



*Leadership
in your own
Biography*

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Introduction

In every chapter we start with content on this subject Leadership in your own Biography. We share reflections on the lecture and then we go to the exercise. The exercise is to explore the different points that I mentioned in the lecture.

We build up through the seven chapters the kind of organic image of leadership in your own biography and hope it will inspire you and support you in this journey that you are doing in this life.

Chapter 1: My personal biographical question

The first chapter is about how to handle my personal biographical question. I will start describing the underlying dynamic pattern of a biography and different views on that.

First there is the image of the gate of birth where we arrive through in this world and the gate of death when we leave this world again and the biography that unfolds itself between those two gates. An interesting question that you could explore is not only about the gate of death, which is still, for most people, quite familiar. The question we have at this gate is: is there a life after death? What does it mean when I die, when I leave the earth? Are we coming into a different world, or how is that? This has been a long, long exploration by humanity. I think philosophy and other streams, religious streams, art streams, scientific streams reflect about this question. But there's very little attention about the gate of birth. Is there live before birth? Where do we come from?

I found a very interesting image described by a medical doctor that says that when the child is in the

mother and it is growing in the mother, it goes through almost the same process where a young ape is going through inside the mother. But at the end there's a big difference between the child and the ape because in the end of the process the ape, the animal, is getting fixed. The animal becomes part of a bigger being, the species. But at birth the human being is unfixed. The process is not fully finished. The child is therefore born totally helpless, she cannot walk, she cannot speak. She can only sleep and drink and cry, so to say. There is something different going on in just the last moment before being born.

One can ask the question, is there life before birth? What does it mean when the person comes into the world? When we come to this world, what is my impulse I bring to this world?

We will come back to this question in a later chapter.

Phases of the biography

There are different phases in our human biography between birth and death described in the human history.

The traditional Chinese vision on this, that I understood, is that life has three periods of 21 years. The first 21 years is to learn. The second 21 years is to fight. And the third 21 years is to become wise. And everything after 63 is given to you. It's a very old vision, as I understood it, but it is still relevant. In my view, you still can discover in your own biography that learning you do in the beginning, then fighting to get into the world, to find your job, to find your place in the world, to find your profession, to find your partner, and so on. And then after the age of 42 the crisis comes and things change in life, we come in a more reflective period. We try to look for the sense of our life and can become wiser.

There's also a Greek vision. The biography is built up in seven-year periods. We go through phases of seven years. In the first seven years we stand up, walk, speak, think. The second seven years we develop our inner life further. The third seven years from 14 to 21 we discover ourselves, take distance and we start to meet and confront the world around us. Seven-year periods is what we go through and after each seven years there's a certain kind of little

crisis or a point of transformation. And I think if you go more in detail, if you study that vision then you can recognize a lot of these dimensions in your life, changes and transformations in your life, challenges in your life that are not just only personal, private for you, but are a kind of common humanity challenges. Another vision, again, is this vision of the cosmic periods. After 18 years and nine months, you'll come back to the same cosmic constellation that was there when you were born, at the moment that you were born. This is also a kind of circle of life like the first two that I mentioned. It's a circle where things come back to a starting point. Here you come back to the question, what was my impulse? You can experience after this period in your life more intense, that this question comes back to you. Why I'm here? What is my impulse? What is the sense of my life? So that comes back after, let's say, after 37,6 years and comes back after 56,3 years. This is also a very interesting dynamic in your biography.

The last circle that I started to notice is kind of very different. The development of our soul, the development of our consciousness goes through a

33-year period. It takes certainly thirty-three years before the I has mastered the soul in a certain way and for instance I really am able to play in a good way my saxophone, I think 33 years it takes to become a master in our profession. And it takes 33 years to really become a good parent. There is this kind of cycle where it takes a very long time to school your soul, to become a soul master. It is the reflective cycle in our life, to discover who you are, your mission in life and becoming able to live this mission under any circumstances.

These phases are really part of our life and I find these dimensions described very interesting to understand. They can help you to see a little better yourself in these dimensions and see that you are not only an individual being coming to this earth and leaving it but you are also part of humanity and part of a humanity biographical development. This is a very nice combination of a total individual path that you go and a path we go together. Nobody else goes this individual path but also you follow a path of humanity in your biography.

My biographical question

We will look now to: what is my biographical question? What is my life question? It's not an easy thing to start with. Our first exercise will be to explore this biographical question, the key question in my life that stay with me all my life, that gives me an impulse, brings me further, is challenging me. In this first chapter, we will open up this question. Hopefully the question will stay with you during your life as a kind of biographical exploration. It's not meant that you give a quick answer to this question. You can explore the question, as you can see it. This question appears to you in this life.

She appears in the natural context because you have these parents and you're from England or you're from China or from Holland? Your parents have a certain background as a family background, as an inheritance. You are in an inheritance stream from parents and grandparents and great grandparents. So, your biographical question has to do with being part of this natural community that has a history and has formed you in a certain way. But also, this

biographical question arises, when you start to live the organized life. You go to school, you start to do a job, you build up your house, you drive your car, and so on. You will act as a worker and as a consumer. You start this organized life and everything that is there in the world created by human beings, you meet in your life. That organized life is asking a question to you, what is that question that is asked to you being in this profession, meeting this kind of clients, working together with these colleagues? That's the second dimension that forms this biographical question of you.

Going through this natural and organized communities, you'll find your own community and your destiny. You find your companions and we become part of each other's community. It's not just natural. It's not just organized, but it is personal. The communities you are part of raise the biographical question to you and ask something of you that you can do.

Discovering this biographical question for me personally, for instance, was: "How to create an

initiative in a situation that doesn't allow it to happen". And my life is a life of initiatives in situations that doesn't allow it to happen.

I start to live with questions in my biography and then I meet resistance. I meet crisis. It's not just an easy thing, this biography. Maybe people don't at all accept this biographical question that you are exploring. So, you meet resistance, misunderstanding, you meet crisis, you doubt yourself. What is the sense of my life? Why I'm busy with this, why I'm doing this job? Why I have this partner? Why have this family? There's resistance coming from outside yourself, but there's also resistance inside yourself.

This leads to situations where transition becomes important, a change becomes very important. Change and transition is not: the old is bad and the new is good. But it is to open up the soul again so that we can move on, that we can create and experience something new. We can contribute something valuable to humanity again. But also, humanity can contribute something very valuable to me.

Sense making

Living with a biographical question creates the opportunity for yourself to make sense out of your life. The whole idea of our exploration in these seven chapters is I think, to connect the sense making element to our biography. It's a leadership art to really create sense out of your life, or to put it in a different way, to give sense to your life, because the sense of your life, it is not so evident. It's not so clear. It's something that you also are invited to create yourself. And to have a key biographical question that you follow up always helps you again and again to create sense.

For a period of my life I studied 33 philosophers. I was challenged by a colleague professor of my university who said: "you write nice little booklets. But what is the foundation of this work of you?"

I started to study these philosophers. And I discovered that all these philosophers during more than two-thousands of years, are not searching for the absolute truth. What is "the truth"? But they are

searching for what makes sense in life. What creates sense in one's life? They explore questions like, where do we come from? Is there a god? Are we Free? Are we a destined person? They are soul searchers, so to say. And the nice thing is that there is a consistency in the thousands of years of soul exploration, of biography and the sense of life exploration. But there is also the element that these questions are not objective questions. They change in time. They reappear in different ways, again and again and again. And living with these biographical questions gives us the opportunity to observe the phenomena that are important for our life. Because the question directs the way you'll see the phenomena. If you have a question, for instance, how to take initiatives, then you start to see all kinds of initiatives around you. If your question is how to stay healthy in life, maybe you're born handicapped or maybe you have to struggle really with your health, then you see all around you people with health questions and health issues. And so, the question directs your observation and your observation gives

you a clue what sense reflects your biographical question.

So that's why this book will be very reflective. It will be a research that we do together. And the exercises that we will explore are reflective research exercises too. We research different dimensions of this Personal Biographical Question, this statement, this standpoint in life. The key of our biographical leadership is to create sense to our life. The leadership of an organization is to create sense to an organization. Leadership of your life is to create sense, to realize your impulse. We will explore the art of creating sense in your life. So not to solve all the problems that you have maybe, or to come to spectacular changes, but to create more intense the sense or meaning of your life so that your life is fulfilled.

Exercise

In the first exercise we concentrate on this personal biographical question. And it goes like this.

You have 10 minutes individual preparation. It's short, but it is the first try. So today, how would I

formulate that biographical question? What is my real biographical life question that I am struggling with all my life? Maybe meeting that question in different ways. Can I describe one or two situations in which the question was really visible for you and maybe for others? So, is there in the past or the recent past one or two situations where this question was very much appearing, so to say, in these situations for yourself, but maybe also for others?

Before you go in dialogue with others, first you take time to really think for yourself and make notes for yourself. What comes up in you when you reflect on these two questions? Just write down what comes up. Don't you worry if it's Okay? It's just the first step of this biographical exploration.

Choose one or two persons and share with them this life question, and also present one or two situations where this biographical question was alive or was appearing. That takes a few minutes, maybe five minutes.

The others listen carefully and then dialogue together about your biographical question and you carefully

take notes. That listening can be on the heart level, can be on the content level or can be on the will level.

When the others have finished their dialog, then you present the essence of what you have heard. It's very often amazing how the others reflect on your presentation. They can come to very surprising and very relevant notions that they bring. So be very careful when they dialogue. Together you finish off with the question, was there something significant? Was there some key element that was very much in the center of what was told and what appeared in the dialogue that you reflected on in the end?

It's important to note that down, to take that with you and develop it further.

And I would like to ask you to really follow the steps and do it quite precisely. Really have this kind of research dialogue.

Finding your biographical question

Finding your biographical question requires full attention what appears all the time to you in the

meeting with others. What comes back to you again and again in your life that you have to respond to? That becomes a kind of key element in the work that you do and in the life that you live.

Chapter 2: Crisis and change

Upper and under life

In this chapter we will concentrate on crisis and change in the biography, on critical moments in your life and we will present some ideas that one can reflect on.

First, a few thoughts about the crisis. I have been inspired by mister Bernard Lievegoed, who was a psychiatrist and a medical doctor. He worked with handicapped children, mentally handicapped and sometimes also physically. Later he was working with people and organizations on the issue of human- and organizational development. When I was a young consultant, we had evenings with Bernard Lievegoed where he talked about his life and his life experience. On one of these evenings he described to us that in the human being and in humanity the threshold in us between the under life, so what lives more down in you and the upper life, what lives more up in you, becomes permeable, transparent. In the past there was a kind of shield between upper life and under

life. Or we can say between consciousness and unconsciousness, between our drives that come from the under organs and legs and the ideas that we have that come from an upper world of the head. In between these two worlds in us there is the heart and the lungs that have to deal with the balance or unbalance between the upper and the lower part of us. And so, I think that each person, if I follow this idea, in the world today is confronted with this open threshold that is not protecting any more, but let things through. This will show itself, for instance, in very not understandable aggression and very aggressive reactions of others. Or on the other hand, let's say, surprising moves that you make that you did not expect of yourself. I think it is very important for the biography that drives, that come up in us, we transform them from unconscious into conscious impulses by mobilizing our "I" in the middle, in the heart. The "I" is the individual human spirit that is you, so to say and that can appear in the heart and in the feelings we have. In this whole sphere of transforming, your "double" plays an important role. The double is formed by everything that is in the

unconscious. This is a potential thing in your life that comes up at some moments and that could be grasped and transformed into conscious actions and initiatives. And this double plays a more and more important role in our life today. It is very important and interesting that more and more we are able to really observe the double of another person. For instance, in the marriage, the longer you live together, the more the double starts to appear: all these things that you are not really good in doing or unpleasant things in yourself.

