



---

**Tom Kelley:**

If you're thinking, "What's Jungian's psychology got to do with business innovation?" all I can say is I kind of thought exactly that same question last, you know, two years ago at AIGA and actually your feedback of attendees at AIGA 2006 suggested that Michael be the one speaker we invite back again this next year. So I, you know, I hope you'll defer judgement on that because it was darn interesting last time. So, besides seeing patients in his private practice in Vermont, Michael consults with corporations and even moviemakers on the application of Jungian archetypes to their work. I urge you to focus your attention and rev up your brains to full speed as Michael talks about things like imagistic iconic coherence, discerning the fields from which patterns emerge and resonating with coherent patterns. So, as proof positive that the Jungian archetypes, the Jungian archetypal patterns and groups have practical applications in the business world, Michael is joined today by David Kuehler who uses his -- Michael's Jungian concepts to good advantage at Proctor & Gamble. Proctor & Gamble has turned up the pace of design-driven innovation as much as any large company that I have seen in the last decade, and David's Clay Street Project is one of P&G's secret weapons in their innovation efforts. David says he got his first big break prior to the P&G role when he got the chance to head up Mattel's super innovative Platypus Program which proved to him -- proved to him and his whole family that yes there was a place in the world for designer/writer/theatrical directors. He reports that one of the big benefits of that career milestone was that his father finally stopped asking the question: "What the hell are you doing?" So -- so what he did at Mattel and what he's doing at P&G not only bridges the gap between design and business but also shows that Jungian therapists can be catalysts for innovation. So, please give your attention to the one-two punch of first Michael Conforti and then David Kuehler.

[Applause]

---

**Michael Conforti:**

Thank you, Tom, for the lovely introduction. And, when I was here last year, they did wonder what would an analyst have to do with design? The last presentation he talked about accents, language, northern Mexico, southern Mexico -- I'll tell you a little story to introduce this idea. I grew up in Brooklyn. Brooklyn, New York, a big Sicilian, southern Italian neighborhood and we grew up speaking dialect. I go to Italy, I've been teaching in Italy now for the past 20 years every summer and, when I begin talking regular Italian, people say, "You know, Michael, you're cultured, you're fun to be around, you're interesting," and then, when I get comfortable, I start talking dialect. And people say, "My God, suddenly you're like a different person. You almost sound like a street urchin." Almost like what they call malandrini. Malandrini are the street people, the longshoremen, the truck workers and I realize -- and they said, "You know, you're not as interesting to us when you're like this," and at first I thought I didn't understand it and then it dawned on me, the dialect I learned come from the street peasants of southern Italy, the longshoremen, the truck drivers, the waiters, the people of the earth what they call the Terroni, the people of the earth and what you begin to find is even with the subtle accents, there's a whole new orientation. One has a whole new way of approaching you, when you speak more regular Italian or probably a different kind of Mexican Spanish, you're apprehended differently by people. And, when I began to look at this I realized, this fits in so much with my work on fields and what I've done, I've been an analyst for almost 30 years and what I've been studying, as Tom said in his introduction, is imagistic and symbolic coherence. And what that really means is that every image is an

---

expression of something, of a field. In the same way when you look at the development of the human body, different parts are coming out of a code that's in the body, there's a morphogenetic code, there's a biological code.

