

The Seven Seeds of Leadership

From Root to Crown

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Abstract

This framework presents a holistic approach to leadership development rooted in organic transformation metaphors and ancient wisdom traditions. The Seven Seeds of Leadership model integrates seven energy centers (chakras) with seven fundamental questions (the 7 Ws), seven story-seeds of leading (the 7 Bs: Beneath, Before, Beside, Being, Becoming, Between, Beyond), seven restorying practices, and seven True Storytelling Principles. Each seed contains the potential for transformation through conscious cultivation—weeding out old patterns, watering new growth, and providing sunlight of awareness. This journey from root to crown, from foundational identity to transcendent purpose, offers both deeply personal and universally meaningful pathways for leadership presence. The framework challenges leaders to move beyond mechanical models of leadership toward regenerative, story-based approaches that honor existing narratives while co-creating new possibilities for organizational and personal transformation.

Keywords

Leadership Development, Organizational Storytelling, Quantum Storytelling, Restorying Practice, Transformative Leadership

Introduction

Leadership development has long been dominated by mechanical metaphors—keys unlocking doors, ladders to climb, positions to attain. Yet the most profound transformations in human consciousness and organizational culture follow organic patterns of growth, not mechanical operations. This framework offers an alternative: leadership as a living process of cultivation, where seeds of potential flower into presence through conscious practice.

Drawing from ancient wisdom traditions—particularly the seven energy centers (chakras) of yogic philosophy—and integrating contemporary organizational storytelling theory, this model presents seven fundamental questions every leader must address. These are not questions to be answered once and filed away, but living inquiries that deepen throughout one's leadership journey. From the root question of "Who are you?" to the crown question of "What are you wishing for your Spirit, Soul, and Self?", each seed represents both a stage of development and a continuous practice.

The Seven Seeds of Leadership: A Journey from Root to Crown



Analogy: To understand the Seven Seeds, imagine you are **restoring an ancient, neglected house.**

- **Beneath (Root):** You first check the foundation to see what the house is under the ivy and dirt (Identity).
- **Before (Sacral):** You research the history of who lived there before, respecting the original architecture rather than bulldozing it (Substance).
- **Bets (Solar Plexus):** You draw up blueprints for renovations, wagering on what the house *could* look like (Future).
- **Being (Heart):** You spend time sitting in the rooms to feel the flow of light and air, ensuring the renovation feels right for *this* specific location (Presence).
- **Becoming (Throat):** You begin the work, experimenting with designs that express the house's new purpose (Evolution).
- **Between (Third Eye):** You invite neighbors and friends to help, creating a community spirit within the walls (Relations).
- **Beyond (Crown):** Finally, you open the doors, turning the house into a shelter or community center that serves the neighborhood long after you are gone (Transcendence).

The framework introduces the 7 Bs—Beneath, Before, Bets, Being, Becoming, Between, and Beyond—as story-seeds of leadership. These are not abstract concepts but practical lenses through which leaders can examine their narratives, recognize inherited patterns, and consciously restory their organizations and themselves. Each seed is cultivated through specific restorying practices: Recharacterize, Externalize, Sympathize, Revise, Strategize, Restory, and Publicize. These practices move leaders from reactive acceptance of dominant narratives toward active co-creation of new possibilities.

Finally, each seed, when fully cultivated, flowers into one of the seven True Storytelling Principles—guidelines for ethical, effective, and transformative narrative practice in organizations. This integration of Eastern wisdom, Western organizational theory, and

narrative methodology offers leaders a comprehensive map for personal and collective transformation, moving from extractive to regenerative models of leadership and organizational life.

The Seven Seeds Framework

The following table presents the complete Seven Seeds of Leadership framework, organized to show the organic transformation from seed through cultivation to flowering:

Leadership Seeds	Cultivation Practices	Flowering into Leadership Presence
<p>1. ROOT SEED – Who Are You? (Beneath) Root energy center (Muladhara: root support). The fundamental question of identity and authentic self beneath external definitions.</p>	<p>Recharacterize – Examine how the world has defined your organization or identity. Look beneath the surface, questioning the labels and categories others have placed upon you.</p>	<p>You yourself must be true and prepare the energy and effort for a sustainable future. Leadership rooted in authentic identity, standing firmly in who you truly are beneath all external definitions.</p>
<p>2. SACRAL SEED – What Is Your Substance? (Before) Sacral center (Swadhisthana: your dwelling, your origin). The nature of your organizational superorganism and essential substance.</p>	<p>Externalize – Label the problem, making it the problem, not you as the problem. Look before—to origins, to what came earlier, to the source. Create space for growth through this subtle shift.</p>	<p>True storytelling makes spaces that respect the stories already there. Leadership that honors what existed before, creating dwelling spaces where existing narratives are respected and new ones emerge organically.</p>
<p>3. SOLAR PLEXUS SEED – When Is Your Future Arriving? (Bets) Solar Plexus (Manipura: jewel city). The wagers you're making about what's coming, commitments to futures not yet here.</p>	<p>Sympathize – Understand the benefits of holding onto the current story. Deeply recognize why people (including yourself) cling to existing narratives even when change is needed.</p>	<p>You must create stories with a clear plot, creating direction and helping people prioritize. Leadership that illuminates pathways forward, helping others see when their future is arriving and how to move toward it with clarity.</p>
<p>4. HEART SEED – Where Is Your Place on Earth? (Being) Heart center (Anahata: unstruck sound, unhurt). Your actual location, embodied presence in this moment and place.</p>	<p>Revise – Recognize the negative consequences of identities that have been imposed or inherited. Release what no longer serves while dwelling in Being—in the present moment.</p>	<p>You must have timing. Leadership that doesn't rush or delay, being fully present to the moment, knowing your place, feeling the rhythm of when to speak and when to listen. The heart of being here, now.</p>
<p>5. THROAT SEED – Why Are You on Earth? (Becoming) Throat center (Vishuddha: holy amongst the holiest). Your purpose and calling, the ongoing journey of transformation.</p>	<p>Strategize – Identify Little Wow Moments (LWMs) that challenge dominant narratives and open new possibilities. Embrace becoming—continuous</p>	<p>You must be able to help stories on their way and be open to experiment. Leadership where purpose finds voice, speaking your why into being, experimenting with</p>