For instance, I can be quite a bit pushy and a bit annoyed and the other can immediately observe this. So, we not only are seeing each other in the "I" and the spirit, but we also see the double of the other more and more strongly because the unconscious power comes up in us and has to be handled by us.

I have noticed in my own life, it's a lifelong journey to start to transform this, this impulse of these eruptions, these forces that come up in you and to make them valuable, to make them fruitful for what is needed in the situation.

I think biographical crises are moments to transform the unconscious to the conscious. You can see crisis as something negative. But you can also see it as an opportunity to really confront yourself with what is not working, what is not happening, and try to grasp it in a more conscious way. To start to see: What does this happening mean? And therefore, you need the dialogue with the other person. I think that's very important. This other person very often sees you sharper than you see yourself, especially when it's about your double. Then it's about unfulfilled ideals and failures to make it work.

Crises

There are key moments in the biography where I think, almost everybody goes through a kind of crisis. For instance, around the age of 28. That is a crisis very often about: 'where I'm going to concentrate on in my life?' Because I have a job and I have a family and I have maybe already children. And you come into this tension of to take care of the different processes you have moved yourself into. Especially around 28, it can be a crisis because things don't fit

anymore. You are totally absorbed in your work. The whole family is complaining about that you're not at home or you're not available. Or the other way around: in the workplace they complain that you're not really into it because you're always busy with something else. The age of 42 is a famous period and a famous moment in life where there's a different kind of crisis. That's a sense making crises as one colleague said to me. Before 42, you have ups and downs. So, you go up and then you will fall down and go up again and fall down. After 42 that transforms in a certain way into a permanent crisis. There are moments however where everything fits. There are moments that everything is really a whole and you feel really fulfilled. So, I think that's a very fundamental change. And living this crisis, becoming aware of this crises, becoming aware that when you're 45, it's about something else in your life than you were busy with before.

I give an example. An organization that I was consulting there was this issue that the director asked, how are we going to deal with young people in our organization? And then there were programs and

opportunities and trainings. And he asked himself, what are we going to do with the people older than 45? And we did an investigation to ask the people in this bank with 2500 people working, we asked 40 persons to think about what would make life interesting for them the next 10, 15 years. And the amazing thing was that they all came up with things nobody had ever thought about. They were totally different points or wishes than young people had. They were much more looking for sense. They were much more looking for reflection, much more looking for good dialogues, for good support, for good health, where young people were more ambitious to make steps and moves and become successful.

56 is another moment where you start to think again about what is important for me in my life. What is the sense of my life, what is the meaning or why did I come here? Why do I live this life? Why do I have this profession, why being absorbed by this community? 56 is a very important moment because all the things that supported you in the past from inheritance, from background, from belief, and so on, they're not

strongly working anymore. You really have to start to do the job yourself.

In crises I learn to mobilize my “I” spirit in the reality that I'm in and that I have to deal with and specially to open up my soul for others and to start to support others, to be a help for others, not just focus on yourself and your own issues. And this is very important also for humanity that generations go through crisis as we develop strength in ourselves to deal with that crisis, with different kind of crisis. To be able to lead a fulfilled life, but also to support others in their life.

Change

Crisis is connected to change. Change, for me, has two dimensions.

First, change is changing the way you look at things. Second, it is about changing the way you do things. And I have noticed a few, let's say, triggers that bring you into change.

The first one is: responding to an invitation. So maybe you'll hear a new vision, a different sort of idea. It's a

kind of invitation to your head that says 'interesting'. Or you move yourself into a new community. Or new clients that invite you to enter and you respond to this invitation. So that brings immediately yourself in change because you notice the repertoire that I have I cannot just practice it and do it like always. I have again and again to reinvent myself in the new situation with the new kind of community, with your new client.

A second element for change is taking an initiative. Following an impulse and start to do something that you don't think you are maybe good in. But you want to develop this. Taking initiative is a way of also changing yourself and changing the situation and changing maybe the organization.

The 3rd element that I see that is very stimulating changes, is integrating a reflective moment when something hit you in the face and you become aware of something. You are not saying, no, this is not for me, this has nothing to do with me. No, you try to integrate this in your life. Integrate everything you've done in your life, also the unpleasant things. Don't say to yourself, I was a technician and now I am a

people interested person. You still have this technician in yourself and so integrate this. These qualities that you have developed in yourself makes you also a person that is really able to deal with the change. So, develop new sides of yourself, but also care for the old sides in yourself.

A fourth element is the movement in new communities. I think it's very important to look for new communities where you find people that have common interest, maybe a common striving or common initiatives.

A fifth element is to stop certain practices, to stop certain routines. It can be very hard to stop but I found out for myself it makes sense stopping with certain things, throwing away a lot of stuff, not just carrying on with all the luggage that you have but say goodbye and stop.

The last, sixth element is to prepare yourself all the time by training and schooling yourself. It's becoming part of a very wonderful, reflective training and schooling process to open up yourself again.

Two elements in change

Especially two elements are very important in change. The first one is changing a steering conviction because the conviction you have directs the way you look at things and the way you act. Changing your steering principle is a leadership act in your biography. So, if you're driven by certain convictions and you see they bring me into disaster, then start to see this conviction, the steering principle behind it, and try to find another principle in yourself that may be a much better guide for living your life. For instance, a steering conviction can be to become successful, to be successful all the time. And at some moments, you start to notice that maybe there's more disaster than success. So maybe it's not really a good steering principle for your life. What is then another principal that's living in me? Maybe it's more about to support my colleagues that makes me happy. So instead of concentrating on my own success, I'm getting greater fulfillment when I support somebody else. Take back a step and start to see something in a different way. Start to change your convictions. Then you start to see things in a different way.

The other point is to change your way of doing certain things at certain moments. Because the process very much defines our behavior. The process raises questions about who is in, where am I, what am I doing, how I'm doing, and why am I doing this? And especially for change, the why question is very, very important. Very often we do not reflect upon why. Why should I make this step? Why should I give up something? And that's the wonderful thing of this why question that you can only answer the why question yourself. Every answer that another person gives is very interesting, can be very stimulating, but it is not working except when you answer the why for yourself.

Structural bottlenecks

Finally, I think living with questions and making small steps brings you to structural bottlenecks in your life, to things that are structurally stopping you. That can be that your parents have given you a strong conviction as a right way of living. You start to notice

that somewhere you have to say goodbye to this conviction. And if you don't make small steps, you don't have those questions. You hide yourself for these structural bottlenecks. You go around them and every time you come back to the same point. But working on a structural bottleneck, like in an organization, brings you in a new reality. But this is the challenge. There is a connection between crisis and facing this bottleneck and to see it as a manifestation that there are some bottlenecks for humanity like I described for the age of 28, 42, 56. But there are individual bottlenecks that come up at certain moments in your life. If you are on the move, when you are in a process of changing all the time a little bit without giving up yourself, then you are able to face these bottlenecks and find ways with the support of others to deal with them and move yourself into a new reality.

What is upper/under life, what is the double, what is a bottleneck?

The head is the upper life. The organs and the legs are the under life. The heart and lungs are the in-between life. Now more and more impulses come out of the organs and out of the legs, so to say. That can be sexual impulses or can be other forces that work through the organs. There was a threshold between this upper body and the lower body. You can observe this may be a little bit in yourself and with others. I try to understand it myself by noticing if I can observe it, if I can see it.

The double is a psychological expression of all that is unconsciously available as substance that can come into consciousness and that you can use as your capital. When people have conflicts with each other, it's very often that they only still see the double of the other person. They don't see the real "I" of this person, his/her personality. They see only the unfinished business. They see the inability of this other person. They see the nasty character of this other person. There is a kind of negative energy that we carry around and that comes up again and again when we meet this person. It is bothering us. But it is at the same time a kind of capital. It's unfinished

business. Some say it comes from earlier lives that you take again into your soul. Some say it is something that you carry because of your parents and ancestors. Unfinished business between your parents that you carry as your double. There are many sources that can feed your double, so to say. And it's your task to start to work with that and transform it. That is the whole process of change to transform it into something valuable. That has very much to do with giving it a certain new sense instead of that it will dominate your behavior.

Structural bottlenecks are something that we can see as been institutionalized in yourself. It can be a very strong conviction or a very strong belief, a fixed way of doing "This is the way things are and how we do it" and you're not able to observe any other reality then only through this conviction. But it can also be a very practical structural bottleneck. We experience fear for doing something or meeting something. We avoid it and go around it. We do not face it.

I have certain beliefs and convictions and I work with them and I live with them. But I start to see that they

bring me disaster. I get into trouble all the time with this conviction. Open it up and see maybe that there is living in you another principle or value or believe that you could act out of. Becoming aware of it helps to come to a decision and see if you want to change something. And then you move yourself into a change process and meet a new reality.

The Exercise

The first step is individual preparation. The first question is: choose three moments in your life where you made a biographical change and describe these moments or periods shortly. Write it down. Go back in your memory and see the three moments where you changed, changed maybe your profession or changed places or changed your believe. If you have written this down, then what do you see as the fruits of these changes? What did they bring you? What came out of that changes for you? What is the fruit of these changes in your biography? Maybe you became more aware of something. Or maybe you found a new direction in life or maybe you could start doing something new, for instance. Is there some common

ground in these changes that characterizes your biography as sometimes changes come back again and again and again?

I sometimes say: in your life very often, you only have one real change question that comes back again and again and again in different forms, appears in different ways. So, is there some common ground in these changes?

Then after the individual preparation start the dialogue with one or two other persons. They listen to the content of what you tell them but also, they listen to what I call 'the voice.' The emotion and the will direction in the way you have expressed yourself. You make notes.

After the dialogue you formulate in one sentence the essence of your biographical change. Like we did in the first chapter, what is really my biographical question, in this chapter, we try to come closer to what is really the essence of your biographical change.

Reflections after the exercise

It is revealing to listen to the stories of the other. Because the personality of each one appears much more and it's so human. Also, the differences between us. The differences are there but that's so human to have this.

We had actually a very touching dialogue on how to create inspiring soul moments in your life. That's very important when you look at your biography and see all the miracles of what was there?

I learned a lot to connect with the three moments of change in my life. It was very emotional for me. Because it's not easy. It was three hard moments in my life. I connected with those moments and I could feel them again.