It's the same thing with images. I'm sure everybody in this room is involved in trying to find that one image, that one sound, that one sound bite that's going to really draw your audience to your new product, whether it's a product at Proctor & Gamble or with Adidas or with Nike, and what happens is we begin to look at images and we -- we begin to appropriate to the image what we want it to be, for me this image means X and Y and Z. And when I was here last year, I demonstrated by way of a movie clip from Disney's "Hercules" that you can't mess with images because images are expressions of a field and the field has stable configurations and stable issues to the field. In other words, when Disney did "Hercules," it basically was a merchandising adventure and what they did was they took a myth and they took tremendous liberties and they changed the story line. It was no longer about heroes. It was no longer about human dignity; it was about something else. Like there's one scene, which is unbelievable, where Hercules finishes his trials of learning to be a hero, he has his mentor, which is played by Danny DeVito, which is quite interesting, and then one day he comes to a village and he's prepared to be the hero, right, and these two kids run up to him and they say: Oh, stranger, would you help us? And he says, sure, what is it? He said, two kids are trapped -- are trapped in a cave and they can't get out, would you please help us. And he says, this is wonderful, I am so glad I could -- these kids are trapped because now I can be a hero. And I thought, this is despicable. Heroes -- if you look at the myth and the story line of heroes from the beginning of time, heroes were never about self-aggrandizement. They were about the -- the keepers of morality, the keepers of the wisdom tradition and they had human dignity. So, if you take the field -- I meant to -- that's a word I've been developing for almost 25, 30 years now that there are these fields that have very specific properties to them, like a hero, like mothers, like fathers, or in the imagistic world the image of a peace circle, an image of a circle, an image of a square, these are things that have rich traditions that are going to effect the audience one way or another. What we tend to do is we begin to morph the image into our own needs and what you're going to find is that, when there's a coherent representation of an image, the audience is going to be drawn to it. When there's an inconsistent representation -- as demonstrated by "Hercules," and it was one of the worst-grossing films in the history and I can tell you why; it's because they didn't honor the tradition out of which the image emerged. Now, David and I have been talking about coherence for many years. He's from the film industry, it's where he began a lot of his work and I've been now working the film industry and I'm very proud to say one of the major movies I worked on premieres, comes out today in New York called "Pride and Glory." And they brought me in to look at the characters and look at the arc of a character, would this character do such and such. And you begin to find that the really creative designers and writers and producers have this sense of a natural story line where things begin to fit and they're able to see things that don't fit. And I've been brought on two different movies, that one and another one called "Deception" I worked on last year, and they said the ending didn't work. And the ending didn't work because they had the character written -- the writing of the character that was totally inconsistent with what would happen in human nature. And this is where the work of a Jungian analyst who looks at symbols and human nature comes in, because we're looking at eternal behaviors and proclivities. Now, in terms of coherence I have a little film clip I want to show and it's from, I mean, we usually look at Shakespeare for classic issues, eternal themes. We look at some of the classics, "Gone With

---

the Wind." Well this is a classic. I'm going to show you just a four-minute piece of this. Okay. Could we just run this film clip? It's not Shakespeare.

---

**[ Cue scene from the film "My Cousin Vinny" ]**

>> Hold up your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

>> Yeah.

>> Ms. Vito, you're supposed to be some kind of expert in automobiles, is that correct? Is that correct?

>> Would you please answer the counselor's question.

>> No, I hate him.

>> Your Honor, may I have permission to treat Ms. Vito as a hostile witness?

>> You think I'm hostile now, what 'til you see me tonight.

>> Do you two know each other?

>> Yeah, she's my fiancée.

>> Well, that would certainly explain the hostility.

>> Your Honor, I object to this witness, improper foundation. I'm not aware of this person's qualifications. I'd like to *voir dire* this witness as to the extent of her expertise.

>> Granted. Mr. Trotter, you may proceed.

>> Hm-mm. Ms. Vito, what's your current profession?

>> I'm an out-of-work hair dresser.

>> Out of work hair dresser. Now, in what way does that qualify you as an expert in automobiles?

>> It doesn't.

>> Well, in what way are you qualified?

>> Well, my father was a mechanic, his father was a mechanic, my mother's father was a mechanic, my three brothers are mechanics, four uncles on my father's side are mechanics -

-

>> Ms. Vito, your family is obviously qualified but have you ever worked as a mechanic?

>> Yeah, in my father's garage, yeah.

>> As a mechanic? What did you do in your father's garage?

>> Tune-ups, oil changes, brake relining, engine rebuilds, rebuilt some trannies, rear ends

--

>> Okay. Okay. But does being an ex-mechanic necessarily qualify you as being an expert on tire marks?

>> No. Thank you. Goodbye.

>> Sit down and stay there until you're told to leave.

