Human Soul Development by Good Organising

MARKING 50 YEARS OF WORK IN HUMAN AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Adriaan Bekman

Editorial Summary

In this book, Adriaan Bekman sets out ten *'keys to changing our social system*' that have emerged from his research over many years. These ten keys can be read as a tentative conclusion to his theoretical and practical work over the last forty years, culminating in the tenth key, which he summarises as follows: *'our unique individual personality as the basis for our social existence alongside others.'*

The book also includes a study of seven executives and the 2017 'values workshop', offering a practical illustration of its approach. This method is based on establishing a rhythm of reflective meetings, encouraging participants to contribute as individuals, drawing on their own strengths and vulnerabilities, in an open and constructive dialogue.

This work invites reflection on human development and social change, emphasising the importance of individuality and dialogue in building a harmonious future.

Human Soul Development

by

Good Organising

The philosophy of Adriaan Bekman

Marking 50 years of work in human and organisational development

Dedicated to all my principals, customers and colleagues.

Foreword by Harry Kunneman

Adriaan is a remarkable person. We first met in the late 1990s whilst he was working on his PhD, during which I had the privilege of supervising him. His book *Bewogen Organisaties* is the result of that work. The book was nominated for the annual Order of Advisers Book Prize. Since then, we have stayed in touch, have collaborated on various occasions, and I have continued to follow his professional development through the many books, both large and small, that he has written. As he once confided in me, a significant proportion of these were written during the many long flights he undertook to overseas branches of the IMO Foundation, the Institute for Human and Organisational Development – a successful, self-organising community of closely collaborating organisational consultants, of which Adriaan is the founder and driving force. The IMO's website describes their work as follows: 'Over the past four years, the 60 IMO consultants have worked with their clients in around four hundred organisations in the following countries: Brazil, China, Denmark, Romania, Finland, Germany, Russia, the Netherlands, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Thailand and Switzerland. We work in a horizontal manner, driven by a strong sense of commitment; we set things in motion and place meaning at the heart of what we do. We share a love for our clients and their organisations and take the initiative in this regard.' This description not only provides an insight into the global reach of his work, but also applies perfectly to Adriaan himself. I know few others who work and live so consistently in a horizontal manner and who so tirelessly to evoke and nurture that capacity in others. Adriaan brings not only his many years' experience in the horizontal development of organisations, but also his deep social commitment and his remarkable ability to consistently and independently seek connections between the level of personal meaning and inspiration, the level of professional practice within organisations, their horizontal governance, and finally the shaping of social developments against the backdrop of a more just and sustainable way of living together.

In this book, he briefly outlines ten 'keys to change for our social system' that have emerged from his years-long quest for 'meaningful social changes that meet the vital needs of people today to achieve personal development in harmony with those around them .' These ten keys can be read as a tentative conclusion to his theoretical and practical work over the last forty years, culminating in the tenth key, which he summarises as follows: '*our unique individual personality as the basis for our social existence alongside others.'*

Adriaan also describes a small-scale study involving seven executives from large organisations in a 'values workshop' which was launched on his initiative in 2017. At his request, I was delighted to contribute to the fascinating discussions and the instructive exchanges around the large table in what was then Adriaan and his partner Jutta's home in Zeist. In this book, he reports on the research we undertook together, drawing in part on three written personal reflections from participating executives. It is a practical illustration of his inspiring approach, which I would like to summarise – albeit in highly simplified terms – as creating a rhythm of reflexive encounters that are not overshadowed from the outset by differences in position, and challenging those involved, through his own example, to participate as individuals, drawing on their strengths and their vulnerabilities. As such, this report on the small-scale cooperative research he has initiated also bears witness to his unwavering commitment to personally putting into practice the ten keys to 'meaningful social change' that he offers us.