It was a very soul full conversation. Interesting to hear the resonance of others on my experiences at different ages, and how the experiences at different phases of our lives are integrated and connect to each other, the interconnection of them. And I was struck how, in a way, how little one has to choose and

how much one is meeting. Life arrives to you a bit like the wind in the sails of your boat. The wind is always there. You can trust it. It really helped me to feel this and be full of gratitude for my life.

I was lucky that I'm the youngest one in the dialogue of three. Both of them are my great teachers, because when they listen to my story, they showed me how they are mastering their way of life. That is an example for me to see how I should choose the attitude towards the bottleneck I am facing in my life.

What would be the choice that is coming to me?

Between us, we had biographical arrows pointing in slightly different directions, but with the aim of finding a common expression for the desire for truth to swim in the ocean of knowledge as a massive active exploration of being human. And to experience being human in a world where humanity maybe is being compromised in years of technology. So, with those three dimensions, the truth, the exploration, and the experience of being human, I think it would be hard to distinguish which one of us had that arrow

of biographical intent. It is really enjoyable to meet some brothers in the game of life.

It gave me a very synthesized reflection of my life. Actually, we have different aspects of truth that we're integrating. I'm very grateful that through this conversation we could see truth in many of its aspects. And we can kind of merge them together by our conversation so it is a greater integration. It's also the essence of my biographical question to integrate the subjective and the objective truth. So that's interesting.

I found a new critical moment in my life and never saw that before it's critical for me. And also, some questions for my homework about what's the relation between the change of belief and the change of the behavior? So, which is first and which is second.

I think it's very helpful for me to understand we have a different approach in facing the crisis. We are so much different: to follow my heart or to be very

rational. But when I listen to my inner voice, I think I have to try to find my own voice, inner voice.

Very helpful to understand the power of conviction. And the other thing is that I feel much connected reflecting on my own kind of life changes. It gives me a lot of energy. I feel not alone in this journey because those two are brothers that have been through similar situations. And they fared very well.

Finally

I can say that once I was working in a company with a management team and they had very functional behavior. Everyone had their department and they had some troubles in the corporation. At some moment I did this exercise with them about three changes in your life and see what is important for them. They hesitated a little bit. But then they did the exercise. It changed completely the way they were seeing each other and the way they were cooperating with each other. Suddenly they appeared as persons, for the first time they really appeared as a person to each other. In this group dialogue we appear to each

other as a person and we can really listen to the other and we can really learn from each other or see ourselves in the soul of the other one. That is for me the ultimate dream of humanity that we can learn to see the soul of the other and learn from that other one.

I would recommend to explore your biographical question and your biographical impulse facing crisis and change. It's always surprising in a way to dialogue with others about this.

Chapter 3: Steering my life out of my own biographical impulse

Introduction

We are going to concentrate on what is my biographical impulse? What is my biographical drive? The first image that I would like to describe is an image of the human being that I like personally very much. The human being is not existing as one thing being part of one world but we are multidimensional beings and part of many different worlds. We are a composition that is created also by ourselves out of these worlds that have made us.

I think the first dimension is that we are standing on the shoulders of our ancestors. We carry the inheritance. We have a father and a mother, and they have come together and they brought us into this world. As I said before, we arrive in this world unfinished but we carry this inheritance of our ancestors. These are parents, grand-parents, great-grand-parents. So, it's very often surprising how much of these ancestors appears in our existence, is

living in our soul. It's documented, so to say, in our body. Not only that our body reflects the way our parents looked like, but also very much the way our grand-parents were composed. So, we are, in a certain way defined by where we come from. But we're not fully defined by that.

We also are meeting our teachers. And we live in surroundings that start to form us, that start to build us up. You meet people and meet situations where our teachers invite us to appear in life and that has a very strong effect on how we appear and become.

So, first I have my parents that created me. My father was a very spiritual man, he invented public relations, was a man of the world as well. My mother was a real teacher. I have this combination myself, his spiritual drive, but also this teaching element.

But also, I have been educated by teachers in the school, later as a student and as an employee of Shell, by my colleagues and clients of the NPI and IMO. So, we have teachers and they form us and they have a message for us. It's not for nothing that we are part of these surroundings and we are meeting these teachers. They form us in a certain way, they invite us

to develop certain capacities, give us challenges. But that's not all.

We are also part of a whole specific community and network that I call the karmic community. There are people we meet in life which are really our life companions. They can be partners, can be children, can be colleagues, can be clients. But certain people that really share the same kind of impulse. And you form a personal community together sometimes worldwide, even without knowing it. Your personal community that wants to bring something to the world. This is a very self-created network or community. But it can have an enormous impact. Like in my life with my daughters and partner, my IMO colleagues, for instance, and earlier my NPI colleagues and some of my friends that I work with in different companies, they became my karmic community and they give me the courage to do what I did. And I give them the courage to continue with their impulse and force.

That's not all.

We are a unique personality. We are, I think, a unique spirit that is connected and that manifest itself and that I call the “I”.

The Ancestors, the teachers, the karmic community, the unique “I”.

These four dimensions reflect themselves in my soul and body and spirit.

I think more and more in time, this is a growing thing. So, let's say for 3000 years, we were very much part of our ancestor's inheritance. Then in later times, the surrounding started to develop us by the teaching, started to form me as being a part of learning groups and of schools and companies. And then we start to find our karmic companions and more and more, these companions today become important to create our own community that care for the key life issue. Last but not least, we have become a unique personality. Each one is a unique person, is a unique “I”.

I can start to work with these four biographical dimensions or qualities. In my view, these four

dimensions or qualities, so to say, show something of our impulse. Our impulse has something to do with our parents, has something to do with our teachers. It has something to do with our karmic companions. It has everything to do with your “I” and your spiritual interests.

The biography is a kind of discovery journey to find your impulse and start to live and steer your life with this impulse. So together they enable the unique biographical impulse to incarnate.

How to find your impulse

This biographical impulse, how do I find this impulse? I think if you take your life serious, to take in what happens to your life, the people you meet and to take that serious, you start to see that this is all directing you to find your impulse. I remember as a child, I was sitting looking at my father who was translating books and writing books. He did that in the bedroom, upstairs in the evening, sitting with a little lamp, writing down things. I visited him there before going to bed. And I was sitting there 15 minutes just to

observe my father writing. And that made a deep impression and it has born the writer in myself. I started to see this is something for me. This is a quality of life that I would like to take on. My education in a Jesuit school, my study to become a sociologist, the NPI and IMO, they brought me closer to touch upon things in myself that I started to notice. It is really important to start to live with these reflective images of your own life. For instance, when I read the little paper that I was writing in my university time more than 50 years ago, I'm very surprised how a common theme was there that I am still exploring today. So very early already, a fascination for certain issues was already born. For you and me: choosing this profession, choosing this company, is linked with your impulse.

I worked in Shell for 8 years being part of an international big capitalistic company. I wanted to know these capitalist, big international companies. People I met there try to find a way to create their own impulse in that kind of context, as these companies are very good grounds for realizing your personal impulse. Having this role, being a leader of

this company, for instance, or being a professional or coach and meeting these people, in all these different ways we can develop our skills our beliefs, ideas and our personality. So, if you start to reflect serious about your life and see what has come out of it, then you can see this composition.

What is holding this all together?

Our “I” is really the thing that brings all this together in me with the aim to be at service for others in life. Because I think the big task of each of us is to serve others in life with our impulse. To find the other people that have needs or development needs and can use you in a certain way to bring themselves further.

Three elements for developing your impulse

I mention here three elements, which I find are very revealing your impulse.

Is there an idea or a concept that you created yourself in life? Not just something you adapted from somebody else or was reading in a book but you have made this concept yourself. You have brought this

idea further. You have internalized this idea, started to work with this Idea or this vision in your work, in your profession, in your life. What is that idea or concept? The key idea or concept that you developed maybe is not so conscious. Start to think about it and see, what is the kind of leading Idea that has been leading your life, more or less.

Has there been an initiative that you took, something that you brought into life in the company, in your work or at home. If you're creating an initiative, it can be a little change in a certain process that is a contribution in a certain situation for certain people. These are things that are very much connected to your inner life and where you become visible for the world and for the people.

Have you been creating a community? I think this has been very relevant for myself. Trying to develop with other people a community that support your development and that of others.

These are three elements where my impulse is connected to and she becomes more and more visible, she can become fruitful in dialogue with other

people. It's not a solo act. It's always in dialogue with impulses of other people.

You can meet your impulse in this unique understanding of your life. Have you been cultivating your favorite ideal looking at films, reading books, dialog with certain people? Have you been cultivating your personal expressions? Have you become visible and cultivated your way of supporting others?

In a certain way, your impulse is your key capital that makes yourself visible for the other person in making contributions in life to other people. That what makes sense and what gives you fulfillment.

We look at the first 33 years of our life.

I said in our first session that there are different phases in life. A 21-year time span, a 7-year time span. But there's also a 33-year time span. I think this time span has to do with finding your impulse and starting to create your life out of your impulse, which is a long-term process. It has to be composed, so to say, out of the sources that I mentioned, like inheritance and surrounding teachers. The first 33

years of your life, you can see as really composing and building up this impulse.

What then is the crucial step you took that directed your life? A crucial step in the life can be to go from working with your willpower to looking for the invitation. Personal wisdom you generate in your impulse life. I think when we have gone through this first phase, you have built some kind of personal wisdom already. You don't have to grow to 88 to become wise. What is this wisdom that you generated yourself in your life?

Another issue is the personal leadership you developed in your life. I think everything culminates in becoming a leader of your own life. That means starting to really work with this impulse. That is what I learned from one of my teachers: "Don't leave your life theme, but develop your impulse that influences and fructifies things that you do". Your "I" is steering with this biographical impulse. And during life, stronger and stronger this "I" becomes the leader of your life and you come into transformation, if you work with your questions, if you go through changes, things that we explored in the first chapters. Your

judgements and decisions are directed by that. It is of practical importance. It's not just magic. It's a kind of compass in life to go with the surprises and to go with the failures, to come to judgements and decisions that are really sound. It gives you a foundation for moving on.

The exercise: steering my life out of my own biographical impulse

Individual preparation with 2 reflective questions:

1. Reflect on the first 33 years of your life: where did it bring you?
2. How did the inner leadership developed and worked in your biography?

With one- or two-persons dialogue on these questions. They listen to you on a feeling and will level and give you feedback after sharing together. You try than again to formulate your biographical impulse in life.

Impulses formulated in one sentence

My learning is to go with the flow. Be present at a pleasant moment and enjoy.

I support a meaningful development for people, in the context of their organization, who are doing the good.

I could visit important moments in my life. And I felt this in my body. It was a learning.

To integrate into life the beyond the order and to design how to deal with the new.

To bring the spiritual, human, and social together. That is something that is very important for me.

To support people to learn with the power of technology.

I want to go to what I would call a pragmatic impulse, which is: take a step, perform the process, find out what is real and how you are experiencing it, choose to change to make things better for the people

around you, and then taking those steps and performing the process, repeat this for a lifetime.

To create unique and different life experiences for myself in which I feel myself in love for others.

I connected to my childhood and found how my childhood affect my choices today. I connected to my mother and my grandmother and I found my impulse. It comes from my mother and my grandmother.