>> Your Honor, Ms. Vito's expertise is in general automotive knowledge. It is in this area that her testimony will be applicable. Now, if Mr. Trotter wishes to *voir dire* the witness as to the extent of her expertise in this area, I'm sure he's gonna be more than satisfied.

>> Okay.

---

**Michael Conforti:**

Sorry, sorry. We got about five minutes. It's a great film. Now why is this a great film? I mean, is it going to go down in history as one of the greatest of -- the great 100 films of all time?

---

Everyone loves this film and they laugh and you feel good watching this. Why do you feel good watching this? Why are the films and why would some products and some ads you feel like there's something doesn't work about it, because they lack coherence. I wanted to show this scene because Marisa Tomei I think is just brilliant in this scene. Those of you that don't know about Brooklyn Italian mentalities, you got it right here. Okay. Everything about her accent, the way she moves her head, the way she walks, her, the little bitchy attitude is -- is perfect. Contrast this with Melanie Griffith in "Working Girl" that she did a couple of -- number of years ago, she was -- it was all acting, there was nothing natural about the role. It was all pretense and you feel it. And as David and I were talking before the presentation today, what you begin to see is that the most natural and coherent presentation of a product and of an image and of a scene resonates with the deep psyche. This is why we think about why is it that kids can listen to fairytales: "Mommy, daddy, tell me that story again." "Well, we just did it a hundred times in the past two months, why do you want to hear the story again?" "Because -- I don't know, I want to hear it again." So you begin and again and again and again, and one of the most famous Jungian analysts of all time, who's one of the most brilliant symbologist, her name is Maria-Louise von Franz, she says archetypes and these symbols are nature's constants and that there's a proclivity in the human psyche to resonate on a very deep and profound level, an accurate presentation of the story line.

Now, let's jump to ads, I got three minutes here, there was an ad campaign by a -- I'll just say a credit card company a while ago, where they had, it was very interesting what they were doing, one image you may remember on TV, major TV thing, they had a woman lying on a dock, right, and there was a shark on the dock, half or three quarters of the woman's body was inside the shark, from her head up to her knees. And the ad said: We can repair anything. We can give you money to repair almost anything. Second ad in the series, there's a group of old people -- you know how they're kind of splashing water, they all have the bathing caps on, they're in their 70s and 80s, all of a sudden, there -- it's like an innocence, like a childlike innocence in these old people, they were happy, they were joyful, suddenly what you see behind them are these sharks. You see the dorsal fins sticking up and the sharks coming after them and they said, the ad was: You should be prepared for anything. I would love to study the effectiveness of that ad campaign, I would bet you it was a disaster. The point that I'm getting at here and it's something that David has been working on for many years and I've been working in my career for many years is a very rich and deep understanding of images, and my suggestion to all of you that are involved in imagistic world is to whatever image you're working on, track it back to its history. There's a mythology and there's a story line behind every image because images that we see today are temporal representation of eternal themes. Basically every image we draw on today has been used throughout the history of mankind for something. If we could track that and we could begin to represent it in the genre that it was meant to be, there's going to be a deep resonance in the psyche and as you find in the film industry and the design industry and advertising that translates into sales, and I'm not looking to manipulate an image to make sales. I think that would be a disgrace and an abomination of the riches of an image but what it does convey is that these images have their own world. It's not that the image and the symbol is an independent entity but it's an expression of a very particular field it's meant to describe.

Just think about it: Right now I'm living in Vermont, only three hours from Brooklyn, but any way all of a sudden you see all the apples are on the trees, the trees are turning colors. It's beautiful, a lot of the leaves are down, well what does it mean? It means we're in fall, very

