire early? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine some of the dissatisfactions in his work life—potential misalignment of some core values and aspirations with the values and mission of his organization. Also encouraging Greg to more closely examine his assumptions about and hopes regarding next phase of his life.]
- Why do you want to work with children and the elderly after retirement? [Rationale: continuing to encourage Greg to more closely examine his assumptions about and hopes regarding next phase of his life.]

We would also suggest some "If" questions:

- If you were to continue providing leadership for many years at Exemplar Energy rather than seeking early retirement what would have to change in the organization for you to find your work gratifying? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine in a somewhat different manner his underlying assumptions regarding work-related motivations and his expectations regarding the conditions at Exemplar that would nourish him.]

Critical decisions being made by these leaders are strongly influenced by unacknowledged societal values interplaying with their unacknowledged personal unconscious life.

- If the opportunity arose where you were offered a promotion at Exemplar Energy that required a relocation for several years to their German headquarters, would you take it? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine underlying cultural assumptions and alignment or misalignment of values and beliefs. Also encouraging Greg to more closely examine family purpose.]

We sometimes combine “Why” and “If” questions:

- If your children were to be doing what you’re now doing when they are at your age—would you be pleased? Would you prefer that they took a different career path? Why? Why not? [Rationale: encouraging Greg to identify and examine even more deeply the sources of his underlying assumptions regarding work ethic and motivation and the ways in which these assumptions and Greg’s values are passed on potential to the next generation.]

While none of these questions related specifically to Greg’s religious background or to the values of the society in which Greg was born and raised, they do encourage Greg’s reflections on the ways in which this background and these societal values impact on his current work and his anticipated work in the near future. We propose that these coaching questions encourage in Greg the kind of critical and thoughtful reflection that Max Weber provided many years ago in reflecting on the origins and current nature of societal values in 20th century Western Civilization.

WEBER AND THE PROTESTANT ETHIC

In a now classic essay, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the German sociologist and social historian, Max Weber, attempts to identify the psychological and sociological conditions that made possible the development of capitalism as the dominant economic system in most Western societies. Weber specifically studied the relationship between the ethics of ascetic Protestantism and the emergence of the spirit of modern capitalism. Obviously, most business practices and daily economic decisions are informed by a leader’s conscious life and by the immediate reality of the environment in which the leader is operating—yet, this does not tell the whole story. In keeping with Weber’s analysis, we propose that underlying religious perspectives and deeply-embedded societal values in contemporary social systems interweave in a powerful way with the personal unconscious of those men and women who lead contemporary organizations. Critical decisions being made by these leaders are strongly influenced by unacknowledged societal values interplaying with their unacknowledged personal unconscious life.

In our work as organizational coaches, we often create invisible boundaries that prevent us from going too deep into psychological analysis with our clients. These boundaries are imposed by both coach and client as a form of protection, both professional and personal. Yet, it is often necessary to get underneath the individual's internal drivers, values and beliefs to be able to make the connections that allow us to have the greatest possible impact in our work. Often these values are deeply embedded in the individual's personal code that has been built upon layers and layers of beliefs and values. How can coaches balance this paradox so as to honor the boundaries, yet also offer a safe space for the individual to expose his psyche to the coach—even if access is appropriately limited?

Weber attributed the progress of Protestant (i.e., non-Catholic, European) capitalist countries (United States, Germany, the Scandinavian countries) to a Calvinist (after John Calvin, a major theoretician of Protestant principles) emphasis on the important link between hard work, worldly success and personal salvation. The accumulation of wealth is the ultimate sign of being “chosen” by God for life in the hereafter. Whereas Catholicism stressed doing good work and demonstrating one's belief in the sacraments while respecting and honoring the institution and those in command (typically the elders), Calvinism recommended hard toil for its followers. They were encouraged to acquire wealth (though not display wealth in a conspicuous manner). By contrast, the Catholic call for charitable work was seen as a sign of grace and accumulating wealth for oneself contradicted the Catholic ethic (Agboluaje, 2009).

