

**A Multimedia Approach to Positive Production Through
Relational Appreciative Dynamics**

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Abstract

Since its inception, Hollywood has enjoyed the benefits of privilege and prestige based in part because of a scarcity of resources (i.e., financing, information, labor, and equipment). Today's technology has leveled the filmmaking landscape, and the incoming generation of filmmakers is less tolerant of the traditional devaluing behaviors Hollywood has normalized. If the resources are no longer coveted and the typical behaviors are no longer accepted, can Hollywood remain the filmmaking capital of the world? This author suggests it can. By nurturing people and relationships through kindness, inclusion, and respectful engagement. This multimedia capstone provides tools for industry leaders to inspire artists by shifting away from traditional devaluing behaviors and creating a culture of support and well-being. It is time that Hollywood leverages its position as the world's foremost creative collective to implement new standard operating procedures. Hollywood can use its universal power to influence communities that prioritize genuine trust, mutuality, and relational energy, or as this filmmaker calls it *Relational Appreciative Dynamics* (RAD). www.CapellaFahoome.com/Capstone

Keywords: film production, positive leadership, trust, mutuality, energy

INTRODUCTION

The film industry is currently suffering from burnout, depleted mental health, layoffs, and work stoppages. Assessing and improving well-being in the film industry is crucial to create a healthier and more sustainable working environment for everyone involved. How can Hollywood elevate the standards and behaviors currently being practiced? This author's proposition is that the answer lies in the relational connections nurtured through kindness, inclusion, and respectful engagement.

A priority, mission, and savior in many situations can be the relationships in which we engage, and the ability to connect and collaborate with others. These relationships can make life richer and can be an influential tool for success in the film industry or any industry. The presence of strong supportive relationships could be considered the “alternative film school.” If relationships are fundamental to success, why aren't we teaching emerging and seasoned filmmakers how to establish and nurture them?

It is the goal of this capstone to present clear information and practical tools to inform production leaders at all levels of the benefits of positive connections. To support this initiative, the author is submitting a multimedia initiative that gives language, lessons, tools, and a model on how to treat each other to optimize creativity and collaboration. The model identified is Relational Appreciative Dynamics (RAD). RAD is a construct developed to train leaders how to enhance relationships through trust, mutuality, and relational energy. Thus, increasing collaboration, creativity, well-being, and ultimately the project's overall success and bottom line.

RELATIONAL APPRECIATIVE DYNAMICS

Relational Appreciative Dynamics (RAD) is an applied approach that enhances the resources necessary to decrease the gap between intention and behavior by practicing trust, mutuality, and relational energy. In short, how we treat each other (see Appendix A).

Trust

The first pathway of RAD is *Trust*. Trust is an essential element in relationships and can have a significant impact on creativity. When people trust each other; they are more likely to share ideas openly, take risks, and introduce innovative solutions. Creators thrive in environments where they are comfortable expressing ideas without fear of criticism or rejection. When creators trust each other, they are more likely to share their ideas, even when considered unconventional or untested. This can lead to a more diverse range of perspectives, which can spark new and innovative solutions to complex problems. Trust also plays a significant role in collaboration. When people trust their colleagues, they are more likely to work together, effectively building on each other's ideas and creating synergy. Trust is not always easy to cultivate. It requires effort and commitment from leaders and creators. Building trust requires empathy, rigor of logic, and authenticity and you must be strong in all three to foster trust (Frei & Morriss, 2020).

The first pillar of trust is empathy. Do you feel like I'm here for you? Sincerely invested in you and your success. In your well-being. Do I have the best intentions for you? The second pillar of trust is rigor of logic. Do you feel like I know what I'm talking about, that I can do it? That my reasoning and judgment are sound. The last pillar is authenticity. Do you feel like I'm representing myself authentically? Do you believe I am who I say I am? Am I giving you the space and confidence to be your real self?

The better the trust between people, the better the relationship and the higher likelihood for mutual success. By creating an environment of trust, production leaders can encourage creators to share their ideas and take risks, leading to more innovative solutions, and motivated teams.

Mutuality

Mutuality is characterized by respect, enabling, and collaboration, and is essential for building healthy relationships that foster a sense of community. In leadership, mutuality encourages partnerships between leaders and creators. It can also encourage input and feedback and builds a sense of ownership and accountability among the entire crew and cast. When creators feel valued and respected, they're more likely to be engaged and committed to the goals of the collective. Mutuality refers to mutual positive regard within individuals, dyads, groups, and the system. A mutual relationship establishes a good sense of communication and understanding. Mutuality often shows a balance of power and respect that promotes productive collaboration. Mutuality acknowledges that all members have needs and everyone's needs matter.

Mutuality is enhanced when leaders have high emotional and social effectiveness, or emotional intelligence (EIQ). High EIQ improves the ability to express, identify, and regulate our own emotions; this is critical, as is our ability to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. Emotional Intelligence is essential in the formation, development, maintenance, and enhancement of close personal relationships. 90% of high performers possess high emotional intelligence and in leadership positions, 85% of the competencies for success lie in EIQ (Goldman, 2020). This is a skill that can be measured, developed, and enhanced.