Leadership Seeds	Cultivation Practices	Flowering into Leadership Presence
	evolution and purposeful experimentation.	new ways to help stories find their path forward.
<p>6. THIRD EYE SEED – With Whom Are You Attracting Relations? (Between) Third Eye (Ajna: command and control—self-mastery). The web of connections and relational spaces you're co-creating.</p>	<p>Restory – Collect Little Wow Moments into a New Story, one no longer bound by the past. Work in the Between—in relational space, dialogue, and the web of connections.</p>	<p>You must consider staging, including scenography and artefacts. Leadership that creates conditions, settings, and platforms where healthy relations flourish and new collective stories can be performed together.</p>
<p>7. CROWN SEED – What Are You Wishing for Your S3? (Beyond) Crown center (Sahasrara: thousand petals). Your wishes for Spirit, Soul, and Self—transcendent purpose beyond individual limitations.</p>	<p>Publicize – Build a support system that reinforces this New Story, making it visible, sharable, and sustainable beyond just yourself. Reach beyond current limitations into the transcendent.</p>	<p>You must reflect on the stories and how they create value. Leadership that becomes reflective, generative, creating value that ripples outward. Leadership that transcends the individual, opening to collective wisdom and shared flourishing.</p>

The Journey of Organic Transformation: Each seed contains the potential for transformation. Through conscious cultivation—weeding out old patterns, watering new growth, providing sunlight of awareness—these seven seeds flower into mature leadership presence. From root to crown, from who you are to what you wish for all beings, the journey is both deeply personal and universally meaningful.

The seven story-seeds of leading are a set of practical lenses known as the "7 Bs": Beneath, Before, Bets, Being, Becoming, Between, and Beyond.

Unlike linear, mechanistic leadership concepts, these seeds are "living, organic inquiries" derived from the seven energy centers (chakras). They function as a comprehensive map for leaders to examine their internal and organizational narratives, moving from foundational identity to transcendent purpose.

The Shift from Mechanical to Organic. The primary transformation occurs in how leaders view their role and trajectory. Mechanical models suggest a linear progression of tasks to be completed. In contrast, the application of ancient wisdom creates a "spiral journey to be lived," in which leaders engage in continuous "restorying" rather than one-time problem-solving. This organic model posits that profound transformation follows patterns of growth—cultivating seeds, weeding out old patterns, and watering new potential—rather than mechanical assembly.

Here are the seven story-seeds in detail, following the organic trajectory from Root to Crown:

1. The Root Seed: Beneath (Identity)

- **Energy Center:** Root (Muladhara)

- **The Question:** "Who are you?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed asks leaders to look **Beneath** surface definitions. It involves examining how the world has defined the organization or the leader's identity.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Recharacterize** these labels, questioning received categories to stand in an authentic identity that is "true" rather than imposed.

2. The Sacral Seed: Before (Substance)

- **Energy Center:** Sacral (Swadhisthana)
- **The Question:** "What is your substance?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed looks **Before**—to origins and history. It acknowledges the "organizational superorganism" and what existed prior to the leader's arrival.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Externalize** problems (making "it" the problem rather than the person). This creates "dwelling spaces" where existing narratives are respected rather than destroyed.

3. The Solar Plexus Seed: Bets (Future)

- **Energy Center:** Solar Plexus (Mani-pura)
- **The Question:** "When is your future arriving?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed focuses on **Bets**—the wagers and commitments made toward a future that is not yet here.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Sympathize**. Leaders must understand why people cling to old stories to effectively illuminate new pathways and create a clear plot for the future.

4. The Heart Seed: Being (Place)

- **Energy Center:** Heart (Anahata)
- **The Question:** "Where is your place on Earth?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed centers on dwelling in **Being**—embodied presence in the current moment and location.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Revise** inherited identities that have negative consequences. This seed develops "timing"—the ability to neither rush nor delay, but to know exactly when to speak or listen.