The following quote from R.H. Tawney's (1958) forward to the translated version of Weber's essay provides us with a comparison of the two ethics. “There is a kind of natural inaptness,” wrote a pamphleteer in 1671, “in the Popish religion to business, whereas, on the contrary, among the Reformed, the greater their zeal, the greater their inclination to trade and industry, as holding idleness unlawful.”

In his works, Max Weber often refers to and quotes one of the great American heroes, Benjamin Franklin. Ben Franklin, a founding father of the United States, scientist, inventor, politician, civil activist, author, printer and entrepreneur, arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the age of 17. His religious beliefs and work ethic significantly influenced the city of Philadelphia's Protestant ethics—a core set of values and aspirations that prevail to this day. Even more broadly, the U.S. government is strongly influenced by Franklin's Calvinist-based views regarding self-government and the importance of individual rights versus collective and institutional responsibility.

How can coaches balance this paradox so as to honor the boundaries, yet also offer a safe space for the individual to expose his psyche to the coach—even if access is appropriately limited?

Weber (1904, 1905, p. 48) exemplifies his theory with this quote from Ben Franklin:

Remember, that *time is money*. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labor, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides.... Remember, that money is the *prolific, generating nature*. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again is seven and three pence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds.

We would suggest that Weber's thesis is relevant to a fuller understanding of the dilemmas facing Greg and to the work of organizational coaches in confronting any complex problem that is filled with dilemmas. The interview with Greg points to ways in which a coach can offer probing (yet appropriate) questions that uncover underlying religious perspectives and societal values. These perspectives and values are collective equivalents in many ways to the personal unconscious and like the personal unconscious, these influence the key decisions which executives make in the organizations they lead. As Greg has proposed, the ethical behavior of a leader is defined not by his or her decision to return \$20 to its rightful owner, but by the much more complex and dilemma-filled decisions that this leader makes regarding the future directions for his or her organization and the manner in which the interests of her organization's many stakeholders (employees, board members, stockholders, customers, members of the community) are being served by these difficult decisions. We have proposed several coaching strategies and a series of probing questions that we believe touch the unconscious and allow leaders to recognize the power and pull of their fundamental values and beliefs. They are encouraged to become more reflective regarding the role that these unconscious elements play in their leadership roles, decision making—and non-work life.

To further illustrate the relevance of Weber's thesis for contemporary coaches we offer the following case study.

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

The organization began as a family-owned services business, whose founders were Catholic and native Philadelphians. The founders' business experienced substantial growth in its first 15 years in an industry whose growth rates paralleled their success. Therefore, the family decided to take the company public. In spite of going public

and expanding service locations around the U.S., the organization retained its family leadership, familial culture and Catholic ethic. Twenty-five years later, four of the six members of the senior leadership team are brothers and cousins and two are sons of the founder. Four of the six senior leaders graduated from Catholic universities in undergrad or graduate programs as did the founding CEO. Two of the senior leaders serve on the board of directors of Catholic universities.

As in the case of many family-owned businesses that have grown into large, multi-stakeholder organizations, this organization has retained its family traditions and family-based sources of power and authority. Members of the family still occupy all senior leadership positions. Family members have learned the business by starting at the bottom and working their way up through the organization. Additionally, the founding CEO has served as their mentor, teaching them first-hand about the nature and purpose of their business. As the respected elder he has played a strong educator and mentor role in relating to his sons and nephews. The family and extended family are extremely close knit. They gather frequently for dinners, celebrations, athletic competitions, and vacations. It is difficult to differentiate one institution (the organization) from the other institution (the family).

This company is actively involved in community and charitable work as evidenced by the leaders and employees participate in activities and events throughout the community. They are hands-on, down-and-dirty with the rest of the community. You will see the leaders serving in soup kitchens, participating in charitable athletic tournaments, cleaning homeless shelters, delivering Christmas presents to low-income families, and educating children in poverty areas.