I became clearer about my impulse to experience different life situations, to meet different people. In the future, maybe they get together.

I have two reflections. First one, it's a blessing to be heard in sharing some story that I seldom share with any other people around me. Second, I feel the power of this soul inquiry journey. Cause when I share this, I wasn't so sure about the impulse. It's just like different pieces of life stories. But when I share, suddenly I realized that there's something that really push me forward. One thing that I pursue in my life is to be authentic and also create authentic community.

The soul is occupied

I once said in a lecture that there are many things that occupy our soul. And there are many things that want to occupy our soul. Is it ideologies or beliefs or convictions or other people's opinion or troubles or conflicts. I think this issue of the personal impulse is very important for me because you start to become aware of different spaces in your soul in meeting all these impulses of others that want to define your life, so to say. This is the reality of today. We are connected to everything in the world. Is it technology or telephones, is it pension arrangements or whatever, we are connected to the whole world in a very direct way. And this is very much defining also our behavior. I have noticed in my life that this personal impulse is really the foundation where you can stand on today handling this complexity. Maybe it's the only foundation that you really can stand on dealing with all these influences, these challenges, these confrontations.

Three human values support this personal impulse: the value of freedom, the value of respect, and the

value of love. These three values are real human values, so to say. And I see them very much connected to realizing your personal impulse. You do that in dialogue with other people and other impulses. Freedom, respect and love are orientation points for seeing if you are on a good path.

Homework

The homework is to reflect on the first three steps we took: the biographical question, the biographical change, and the biographical impulse. To live with these three dimensions: what is my biographical question, what have been important changes in my life creating transformations? What is my biographical impulse? It would be nice in the coming weeks if you just try to observe yourself a little bit in your practical actions, things that you're doing and the way you are doing it and why you are doing this. A moment maybe in the evening where you could reflect a little bit on this, because in the next chapters we will go more to concrete dimensions like what are the processes you're living in, what is the inner dialogue that you have going on all the time, what is

your vision on the future of yourself? We come to more practical dimensions of the biography to explore them.

By this we built up maybe a good platform for each one to live a conscious and fulfilled life and to strengthen your own leadership in trying to realize something like that.

Chapter 4: Creating life processes

Introduction

In this chapter we will concentrate on the processes of life.

I can say that I have noticed that many people live a complex life and we are very much obsessed by content and by problems, to deal with problems and to deal with content. I think that keeps us busy all day long. But maybe more important than problems and content is the context and the process we are in. And very often we have little eye for the context and the process we are in. We are very busy with things, but we are not so much aware of how the things go and why these things go like they go. Why in this place and why in this manner?

Sometimes people ask me where do you live then? And I say, I live in my process and they laugh. And they say, that's not my question. Where do you live? And I say, you expect that I will say, I live in Appenweier in Germany and I live in my house. But actually, I live in the processes that are taking place in

my house or in my workplace or in my holiday home. So actually, we are not so much living in a house, but we are living in the process that takes place in that house or in that organization or in that holiday home. I think in my view, also our biography is a process. I think the process is our home.

Creating a fulfilled life through process

Are we able to create a fulfilled life? It doesn't have to be a very happy life or a life without problems, but a fulfilled life. That is a life where you are part of processes that are important for you and that you want to be in.

Processes have a cyclic rhythmic sequence of activities. We go through the process again and again, like waking up and going to sleep. The seasons are a process. The whole cosmos is a process happening in time and space. And I think for us it is very important to become more aware of the process that we are in and to really concentrate on the process. And then a good process has rhythm and has flow and have a beat. Like in music, you have 123 - 123 or 1234 – 1234. A Kind of beat. You have a melody. And if you

bring that in movement a certain rhythm comes in the process of music. Making music is a very nice experience of what makes a process flow: rhythm and a good beat, a good melody makes a process work.

Good processes

So here we are going to observe how we are living in our processes. And obviously, these processes must be really good processes. Or are they stupid processes? And I have noticed, for instance, in organizations, but also sometimes in family life, we create processes that don't work. We get stuck with it, or we get problems with each other. Or we have issues in the dialogue. But basically, it's not us that is stupid. But the process we created is stupid. I think that the Gods created wonderful processes like the seasons, like the nature, so that these are harmonic processes. They work and they work together. They are colorful. And they have a rhythm and they have a flow by themselves. But are we able, as human beings, to create good processes ourselves? That's very defining for our soul being. Let's say we have

work processes. We have family processes. Within that we have personal development processes.

An example

I give an example of my own past. My eldest daughter Lianne, when she was very young, one month before her birthday she started to talk about her birthday and birthday party. When she was three years old, she was looking forward to the birthday and I said, don't worry, it's still a month. And we'll do something nice. And so, I cut it a little bit. And then after a few days, she came back again, saying, my birthday is coming. What are we going to do? And I said, don't worry. And more and more, she got a little bit excited and upset. And when the day was there and we had organized some nice program for her, she was totally hysteric. And it was very difficult to really keep her a little bit in the process of the birthday. Going to school and having the birthday party, for everybody it was difficult to handle her. So, it was a bit frustrating also for myself. So next year again, one month before, she started saying, my birthday is

coming. And then I decided that the birthday is not just a day, but it is a process. So, I said, let's make a process out of it. We started the dialogue about that day. What could we do: we go to the swimming pool, take cakes into the school, invite these schoolmates for the party. And then after a few days again, she said: "No, maybe we are not going to swim. Maybe we do something else." We created a process of dialogue with each other to prepare the birthday. Then when we had the birthday, she was very excited. But she was not hysteric and she enjoyed it. After that day, we had very nice dialogues about the wonderful birthday.

Life is a process

When I was younger, I started to learn that maybe in life it is very important to create good processes. How is the process with my client and how is the process with the family? There is always a tension between the client process, the work process and the family process. If the client wants more than I'm too late at home and the family is frustrated. So how are these processes balanced? Am I totally involved in the work

process and not ready for the family process? Or do I forget my personal process so I get totally exhausted by the work and the family processes? How to deal with these processes and how to balance them, and how to give them a quality. Also, for other people who are involved in our processes this is important. When you are in the process of someone else, for instance you're in the meeting with these people as a team and there is just discussion and argumentation. And after the meeting you're totally exhausted and say, what are we doing here wrong? It's not the people who are sitting there to be stupid. But the process and the design of the meeting process, the way the process goes, is not working. We have to change the process. And that is, I think, a key element in biographical development: to create good processes for yourself and others.

Getting stuck or flowing

Is the process getting stuck or is it flowing? One can observe certain processes that come back again and again and you get stuck in it. For instance, I am totally obsessed and frustrated when I come to traffic jams

or when I go to the airport and you have to wait in queues. I get a little bit angry. Even I try to escape. I'd like to find ways to escape this traffic jam or to escape this queue and sometimes I show a little bit nasty behavior. I have difficulty handling traffic jams. I like to be in a flow. And I don't like to get stuck.

Is the process having the right sequence of activities? You take several steps, but you forgot one step and you have to go back again. And then you take three more steps and then you say it's not working and you have to go back. Do you have an idea what is a good sequence for steps like I had with my daughter preparing the birthday? What is the secret of a good sequence to make this process flow, to make this process valuable. Am I able to stop at certain moments and start again? Am I just going on and the process is getting exhausting. Is there good cooperation in the process? Are we cooperating? Are we in dialogue with each other? Is it flowing, are we in dialogue? Do we get stuck in that process? Are we taking right decisions based on good judgment? Because all the time we have to make decisions to continue, to stop, to go back, to finalize something, to

open up something. Biographical judgments: what to do, what not to do, in what process to be, or in what process not to be, to be in what kind of process?

So, a very important issue for the biography, as I have noticed, is if there is a good balance between the work process, the family process, and the personal process? If there is imbalance, then the quality of life goes down very quickly. It's an art of leadership to steer processes, to create good processes, to steer your life processes.

Parallel processes

It starts with being aware of the different processes we are in. I see life embedded in parallel processes. They go next to each other. Being in the Family process, and then we go into a work process, then in a personal process. And then you go back to the family process and back to the work processes, back to the family process. And so, you move from the one process into the other. Is that changing the process working well? I think that's a critical moment of life quality.

I have noticed that if there's an issue in the process, it is important that you start to handle this issue in the process that the issue is in. To give an example: if you have difficulties with your boss in the work process, it doesn't make sense just to start to argue with your partner at home about it. You can talk about it. But you cannot solve it there. You have to solve it in the process where the issue is part of. I see that's also a kind of hygiene thing. Don't take the issue in another process, as that may make the process confusing. I think this is an art of living and I had to learn it. And when I started to learn this: when I have issues with my colleagues, I deal with my colleagues. And an issue with my daughters I handle with my daughters. It requires courage to do that, to face something and somebody, to not be afraid of a certain kind of confrontation in that process about an issue that is there. Very often we try to escape it. We complain in other processes about not being happy in the work process. That is not helping. It even gets worse because other people get annoyed.

To be ahead and do it slow

For instance, what is very important in the process you're in, is to be a little bit ahead of time before starting the process. A process has a start, has a middle, and has an end. Let's say five minutes before you start a 'zoom session', you prepare yourself inwardly. I move myself in this 'leadership in your own biography process'. To be inside yourself, to be a little bit prepared before you move in the concrete process. But when you are in the process, don't hurry. Don't rush. Just hang a little bit behind things. I have learned this also with my Jazz band, that before you start to play a tune you're getting already into the tune, so they say, you move yourself into it. But when you are playing the tune, don't rush because then it is not swinging. Just hang a little bit behind. Just go a little bit slower in your expression. It strengthens the rhythm, and it strengthens the swing. So be a little bit ahead before you start the process. And in the process, just hang a little bit behind so that you're not rushing.

Create wonderful processes

So, I recommend conscious changing from one process into the other process strengthens the quality of the biography. And finally, I think it's really a wonderful art to create wonderful, nice processes for yourself, for your clients, for your colleagues.

An example out of my own life when my daughters were young. Every evening I was reading a story to the youngest daughter, who's seven years younger than my eldest daughter and then reading a story for the eldest going to bed. I created a story myself for both of them and continued this every day. Now they are in their forties. They want me to tell them a story when they visit. Because they really enjoyed that stories, the rhythm of listening to the story of the father. And it also helped me to start to be able to tell stories and to enjoy doing that together. And later they said to me, after we had the story and you went away, then you started to play the saxophone. After the stories I went to my room where I practice a little bit the saxophone. And they were lying in their beds and listening to their father playing the saxophone. I never knew that because only later they told me that it was part of the evening ritual. So, it was not only

making sense for myself playing the saxophone, but it was also part of their life.

Changing the process

So, if you're always working and you want more time for yourself, you have to change something in the work process. What is it you would like to change in the work process? Like I have one friend who said, I never have time for myself. And now corona came. And for sure things stopped. And instead of getting frustrated he said, now is my chance to create more space for myself. And that's what he started to do. And that gave deep satisfaction.

Exercise: describing my life processes.

Individual preparation using the following questions:

- Describe a characteristic work process
- Describe a characteristic family process
- Describe a characteristic personal process

Is there a gesture, a basic structure underlying this composition of processes?