5. The Throat Seed: **Becoming (Purpose)**

- **Energy Center:** Throat (Vishuddha)
- **The Question:** "Why are you on Earth?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed represents **Becoming**—the continuous journey of evolution and purpose.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Strategize** by identifying "Little Wow Moments" (LWMs) that challenge dominant narratives. The throat becomes a channel where purpose finds voice to "help stories on their way".

6. The Third Eye Seed: **Between (Relations)**

- **Energy Center:** Third Eye (Ajna)
- **The Question:** "With whom are you attracting relations?"
- **The Seed Function:** This seed operates in the **Between**—the relational space and web of connections co-created with others.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Restory**. Leaders collect "Little Wow Moments" to weave a new collective story, focusing on "staging" environments where healthy relationships can flourish.

7. The Crown Seed: **Beyond (Transcendent Wish)**

- **Energy Center:** Crown (Sahasrara)
- **The Question:** "What are you wishing for your Spirit, Soul, and Self (S3)?"
- **The Seed Function:** This final seed reaches **Beyond** individual limitations toward transcendent service and collective wisdom.
- **Cultivation:** The practice is to **Publicize**—building support systems that make the new story sustainable and sharable. It transforms leadership into a generative act that creates value radiating outward to all beings.

Summary of the Process Crucially, these seeds are not a linear checklist to be completed once. They represent a "**spiral journey to be lived,**" where leaders continuously weed out old patterns and water new growth. The integration of these seeds moves leadership from an extractive mechanical model to a regenerative approach, where leaders act as "gardeners of organizational culture".

This anatomical realignment transforms specific leadership behaviors:

- **Identity (Root & Sacral):** Instead of defining an organization by external labels or reactive problem-solving, leaders learn to "Recharacterize" imposed definitions and stand in authentic identity. They shift from blaming individuals to respecting the "organizational superorganism," acknowledging the origins and stories that came before them.

- **Power and Timing (Solar Plexus & Heart):** The model transforms the exercise of power from force to illumination. The Solar Plexus seed moves leaders from blind enforcement to "Sympathize," helping them understand why people cling to old narratives. The Heart seed corrects the mechanical tendency to rush or delay, teaching leaders to "dwell in Being" and master the rhythm of "timing"—knowing exactly when to speak or listen.

- **Voice and Vision (Throat & Third Eye):** The Third Eye (Ajna) is traditionally associated with "command and control," but this framework reinterprets it as **self-mastery and relational co-creation**. Leaders move from dominating subordinates to "staging" environments where collective stories can flourish. Similarly, the Throat center transforms from a tool for issuing orders into a channel for "Becoming," where purpose finds its voice through experimentation.

- **Purpose (Crown):** Finally, the integration of the Crown chakra shifts the ultimate goal of leadership from individual success to **transcendent service**. It asks leaders to consider what they wish for the "Spirit, Soul, and Self" (S3) of all beings, turning leadership into a generative act that creates value radiating outward beyond the self,.

From Narrative Control to Stewardship This integration fundamentally alters how leaders handle information and culture. Modern mechanical models often treat stories as tools for manipulation or branding. By contrast, the ancient wisdom approach views stories as living entities. Leaders become stewards or "gardeners of organizational culture," tasked with identifying "Little Wow Moments" (LWMs) that challenge dominant narratives. This creates a "True Storytelling" ethos where leaders do not control the plot but rather "help stories on their way," honoring complexity and emergence,.

Analogy To understand this shift, consider the difference between an **architect building a skyscraper** and a **permaculturist tending a forest**.

The mechanical leader acts as the architect: they work from a rigid blueprint (strategy), treating employees as interchangeable structural beams (resources) to reach a specific height (goal). If a beam doesn't fit, it is discarded.

The transformed leader acts as the permaculturist: they understand that the forest (organization) is a living superorganism with deep roots (history/identity). They don't force the trees to grow; instead, they observe the energy of the seasons (timing), prune dead branches (restoring old narratives), and ensure the soil has nutrients (culture), allowing the forest to reach heights the architect never planned, simply by honoring its natural vitality.

Detailed Exploration of the Seven Seeds

The following sections explore each of the seven seeds in depth, revealing the transformative journey from fundamental questions through cultivation practices to mature leadership presence.

1. Root Seed – Who Are You? (Beneath)

The first seed of leadership lives in your Root energy center (*Muladhara*, meaning "root support"). This seed asks the fundamental question: **Who are you?** To cultivate this seed, you must look **'Beneath'** the surface—examining how the world has defined your organization or your identity. The growing practice here is to **'Recharacterize'** these received definitions, questioning the labels and categories others have placed upon you. As this seed flowers into leadership presence, you embody the first **True Storytelling Principle: You yourself must be true and prepare the energy and effort for a sustainable future.** This is the foundation—knowing who you truly are beneath all the external definitions, so you can stand firmly rooted in authentic identity.