Succession planning is viewed by the board as a top priority and taken very seriously. There are frequent discussions at the board level regarding successors to the key leadership roles in the organization. The current plan is that within eight years, the nephew of the current CEO will become the CEO. Let us recall that there are two sons of the CEO on the executive team, yet their cousin was identified as the successor to the CEO. Accelerating the readiness of the nephew does not appear to be an issue as the timeline is over five years. The development to readiness includes leading acquisitions and partnering directly with the CEO and board on merger and acquisition activities. The successor is also working with a coach to examine critical behaviors required for the top job.

As we use this case study to explore our hypothesis that religious perspectives and deeply-embedded societal values are equivalent to the personal unconscious and that economics and business practices are equivalent to personal conscious life, these questions become relevant.

The ethical behavior of a leader is defined by the much more complex and dilemma-filled decisions regarding future directions for the organization and the manner in which the interests of the organization's many stakeholders are being served.

- What underlying religious perspectives and societal values will impact the coaching of the successor to the CEO?
- How does the interplay of the Protestant environment show up in the coaching work at the organizational level?
- What opportunities and what challenges exist when two institutions/two systems (family and organization) are integrated?
- What can the coach do to connect the personal unconscious with the personal conscious for the most impactful coaching?

COACHING THE SUCCESSOR

What would we say and do as someone who is coaching the potential successor to the current CEO? As with Greg, this successor-leader faces problems and mysteries. However, his succession to the CEO role creates opportunities for the coach to play a key role in preparing him for that role, as well as surfacing the mysteries that he may or may not see in the complex family and historical legacies. Hence, we have combined a series of what/why and how/why questions for this leader:

- What are the criteria for the selection of the next CEO? Why do you think you are being selected rather than the son? [Rationale: encouraging the successor to identify and examine the competencies and experience he has that are different from his cousin's and also begin to examine the intra-family dynamics at play in the succession plan.]
- What challenges do you anticipate in the CEO role five years from now? Why do you think you can overcome these challenges? [Rationale: encouraging the successor to identify and examine a spectrum of challenges and needed competencies so as to prepare for success as CEO.]
- How would your approach be similar to and how would it be different from the current CEO? Why would be it different? Why would it be the same? [Rationale: encouraging successor to identify and examine how he will approach the role and allow him to reflect on current leadership and legacy leadership.]
- What are the community expectations of a CEO in this city? Why should citizens care about the success of your organization? What do you do to demonstrate being a good corporate citizen? [Rationale: encouraging the successor to identify and examine legacy cultural values and beliefs and its impact on running an organization.]

- What are some of the advantages inherent in an organization that is family run? Why should your family stay involved with this business? [Rationale: encouraging successor to identify and examine the complex family infrastructure and core values.]
- How do you know when your organization is successful? Why is this a measure of your success? [Rationale: encouraging successor to examine underlying assumptions about values and motivations.]
- What provides you the most hope and what do you most fear about the succession? Why would you want to serve in this role? [Rationale: encouraging successor to identify and examine more closely his work ethic and motivation.]
- How do you separate work from family? Why is this difficult or easy? [Rationale: encouraging successor to identify and examine complex family relationships in a business construct.]
- What members of your immediate family are working in the organization? Why do they choose to be part of this business? [Rationale: encouraging successor to examine how unconscious core values and beliefs affect decision making.]
- How will you honor your uncle's legacy when you are CEO? How did he honor his father's legacy? Is honoring their legacy important to you? To the leadership team? To the organization? To the community? Why? [Rationale: encouraging successor to identify and examine the impact of historical legacy at each level.]

We can draw connections between Weber's theory and unconscious reality and this coaching case. What are the implications for a Philadelphia-based institution, built upon Catholic ethics, in a Protestant land? How do the core values and beliefs of a religion that has built one of the largest hierarchies (the Papal hierarchy) in the world unconsciously affect the institution and its leaders? What role does an embedded family institution have within the organizational institution and what conscious and unconscious challenges exist as a result? What are the implications for an executive coach who is engaged in coaching one of the leaders in preparation for his assuming the CEO role of this institution? Or for coaching a CEO like Greg? In this article we have identified several of these implications – with the help of Max Weber.

His succession to the CEO role creates opportunities for the coach to play a key role in preparing him for that role, as well as surfacing the mysteries that he may or may not see in the complex family and historical legacies.

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