

Dear Senior Fellows and Friends,

On December 3rd, we were graced with the presence of Gail Williams, [Leadership Innovator at NASA](#). Hurricane Sandy forced us to postpone a few weeks, and the impact that Gail has made over the years was shown by the regretful messages I received from admirers at FDIC and Kahler Communications (Washington, D.C.) who were unable to make the second date because they were training leaders out of town that week.

Although Gail's recent work has revolved around the Exploring Leadership Colloquium at Goddard Space Flight Center (see attached sample), she spent the evening describing the Leadership Alchemy Program that she designed and implemented with Kanu Kogod a few years ago. Gail describes Leadership Alchemy as "a transformational leadership development program – a 9-month hero's journey." The original task was to develop forward-thinking leaders from among GS/12-15 supervisory and non-supervisory employees, although successive spinoffs at Goddard and Ames had a broader mission. Leadership Alchemy, which is described by Kanu Kogod in the April 2009 issue of Warren Bennis's *Leadership Excellence*, rests on 5 principles:

- Breakdown to Breakthrough: The place of chaos and uncertainty is the place of most potential because it is in those times that new patterns can best be developed.
- Intentional Commitment: Whatever we focus on expands.
- Wise Leadership: Before we can lead others, we must lead ourselves.
- Appreciative Inquiry: Ask questions from a space of possibility.
- Recognizing and Shifting the context: Trade a limiting context for a world of possibilities.

Gail described how a space was created in which the participants felt safe to show up and learn from each other. As she was telling the story at our dinner, she was quietly recreating that safe space! This was evident during a break, when she suspended her presentation for a few minutes. While most participants ate and talked at their tables, Gail worked quietly with a senior fellow at one side of the room to show him that the head, heart and body have a natural coherence, and that changing one of those elements will cause the other two to shift.

Gail said a few things that are worthy of reflection:

- Your way of being in the world generates the possibilities you can see.
- Learning is a matter of awareness and choice.
- Moods are contagious. Leaders create a mood that's consistent with what they want to get done.
- Language creates; it's powerful. When I speak, I'm generating action. JFK is a good example – his speech put a man on the moon.

She also handed out a page of Trust Exercises that adapts the work of Kristi Hedges' *The Power of Presence* and Maister, Green and Galford's *The Trusted Advisor* and refers

readers who want more to the free Trust Quotient Assessment at <http://trustsuite.trustedadvisor.com/>.

Participant affiliations were as follows:

- American Psychological Association
- Booz Allen Hamilton
- Consultant, I.T. Workforce Issues
- Department of Education
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Homeland Security, Retired
- Department of State
- ESL Teacher
- Federal Trade Commission
- General Services Administration
- Government Accountability Office
- GovLoop Fellow
- Health and Human Services
- Lynda.com
- Millennium Challenge Corporation
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Partnership for Public Service
- PMI - Silver Spring Chapter
- Securities and Exchange Commission
- University of Colorado
- Vigilant Watch Inc.

A generous spirit of learning and collegiality was fostered and shared by everyone in the room. Happy Holidays! Together, let's make 2013 a very good year.

Sincerely,
Kitty Wooley