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Foreword

Over the course of 50 years of work in human and organisational development, I have, intensively and in collaboration with others, supported people and organisations in their development and change processes. In doing so, my aim has been – and remains – to help people achieve a meaningful and fulfilling life and to contribute to meaningful changes that address the long-standing questions facing individuals, organisations and society. In this book, I wish to bring together some of the most striking insights I have gained in this work.

In doing so, I draw in part on texts I have published in the many books that have been published over the years .

I am grateful to have been able to live this life and to have been able to make this contribution.

There are still years ahead in which I wish to address, with love and care, the issues that cross my path, together with the people I love.

Part 1: A Philosophical Exploration of Organised Life

For 50 years, I have been engaged with issues relating to human and organisational development. It has been an exploration that has never grown tedious, and in which temporary answers have time and again led to a re-evaluation of how to tackle these issues. Over the years, I have encountered many management theories, as well as theories, concepts and models put forward by academics and consultants. As a rule, these concepts and models promised the same thing: success. However, my own leadership and consultancy practice showed me instead the constant struggle to find the right answer and the right course of action when faced with issues for which there is no immediate solution. The future always calls for fresh and new answers which, on closer inspection, turn out to be related to the issues and answers of the past.

Ultimately, I decided to delve deeply into what influential philosophers have offered us as humanity over the past 2500 years and that is the pursuit of meaningful dialogues on life's questions, through which we can interpret and create meaning from what we encounter.

So let me begin, first of all, with a philosophical exploration of the issue of good organisation. This can provide a sound basis for further, more detailed explorations into the essence and spirit of good organisation and good leadership.

Organised life

Introduction

Throughout my working life, I have intensively explored the organised life that we, as human beings, lead across the globe. I have observed that the issue of this organised life is becoming ever more significant. This is due to the far-reaching developments during that same period, encompassing technology, means of communication, systems, controls, specialisms, coordination mechanisms, financial management, professional expertise – indeed, just about everything – have taken place. As families, we have become organised within our homes. As family communities, we have become anonymous functional systems.

In my observation, a growing distance has emerged during this period between senior managers, middle managers and staff within an increasingly functional organisational structure, whereby senior managers deal mainly with other senior managers, middle managers with other middle managers, and professionals with other professionals – focusing primarily on the system and its objectives, but less on one another. The focus is on results; the figures must add up, with the danger that the substance may be lost sight of, relationships become purely functional, and the sense of purpose is lost.

Over the past decades, I have observed an increasing disengagement among professionals and managers within their organisations, a rise in burnout (16% of the Dutch workforce are affected by burnout, according to a recent TNO study), and a lack of interest among younger people in committing to an organisation for the long term.

Conversely, I see a growing focus on protocols, safety systems, inspections and audits, all designed to cover and mitigate every risk, thereby restricting people's creative freedom. Ultimately, it's all about achieving the planned result.

In short, the result is: For many of us, the workload has increased whilst the sense of fulfilment derived from our work has diminished. Furthermore, the sense of connection between employees and their organisations is waning. Only 20 per cent now feel strongly committed to the organisation where they work. Fifty years ago, that figure was 80 per cent.

This is a cause for concern and presents us with a challenge.

Could there be a crisis of meaning in the organised communities in which we work and live? Is there perhaps a leadership crisis within organisations when it comes to addressing these issues?

Together with colleagues, my clients and members of my professional network, we conducted research.

Here are the key findings, which also provide an overview of what is discussed further in this book.

We explored leadership

First of all, we explored leadership within organisations and concluded the following:

Leadership has traditionally been associated with the leader who guides the community. He determines the fate of the people in the community. Later, we came to recognise managers who act as leaders within organisations. There are those who give direction and those who take the lead. Today, we see personal leadership among professionals who independently shape the form and content of their processes, focusing on their clients. In our organised world, this now converges in the leadership of senior executives, managers and professionals.

