

HUMAN CAPITAL[®]

realising business strategy through people

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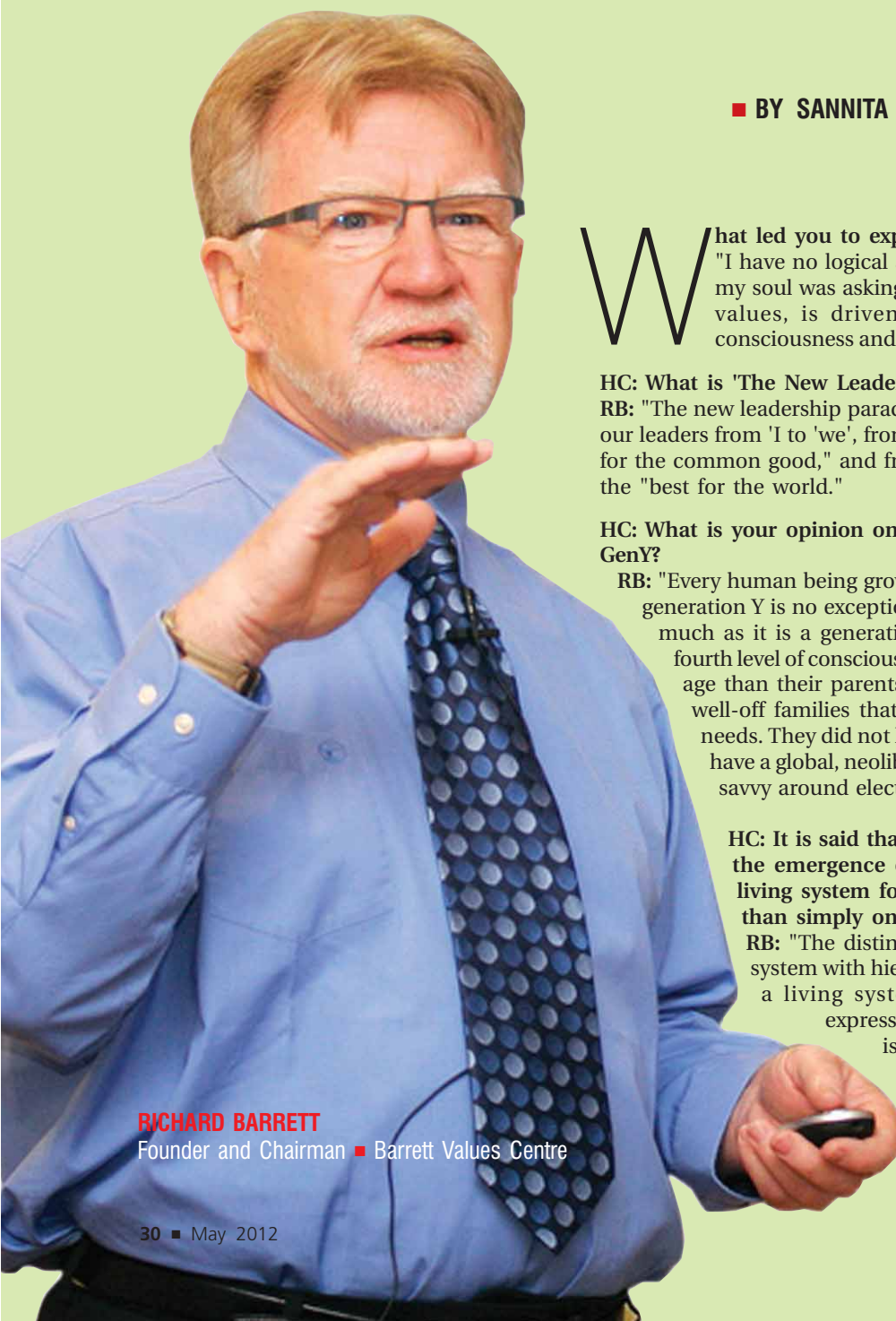
Ever changing business demands are pushing HR pros to reskill themselves and evolve with changing times.

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'I' TO 'We'

a new learning for new age leaders

■ BY SANNITA CHAKRABORTY SAHA



What led you to explore human values so deeply?
"I have no logical answer to this question. It was what my soul was asking me to do. My interest and work on values, is driven from the deepest levels of my consciousness and an expression of who I am as a soul".

HC: What is 'The New Leadership Paradigm' all about?

RB: "The new leadership paradigm is about shifting the thinking of our leaders from 'I to 'we', from 'what's in it for me' to 'what's best for the common good,'" and from being the 'best in the world' to the "best for the world."

HC: What is your opinion on budding managers who belong to GenY?