---

simple, right? That's a no-brainer, right. But what does fall begin to tell us about the life cycle, not only of nature but of human beings? There's a field, how many songs are written about fall, how many songs are written about the natural cycle of life. Remember that beautiful song "September" that Willie Nelson has done, Henry Mancini has done, and they talk about the seasons of life and what goes with each season. So, if we want to try to take the image of a summer or of a fall or of a winter and we say winter is all about new growth and new initiatives and new challenges and new this, you know what, it's not going to take because winter is a time of dormancy, winter is a time of pulling in. It's not about death, people say, "Oh it's about death and stagnation," not at all. It's a time of pulling in to prepare for the next season. Fall is the time, both in the outer world when we begin to look at our gardens and then we begin to get our apples, it's a time to harvest what we've done with our life. If you can't convey that with your ad campaign that draws on these images, you're going to find there's not such a great response by the public. So in closing here, I just want to say that as we see Marisa Tomei and the funny image and all, you see she captured the feel that she sought to represent. That's what makes it successful. And what we need to be is not necessarily have everybody be an expert in symbolism, like some of us have spent our lives being, well, being an art historian who knows images, but to be as sensitive as we can to what the images really trying to represent on its own.

I had 12 minutes, thank you very much. Thank you.

[Applause]

---

**David Kuehler:**

Let's get a little water first. Yes, my father did say that about me. So my name is David Kuehler, and I lead an initiative, an innovation initiative at Proctor & Gamble called the Clay Street Project, which I'll talk about in just a few minutes. But what we believe at Clay Street is that innovation is merely a by-product of coherent, healthy teams working together, a by-product. So what I'm going to talk to you about or share with you is the five threshold factors that I think are necessary to set a team on its proper course, set the initial conditions. But, before I do that I actually have to go back in time so that we can go forward, so I'm going to take you back to the time of the Elizabethans, when Shakespeare lived and wrote, and he wrote some of the most beautifully dramatic plays of all time. And the people in his audience, he actually produced with the Globe Theater in London, and the people of his audience were very unique, they were royalty, nobility and commoners who paid one penny to see the show. And, when the audience saw something or a performance the actor gave that was absolutely brilliant, it was just amazing, they gave that actor a gift. And it was a very special gift, very simple but it was a great honor to receive it and that gift was an apple. An apple. The symbol of symbols: sexuality, fertility, the harvest, knowledge, the search for eternal youth, the cosmos, the struggle of being a human. And through those performances, what the actor did was he actually, the line before, between the imagination of the theater and reality actually disappeared.

So, I'm going to take you forward about 200 years to the 20th century, where another great scholar lived and wrote and his name was Joseph Campbell. And what Joseph did was he studied comparative religion and mythology and he also wrote a book called "The Hero with a 1000 Faces" and in that book he actually talks about this idea of the hero and that the hero actually goes through these archetypal phases to accomplish their goal and, for example, I'll

---

give you a brief description of the hero and the hero's journey, because he actually structured it, what happens is the hero starts in the ordinary world, and then he gets a call to action and he leaves that ordinary world to accomplish something. He crosses the first threshold and meets allies, enemies and tests, and then he goes into the innermost cave where he has to deal with his own demons so he can start to think about how he might overcome external demons, and then he goes through the big ordeal where he overcomes that villain, he grabs the elixir, makes his way home and returns to his village. And I think that Campbell also touched on something, I thought it was very interesting about why we empathize with the hero, because the hero is us. Campbell said: Life is the constant state of becoming, looking for the next higher self. I'm going to say that again: Life is the constant state of becoming, looking for the next higher self. This is why we engage in a hero's journey, this is why we want to learn the lessons of the hero as he goes through those struggles because we want to be a little bit better in the process. So this serves as the foundation for the Clay Street Project, the lessons we learned from nature, the lessons we learned from the hero myth. "So what is the Clay Street Project?" you're probably wondering. What we do at Clay Street is we will take a team, multi-functional group, and give them a large challenge, a difficult challenge that they have to solve for the business, and they stay with us for about 12, for about 10 to 12 weeks. And so during that challenge that they're trying to accomplish, they're also on a journey of self-discovery. So, we will immerse this team or these heroes for about two weeks and prepare them for all the things they need to know for the journey. We'll give them the knowledge and the skills that they need to accomplish the task. So, I want to talk about the threshold conditions and actually Michael said something a long time ago that he may not remember that stuck with me. He said that, if there's dissidence in the creation of a product, then there's dissidence on shelf. So the flip side for me is, if I want coherence on shelf, then there have to be coherence in the creative process, which goes back to my first point. The other thing that I've learned after doing many, many sessions with groups, is you must create the proper initial conditions that match the journey you're asking them to take. And this is what I mean by that: If you're asking folks to just optimize, I'm not saying just but to optimize processes, the conditions you set in front of them will be very different than if you're asking a team to go off and imagine the future of your business and the products and the services for the next 10 to 15 years.