Relational Energy

All human beings flourish in the presence of light or positive energy, this is referred to as a heliotropic effect, a term typically used to describe how plants respond to the rays of sun (Cameron, 2021). Evidence confirms that all human beings react favorably to and are transformed by positive energy. Furthermore, up to 70% of the variance in an organization's performance can be attributed to leadership behavior, no other factor, culture, strategy, processes, or incentive systems are as important (Thomas, 1988). Positive leadership is not only important because it leads to positive outcomes such as profitability, productivity, and employee engagement, but also because it leads to relational energy. Relational energy is the only kind of energy that does not deplete with use and does not require recovery time after it's expended (Cameron, 2021). Physical, emotional, and mental energy tends to diminish with use and needs rest to replenish, while relational energy is regenerative and renewing.

Recent research on positive energy and organizations confirms that people who are positive energizers are higher performers than others (Owens et al., 2016). They tend to uplift and give life to others and are likely to perform better than those people who are not. Positive energizers also impact the performances of those with whom they interact. People tend to flourish in the presence of positive energy or life-giving influences. Lastly, high-performing organizations have many more positive energizers than normal organizations, as many as three times more. Positive energizers can reside throughout the organization in any hierarchical level.

It's important to remember that positive energy is not a personality trait, but rather a set of behavioral attributes. When hiring and training leaders, the influence of positive energy should be an important part of the developmental strategy. Teams with positively energizing leaders

have more job satisfaction, well-being, engagement, enrichment of families and professional lives.

THE TOOLBOX

This capstone is a continuation of the 2022 academic paper titled, “The New Hollywood: A Producer’s Approach to Positive Production Through Enhanced Relationships.” The products submitted are designed to ignite initiatives toward positive leadership through engaging content and enjoyable discussions. This is done through the following products:

Season 1 - When is Now Podcast

Season one of the leadership podcast, *When Is Now* was created for the film industry leaders, such as producers and studio executives, but relevant for everyone. The discussions include topics related to organizational and interpersonal trust, creativity, inclusion, curiosity, gratitude, positive relationships, and transformational leadership. This podcast gives space to write new narratives and open leadership discussions that empower people to empower others. As the host, a film producer, “production whisperer,” and life-long devotee to relationships, I talk with a diverse range of exceptional leaders that believe in a nonzero-sum game. Each guest shares their insights, personal stories, and practical tools for how we can support and encourage listeners to engage in practices that inspire and enhance everyone around them now – not when.... they get a promotion, have financial security, or meet their soulmate. They can use what they currently have, to create great influence in the present.

1-Hour Workshop

Using Relational Appreciated Dynamics (RAD) to Enhance Production: A discussion on the importance of positive relationships on set. Historically, filmmakers have not been formally taught the steps necessary to enhance human connections and community in the film industry.

Learning the *human* side of the business is the differentiator between transactional leaders and transformational leaders. Positively energizing leadership is substantially more important in accounting for individual and team performance than information or influence (Cameron, 2021).

This workshop utilizes relatable real-world experiences with empirical research on leadership to help understand the individual and organizational conditions that cultivate optimal performance. It identifies opportunities for connections that contribute to individuals feeling supported, valued, energized, and opportunities to promote positive interactions. Discussions include building connections, and their contribution to well-being and health in stressful situations. It includes recognizing that positive connections contribute to well-being and are a primary ingredient to a more inclusive and collaborative organization. This workshop helps to provide conversations and tools to enhance the production's creativity, collaboration, and final output.

Free Downloadable RAD eBook

This eBook is a brief introduction to Relational Appreciative Dynamics. The intention of this product is to encourage people to come to the website to learn about me and my work, speaking topics and booking opportunities, ways to integrate RAD into organizations, links to the podcast, and collect emails of visitors.

Book Proposal

The Outsider's Guide to Filmmaking...and life in general is a book that began in 2018. It is modeled after *Steal Like an Artist* and is intended to remind people of the lessons learned in kindergarten and how they can still benefit us today. It is highly graphical with fun sketches and big fonts, and easy to read. Chapters include When is Now, The Obvious Stuff, Power of Narrative, and Beware of Users, Fakers, and It-Can't Be-Done's.

CONCLUSION

Hollywood has normalized behaviors that leave creators feeling devalued and exhausted. Our industry is currently experiencing a depleted workforce, diminished well-being, and threats of union strikes. It does not have to be this way. It is this author's position that Hollywood can evolve its practices to include connections that support creativity, kindness, and inclusion by nurturing people and relationships. This multimedia capstone provides a variety of tools for industry leaders to create a community that supports each other. Furthermore, Hollywood can use its universal power to influence the film industry worldwide to nurture positive relationships through genuine trust, mutuality, and positive relational energy.

Leaders can curate experiences that produce positive relationships and leave team members feeling empowered and enabled. Energizing others, getting the best out of people, and understanding the value of how we treat each other is the core of a leader's responsibility. A producer is accountable for all aspects of production, from the safety of the team to generating environments that allow creativity to flourish. This can come in many forms, including unwavering support, protection, valuing, and enabling the artists. Unfortunately, these skills are not always instinctual and are rarely formally taught. The products submitted discuss Relational Appreciative Dynamics and its three pathways as a practical tool to initiate and strengthen relationships in production. That is the goal of this capstone, to introduce a model that helps production leaders understand the importance of connections, as well as a guide to build and maintain them.

We work in the greatest industry in the world! By nurturing relationships based in trust, mutuality, and energy we are inciting some of the deepest human needs to matter.

It's Hollywood! Opportunities to create magic, imagination, and inspiration are infinite.

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Appendix A

RELATIONAL APPRECIATIVE DYNAMICS