2. Sacral Seed – What Is Your Substance? (Before)

The second seed grows in your Sacral center (*Swadhisthana*, meaning "your dwelling, your origin"). This seed probes: **What is your substance?** What is the nature of your organizational superorganism? Cultivation requires looking **'Before'**—to the origins, to what came earlier, to the source. The practice is to **'Externalize'** the problem, making "it" the problem rather than making yourself the problem. This subtle but powerful shift creates space for growth. When this seed blossoms, you embody: **True storytelling Principle Two: Making spaces that respect the stories already there.** You honor what existed before you arrived, creating dwelling spaces where existing narratives are respected and new ones can emerge organically from your authentic substance.

3. Solar Plexus Seed – When Is Your Future Arriving? (Bets)

The third seed pulses in your Solar Plexus (*Manipura*, the "jewel city" of personal power). This seed demands: **'When' is your future arriving?** To nurture this seed, you explore your **'Bets'**—the wagers you're making about what's coming, the commitments to futures not yet here. The cultivation practice is to **'Sympathize'**—to deeply understand why people (including yourself) hold onto current stories, recognizing the benefits they provide even when change is needed. As this seed flowers, you live out: **True Storytelling Principle Three - You must create stories with a clear plot, creating direction and helping people prioritize.** Your leadership becomes a jewel that illuminates pathways forward, helping others see when their future is arriving and how to move toward it with clarity and purpose.

4. Heart Seed – Where Is Your Place on Earth? (Being)

The fourth seed blooms in your Heart center (*Anahata*, the "unstruck sound" or "unhurt"). This seed asks with tenderness: **Where is your place on Earth?** Cultivation here means dwelling in **'Being'**—in the present moment, in your actual location, in embodied presence. The practice is to **Revise**—to recognize the negative consequences of identities that have been imposed or inherited, and to release what no longer serves. When this heart-seed flowers, you embody: You must have timing. Not rushing, not delaying, but being fully present to the moment, knowing your place, feeling the rhythm of when to speak and when to listen. This is the heart of leadership—being here, now, in this place, with these people.

5. Throat Seed – Why Are You on Earth? (Becoming)

The fifth seed resonates in your Throat (*Vishuddha*, "holy amongst the holiest"). This seed calls forth: **Why are you on Earth?** What is your purpose? Cultivation requires embracing '**Becoming**'—the ongoing transformation, the journey of continuous evolution. The practice is to '**Strategize**'—to identify **Little Wow Moments** (LWMs) that challenge dominant narratives and open new possibilities. As this seed flowers into voice, you live: You must be able to help stories on their way and be open to experiment. Your throat becomes a sacred channel where purpose finds expression, where you speak your why into being. **True Storytelling Principle 5: experimenting with new ways to help stories (yours and others') find their path forward.**

6. Third Eye Seed – With Whom Are You Attracting Relations? (Between)

The sixth seed opens in your Third Eye (*Ajna*, meaning "command and control"—but here, self-mastery rather than domination). This seed reveals: **With whom are you attracting relations in your life?** Cultivation lives in the '**Between**'—in the relational space, the dialogue, the web of connections. The practice is to '**Restory**'—to collect those Little Wow Moments into a 'New Story', one no longer bound by the past, co-created with the people you're attracting into your life. When this seed flowers into vision, you embody the **True Storytelling Principle 6: You must consider staging, including scenography and artefacts.** You see how to create the conditions, the settings, the props and platforms where healthy relations can flourish and new collective stories can be performed together.

7. Crown Seed – What Are You Wishing for Your Spirit, Soul, and Self? (Beyond)

The seventh seed radiates from your Crown (*Sahasrara*, the "thousand petals" of enlightened consciousness). This seed whispers the ultimate question: **What are you 'Wishing' for your Spirit, Soul, and Self (S³)?** Cultivation means reaching Beyond—beyond current limitations, beyond what's visible, into the transcendent. The practice is to '**Publicize**'—to build a support system that reinforces this 'New Story', making it visible, sharable, sustainable '**Beyond**' just yourself. As this final seed flowers into its thousand petals, you live: **The Seventh Principle of True Storytelling: You must reflect on the stories and how they create value.** Your leadership becomes reflective, generative, creating value that ripples outward, helping others connect to their own '**Wishes**' for spirit, soul, and self. This is leadership that transcends the individual, opening to collective wisdom and shared flourishing.

Conclusion

The Seven Seeds of Leadership framework offers a paradigm shift from mechanical to organic models of leadership development. By integrating ancient wisdom traditions with contemporary organizational storytelling theory, it provides leaders with a comprehensive map for both personal and collective transformation. This is not a linear progression to be completed but a spiral journey to be lived—each seed continually deepening, each practice revealing new layers, each flowering opening to greater possibilities.

The journey from Root to Crown—from "Who are you?" to "What are you wishing for all beings?"—mirrors the evolution of consciousness itself. It moves from survival and identity through belonging and purpose, culminating in transcendent service. Yet each level remains essential; the crown cannot exist without the root, and the most enlightened leadership remains grounded in authentic identity and respectful of existing stories.