There is no universal concept of leadership that senior executives, managers and professionals can apply to achieve good leadership. Leadership is based on insights gained through personal experience and lessons learnt. Leadership does, however, have a common aim: it seeks to motivate and inspire people to do the right thing.

Good leadership is not solely dependent on the leader as an individual, their moral character and competence, but is also a creative process within the community that fosters development and in which many people participate.

When top leaders engage with themes and issues that also concern the organisation's managers and which professionals encounter in their work with clients, there is a good chance that leadership within the organisation will function effectively; after all, everyone understands each other regarding what is at stake and can focus their attention and efforts on what really matters.

Leadership is distinct from management. Management is a relatively new discipline and involves the effective organisation of working conditions. Leadership is about inspiring people to take action. *Management* is primarily operational, focused on output, and vertically oriented towards hierarchy and the achievement of objectives; *leadership* is primarily developmental, focused on purpose-creation, and horizontally oriented towards value creation and collaboration . Managers can shape both dimensions. But this only works if managers and staff demonstrate leadership together.

We may need to move away from the idea that top managers lead middle managers, and that middle managers lead – or indeed must lead – staff. That is no longer a given. We lead one another, and leadership today is much more of a dialogical, horizontal process within the community in which positive outcomes can be achieved. In that sense, leadership is something that applies to us all. Leadership functions as a process when we, as leaders, interact and communicate with one another. As leaders, we understand one another, whereas as bosses and staff we speak different functional languages and no longer understand one another so well. In short, horizontal leadership is for everyone and desired from everyone!

We explored the search for meaning

How does the search for meaning come about within the organised context in which we work and live, and what is the significance of the search for meaning as a leadership challenge? That was our research question.

Meaning is closely linked to inspiration. In natural communities such as the family, meaning and inspiration are part of everyday life. We love one another and we argue with one another.

Organised life within an organised community, by contrast, is functional and focused on achieving goals. Whereas in our natural coexistence we have, for centuries, been dealing with the natural human soul and human well-being, this is not a given in organised life. The organisation ‘in itself’, however, can be seen precisely as a manifestation of the human soul—of human souls. Everything that people create as an organised entity stems from a human idea and must be maintained by people, as well as imbued with meaning. In human creation, there is no self-evident harmony, no absolute coherence such as that which is present in the natural soul. In this sense, we can describe the human organised soul as paradoxical, as well as its manifestation, the organisation. Both the soul and the organisation must be nurtured by us and constantly recreated, and they manifest as meaning-giving organisms only when we actually create that meaning in our own actions. That is an essential task of leadership.

Meaning is linked to being inspired. The question is: what inspires us? This may well be, above all, the organisation’s original impulse – that for which it was and is intended. Working with the client also provides inspiration, as the client is the organisation’s existential partner who needs this impulse and who thereby secures the organisation’s raison d’etre. These are two sources from which the organisational individual draws nourishment, and through which he or she experiences the meaning of his or her work. A sense of purpose can be threatened by excessive organising and protocol, which restrict the creative scope of the working individual. Our drive for ‘Formtrieb und Sachtrieb’ all too easily overshadows the much-needed attention to the ‘Spieltrieb’ (Schiller).

A sense of purpose is intrinsically linked to a person's inner life and to the questions that preoccupy and motivate them. Above all, exploring issues and experimenting with new possibilities sets a person in motion. Creative collaboration with others, co-creation with a third party in mind, helps to give meaning to the lives of organised people.

Just as leadership plays out between people, so too does the search for meaning. Creating a beautiful, reflective process together, engaging in dialogue with one another about the 'why' question – the question of meaning – and thereby helping to shape that meaning based on one's own life story, provides us with a solid foundation for meaningful work and the experience of meaning. In short, horizontal meaning-making is for everyone and desired by everyone!

The nature of the community

Demonstrating leadership and the search for meaning are strongly determined by the nature of the community in which they take place. We are familiar with, and form part of, closed natural communities as well as organised open communities.