So, I'd like to spend the next couple of minutes talking about those five threshold conditions and they are: people, purpose, context, mentorship and belief. So as many of you probably know, that getting the right people on a team is incredibly important. And, if we translate that to the theater, they say, if you cast it right, the rest is crowd control, and it's true. And also another important thing is that we found is that the more that you invest in the health of individuals in a team, I have found the more fulfilled they are, the more creative they are and the more productive they are. Investing in the health of individuals of the team. We also look for people that have an open mind, who are open to change, who are aware, who are compassionate and who are wise. During that first couple of weeks that I mentioned, one of the things that we do is we train them to operate as a living system where they're able to self-correct and self-regulate on their own. We also look for folks that know a lot about the business objective we're working on and people that don't know anything about it. I remember I was interviewing a candidate and halfway through the interview she said, "You don't want me on your team." Well, I said, "Well, why not?" She says, "Because I hate the brand you're working on." I said, "Okay. You're on the team." And the reason I did that is because her candor and fresh eyes is exactly what that team needed to reinvent that brand,

---

and she ended up being a wonderful contributor to that team. Purpose, this one seems -- I'm going to get some more water, bunch of people watch me drink water, I love that. Purpose: now this one seems so simple to me, but why is it so hard to get a clear purpose when you're working on something? I don't know about you, but I sat on teams where they're halfway through an initiative and you sit there and you go, "What's your purpose?" You ask somebody what's the purpose of this team, they go, "I don't know but we're just working, so -- so where was I?" So what we do at Clay Street is we will spend a lot of time working on the purpose or the scope of the brief to make sure that it is narrow enough so the team can wrap their arms around it but broad enough so that something new can emerge. And we approach things holistically. For example, if a client is looking for market segmentation, they'll get strategy, a business model, they'll get competitive analysis and a design of products and services; everything is connected. We have a saying at Clay Street that strategy informs execution and execution informs strategy. The other thing that's important is that the initiative before we even take a session must be actionable, and what I mean by that is we say to the organization, "If you're coming to us with a big problem, you need to take that to market or you better darn well try." And the reason for that is a team will not form, they will not form unless they know that what they're doing is meaningful as an individual, for the consumer and for the business. Okay. They also must know in their hearts and minds, in their hearts and minds, that the organization is depending on them to be successful; it cannot be a blue sky exercise.

The next one I'm going to talk about, the threshold, is context. And what I'm saying here is create the physical environment and cultural norms that match the journey you're asking people to take, so let's talk about environment. How many of you have been charged to go create something innovative, go do something breakthrough and you find yourself in a fluorescent lit conference room sitting in, like, coffee-stained fabric chairs and the, you know, management slips you the brief and says, "Okay, go do whatever you want, be innovative, I'll see you in two weeks to see how you're doing." Or conversely, how many of you have been sitting in a beautifully designed team space with colorful chairs and sunlight shining through the windows and management says, "Look what we designed for you. Um-hmm. Go be innovative, go get inspired but don't touch any of our core processes and don't touch our sacred cows; they're sacred for a reason." Next cultural norms, this is really important. The hero, as I mentioned, when they live in the ordinary world, will leave the ordinary world to go to the extraordinary world to accomplish their dreams. And when they -- and for example, in "Wizard of Oz," when Dorothy leaves the farm the dull black-and-white farm quite literally and goes to the colorful world of Oz, well she sees a little -- lot of little people running around singing songs, she goes, "Okay things are different here. I need to learn the rules of this world so I can figure out how to navigate this world." Okay. So it's important to understand the cultural norms or set those conditions, so at Clay Street on the very first day what we'll do is we'll set those cultural norms. One of the biggest things for any team heading off on a journey is to create a sense of safety, safety and support, so folks can feel vulnerable enough to speak the truth. I can't tell you how important that is to let people be able to speak the truth. We also will tell the team that our job is to guide but not direct as facilitators. They also know the process is theirs to unfold. They create their own tools. They create their own processes to accomplish the task and, ultimately, they are the decision makers, so don't wait for management to tell you what to do; they're relying on you to accomplish a task. Mentorship, every team and every hero needs one. And, again, it's very important to have the right mentorship or guidance depending on the task or journey that