The restorying practices—Recharacterize, Externalize, Sympathize, Revise, Strategize, Restory, and Publicize—provide concrete methods for narrative transformation. These are not one-time interventions but continuous practices that help leaders and organizations move from extractive to regenerative models, from dominant narratives that constrain to emergent stories that liberate. The Little Wow Moments become seeds themselves, small openings where new possibilities first appear, eventually blossoming into transformed organizational cultures.

The seven True Storytelling Principles that flower from this cultivation—being true, respecting existing stories, creating clear plots, having timing, helping stories on their way, considering staging, and reflecting on value creation—serve as ethical guidelines for narrative practice. They remind us that storytelling is not manipulation but stewardship, not control but co-creation. Leaders who embody these principles become gardeners of organizational culture, tending the conditions where healthy stories can grow.

In an era of rapid technological change, ecological crisis, and social transformation, we need leadership models that honor complexity, embrace emergence, and support regeneration. The Seven Seeds framework provides such a model—one that recognizes leadership as a living practice, organizations as living systems, and stories as living entities that shape and are shaped by the communities that tell them.

The invitation is clear: plant these seeds in the fertile ground of your own leadership practice. Water them with attention, weed them with honest self-inquiry, and provide the sunlight of awareness. Trust the organic process of growth. From root to crown, from foundation to transcendence, from individual transformation to collective flourishing—the journey awaits. May your leadership seeds find good soil, and may their flowering bring benefit to all beings.

The Seven Seeds of Leadership: A Practical Training Manual for Narrative Transformation

1.0 Introduction: Leadership as a Living Process of Cultivation

Welcome to the Seven Seeds of Leadership. For too long, leadership development has been framed using mechanical metaphors—ladders to be climbed, doors to be unlocked, positions to be won. While useful, these models often fail to capture the complex, emergent nature of true organizational change. The strategic imperative for today's leaders is to shift from this mechanical mindset to an organic one, viewing leadership as a living process of cultivation. This manual is designed to translate the profound concepts of the Seven Seeds framework into actionable practices, empowering you to foster personal and organizational transformation from the ground up.

The Seven Seeds framework presents a holistic approach to leadership rooted in organic metaphors and ancient wisdom. It challenges you to move beyond reactive problem-solving toward regenerative, story-based approaches that honor existing narratives while co-creating new possibilities. The core philosophy integrates five distinct layers of practice into a cohesive whole:

- **Seven energy centers (chakras)** from yogic philosophy, providing a map of human consciousness from root identity to transcendent purpose.
- **Seven fundamental questions (the 7 Ws)** that serve as living inquiries to deepen your leadership journey.
- **Seven story-seeds of leading (the 7 Bs)** which act as practical lenses for examining and restorying personal and organizational narratives.
- **Seven restorying practices** offering concrete methods to move from passive acceptance of dominant narratives to active co-creation of new ones.
- **Seven True Storytelling Principles** that flower from each cultivated seed, providing ethical guidelines for your transformative narrative work.

This manual will guide you through a detailed exploration of each of the seven seeds. For each seed, we will examine its foundational question, its corresponding story-seed, its specific cultivation practice, and the tangible leadership presence that emerges when it is nurtured. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive map for a journey that is both deeply personal and universally meaningful.

Let us begin by preparing the soil and planting the first, most essential seed—the seed of authentic identity.

2.0 Seed One: The Root Seed – Discovering Authentic Identity

The journey of transformative leadership begins at the foundation. A leader's authentic identity is the non-negotiable bedrock for sustainable change, resilience, and trust. As a leader, your first task is to look *Beneath* the surface-level definitions that have been placed upon you and your organization. This work, grounded in the Root energy center (*Mula-dhara*) and the fundamental question "*Who are you?*", is the source of the stability required to navigate any organizational transformation.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Mula-dhara (root support)	<i>Who Are You?</i>
Story-Seed	Beneath: Look beneath the surface of external definitions and labels.	

Cultivation Practice: Recharacterize

The practice for cultivating the Root Seed is to **Recharacterize**. This invites you to actively examine and question the ways the world has defined you, your team, or your

organization. It is a process of peeling back the layers of imposed labels to understand the authentic character that lies beneath.

Reflective Prompts for Leaders

1. **Personal Identity:** What professional labels have been applied to you (e.g., "the turnaround specialist," "the tech expert," "the budget hawk")? What essential truths about your capabilities or values exist *beneath* these labels?
2. **Team Narrative:** Reflect on a label that has been applied to your team or organization (e.g., "innovative," "legacy," "risk-averse"). What narratives exist *beneath* this label that tell a different or more complex story about your collective identity?
3. **Future Self:** Consider an identity you wish to cultivate. What inherited definitions or assumptions must you recharacterize and move beyond to step fully into that identity?

The Flowering Presence

When the Root Seed is cultivated, you embody the first True Storytelling Principle: **"You yourself must be true and prepare the energy and effort for a sustainable future."** This presence is not about projecting an image of leadership but about standing firmly in who you truly are. It manifests as a quiet confidence, an unwavering integrity, and the resilience to withstand external pressures because you are deeply rooted in an authentic identity. This truthfulness becomes the stable ground upon which all future growth depends.