The family, the village or the community of shared beliefs are manifestations of a natural closed community. This natural closed community has the meaning of its existence and of its leadership inherent within itself. They are determined by heredity. The organised open community exists because of a third party situated outside the community: the customer and the supplier. In interaction with this third party, the organisation continually recreates the purpose of its existence, as well as the leadership that determines it.

People who cannot tolerate one another in natural communities due to differences in background and ideology can nevertheless work together for a lifetime within organised communities.

When a community is closed and therefore inward-looking, a fixed hierarchy prevails amongst its members. In a closed community, relationships play the leading role. There is love and desire, but in the closed community phenomena such as psychological power, dominating and being dominated, violence and abuse. When a community opens up and turns outwards, it can serve others, but at the same time all manner of things – including undesirable ones – can blow into the community, and all sorts of things can be passed on from the community to its surroundings.

The individual, as part of both the natural and the organised community, can shape their own personal community together with the people with whom they spend their life with. These may be family members, friends, colleagues or clients. It is this personal community that supports the individual and within which they can demonstrate their own leadership and sense of purpose.

You could also call it 'the community of trust'.

A common thread, a passion, an aspiration that we have been pursuing in our explorations over many years is the question *'how the inner world of humankind and the outer, organised world created by humankind relate to one another in such a way that there can be talk of the healthy development of both humankind and organisations, and of good organisation' '*. In

my view, this question is of great significance for addressing pressing social issues such as the preservation of the Earth and all its living beings.

The question and the approach

The purpose of our exploration was, and remains, to gain a clearer picture of:

. how human life unfolds in natural/closed contexts and in organised/open contexts,

. which leadership processes, fuelled by people's inner worlds, take place in this context,

. which organisational and work processes unfold in the organised external world, and

. how the leadership of organisations and the organised community, of which we are all a part, can address this in such a way that human and organisational development that is healthy and meaningful for our society can take place.

I would like to articulate the *core idea* on which we base our exploration of the organisation as a community, its leadership and sense of purpose as follows:

Traditional, natural communities are, in principle, closed communities, in which community members are bound to one another relationally for life, may become entangled in relational problems and must find a way out of them, and are, in effect, condemned to do so for the rest of their lives. This leads to a quest for liberation among community members, an awakening to their own souls.

Organised communities are, in principle, open communities in which community members provide a service to others or third parties and must, in doing so, engage in a constant struggle together to ensure continuity. This can lead to a desire for connection amongst community members and foster an awareness that there is another person who gives meaning to our existence.

In other words: '*your father is and always will be your father; your boss and your client are not always your boss and your client'.*

In short:

Traditional, natural communities are a gift we receive at birth; organised communities are something we must acquire.

Traditional, natural communities are primarily inward-looking; organised communities are primarily outward-looking.

The traditional community possesses its purpose inherently; the organised community must add that purpose itself.

In the traditional community, it is 'always returning to the source, the origin'. In the organised community, it is 'always taking another step into the unknown, into the future'.

If the natural community is developed into an open community, that is to say, if it focuses on the personal development and emancipation of its members, then it can cope with internal relational problems. It runs the risk of falling apart.

If the organised community becomes a more closed community, this will initially foster a stronger sense of solidarity and a pooled strength; however, this may lead to relational problems between community members and may ultimately in the long run because it loses its outward focus – the very reason for its existence.

Both within the natural community and the organised community, personal connections arise between people, based on a freely chosen common theme that is pursued together with others out of personal interest. It is this personal community, the community of trust, that will shape people's personal destinies in the future and within which unique individuals can freely work together for the common good.

This forms the foundation for our personal leadership and the creation of meaning in our lives.

Personal Leadership

The personal community of trust

The organised community

The natural community

What do we wish to contribute?

Forming and being part of a community is perhaps the most essential context in which human souls can live. The moment a person is forced to leave the community, the soul is broken. Yet leaving a community of one's own free will can also mean the liberation of a human soul.