Would you like to change something?

Then you dialogue with two persons. You ask one person to listen critical, the other person to listen supportive. They dialogue with each other and you make notes. You try then in the end to formulate the next step.

Reflections on the exercise

If I think what I learned from tonight work, I decided that I continue to design my elegant life every day and every moment. That's my task.

I learned that to play the critical role in listening is not easy. I really enjoyed learning from my speaking partners how they provide feedback and how they reflect on the life stories.

Every time when we are having a scheduled meeting, always arrive in time, physically and mentally.

So, starting a dialogue is something very important. If we don't start, we never know where we can get to.

I think listening from the point of view of supporting and being more critical was really helpful to hear myself in my own story and then receive what they brought back, which was wonderful and affirming and generous. What that brought me was confirming a thought and the phrase I was left with and that is that I would draw my line, which could be something artistic and creative.

The definition of a process is difficult. If nature is a process, how do you define it? One way might be to say nature is a way of turning something into something else. I found it easy to describe the actions of the process. But my reflection is to actually understand the process itself in terms of all its dimensions.

This reminds me of a conversation I had a little while ago about what's the difference between a process, or system, a procedure, a method, a model, et cetera.

The next step for me is to be aware of my personal process in each day. That means probably I can

prepare myself or design the intention at the beginning of the day. The second one is to be aware about the transition between processes and how to prepare myself before the process and also have some time to reflect on it.

So, I found the two angles, critical and supportive combined together, can be very helpful. It is helpful to see something that you haven't seen before.

I must say that I am very grateful for the introduction in which was stated, that people are more directed to content and to problems than to processes and context. I can learn something out of this that I recognize myself, that processes bring you into reality. What is my relationship to the work processes and the family processes and personal processes?

My learning is to give me some time at the beginning of each day, just to think, to have a little bit a plan about the day, and to be more efficient. Another one is not to be too critical to myself. Sometimes I am a

kind of perfectionist. And another is to ask for help when it's needed.

Rounding of

It is said in lean theory that the process defines very much the behavior that we have. If you have a stupid process, we come to stupid behavior. Like I described, for instance, standing in a queue or in a traffic jam and to see things got stuck in the process. And then your behavior changes. But also, if you have a really good process, can be a good flowing process, an inspiring process, a good meeting, for instance, a good dialogue, then things can happen that didn't happen before. This life quality gives you fulfillment, so to say. I love to observe processes as a client when I go to the shop for consuming or I'm sitting in a taxi with the taxi driver or in every place where I go as a client. I try to connect to the process we are in and then dialogue in this process with the people who are there and do this in a personal way and not just in a functional way. That gives a totally different experience. It doesn't solve all the problems and it doesn't solve all the issues, but it gives a different

quality to life. And I see that as a very important element of the future that we all become leaders in our own biographical processes and connect in a personal way to the people we meet, our clients, our companions or life partners or children. Being in the processes and trying to make gentle processes, you become more yourself, so to say. And the other can be more his or her self. This is actually a good, an enormous blessing in life. It can happen when you're shopping. It can happen when you're like I said in the taxi with a taxi driver, it can happen in the workplace. If we don't create it, it doesn't happen. We stay in a kind of functional attitude and we just pass each other by and we neglect the sense and then fulfillment is very, very low.

What kind of little intervention can I make to improve the process? One of my colleagues once said: "if in your life you have changed something in the process with your partner, with your client, that is beneficial, that improves the life, then you have fulfilled your mission in life." A kind of focus in our life is maybe to really improve processes, not for technical reasons,

not for profits, but just to have a more substantial, fulfilling, maybe even more happy life.

Homework

Please observe processes, the quality of the processes. And maybe even try to make a little improvement in some process and see how it works on you and others.

Chapter 5: Communities and inner voices

Three types of communities

I will give an introduction to the theme of community and the inner voice.

I will start with community, and then I will go to the inner voice and the connection between the two.

I will describe three types of communities that we are part of and that have a very different kind of character and a different kind of influence on our life, on our biography.

The first type of community I have called the **natural community**. The natural community is, for instance, your family, is the country where you come from, maybe the belief or the religion you are raised in. This is all given to you. So, your parents are given to you, your family is given to you. I'm a Dutch boy and that is given to me. I was raised in a catholic background because both my parents were catholic. So that was part of my start in life. And I think that the characteristic of this natural community is that you

cannot escape it. It's part of your being. Your father is your father and your mother is your mother. Even if you say that I'm not so happy with my father, for instance. He still is your father. Your brother is your brother and your grandfather is your grandfather. This is part of this inheritance stream. And this forms maybe a little bit your character, your body, the way you express yourself. Like for instance, when I visited my mother when she was older, my father had died when he was 60, and I came into the house of my mother, she always said: it's just as if your father is coming in. Because in me she saw her husband very much so. I think the natural community is something also to nourish. For some people that is very difficult. To do that. They have great problems with this natural community. They would have liked to be born in a different place, in a different context, a different family, a different believe. But this is part of the life, it has been there and it will be there. When you were born, people of the natural community were standing around your cradle, probably when you're dying and you are going to the grave also the natural community will stand around the grave. That is saying

something of the continuation of this inheritance stream that you are part of.

You're not only part of natural community, you also become part in life of what I call **organized communities**. It's all the communities that you enter in yourself. You decided yourself to enter this organized community. In the beginning of your life it is a little bit a combination of the natural community and organized community. For instance, going to this kind of school. I went to a catholic children school. And later I went to a boy school and was raised by the Jesuits. But in a way, you enter into a new kind of context with teachers and you meet classmates. You make friends there. And later you go and work. I worked for Shell for eight years and then at the NPI institute for organizational development. You meet more and more client organizations. And in the end, you will be a client of all organizations in the world: the telephone company or the insurance company, or the tax office. So, you'll connect yourself to all these organized communities in a certain way and will work in some of them. More and more, one can say that these organized communities are dominating the life

of people. So more and more, we're not living in the context of this natural community, which was dominant the past thousands of years. But more and more, certainly since a few hundreds of years, we are living in this organized communities. All life processes, as we explored last time, are going to be handled by organizations.

When I was visiting my sisters in the United States, then in the morning, they said: okay, let's go to the breakfast restaurant. I was surprised because normally breakfast you have at home. No, they have the breakfast in the breakfast restaurant. Everybody was sitting there and eating pancakes and drinking coca cola. And afterwards we went to another place. We went to the gambling city that was owned by the old natives of the United States, the Indians. They have their own territories, and they are tax free. And they started to make gambling centers, with hotels and so on. And so, we spent time in this gambling place. And then we went to the golf course and so on. So, we went from one organization to the other organization. And the life of many people takes place

in organizations from school time till you are put in a nursery home, or elderly home.

The natural community has the sense in itself. The sense is given to it. It's inside the community. The organized community has the sense outside of itself. They exist because we create them, we maintain them for serving others. And we give them a sense ourselves. The sense of an organized community is lying outside the community. And therefore, this community can destroy us. But we can also raise ourselves as a personality in them. We could never raise ourselves like this in the natural community. Because there you are very much defined. But in an organized community, you can become somebody. You can have a profession and have a role. You can have a responsibility. You can have authority that you can develop yourself, which is mostly a struggle. But it is an opportunity for self-development.

Out of these two types of communities you start to meet people, it can be your brother, can be your boss, it can be your client, it can be your colleague, that you start to form a **personal community** with. A personal community is the community that you

create yourself. It can be a community of common interest: that you have a certain common thing that you are interested in, develop something together, create something together. In my life, I have got friends and colleagues and clients that stay with me and I stay with them. And although maybe we see each other not for years, we are still part of this self-created community. We support each other. We have an interest in each other. We become even more than friends, we become co-creators, so to say. And in my view, this personal community will be the most important community in the future. Because the natural community and the organized community, more and more lose its carrying power. Many young people fall out of the family context. And people fall out of the organized contexts. And they are more and more looking for personal communities. Communities of people that have the same kind of spirit or impulse that they want to be part of and live together with, live together and develop together.

So, a question in your biography can be: is this community the place to be, this job, this client organization, even this natural community.

An example. When I was young, I always had to go to birthday parties of all the family members. I was studying, being busy and starting to work. And at some moment I was not going to all this more or less obliged birthday parties of all the family members. So, I took a little bit distance from the natural community and started to be more in the organized community, start later to be more together with my personal community.

You can ask yourself the question: is this community carrying my development? Is this really a community to be part of? That can be the workplace, it can be a group of friends, it can be a hobby club, it can be a family group. Is this a community that really cares for my development? Or are you going a little bit down, so to say, is it obstructing yourself to move on? So sometimes it's important to say goodbye to a community. Sometimes it's really good to enter into a new community, a new kind of community that supports your development.

Inner voices

The community is very much around you, so to say. It's the context in which we act, in which we perform, in which we live. But we also have an inner world, an inner context. I discovered this only later that there is not so much only a community of people outside yourself in different roles in a specific context, but there is also a community of voices inside yourself. Inner voices can be the voices of your parents, can be voices of your brothers and sisters, can be voices of bosses you had. It can be voices of certain clients we have been working with for a long time. They have been coming inside your soul. That's a kind of inner community. And these voices of parents, of teachers and bosses or friends, they can become very dominant.

My mother always said to me, behave yourself, speak with two words. For a long time, this voice of my mother has been part of my inner team of voices. It was very difficult for me not to behave nice. Although it was sometimes asked in the situation not to be nice, I stayed very nice. But maybe sometimes it's not the voice that should lead you in a certain situation. My father added a different voice. He said to me: be a

real explorer and make yourself familiar with the thing. That was something that he was doing, it was a life model for him. He was a writer of books. I took this in: writing books. I started playing the saxophone myself, inspired by musicians. Developing these voices, so to say, that express themselves in my playing the saxophone, in my writing the books, or in telling this story. This is based on inner voices. You can start to nourish these voices. You can start to grow a specific voice. But you can also start to limit a specific voice. Sometimes there are dominant voices that came into you from a teacher or a boss. But they can be very destructive in certain moments in life. So, can you put this voice more down, or can you not? Keep this voice a little bit more in the background because then another voice can be much more leading yourself in your biography.

The “I” is choosing

So, the question that has been very important for me in dealing with my own biography is: am I able to choose the communities I want to be part of. Is this community really keeping me fixed in a certain way

by obligations and giving me a certain responsibility that I don't want to carry? Am I always making myself a little bit smaller? Am I able to choose communities that I want to be part of? Am I able to say goodbye to certain communities, I don't want to be part of anymore? Because I think being part of a community, it gives you a certain responsibility. If I am part of a family, for my two brothers and sisters I have a certain responsibility to care for them and to nourish them, to communicate with them. But I don't personally want to be only part of this family and having this repeating dialogue sometimes all the time. I also want to be part of the IMO community, also be part of the musical community or an artistic community or religious community.