Having established this authentic root identity, we can now move upward to understand the very ground from which the organization has grown—its unique substance and origins.

3.0 Seed Two: The Sacral Seed – Honoring Origins and Substance

The Sacral Seed, rooted in the *Swadhisthana* energy center, focuses on your organization's essential substance by asking, *"What is your substance?"* Answering this question is critical for leading any successful change initiative, as it requires you to look *Before*—to the source, to what came earlier, and to the foundational narratives that have shaped the culture. Honoring this history is not about being trapped by it, but about understanding the soil in which you are planting new seeds, ensuring new growth can emerge respectfully and organically.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Swadhisthana (your dwelling, your origin)	<i>What Is Your Substance?</i>
Story-Seed	Before: Look to origins, to what came earlier, to the source.	

Cultivation Practice: Externalize

The cultivation practice for the Sacral Seed is to **Externalize**. This is a subtle but powerful shift where you label a problem as "it" and not "you." By making the challenge an external object of inquiry rather than an internal flaw, you create the space to analyze it without blame, shame, or defensiveness. This allows your team to look at the origins of the problem and its substance without making individuals the problem.

Team Workshop Activity: "It's Not You, It's the Problem"

Objective: To re-frame a current team challenge by externalizing it, enabling objective analysis and collaborative problem-solving.

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions:

1. **(5 mins) Identify the Challenge:** As a team, identify a recurring problem or persistent challenge. Write it on a whiteboard as a personal attribute (e.g., "We are slow to innovate," or "We are poor communicators").
2. **(10 mins) Externalize and Name It:** Now, re-frame the problem as an external "thing." Give it a name. For example, "We are slow to innovate" becomes "The Innovation Brake." "We are poor communicators" becomes "The Silo Fog." Write this new name on the whiteboard and circle it.
3. **(15 mins) Analyze "It":** With the problem now externalized, discuss the following questions as a group, focusing on the "thing" you've named:
 - Where did "The Innovation Brake" come from? What stories or past events feed it?
 - What are the components of "The Silo Fog"? How does it operate day-to-day?
 - What effect does this "thing" have on our work and our team, and what could we do to shrink or dismantle it?

The Flowering Presence

Cultivating this seed allows you to embody the second True Storytelling Principle: **"True storytelling makes spaces that respect the stories already there."** This leadership presence manifests as a deep respect for organizational history and culture. Instead of imposing change from above, you create dwelling spaces where existing narratives are heard and honored. This approach fosters trust and ensures that new initiatives are integrated into the organization's authentic substance rather than being rejected as foreign bodies.

With a clear understanding of the organization's past and substance, you are now prepared to make conscious commitments about its trajectory, which brings us to the Solar Plexus Seed.

4.0 Seed Three: The Solar Plexus Seed – Committing to a Future

The Solar Plexus Seed, centered in the *Mani-pura* energy center, is the seat of your personal power and forward momentum. It asks the critical question, *"When is your future arriving?"* This requires you to consciously evaluate the **Bets** you are making on the future. This isn't just about vision; it's about the tangible commitments of resources, time, and reputation that define what is to come. A crucial part of this work

is understanding the powerful narratives that keep teams anchored in the present, a necessary step for effective change management and risk allocation.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Mani-pura (jewel city)	<i>When Is Your Future Arriving?</i>
Story-Seed	Bets: The wagers and commitments you're making about the future.	

Cultivation Practice: Sympathize

The practice for cultivating this seed is to **Sympathize**. Before you can create a new story for the future, you must deeply understand the benefits of holding onto the current one. Change is difficult because existing narratives, even flawed ones, provide comfort, identity, and predictability. To sympathize is to recognize why people—including yourself—cling to these narratives, acknowledging the legitimate value they provide.

Analytical Questions for Strategic Planning

1. **Benefit Analysis:** Before proposing a new strategic direction, what are all the tangible and intangible benefits our current strategy provides to our team members? (e.g., sense of security, clarity of roles, pride in past accomplishments).
2. **Story Function:** What fundamental purpose does our current dominant story serve? Does it offer a story of safety, of superiority, of stability? Why do our people find it compelling to keep telling this story?
3. **Anticipating Loss:** If we ask our team to embrace a new future, what specific stories, routines, and identities are we asking them to give up? What sense of loss might they experience, and how can we acknowledge it with genuine sympathy?

The Flowering Presence

When the Solar Plexus Seed flowers, you embody the third True Storytelling Principle: ***"You must create stories with a clear plot, creating direction and helping people prioritize."*** Your leadership presence is like a jewel that illuminates the path forward. You don't just present a vague vision; you articulate a clear and compelling plot that helps people understand *when* their future is arriving and how their actions contribute to that arrival. This clarity provides direction, helps the team prioritize its efforts, and transforms passive waiting into purposeful movement.

While making bets on the future is essential, leadership loses its power if it is not grounded in the reality of the here and now, which leads us to the Heart Seed.