Out of community, the new is born. All life's crucial moments are shared within the community of which one is a part.

Community is linked to leadership. The development of the community and its governance require leadership. Community is also linked to meaning. The meaning of human life is connected to the values and impulses shared within the community.

It has always struck me how little conscious attention is paid in management and organisational literature to the significance of community-building and the development of a free human spirit for effective organisation. In my view, these are fundamental components for whether or not people lead a good life and, as such, are issues that have preoccupied us for centuries. Even the ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle posed questions within their communities about our origins as humanity, the existence or otherwise of the soul and of human freedom; and these questions remain highly relevant to the way people organise their lives today. These questions relate to the fundamental philosophical dilemma of whether life is about the pursuit of pleasure or the pursuit of knowledge. Both relate to the meaning of life. Both are fundamental qualities of being a soul. They are linked to the question of what makes people happy and also how people can come to do what is good.

Since we live primarily in an organised world and form part of organised communities, these primordial questions about community and the soul have receded into the background. The focus is now mainly on utility, the immediate satisfaction of needs, controlled prosperity and the attainment of lasting personal well-being.

Nevertheless, I believe I can perceive that it is precisely within people's inner worlds that things can sometimes become quite intense. People are seeking for themselves the liberating path out of their inner turmoil now that the old certainties of faith and trust in God – as nourishment for the soul – and an existence embedded in the natural community are disappearing, and we are waking up to a scientific world of explanations and recommendations.

In my view, in our organised world, spiritual questions about a meaningful life within organised communities need to be posed anew. To this end, I have sought – and continue to seek – to contribute throughout my life.

Community and I - Soul

The nature of the organised community

Today, we all live and work in organised communities that serve people living and working outside these organised communities. In these organised communities, all manner of innovations are introduced and change is a constant feature. There is no lasting foundation other than the one that is recreated and nurtured anew each day. New people join the community and others leave the community.

Within the organised community, there is a defining hierarchy and goal-oriented functionality. We carry out specialised tasks and collaborate with others in doing so. However, within this community, we can move towards other areas, other roles, other responsibilities and powers. We can leave this community.

The organised community as a whole operates within the context of a 'crafting strategy', that is to say, action is taken on the basis of evolving insight. The creative and the systematic must strike a balance. Within the organised community, people act on their own impulses and link these impulses to those of the greater whole for a limited time. In these organised communities, the individual can rise to the occasion and shape their life into an ever-changing and evolving whole. Here, too, people can become bogged down in closed bureaucratic systems that force them to carry out a task in a 8 years at Shell

*In the 1970s, I worked for eight years at Shell companies as an in-house organisational developer, where I became familiar with the workings of a large multinational. During those eight years, I clearly sensed the tension between a closed, international Shell community elite – which leads all Shell companies and of which you can be a lifelong part – and the tough business environment where failure leads to the dismissal of staff. As As long as, as part of the international Shell elite, you met the expectations of the highest authorities, everything was fine. If you did anything that did not fit with policy, you immediately had a problem. For instance, whilst working for the Shell refinery in Curaçao, I co-authored a book with a colleague about the fear of independence and self-determination in the Netherlands Antilles, published by Van Gorcum under the title *Drempelvrees*. The managing director made it*

made it bluntly clear that such a thing did not fit in with Shell's culture: 'We abide by the law and do not interfere in anything' was his motto. It was one of the reasons why, after eight wonderful, fascinating and intense years at Shell, I eventually resigned and went on to work as an OO consultant.

My work as a consultant

As a consultant, I worked in many organisations across more than 10 countries and experienced different cultures, systems and practices. I saw how differently people can connect – or fail to connect – with their organisation, and how differently this affects the human spirit. I found this particularly true of community organisations where an older generation has long over a long period of time. I am thinking here of national and local government organisations, large and small social service providers in healthcare and education, and institutional social bodies such as churches, banks and insurance companies with a mission. This also applied to many family businesses where people work loyally for long periods. I encountered organisations driven by a sense of purpose, such as trade unions and non-profit development organisations with a mission and an ideal that keep people committed for a long time . For the younger generation, however, this lifelong connection is far less a given.