---

you're trying to solve. So, at Clay Street our entire staff is dedicated to mentoring these teams, and we're very good at the classical techniques of facilitation, but that's not what's needed. When someone is trying to imagine the future, we had to learn how to become much better at the art of facilitating emergence 'cause people are discovering as they go, so we'll create form that allows freedom for the team, and we study the archetypal patterns of groups and human systems so that we can understand in three dimensions or whole systems the patterns that groups go through. So, if they're on a trajectory that doesn't look like it's going to get them there or it's unhealthy, we can intervene and get them back on the right trajectory. We're often referred to as being the banks of the river. So, "Is this approach repeatable?" I'm often asked that. "Can you repeat this process?" And we've actually done 17 sessions and each one has been very, very successful in its own right and people are actually surprised by that, but I'm not, because we're not creating a new process. What we're doing is reflecting what's already there in nature. We're reflecting the myth of the hero. We're reflecting how people create together. We're not creating anything new, anything that's not already inside of us. So, I've taken you through the four threshold conditions: People, purpose, context and mentorship and the last one, belief. I'll tell you -- but I got to tell you through a story, I'll get a glass of water first, 800 people watch me drink water. Belief. When I first came to Procter & Gamble from Los Angeles, my boss Claudia Kotchka, who's a wonderful woman, said to me, "You have to go meet A.G." A.G. is the CEO of Procter & Gamble, and I'm like okay. So, she marches me up to his office and I meet A.G. and after we, you know, we have the typical dialogue that you have with a CEO of an \$80 billion company, A.G. said something to me that I will never forget. A.G. said, "What you're about to do is going to be very hard. What you're about to do is going to be incredibly challenging. Change is going to happen slow but change will come." And he said, "I want you to know that I believe in you. I believe in you." And I can't tell you how important that was for me at a stage in my career when I was trying to overcome major obstacles of starting something new in a large organization. People wouldn't come to the first session because they didn't know what it was. We almost went out of business our first year. So those four simple words kept me going during the tough times. He had set the conditions for me to move on. So, I encourage you today to find someone who's doing something for the greater good, a hero. It can be a lover, a colleague, a manager, someone you manage, even a stranger and I want you to say to them, "I believe in you." You're setting the conditions for them to become.

Thank you.

[Applause]

---

**Tom Kelley:**

Don't go away. We have ten minutes of questions and answers, so didn't want to let anybody get off the stage. Tell you what, I'm going to stand over here because there's more room and you guys stand over there, how about that. Okay. So, sure, so –

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

Yeah, over here.

---

**Tom Kelley:**

So, yeah, have a glass water, we won't all watch you. Some of us will watch Michael, there we go. Okay. So, Michael, you told us about the theory, you've told us about the, you know, the eternal themes. And, David, you told us a little bit about how you apply it at a pretty unique place, Clay Street Project, but still a very business-oriented place, so it's really the practical application. Just imagining what the audience is thinking, I'm thinking there might still be some thirst for understanding: Well, how does this work exactly? When you're -- especially when you're taking, applying these Jungian archetypal patterns, applying them, you know, down at the consumer level, can you, like, spell that out for us a little bit more? And feel free to bounce it back and forth.