Are we able to handle this community of voices that are leading us? Can you start to lead these voices, to stimulate a voice to be more dominant in yourself or to narrow down the space for a voice that has been very dominant and you don't want to be led by that voice. So sometimes saying goodbye to a voice, that's an issue of courage. I think it's an issue of

confrontation. It's an issue of courage and confrontation

I think this is the role of this personal community: confrontation and courage. This community that you created yourself with your companions in life. Those are the speaking partners that can help you and you can help them. They appeal to your "I" to make choices about community and inner voices. You will be surprised how these companions, it can be only a few, see you very clearly. And even more clearly than you see yourself. They can help you to make biographical decisions about moving on in communities, moving on in your inner world and to become more familiar with that. They see you more sharply than you see yourself. So, what we have to learn, in my view, is to really build up this personal community. That's my wish for everybody in the world, rich or poor, black or white, old or young. To create personal communities of people that really are companions that help you to move through life and that appeal to your "I" and not to your inabilities or

not to your handicaps or not your issues, so that you can grow as a leader of your own biography.

You can continue in your personal community with people that have died, like with your father and mother. My parents are still part very much of my personal community because I see a lot of them in myself.

The exercise

You do individual work to reflect a little bit on these three types of communities: your family community, your organized community, maybe your personal community. Reflect with the question, why did I choose this community? Even maybe think about the question: why did I choose these parents? Why did I choose to be part of this community? Why did I choose this job in this company, these friends, this group of professional companions? Reflect on this 'why question', try to listen to inner voices that respond to this question.

If I ask myself the question, why did I choose these parents, the response comes to me that my mother

was a teacher and my father was a very spiritual, creative father. So maybe I have chosen them to get this combination in myself. That is coming up in me when I think about why did I choose these parents? Why did I choose these colleagues? Why did I choose this job? If you listen to the why, maybe there's some response in yourself. And then if possible, write this down. A few responses that come up in you, just spontaneously write them down for yourself. And even if possible, give these response voices a name. If a voice has some kind of characteristic, you can give this voice that speaks to you a name.

After individual work, dialogue with two speaking partners. They listen on a feeling level. Do we feel the sense of what you are telling us? If they want, they can even add a voice. Together you try to create a clear picture on these outer and inner communities.

Reflections after the exercise

I really appreciate to have a conversation with two others. I find that every time very helpful as I am unable to figure out the answer by myself. Again, I notice how important it is to develop an inner

dialogue because then you don't lose your time. You can take a decision. I want to develop this conscience inner dialogue more and more.

For me, it was very important to hear this distinction between the natural community, organizational community and personal community.

For me it was a great exercise to do. I found the question very good: Why did I choose this family? The other communities, this was clear. But why did I choose the family? And it's even more clear how the family has influenced my life and still influences.

Many different interesting threads. I think I will just pull out the inner voices. And I have a look at those in more depth because I think they really highlight aspects of oneself you may not always pay attention to and be even aware of. So that was interesting. I realized an echo with a grandmother that I haven't really connected to that echo before. And the other piece was really interesting: how strongly the personal and work communities overlap in my life.

So, it was really lovely to listen and be listened to and get different resonance.

This process helped me a lot. It was a very deep dialogue. I will put more attention to my inner voices and all those communities that I am part of.

I do see how to live and choose the community following my nature and then can feel the happiness. That is the kind of different life. We should choose our community by our heart. I should be more aware of the influence of my personal community and to build the relationships to the person's that I envy, or I would like to be connected with.

The words that came through as my inner voices were love and adventure. Which community is actually filled with a loving free spirit, like a ship that is sailing as an adventure called life, in which there are opportunities for learning and friendship. The motion in the voyage and that the real possibilities are shown.

It made me think deeply how I may have some different choices. I have still some questions about the inner voice and to differentiate inner voice from core value. Inner voices are good or bad, motivate me or maybe limit me. I am just curious about that.

Why I choose to be part of these communities is a very powerful question. How can I choose my family? Because I was so young. I was a baby. They choose me. It's very powerful to listen to the inner voice. And that is my purpose of my life.

It may be partly answering my question why I am quite different from my community here? Because I barely listen to what they say. I mean I am not acting conform the expectation of the community, I'm quite independent myself. I have my own choice in this sense but I will keep exploring. It is an interesting starting point that I can see how the community and the inner voice, my inner voice are interacting with each other.

The three communities, they gave me the gifts and energy that provided me. I didn't think about it before. But today's conversation just gave me a lot of thread on how I can leverage the wealth and the gifts that those three committees provided me. Another thing is that I'm triggered by another question why I choose these three communities. That's the thing that I like to explore during the journey.

Finishing words

One can ask the question, what is a point in life where you can really stand on dealing with the communities that you are part of and the inner voices that you are hearing, that are directing you. I discovered It is your spiritual "I" that is this point that is really solid to stand on. The human I is connected to three specific human values: freedom, respect, love. This individual freedom, to be yourself and showing yourself on the one hand. And on the other hand, the love for the other one, the love for the situation, the love for the work and for the task that you have. In between these two is the issue of respect for the differences: respect for nature, for the

other human being, for animals, for all there is and that lives around us. And I think the balancing act in dealing with communities and inner voices is to cultivate these three qualities: the “I”, the human spirit, working out of freedom, love, and respect. It's an art of living now, biographical living to steer your life with these qualities, which I think are specific human qualities that can help us together to deal with the issues that we meet. And communities are very important, the inner voice response is very important. But the most important thing is that it is me who is really leading this process of the community and of the inner voice.

That's actually a great step in the biography in life that slowly you can move to this point, living out of freedom, love, respect. You start to deal with the issues in your life.

Homework

It's simple. It is to really reflect a little bit on this issue of the community you're in. So, when you are active in the community at home, the work community, the friend's community, to create this sensitivity for how

do I relate to this community. This feeling of freedom, of respect and love is that really representing the way we deal with each other. Or is this community putting me fully on the stress or making me unhappy, or is it not fulfilling? Maybe not the place to be, so that you get a bit more sensitivity of how communities work on you and how you work on communities.

See if these inner voices are a good orientation point, a good compass. See if you are able to start to steer a little bit more conscious your biography on this level of your "I".

Chapter 6: The human soul

Introduction

I would like to start to characterize the human soul. I do that based on a long-time study of philosophers and philosophy and other sources for this issue of the soul, which has been fascinating me for a long time. I can start maybe with the idea that many, many philosophers described to us. We are part of two worlds as a human being. We are part of the world of being. We are part of a world of becoming. The world of being is a kind of eternal world, the cosmic natural world, which has its own archetypal dimensions, laws, characteristics. And this world can also be described as a world of beings. So, as we are a human being, there is a cosmos full of beings which form together the world of being. But we also are part of the world that I will call the world of becoming. The philosopher Nietzsche described the world of becoming as a world of human creation. It is a world of human creation. And one can see that the soul is not only part of a world of being as a kind of

potential, but is very much expressing itself in the world of becoming. That is, I think, a very fundamental thought because Nietzsche and many other philosophers try to give an answer to the question, are we just part of a world of being or do we also have our own space? And do we also have our own time to create ourselves. So, do we create something of ourselves? Do we create our own soul? There are three fundamental questions I found that for 3000 or more years keep philosophers busy, but many other people are also reflecting on this. What about our origin? Where do we come from? Are we a cosmic being? Are we an evolutionary being? Where are we coming from as human beings? It's still an open question. But also, the existence of the soul and the characteristics of the soul has not been very clearly defined. And the 3rd question is, are we free or are we destined? These questions do not have definite answers. They are sense making questions. One can say that maybe the body is part of a world of being. It has its own laws. like our spirit is part of the world of being. It has its own authenticity. But these worlds of being are harmonic worlds, that means

everything is connected to everything in a certain balance. The stars or the sun or the planets, or plants and animals, or our own bodies, they are connected to each other. They work out of the same laws, have the same basic dimensions so to say. But that is not the case for the human soul. Even so she is maybe the only thing that is not fully part of this world of being. She is part of the world of becoming and the soul in itself is therefore not harmonic. The soul is paradox. The Soul appears as a polarity so to say and this is what we experience. We are living in the here and now. We have a past and we have the future, we have memories and we have expectations. There's a difference between the ideas that we have and the reality that we meet. And there is a difference between what's going on inside ourselves and what is going on outside ourselves. So, the world that we see appearing around us and see appearing in ourselves is the world of the soul, so to say. And what we think and what we feel and what we do, we have to create it again and again. It's coming in. It's going. We can say maybe that the body "is" and the spirit "is" but the soul is appearing and is disappearing.

Organizations, in my view, are complete expressions of the human soul. They come and go. And they have to find their own sense again and again and again. Nothing exists out of itself except when the human being creates it. And the problem there is that very often what we think can be something else than what we do. I can think that I'm a very social person, but maybe in my actions and in my doing, maybe I am anti-social. There's is not a natural coherence between our thinking, our feeling, and our doing. For organizations as a human creation, there is not a natural existence. It's a paradoxical existence. We have to recreate again and again and again.

Questions

We started our whole adventure here on the leadership in our biography with this issue of the question. The biographical question. And one can say that the question is a perfect expression of the human soul. Because nature doesn't have questions. They are existing in its own laws. But the soul is not. So, the soul appears in the form of questions that we have. Questions about our future, questions about

who we are. Questions about our job. Questions about our relations. We are full of questions that are expressions of this polarity, of this paradox reality.

To lead our soul

We found that there are three points that we can concentrate on to try to learn to handle our soul, to lead ourselves, to create leadership in our soul and with that create leadership in our own biography.

The first one is, and I mentioned that before, to create **good processes** as we can explore that together. The second element is to live in **dialogue**. To live in dialogue with other people, in dialogue with yourself, in dialogue with nature, animals. Our existence is a two-way traffic: in the soul it is not one way. And the third element is **the biography** and how our life appears. It appears in terms of our biography. To become a leader in your biography, you can work on creating creative processes and to create dialogue with others.

I think it is a challenge in our biography, from being a child till our old age again and again, to bring our

head, our heart, and our hand in balance in connection with each other. Therefore, we have fundamentally our own spirit, our “I”. Our “I” is not part of the soul in itself. It is the authentic spiritual being that you are that can start to learn to handle the soul, start to handle the way things go on in our head, in our heart and our hands, to bring them in a certain balance. So, what you think connects to what you do, what you feel connects to what you think, what you feel connect to what you're doing. And that needs schooling of the soul. It is not coming by nature or is not coming by godly interventions. Or by evolution. This is something that is our own responsibility. Namely that we start to school our soul in dialogue with other persons.

Four dimensions of soul schooling

I will mention four dimensions, how to school your soul. This soul schooling we can do today as spiritual beings, as individual beings, as responsible beings.

The first thing is that you internalize your past life by giving it a sense. I'm a little bit older guy, and I have already a long life behind me. And the amazing thing

is that I can describe my life as a total disaster, a total failure. There are many moments of failure, of not being really in touch, not really being balanced. But I can also describe my life as a big surprise. My life has been totally different than I expected it to be. So how to create sense in your life, how to give your life a sense by looking back and reflecting on your life and internalizing it? What happened in your life, in your own soul? The soul is the reflective space, or to say it is the reflective time, to create sense of your own biography.