RB: "Every human being grows and evolves in the same way, and generation Y is no exception. Generation Y is only special in as much as it is a generation that has been able to reach the fourth level of consciousness (individuation) at a much earlier age than their parents because they grew up in relatively well-off families that were able to meet their deficiency needs. They did not have to struggle for survival, and they have a global, neoliberal outlook. They are also extremely savvy around electronics and communications".

HC: It is said that a new type of leadership parallels the emergence of organizations that operate as a living system focused on life-creating value rather than simply on profit. What is your take on this?

RB: "The distinction here is between a mechanical system with hierarchy and control from the top, and a living system which allows for freedom of expression and spontaneous action. The first is driven by fear; the second is driven by love. People naturally gravitate to companies that give them opportunities to become all they can become-to grow and develop,

RICHARD BARRETT
Founder and Chairman ■ Barrett Values Centre

organically, in alignment with who they are, and fully express themselves and their talents. I believe if you can create a culture (environment) that allows employees to explore their natural talents then you will have a committed work force; and you will have a group of people who are willing to bring a lot of discretionary energy to their work".

HC: Tell us something about value-based leadership. What learning does it have for our Indian leaders?

RB: "The reason why it is important to become a values-driven leader is because the world we live in has become extremely complex. If we continue to make decisions based on our beliefs - things we have learned from the past - we will not be able to meet the complex challenges facing us. The world we live in demands a higher order of the decision-making process; one that can guide us through territories we have never experienced before, and align with our most deeply held values. In my opinion, at the core, Indian leaders are no different from leaders from other nations; we are all human beings. What is different is the cultural influence that has conditioned our beliefs. Once you get passed belief-based decision-making (based on cultural programming) and step into values-based decision-making, you tap into the priorities that we all share as human beings".

HC: You once said, "Whether we are talking about organizations or nations, the key differentiator of performance is culture". Please explain this keeping in mind the Indian organizational culture that prevails.

RB: "Cultural capital, or as it is sometimes known, social capital, is the key differentiator between high performing organizations and nations, and low performing organizations and nations. The first reason for this is that cultural capital creates trust. The research from

nations and organizations shows that when people trust each other all transactions are speeded up. The second reason why culture is important is that if it is properly conceived it creates a sense of values and mission alignment-everyone working together for the good of the whole. We call this internal cohesion. The most successful groups on the planet are those that display high internal alignment and low cultural entropy (a measure of the

Richard Barrett (FRSA), an author, speaker and social commentator on the evolution of human values in business and society, speaks to Human Capital on the new leadership paradigm.

dysfunction in a group)".

HC: For any leader, building trust among his team members is critical for success. How can a leader learn to build internal cohesion and trust in his team?

RB: "Trust is built through open, honest conversations around the shared values and shared vision of the group. It is extremely difficult to build trust when the leadership team is made up of ego-driven individuals who are more interested in their own futures than the future of the organization. Ultimately, the leader of an organization must be able to model trust. That is why the first requirement for a good leader is to learn to lead self. In addition, to honest open conversations, the leadership team must learn the principles of dialogue rather than debate. Dialogue requires us to put our own beliefs and assumptions on hold while we listen to the opinions of others, and then incorporate the best of these ideas into our own opinions. Debate, on the other hand, is all about destructive listening-listening to find weaknesses in the other person's ideas and then attacking those weaknesses so we can get the result that we want. Debate destroys cohesion, because

it creates separation".

HC: The culture of an organization is a reflection of the consciousness of the leaders with; therefore, to grow and develop your culture, you need to grow and develop your leaders. Comment

RB: "Who you are as a leader is reflected in the culture of the organization. We need leaders who operate from full-spectrum consciousness, who then create full-spectrum organizations. What I mean by full-spectrum is that the leader and the organization can respond appropriately to all situations that arise; they meet the needs that are inherent in the Seven Levels of Consciousness model which was created by bringing together Maslow's hierarchy of needs with Vedic philosophy. The resulting model identifies seven levels of needs that are necessary for human individuals and their group structures (organizations, communities and nations) to live successfully at a high level of well-being".

HC: How important is the leader's personality in driving team performance and productivity?

RB: "I cannot stress enough that who you are as a leader-where you have to go to in your own personal development-significantly affects the level of commitment and energy of the people who report to you. We always find that business units and departments that display high levels of cultural entropy are led by people who display high levels of personal entropy. This is why I insist that leadership development begins with learning to lead self. Conversely, business units and departments that display the highest levels of performance are led by people who display low levels of personal entropy. Research has shown out of 100 leaders from 20 countries, four values that distinguish low entropy leaders from the rest are teamwork, trustworthiness, fairness and listening". HC