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

I think, you know, first of all what I didn't mention, at P&G and at Clay Street is the consumer is at the center of the world of our teams. And what we try to do is we're always trying to understand or create new ways to learn from our consumer, and so we use this idea of story and the archetypes in stories to help us learn from the consumer so, even in terms of how we recruit focus groups we start thinking about archetypes. We start thinking about archetypal patterns of behavior in terms of how we interact with consumers, and we do a lot of work with story in terms of talking to them about ideas within a story context, something they can resonate with.

---

**Michael Conforti:**

I'll respond, excuse me, from the world of cinema again and, as I said, the movie "Pride and Glory" is coming out tonight. And I was brought in to help look at the ending of the movie because in the original -- well, the movie is about the theme of redemption. It's about a New York family -- they say they bleed blue. It's been a police family for many years with corruption and all that and one of the brothers is trying to finally break the spell of corruption. And there's this incredibly dramatic final scene and the writers and producers, they kept on saying there's something about it doesn't work, and they brought me in and I was reading the script and I said the ending is not about redemption; it's about staying with corruption. That the solution that the writer initially came up with was just promoting how the corruption continues ad infinitum. And I said, "You know what, I think you're going to compromise your story line." Let's go back to what the -- I hadn't used the word archetype and actually here I'm the Jungian -- what the pattern of redemption is about, and it translates to whatever your product is, whatever the pattern of what that product is. And I said, what's involved in redemption? Redemption has to do in part with a responsibility, an act of conscience, an act of paying one's dues, a sense of moral responsibility. If you don't bring that into the scene, and I'll translate, if you don't bring that into the product, it's really not going to resonate with the buyer. They changed the scene and it looks like this is going to be a blockbuster, I'm not saying because of my counsel -- yes, I will say. It's because of what I did that's why this is a great movie. No, but anyway it's the same thing with products. I've worked on a number of products with people and, again, what you look at is what is this product about. Go into the field of the product and then begin an advertising campaign that's consistent with it. And what it takes is a real sensitivity, as David said, when you look at initiative, you need to know the meaning of that initiative. That's where the, I don't want to say scholarship, but where the sensitivity comes in. And I want to add one more piece, this is

---

not about trying to be really overly intellectual, that's not what this is about. I happen to like the intellectual world. I spend a lot of time studying and all --

---

**Tom Kelley:**

Oh, really?

---

**Michael Conforti:**

-- but -- what? What?

---

**Tom Kelley:**

No, I don't find that surprising, sorry, go ahead.

---

**Michael Conforti:**

But I'm also from the streets of Brooklyn, you know, I grew up in an uneducated family and all, and the things have to be meaningful, they have to be applicable and you want to find a way to show that this is not just scholarship, it's real life. You go to Italian restaurant, there's certain things you expect. You go to a Japanese restaurant, there's certain things you expect. If you begin to have inconsistencies, say there's something -- doesn't mean it's wrong but it's that twist that comes in. It could be an introduction of chaos into a system, which is wonderful, but one needs to be aware of this.

---

**Tom Kelley:**

I think you may have just answered my question with respect to the movie but so, last time you presented and you gave the "Hercules" example and you explained to us how things don't read right, you know, something it just -- in your words, it sounds a false note, and so that's kind of diagnostic, right, and so your knowledge, your framework of looking at the world allows you to say, "Mmm, something is not right there." But I think I just heard you say it's equally good at prescriptive. It's saying not just, "This is not right" but "Here's the direction it needs to go." Is that, would you both say that's the case, does that?

---

**Michael Conforti:**

Yeah.

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

Yeah.

---

**Tom Kelley:**

So, you -- so in Clay Street Project, for example, you -- you -- it takes you in a new direction. You just don't say, no, based on my knowledge of the Jungian archetypal patterns --

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

Yeah.

---

**Tom Kelley:**

-- let's say, it's not just that you know one is wrong, you -- you -- you get some sense about what direction to take it? Would that be fair to say?