Another soul schooling element is meeting the other, serving the other. The motto for 3000 years humanity is: How can we do the good and serve the other one, can meet the other person? That's a path of soul development: to open up for the other person and to learn how to meet each other and how to serve each other in our soul development.

I think as another element also it's very important to learn to observe phenomena and to learn to express yourself in a personal way. Learn to become visible for others, but also to start to see others in their full being. Observing the world, observing what's going

on in the world, but also expressing yourself in that world. And doing that in a personal way is an enormous schooling of the soul. You become a better observer, you are better able to express yourself. And this all works if we appeal to the “I” of the other person, as another person appeals to our “I”. We don't appeal to all the problems and all the issues, and all the things that belong to the soul but we appeal to the “I” handling the soul and its issues. This is, I think, the fundamental issue of the leadership in your biography: to appeal to the one who is the leader of your biography, to build on the “I” of the other person in the meeting, in the reflection, in the serving.

Continuous soul development

I think during thousands of years, everything has come and everything has gone. Except one thing that is that the human soul has continued to develop itself and every new generation does construct that individual soul further. The development of the soul is the only continuous red thread through the whole history of humanity. Everything else disappears. But

soul development stays. A small step soul development also may stay with yourself, with your “I”.

Your destiny

I think a very important issue in the biography is dealing with your destiny. And to be able to do that, I have three expressions here which one can work on.

That is: **to be embodied**. Really live, so to say, in your body and develop your body in terms of trying to live a healthy bodily life and not to hang a little bit outside your body.

That is: **to be souled**. That means that you are really in touch with the process and the people you meet.

That is: **to be inspired**. That is that you are really connected to your impulse. These are things that we have been exploring together in our biographical exploration, creating good process, working with your impulse, dealing with your biographical question, taking initiative and steps.

Are you free to shape your own destiny, or is your destiny shaped by others? How are you going to shape your destiny in your life in the coming years?

The exercise.

A short individual preparation with two questions. Are you free to shape your own destiny or is your destiny arranged by others? This has to do with this paradox of the soul. Your ideal, your ideas, is that the same as what you do? Are you free to shape your biography, do you have this feeling? it's a reflection on your biography up till now.

What is your main feeling about what you wanted to create of your own life? Will you follow what is expected of you, or do you follow your own impulse under any circumstances? How is that balance between the two, so to say?

And then the second question is, how are you going to lead your life in the coming years? What is the perspective? Is there something that you see about 'my leadership of my life in the future'? Can you try to formulate that leadership? How are you going to lead your life in the coming years?

Think about these two questions and make some notes of what's coming up in you.

Then dialogue about this with two other persons. They listen with heart quality, and reflect and dialogue on what they heard from you. You listen to them and then try to formulate the fruit of the life as it is to be seen now at the moment, the fruit of your life in terms of the leadership of your life, the fruit of your leadership of your biography.

Reflections on the exercise

I very much appreciate my teammates because they summarize what I'm doing recently, what I'm believing in recently, and they gave me some time to think about what is my past and my person. This gives me a foundation for the future me.

I feel I just start to share my story. Probably just not yet in an organized way. I just think what happened to me in the past and then just share it. I'm not sure why I say that content, but it makes sense to me. So, it's good to have the chance to say it out loud.

For me, it was very interesting. And it brought me to an insight how to connect the reality also with the questions I have. So that was very fruitful to me to make a connection between what I am living now and the question that I am beginning to discover.

It was so nice to think about the future. And my decision is, every day to live my life with my head, with my heart, with my hands in balance: with awareness, feelings and truth. I need to create a process for that to happen. I need to create some scenarios. But the most important for me is to be connected with this moment. What's good for me now in this.

It let me enjoy the different fruit of life from different people, and which fruit can guide me in my future. I'm surprised I had such a big and sweet fruit from my life experience.

This topic is very interesting. I had the chance to reflect on my destiny. So how I was born in this family and meeting my relatives, grandparents, and mom

and dad. So, I realized that the freedom that I have is a blessing from the family because I have all this blessing to be myself and have the freedom to choose. I can enjoy the freedom now. Now I realize that I begin to link to the river of life. I can see in a bigger context who I am and what I'm becoming.

It's a wonderful experience. Even though the whole experience is a kind of disaster for me. But the dialogue process was very enjoyable. And they help me to see my attitude to my destiny and also how I am going to lead my life in the future. It gave me a kind of fulfillment having this connection with the people, the relationships.

Rounding off

I think this issue of the destiny, the questions of our origin, the development of our soul and freedom that we have or don't have are really key elements for leadership in your life. I started to see that maybe it's a blessing that life is not harmonious, that life is paradoxical and it's an issue. And there's a question and there is a step. And it's also in that sense, a

creation. And not only a personal creation, it is also a creation between us. I think that is based on the fact that the natural cohesion that we come out of, the basis that we have been given, is not fully carrying us anymore into the future. So, we have to start to take responsibility ourselves for our destiny, which I think is in a certain way a new step in humanity, a new phenomenon. Especially in creating our destiny, we are very much depending on and in dialogue with others. This has to do also with this element that we were looking at, the personal community and your community that you create. I think the fulfillment in life, so to say, has very much to do with being in the lead yourself to create your destiny. In that I am with others in situations that are not harmonious, but that always have a kind of question in it with always a kind of tension. Then we can school our soul. And that is also my personal experience making steps and exploring questions and integrating things that I have seen or discovered in my life. That gives you in the end a kind of foundation or standpoint on which you can stand with your "I", with your individual personality and deal really in a human way with the

issues that you meet, the challenges that you meet. That's also the blessing of growing a little bit older in time. More and more you can come yourself in the lead. And you can start to see also back to your life and recreate some things in terms of the sense of your life. What may be was not pleasant in the past, maybe has contributed really to a step that you have been taking in your life.

That was the key idea of all these chapters, steps that we have been taking, the question, the importance of the community, things like that.

The next chapter we will look a little bit more specific into the future by creating a few scenarios for ourselves. How we could lead our biography in a way that even certain dreams that we have, certain wishes that we have, creative ideas that we have, maybe even impossible ideas, nevertheless can become part of our life.

“I” to “I” meeting

Everybody that you meet, it can be a client or somebody in the shop or in the taxi or whatever, this

person can be your teacher, so to say, can be your source of inspiration, where you can meet on the "I" to "I" level. We can share our own life with them like we do here in the exercises and help each other to look in the mirror of the eyes of the other and see yourself more sharply.

What I have learned also that if we are complaining all the time, you cannot find peace and joy in your soul every moment. That has become a motto for myself in life, based on practical life experiences: don't cheat, don't lie, don't complain, don't just criticize, but try to deal with the issue. Because all these things like cheating or lying are a kind of escape to face the reality and to deal with the reality. I think everybody can do it. If you can also be great enough to ask support of the other we can do this together. The eight principles of buddha also say these kinds of things.

Resistance

If there's something you cannot change, you just listen to it and find the courage to follow it. Very often in the beginning, when you have a certain

impulse or you want to do something or want to become somebody, then there's a lot of resistance in the traditional context. Because many other people, it can be the parents, it can be the neighbors, they have maybe a different view of what you are or what you should be, where you should go. And like I said before, it's a kind of balancing act not to just resist. Not only just go your own way, but to follow your own impulses in dialogue with the others, so that others can also move along with you in a certain way and not just get lost, lose the connection with your track. That's, I think, very important in leadership, that you become an example for others also. Especially when you get older you can become an example for younger generations: that it is possible to become a Free person in that sense, but nevertheless be fully integrated in society and communities, in your families and so on.

Are you very much the leader in your own soul of what you want to connect to, what you want to commit to, what you want to do, what you want to respond to. To be the master of your own soul, so to

say, and not having other people being the master of your soul. Don't hang outside your body. But cultivate your body. Take care of your body. Because it has a lot of energy in it, has a lot of potential in it as well as character. It has genes in it, history in it, has your ancestors in it. So be in your body, and don't try to escape the body but care for your body. And being inspired means that the leading idea, ideal is really with you all the time. Don't forget your ideal. Because life very often seems to ask of you to give up your ideal and just do something else. And I think the soul that is the Challenge. The Challenge to master the life. Caring for the body and to care for the spirit is supporting that.

Homework

The homework is to think about your future and what could be a leading star for your future. So maybe you're on the point where you can start to make some choices or take some decisions or say goodbye to something that is not really so relevant any more in your life. By thinking a little bit about this kind of life issues, opportunities, wishes, dreams you prepare

very well for the last chapter where we will design a few scenarios for ourselves to see what is the key decision for my future in which I can be a leader: what is the key 'leadership in my biography' decision.

Chapter 7: Seeing the future

We work on the future of our life, our leadership in our biography, and one can ask oneself, can we see the future? I myself have the image that the future lies behind you. So maybe with our eyes, we can see the past and see what we have been creating as the eyes are in the front of our head, but the future is behind us and therefore we have our ears to monitor the future. The ears sit a little bit back on our head and so maybe we can hear the future. We can hear the future in each other when we dialogue. But we cannot see it. We can hear it like it was described that the cosmos is also, let's say, very much existing in terms of sound and melody, beat and rhythm that we can hear with our ears.

We will try to explore the future in such a way that we try to develop three scenarios, three different scenarios about our future. In terms of the leadership in your biography, it's not just a general picture, but it is about how do you see the way you're going to lead your own biography in the future?

In the first scenario you can think a little bit about this and see what comes up in me, what do I hear, so to say, when things will go on as they are now for the next three years. So, it's a continuation of what have been going on like now. And if there's something to change, that change will come from outside. Something can happen from the outside. Very sure in certain ways there is change. But it is not that you really want to create a change in your life, in your biography. So how would it look like in three years' time when you go this path, like you're going now?

The second scenario is a very different scenario. What is my big dream that in three years' time has come true. My surroundings have moved with me. So maybe in you is living a dream about something that you would like to realize. It can be a small dream but it is an influential dream. And you have realized this dream. How would it look like then in three years' time? How would you like it to be then? And how is your surrounding moving with you and your family and your partner, maybe your work, your communities and yourself. That's a scenario too, a different image of the future.

The third scenario is: the unimaginable has happened. So, my environment and I have changed fundamentally. So maybe somewhere inside of you, there is even something else than a dream but it is something you never thought it would be possible to realize that.

It is something that is living in you, but you don't think that is realistic. You never would realize this. If I give an example for myself. For instance, my scenario number three would be that I will give a speech in the United Nations about the existence of the human soul and how to develop the soul. I think this will be never realizable. I won't show up in the United Nations. But nevertheless, something is living in me like this to really promote or share worldwide this new image of the soul, so to say.

So, you realize this unimaginable element in yourself and your environment and yourself have changed, in a way, fundamentally by making that step in your biography.

Three different scenarios we can start to think about. Describe each scenario as a leadership scenario for to

give your life form in the next three years. It is important to give space to what is the key point? Who is part of this? Where does it take place? How will I act? Why do I like this?

So, reflect on these three different scenarios. Make some notes for yourself. What comes up when you think of this scenario? And then ask yourself the question what choice do I have to make now for my leadership of my own biography to advance? What is it telling me?