5.0 Seed Four: The Heart Seed – Leading from Presence and Place

The Heart Seed, centered in the *Anahata* energy center, invites us into a state of **Being** by asking the profound question, *"Where is your place on Earth?"* As a leader,

your ability to be fully present—to dwell in this moment, in this location—is the key to impeccable timing, effective listening, and fostering the psychological safety needed for your team to thrive. It is the practice of leading from a place of groundedness, not frantic energy, and it gives you the wisdom to release identities that no longer serve.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Anahata (unstruck sound, unhurt)	<i>Where Is Your Place on Earth?</i>
Story-Seed	Being: Dwelling in the present moment, in your actual location.	

Cultivation Practice: Revise

The practice to cultivate the Heart Seed is to **Revise**. This invites you to honestly recognize the negative consequences of imposed or inherited identities that you carry. To be fully present requires letting go of what no longer serves. Revising is the conscious act of releasing outdated narratives and assumptions so you can respond to the reality of the present moment, not the ghosts of the past.

Personal Leadership Reflection Exercise

Step 1: Identify the Burden

- Take a few moments to be still and connect with your present state. Identify one inherited identity, assumption, or story about your leadership that is currently creating negative consequences (e.g., stress, poor decisions, strained relationships). An example might be "I must always have the answer" or "Our team has to be the best at everything."

Step 2: Declare the Release

- Write a short, simple declaration of release. Acknowledge what you are letting go of in order to be more present *now*. For example: "I release the story that I must have all the answers. I embrace the presence to listen for wisdom in the room. I am here, now, with my team."

The Flowering Presence

When the Heart Seed flowers, you embody a crucial quality described by the fourth True Storytelling Principle: "**You must have timing.**" This is the leadership presence of knowing your place and feeling the rhythm of the organization. It is not about rushing to a decision or delaying out of fear. It is the unhurried wisdom to know when to speak and when to listen, when to act and when to wait. You are fully present, feeling the "unstruck sound" of the team and responding with a sense of centered, impeccable timing that comes from being truly here, now.

This grounded presence of *Being* creates the foundation for the expressive and purposeful articulation of *Becoming*, the domain of the Throat Seed.

6.0 Seed Five: The Throat Seed – Voicing Purpose and Potential

The Throat Seed, the *Vishuddha* center of expression, challenges you with the powerful question, "*Why are you on Earth?*" Clarifying and voicing this purpose

empowers you to challenge stagnant, dominant narratives and embrace the journey of **Becoming**—a state of continuous evolution. This is where you find your voice, not just to manage, but to foster a culture of innovation and experiment with new possibilities.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Vishuddha (holy amongst the holiest)	<i>Why Are You on Earth?</i>
Story-Seed	Becoming: The ongoing journey of transformation and evolution.	

Cultivation Practice: Strategize

The cultivation practice for the Throat Seed is to **Strategize**. This is not about creating rigid, top-down plans. Instead, it is the strategic practice of identifying **Little Wow Moments (LWMs)**—small, real-world events that challenge a dominant, negative narrative and hint at a new, more positive possibility. These LWMs are the seeds of a new story, and your job is to notice them, name them, and amplify them.

The LWM Log: A Tool for Narrative Strategy

Use this simple log to track the Little Wow Moments you observe. This practice trains you to see the evidence of the future you want to create, which is already emerging in the present.

Date	Little Wow Moment (LWM) Observed	Dominant Narrative It Challenges	New Possibility It Opens
	<i>e.g., A junior team member spoke up with a brilliant idea in a senior meeting.</i>	<i>"Only senior leaders have good ideas."</i>	<i>Wisdom can come from anywhere in our organization.</i>
	<i>e.g., A client praised our team's proactive call, even though we were delivering bad news about a delay.</i>	<i>"We should avoid difficult client conversations."</i>	<i>Proactive transparency builds trust, even when the news is negative.</i>

The Flowering Presence

When this seed flowers into voice, you embody the fifth True Storytelling Principle: **"You must be able to help stories on their way and be open to experiment."** This is an active, vocal leadership presence. You don't just state a purpose; you live it by speaking your "why" into being. You act as a steward of stories, noticing emergent narratives (LWMs) and helping them find their path forward. This leadership is marked by a spirit of experimentation, giving voice to new ideas and creating a culture where it is safe to try, learn, and evolve.

The expression of an individual's purpose finds its greatest impact when it connects with others, leading us to the co-creative web of the Third Eye Seed.

7.0 Seed Six: The Third Eye Seed – Cultivating Relational Webs

The Third Eye Seed, your *Ajna* center of self-mastery, shifts your focus from individual action to collective co-creation. It asks, "*With whom are you attracting relations?*" Effective leadership is not performed in a vacuum; it happens in the **Between**—the relational space where dialogue happens and connections form. Your role here is to intentionally stage these relationships, breaking down silos and fostering the cross-functional collaboration needed to co-create new collective stories.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Ajna (command and control—self-mastery)	<i>With Whom Are You Attracting Relations?</i>
Story-Seed	Between: The relational space, dialogue, and web of connections.	