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

Yes. You know, and again it comes back to, you know, understanding the patterns of a group. And actually a group goes through these patterns of infancy, adolescence and adulthood. And, you know, it doesn't mean that they're immature but the group in a sense in its life is immature, and so understanding where the group is in their lifecycle will actually determine how you interact with that group. So, through adolescence there's a bit of chaos that goes on as a child is actually trying to understand themselves in the world. If you look at the eye of a group, the same thing goes on. So you actually can introduce chaos to [inaudible] the system only if they're ready for it. You can't do it and expect it to happen just because you want it to. So you have to understand that the whole system, as Peter was saying, refers to complex dynamics seeing the whole system in three-dimension and then working with it in that way.

---

**Michael Conforti:**

Yep. And the thing I'll add is I've had a really varied career, you know, I began as an analyst and I began then working with organizations and began to work in the film industry and I have David to thank for a lot of this, he really got me involved in this years ago. And I've begun now to consult with different communities where there have been terrible crimes, and they say, "Well can you help us?" and I say, "What is it you want me to tell you"? And, anyway, when Tom and I talked on the phone the other day, I introduced a term that I've realized been very important and -- all of us have been looking at patterns, okay, and I think that's this entire audience and that's the word, ethology. And usually we know ethnology but ethology is something I hadn't been aware of until about a year ago. Ethology is the study of natural patterns in the wild, natural patterns of animals. It means, if an animal is left on its own, how would it behave and you begin to find that there are these deeply entrenched natural patterns of survival and creativity that are part of every living organization. What happens to the human condition where I think we have -- where we get into trouble is when we're estranged from natural life patterns. There is a way, there are patterns for life, there're patterns for early life, for middle life, for the later parts of our life, there are patterns for starting new initiatives and, when you begin to realize that we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time -- let's get a creative team, let's put a million bucks into this, let's look at creativity -- I mean, that's great but, if you can just take a step and reflect on what is it that the people that were the holders of the wisdom traditions knew about life, you know what, they understood that life teaches us how to be involved with these initiatives in ways that are so profound and they offer a certain blueprint, a certain schematics and you begin to realize that everything in life is a response to some codes, whether it's the Pythagorean Mean in architecture, whether it's the Fibonacci Code with the formation of every living seashell pattern, there's a pattern behavior here. What we do with the act of human hubris is we believe, well, we're going just to create it all of our own minds. Human creativity is a wonderful thing. It's one of the gifts we have in life. When that's estranged from tradition and when that's estranged from the wisdom traditions and these natural ways of life, I think we get into some trouble. And what Dave, and one of the beauties of what Dave is doing, and he says let's look at how nature -- and it was wonderful the way he presented it -- how nature tells us about initiative, how nature presents threshold conditions.

**Tom Kelley:**

And, David, you know a lot of us have heard a lot about the Platypus Project at Mattel and all the great things that came out of that, and Clay Street Project at Procter & Gamble, and you're

---

obviously, I think, the only person who's had a leadership role in both. I wonder if you could tell us about what you learned or adapted or shaped or translate from the early days of Platypus that you think maybe you've had a chance to do better at -- at -- at the Clay Street Project.

---

**Dave Kuehler:**

That's a good question. I think when I went from Mattel to P&G what I didn't want to do is replicate what happened in the culture of Mattel at P&G because, if these things are truly part or emergent from the culture, you can't do it; it probably won't work. So, I interviewed about 25 or 30 people at P&G before I even started the thing to understand how they innovate, what the culture is like, just really to understand the entire culture in 360, and I'll tell you that -- and I was biased going to P&G and I referred to folks at P&G as proctoids, robots, and what I learned actually, I was sitting with folks from P&G, that they're really intelligent people with a strong value system and a lot of the cultural work we do, working with Tibetan Buddhists, I mean, you name it, improvisational artists, I was afraid that that culture wouldn't accept that and what I found was they were more accepting of the human training, you know, how to interact together and how to be interdependent than they were at Mattel. So again, neither is good nor bad, it's just each culture needs different things. So, we do more of that, actually, at P&G than I did before.

---

**Tom Kelley:**

Great. Okay. Thanks very much.