It's not necessary to choose between these three different images of possible futures that appeared out of you when you listen to the future. If you look at the three of them, maybe it tells you something about what to move forward, what to take in hand, or what to let go. Maybe it can clarify something. It's a kind of biographical decision.

It is good to find speaking partners to share the three scenario's and the decision you want to take. You describe to these other persons your three scenarios and tell them which decision to take. Now if something comes up like that, like I said, it's not

necessary to choose between the three scenarios. The invited persons can listen to you on the will level and give feedback to you. So is there a will speaking, is there something you want to create in your biography. Now maybe it is the time to really make a step. Based on the dialogue you can formulate the next step in your leadership of your biography.

Final Reflections

Going through the process of reflecting and researching your leadership in your biography, there are fruits to take with you in the future.

What kind of fruits we can think of?

Here you find some personal reflections of persons that went through the process.

As a first step everyone was searching their own biographical question and then we researched three change situations in everyone's biography. Also, we searched for our own biographical impulse.

Leadership development key points that have been developed during 33 years opened up for me

inspiring moments to be the pilot in my own live. Then we worked through work-, family-, and personal processes and find common guiding principles and inner voices. The next question was how we lead our live and take care of our soul? Being embodied, being be-souled, being inspired are life challenges in every moment: how free are you to shape your own biography, how are you going to lead your life in the coming years, how you support a good sustainable health of your body and soul?

In my learning process freedom, respect and love as real human values became visible in common dialogues. Fear for the unknown, hate for what blocks us and guilt for dishonesty can be transformed in freedom in our reflection, respect in our relations and love for what we do and contribute. For me living with a question, living in a biographical process, living in dialogue opens up again and again peace and joy in my soul.

How we and our clients can use more leadership questions and biography dialogues in family life, working life and personal life, that will be my research question in the future and will form the next

steps in my life. Also, how clients lead their biography out of their own individual impulse?

I started to understand the direction of my own biographic intent. I bring that alive within the context of my personal community. Others presented me with the challenges that I need to grow and to fully participate in the course of the cosmos. I think, from this experience I started to see that we are all entangled in the same process and thus can nourish each other, even though we may be separated by many thousands of miles and time zones, we are all part of that cosmos and of that process. And by bringing our lives, our individual arrows of intent together, we can support each other in that way. What is the gift? The gift this process has brought me, and I thank all of you for that, is that I will carry my impulses and our conversations with me, and use those to create warm memories around the arrow of my biographical intent as I run into the challenges that I will inevitably face.

I would like to share that I have some great findings. The first one is that I found out the answer of who I am. It has given me a very concrete picture of how I'm living in the last 40 years. And because I got a much clearer picture now, so it gives me the confidence for how to spend my time in the future. The second thing is, in the conversations with everyone, that I discover how should I position myself in different relationships? The relationship with my work, relationship with my family, and also the relationship with myself and the relationship with others. I realize that I need to be truly open with others in order to be sure to kick off a meaningful dialogue with other people, get to listen to other people. This is something that came from the conversation with our classmates. I need someone to give me that inspiration. And now this has become part of me. Also, how to keep a good harmony relationship with my family. So, this is about how to set my daily routine. This has become a very concrete step for helping myself how to set my daily routine. And the third one is how to set a reasonable goal for myself. To use my resources, including my time, and

my focus on something meaningful. I found in the conversation what is really and truly important to me. I can write a brief strategic plan for my life, which I would say in one word, I would describe it in one word with: simplicity. To make my life simple. To make my daily routine very simple. And to make my personal goal simple: just focus on something truly meaningful to myself. Lastly. When I had our lessons with everyone, it truly gave me a sense of a global citizenship. I could learn from people all over the world and I could apply the knowledge locally. This is something we can achieve together. All of you gave me a quality time and also the space to discover myself. I hope that in doing so, I also have given you quality time and space.

I get a lot of fruit from this course. Firstly, I have a clear understanding of knowing who am I by keeping to review my life stories. I know why I have become I and I know how to face the future. Secondly, I think because of this course, I have more reflection on myself. Now I have a better connection with my inner side compared with before. The inside of me has

become fulfilled. I really enjoy my inside change. And I enjoy my inside condition compared with the outside condition. And so nowadays, when my outside world has a big change, inside I can still keep peace, keep quiet. So that is a kind of joyful feeling. The third one is that I really appreciate all the people in front of the screen. Thank you for all of you sharing your life stories. And thanks to all of you to share your opinions. And so, we have created deep connections. In the future, I hope we can keep connected with each other.

I learned a lot about myself and about how to make connections with others. And recently I find myself somehow like surfing on the waves. Sometimes I'm really good at it. But sometimes I really have to say I am not so good at it. Sometimes I just put myself down into the water and then I have to get up again. This is really a great experience for me with the biographical exercises to really learn about who am I. Especially for today's session, I start to be clearer about what is my intent and what is my focus and what kind of a person I really want to be. And this

could give me a lot of different energy. I think this is all about relationship. I think the journey has just started. And for me, it's more and more a journey together with other people and a journey more into exploring myself who I really want to be.

I came to a phrase that I think is summarizing it all somehow: “if you lead your own biography, you will be able to lead other people”. That is the impression that I have out of myself and my own experience. Being a leader of my own biography, I can be a leader for other people and for myself. It helped a lot to find the next steps I will do, related to my own biography here. One of the things that was said to me is that I must choose to sing more. And I will try it right now. I will sing a verse that I like very much, written by a Brazilian singer who was very active during the military dictatorship that we had here. And I will sing it to you, now.

Today brought me closer to my dream. I was attempting to sit outside under the tree but then it started to rain. But that's what happens when you

align yourself with natural processes. The unpredictable happens. I want the trees to continue to flourish. And I have a piece of a very, very ancient tree there in the garden. So, I'm hoping today's trees will live their destiny and I play my part, so my dream is that they continue to flourish. I continue to live my life with Mike and my family. And that I listen to and hear the messages of the trees and the light and I find a way to share them on ways that inspire others. This course has been a bit like a tree. So, we're all the roots in our different parts of the world with our many ongoing connections, with impulses that resonated through. And we've been fed and watered by Cynthia, who have injected love into our network as well as practical organization. And at the other end Adriaan, our crown above our branches, have been bringing the perspective and the air and some new qualities for us to absorb and synthesize. Thank you both. And each of our sessions has been like the rings on the trees. So, my question is, how do I stay associated with my center and be present with others? So, I'm practicing here and now stepping through the ring of gratitude for my life so far, loving

the dialogue that has facilitated, each ring forming the quality of listening on the different levels and being heard and bringing listening to others. Recognizing my impulses to integrate them into my life beyond the invisible in order to design how to deal with the new. So, I didn't expect the rain. These are the fruits of my life I continue to enjoy. My process has been clarified and needs a lot more cleaning up. That's my life. My life task is to improve my processes in mortal time and space. So, there is much to continue, much to enjoy, much to be grateful for. And this work resonates beyond the rings of the tree, this sets up impulses out into the air and energy fields beyond us. And at that point, I will conclude with gratitude to each of you.

The time and space that we're together is a great exploration. Together, like I said, I got more interested in life and this call to our biography. Leadership in my biography has given me a lot of opportunities to see life as quite a very different thing. And I can say that maybe life is now more like a river to me. Like a river life is neither very small nor very large. If I can

understand life in its many opportunities to connect to the family and other communities, life becomes full of possibilities. Many aspects are awaiting me and are connecting us. So, it's not too small and it's not too big or not too large because like each time we connect to our life, we get the whole. It's very dynamic. More and more it sometimes seems like a game for me, but it's neither too real nor too fake. And the joy we have together is very real and at the end, I want to show my appreciation for life and for each of you that you shared your energy with me and that you have taught me a lot. Thanks for the joy.

I think this course included a free path to the past and the future. In the first three sessions it was about our path, to explore our path. To connect to your path, your past life, and not only your past life, but also your parents, your grandparents, and so on. The most powerful moment for me is the dialogue. I suddenly recalled my very first memory. This was in my age of three. I travelled with my grandpa from my hometown, a very small village to a city very far away from my hometown. And I remember in the dialogue,

I remember all the details of that day. I think that's the beginning of the journey of my life. And then when I recalled this memory, I certainly know where I came from and what I got from my mother and my grandpa, that is the courage of the life. That made me feel very, very strong at that moment. And that's the first part. And the second part is about how to make the right decision. And in this part, my inspiration is to choose my community, to change a community, or to create your own community. I'm doing a job about helping people to build their own learning community. And I found the model: "dialogue, process and biography" is very helpful for me. About our future in today's lesson, then for me, the inspiration is to live as if everything is okay and everything has come true. Because in the exercise I found the unimageable thing that I can live 200 years old. That means now I'm in a very young age. Even I'm 47 it means I can do everything I want. I can meet more people. I can try more and feel more. That's great.

We had very nice dialogues. Very, very, very nice. Thank you for the support. It helped me a lot because I'm in a moment of changing my life. In this moment to organize my life, organize myself. This seminar helped me to create a plan, a weekly plan. And it will help me a lot. I create a process. I think I improved myself knowledge. I'm more aware about my moment. I have been doing the balancing between the relation with others and the relation with myself. Because I was very out. Now I'm looking for me again. I left my parents family in my country. I work all the time. And this course brought me more clarity about my goals. And it's so important the exercise of today. It was so nice I could see clearly my future. And before I couldn't. So, I'm very happy because of this. I want to continue my life every day with inspiration, being present, action, love, and lightness. And I want to continue helping people and helping leaders in the development of their leadership. I am very interested to know more about biography and would like to use it more in my courses.

It's very precious to know all of you, especially to know you in your very deep lifestyle story. A real opportunity for me to know someone deeply. So that's nice, I feel very touched. At this moment, actually, I am in the process of unfolding my life. And I found in the seven weeks, probably more than seven weeks, I rediscovered my path. I reconnect to the dots in my life. And also, I feel very supportive in this group and also it is inspiring. I also feel it's a very trust space for me. It is strengthening my awareness a lot. The major one is my knowledge of process. I never thought about the processes in our life. I feel it's just a starting point to continue to reflect on my life and also feel my leadership in my own biography.

I would like to keep this community. We have this deep connection. And we'll see how to make it continue. Whatever we'll find the chances. All of you, we can do it together.

it was extremely inspiring to do this together. It's a totally new experience for myself to do. To do it in this way, and to see if we can touch, let's say,

essential elements in the life and following this process and supporting this process. I'm totally grateful and very much inspired and sometimes very much surprised about how you together started to deal with these issues, questions and explore them and dialogue on them and accepting the steps again and again, going through the same little process and build together. The international connection I found it very, very amazing. I think a small contribution we made together to build the world community on very important issues. Maybe the traditional institutes are not very able in the future to carry our destiny, that maybe we need more and more each other to help each other to live our destiny and to handle the complexities and to deal with sometimes very funny things like corona and everything that happens to us. I'm very grateful that you joined us and that we could do this together.

And thank you, Cynthia, for being the initiative taker, the organizer, the heart of the whole thing.

I hope you will enjoy your certificate and see it once in a while.

I don't think this is the last time we'll create opportunities to get together and reflect on the leadership in our own biography.

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