Cultivation Practice: Restory

The practice here is to **Restory**. This goes beyond simply identifying Little Wow Moments (LWMs); it involves actively collecting them and weaving them into a new, coherent story that is no longer bound by the past. This new story is not authored by you alone but is co-created *with* the people in the relational web, emerging from the shared experiences and insights captured in the LWMs.

Narrative Co-Creation Framework

Use these steps to guide your team in building a new story together from collected LWMs.

1. **Gather the Seeds:** Bring the team together and share the LWMs that have been collected (using the LWM Log or similar method). Ask team members to share their own LWMs that they have observed.
2. **Identify the Theme:** As a group, look for a common thread or theme running through these moments. What is the core message these small stories are trying to tell us about who we are becoming?
3. **Construct the Plot:** Frame the new narrative. What was the *old story* we were living in? What was the *turning point* (represented by the collection of LWMs)? What is the *new story* these moments are pointing toward?
4. **Embody the New Story:** Brainstorm specific actions, rituals, or behaviors that will bring this new co-created story to life. How can we start performing this new story together, starting tomorrow?

The Flowering Presence

Cultivating this seed leads to the sixth True Storytelling Principle: "***You must consider staging, including scenography and artefacts.***" The leadership presence that emerges is that of a thoughtful director or curator. This means it is the leader's responsibility to architect the environment—physical, digital, and psychological—where the new story can be lived, not just told. This includes everything from the

design of a pivotal all-hands meeting to the choice of metrics on a team dashboard. You create the conditions where new collective stories can be performed together.

From the co-creation of stories within relationships, our journey elevates to the final, transcendent purpose that guides them: the Crown Seed.

8.0 Seed Seven: The Crown Seed – Leading Beyond the Self

The Crown Seed, your *Sahasrara* center, represents the pinnacle of leadership—transcendence and generative purpose. Here, you reach **Beyond** individual goals to focus on creating value for the entire system. It poses the ultimate question: *"What are you wishing for your S3 (Spirit, Soul, and Self)?"*—that is, for the organization's transcendent purpose, its collective culture, and the well-being of its individual members. This is leadership that serves not just the bottom line, but the long-term, flourishing legacy of the whole.

Component	Description	Core Question
Energy Center	Sahasrara (thousand petals)	<i>What Are You Wishing for Your S3 (Spirit, Soul, and Self)?</i>
Story-Seed	Beyond: Reaching beyond current limitations into the transcendent.	

Cultivation Practice: Publicize

The practice for cultivating the Crown Seed is to **Publicize**. Once a new, co-created story has been established, it needs a support system to be sustained. Publicizing means making the new story visible and sharable, reinforcing it beyond the initial group. It is the act of building a community of practice around the new narrative, ensuring it has the strength to survive and ripple outward.

Sustaining the New Story: A Publicity Checklist

- **[] Articulate and Share the New Narrative with Key Stakeholders:** Clearly communicate your new co-created story to allies and supporters who can reinforce it.
- **[] Establish Visible Reinforcements (Rituals, Artifacts, Communication Channels):** Make the new story a consistent part of daily work, such as through a weekly "LWM Roundup" email or a project dashboard reflecting the new narrative.
- **[] Identify and Empower Story Champions:** Who are the key influencers who can amplify and model this new story across the organization?

The Flowering Presence

As this final seed opens into its thousand petals, you embody the seventh True Storytelling Principle: ***"You must reflect on the stories and how they create value."*** This leadership is reflective and generative. It is less about directing and more about creating the conditions for collective wisdom to emerge. You constantly ask, "How are our stories serving us? What value are they creating, and for whom?" The focus transcends the individual or the team, extending to the well-being of the entire organizational ecosystem and fostering a culture of shared flourishing.

This completes our exploration of the individual seeds. Now, let us synthesize the framework into a continuous, regenerative journey.

9.0 Conclusion: The Regenerative Journey of Leadership

The Seven Seeds of Leadership framework offers a journey from the deepest roots of identity to the highest aspirations of transcendent purpose. The path moves from the deep internal work of the Root Seed, to the relational co-creation of the Third Eye Seed, and finally to the systemic value creation of the Crown Seed. It is critical to understand that this is not a linear, one-time progression to be completed, but a continuous, spiral journey of cultivation. The root must be tended even as the crown blossoms, and the wisdom of the heart must inform the bets we make on the future.

The transformative potential of this organic model lies in its integration of practice and principle. The restorying practices—from Recharacterize to Publicize—provide you with concrete methods for narrative change, while the seven True Storytelling Principles serve as your practical and ethical guides. Leaders who embrace this framework cease to be mechanics trying to fix a machine; they become **gardeners of organizational culture**, tending the conditions where healthy, life-giving stories can grow. You weed out old patterns, water new growth with attention, and provide the sunlight of awareness.

In an era defined by complexity and change, we require leadership models that are regenerative, not extractive. The invitation of this manual is clear: plant these seven seeds in the fertile ground of your own leadership practice. Trust the organic process of growth. May your leadership seeds find good soil, and may their flowering bring benefit to all beings.