I also worked with industrial and commercial firms where people hop from one role to another. Last but not least, I see a trend emerging towards part-time work and full self-employment among the more than one million self-employed people in the Netherlands – those who must manage all aspects of a small-scale organisation through their own entrepreneurship and within collaborative networks of people.

In general, I would argue that the traditionally desired connection between person and organisation – as a lifelong commitment – is beginning to crumble. My parents still aspired to permanent positions and lifelong pension accrual. My children work on a project basis, seek interesting challenges and multiple connections, and have no need for a life-fulfilling connection with an organisation.

I see a trend towards an increasingly independent and self-reliant existence for many people, which may indicate that a third type of community is emerging. I call this third community the 'personal community of trust'. Everyone has the opportunity to build their own community, through networking and collaboration, in which lifelong connections with others are forged, with everyone supporting one another in independence, in trust and in support one another whilst working and living together in freedom.

Arnold Cornelis

The philosopher Arnold Cornelis also recognised this and beautifully articulated it in his threefold division: natural community – infrastructurally organised community – interactive, self-governing community. These are three layers of community that we have been building up worldwide over a long period of time.

We have traditionally been familiar with natural bonds. We have come to live together as husband and wife, as a village, as a community of shared beliefs. We share blood and soil and are connected to others in a natural and hereditary way. We have also witnessed the emergence of a global, organised infrastructure within which we can live and work: the

organised community. We have a number of common rules by which billions of people can function within these infrastructures: for example, 'give way to the right' or 'we work in paid employment'.

Now we are all working together on interactive self-governance as a means of building the personal community in which we can live and work.

People live out their lives within these three layers of community.

In summary :

In the natural community, hereditary compulsion is at work, and we have become thoroughly accustomed to it. The purpose of the community lies within.

In the organised community, the system operates in conjunction with hierarchy and functionality. The purpose of the community lies outside.

In the personal community, personal connection is at work. The purpose lies in the dialogical connection we enter into with one another in trust.

It is precisely it is within the personal community that the best in humanity can be realised: the qualities of freedom, love and respect. In freedom, we walk our path together with others and support one another out of respect and in love towards that which connects us.

Being able to be part of these three layers of community and to fully realise oneself as a person within them can lead to a beautiful and fulfilled life.

Community and the soul

Let me explore in more detail how the three communities mentioned earlier – the natural, organised and personal communities, relate to one another and how they affect the souls of the people living and working within them.

The natural community and the hereditary soul

The natural community is the oldest existing form of community among people. Family ties give rise to local communities such as villages and, later, towns; they also give rise to peoples and nationalities. The defining force of these communities is the principle of hereditary blood and soil . We are born of our ancestors and rooted in a natural community and a people. We cannot escape this. Our personal nature and character are shaped first and foremost by this heredity.

'The apple doesn't fall far from the tree', beautifully expresses all this.

We are brought up within our immediate local communities, and these shape our most fundamental outlooks on life. Religious and ideological beliefs play a significant role in this. It does make a difference whether you are born and brought up as a Christian, a Jew or a Muslim. It makes a difference whether you are Chinese or Dutch.

At birth, the natural community gathers round your cradle, and at death, it gathers round your grave. During significant events in between – such as baptism, marriage or a birthday – it is primarily the people with whom you have natural ties who come to the fore. Gradually, your friends join this circle, with whom you form warm relationships. We become, as it were, a bit like family to one another.

The natural community can be very closed in nature and thus become highly determinative of your fate: I follow in the footsteps of my forefathers in every respect through the line of descent and bear the responsibility to protect and preserve the cultural heritage that has been acquired. This often has to be secured against other natural communities, which can lead to conflict, indeed even war.

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The natural community finds its raison d'etre within itself; it is rooted in the community itself. This can be threatened by other cultures and the views, beliefs and ideologies of other natural communities. Human history is a long tale of warring natural communities that make life difficult – indeed, often impossible – for one another. This conflict also reflects what is taking place in the souls of the people involved. What has been handed down must be safeguarded and preserved at all costs. You even receive praise for 'driving out

the other who threatens the community'. Within the closed natural community, we also find this constant internal struggle, which can cause the community to degenerate. As soon as someone within the community begins to break away and seeks to forge new paths, the community reacts with shock and will do everything in its power to prevent this. Power plays a significant role here, accompanied by psychological pressure and ultimately degenerating into mutual abuse, sometimes extending as far as sexual abuse. The boundaries of morality become blurred and, ultimately, the most bizarre and inhuman acts are permitted in the name of the greater good of the community.

Ultimately, closed communities then fall apart. They cannot keep everything 'under wraps' nor can they keep all developments in their surroundings outside the door, outside the very soul of their community. Once the door opens, there is no turning back back. The family, the extended family, the religious congregation, the village, the nation – they all dissolve into new wholes.

It is chiefly through the rise of organised communities that this process of opening up the natural community has been set in motion worldwide, and for several centuries now, other communal forces have been at work.

The organised community and the formed soul

For several hundred years, many generations have joined organised communities. Initially, the traditional natural communities, having begun to lose their natural state of being, resorted to organised measures to hold things together. Constitutional states have emerged, along with organised working and living communities. All the life processes that had a place within the natural community – such as living, learning, working, socialising and praying – have become organised and are now carried out within organised institutions.

We go out into the world and encounter others within these organised contexts . An infrastructure of community bodies is emerging – religious, administrative and economic, which offer us processes in which we can participate. It is within these that our soul is now

shaped, and it is there that we encounter new realities which we have not traditionally known or experienced. Living, working and learning become individual pursuits carried out within various contexts.

The soul becomes an organised soul. We adopt what suits our personal lives, and as human beings we can become a cross-section of what is revealed and manifested in societies. A Chinese blacksmith in China can become a fan of the English football club Manchester United.

'We are influenced by what we associate with', as the saying goes, expresses this beautifully.

The organised soul is constantly confronted with the indeterminate and must learn to deal with it. Thus, this soul is a soul of change and renewal. This stands in tension with what the soul, in its natural state, is accustomed to doing, namely to seek out what is predestined and to conform to it. A

paradoxical tension arises within the soul, which mirrors a paradoxical tension in society. In society, everything that would naturally oppose one another within the natural community is forced to coexist. In organisations, people who could not tolerate one another in the natural community can work well together for years. We serve one another as customers regardless of faith, background, skin colour, gender or age. That is wonderful and creates a new connection. In this context, we can stand up as individuals and make ourselves known. We can base our lives more and more on what holds value and meaning for us as individuals. In society, this leads to the closed, natural community and spiritual life coming into conflict with the open, organised community and spiritual life. As a human being, I must divide my attention between home and work. This now forms the basis for the emergence of a third community: the personal community of trust.

The personal community of trust and the 'I'-soul

People move between both communities: the natural and the organised community. There they meet other people and live, work and learn together with them. From this, new connections between people arise – connections that stem from the bonds these people have forged themselves in trust. We share something with one another that is not predestined, but to which we have committed ourselves together and which we continue to develop together. As soon as we meet again, that process of exploration and development continues. We share with one another what is going on in our personal souls and the questions that preoccupy us. We develop a new kind of intimacy, a new kind of love and respect; we develop a relationship in freedom.

This elevates the individual into a world of conscious souls. It is precisely the moral questions that we can share with our self-chosen and self-created community. This is already taking place at an early age amongst young people today. They support one another in their personal growth, give each other feedback, share moral considerations, learn together from mistakes made, and seek a new connection with what they have inherited from both the natural and the organised community.

Community and Soul

- **The natural community and the inherited soul**
- **The organised community and the formed soul**
- **The personal community of trust and the 'I'-soul**

Community – Leadership – Meaning

We have distinguished between the natural community, the organised working community and the personal community of trust.

All three of these community types are intimately linked to *leadership* and *meaning*.

Leadership within the community is a manifestation of the community soul, aimed at achieving something together.

Meaning within the community is the shared reflective contemplation of what has been done and the attribution of value to it – a learning outcome.

These are two movements through which the community soul reveals itself. This is most beautiful when it occurs with a sense of self-awareness – an awareness that pays attention to one's own being and that of the other.

Leadership relates to taking the initiative in engaging with others, setting their issues in motion, and identifying and taking the next step.

Meaning-making is the reflective look back, also together with others, on what has been done in order to thereby gain a conscious insight that guides you on the further path of your life.

In these processes of leadership and finding meaning, the becoming of a community takes place through the opening and closing of the soul. We come together and enter into dialogue. This requires a rhythmic opening and closing of the soul, a rhythmic being-with-the-other and being-with-oneself.

In leadership, we work together with a view to serving a third party. This requires opening the soul, observing the other person, responding to their needs, making oneself available, placing trust in them, and offering the other person the very best you have to give.

In the search for meaning, we come together to fathom the meaning of what has happened, to create meaning, and to learn from and with one another so that we may both continue on our own and shared paths. This requires closing one's soul, looking within oneself and further internalising the fruits of reflection.

In our organised lives, this requires an awareness of both taking action and reflecting and internalising.

In organisations today, the emphasis is primarily on action and moving forward, whilst far less attention is paid to reflection, contemplation and finding meaning.

This is evident in our tendency to shy away from what Kunneman referred to as the 'slow questions' that lie deep within the murky foundations of our communities, and in our preference for the attractive strategic plans for our community's future that we have devised on dry, high ground.

My ideal

What I would like to systematically introduce into organisations is a horizontal, reflective dialogue on questions of meaning between senior leaders, managers and staff working together. They do this as individuals and, in doing so, form a personal community of trust. When people from different backgrounds, positions, roles and areas of responsibility engage in dialogue together about what they see as fundamental questions that concern them – questions relating to the organisation's development and to which there are no simple answers – a wonderful organisational spirit emerges – a shared spirit – in which everyone can act as an individual in the interests of the whole.

As far as I am concerned, these conversations are not conducted in a functional manner; rather, they are a dialogue between individuals – people I know – who, acting out of their own personal sense of responsibility, share with one another their fundamental questions and insights relating to 'doing the right thing' and ensuring the effective functioning of their organisation, department, team, their personal role within the whole.

We work together based on the quality of a personal community.

It is my experience and observation that such reflective conversations, held with some regularity, are an enormous help to everyone in acting consciously and doing what is right. In this way, the 'slow questions' that actually shape the future of an organisation as a community are identified and addressed.

As I engaged in research and experimentation with the 'slow questions' outlined questions in organisational contexts, a desire grew within me to find a well-considered and solid foundation for this work. This led me to study the work of philosophers who have engaged with fundamental, slow-burning questions of what it means to be human. I report on this in the following chapter.

Philosophy as a foundation for our research

In seeking a foundation for my exploration of the essence and meaning of our organised lives, I spent many years reading the works of a number of influential philosophers. In doing so, I wanted to discover how these philosophers deal with the essential questions that lie at the heart of people's lives. As I read, it gradually became clear to me that they are not so much striving to arrive at an absolute truth concerning our human existence, but rather that they wish to contribute to interpreting what takes place between people in real-life situations and what the meaning of this is. This, it seems to me, is a good starting point for us to explore.

I believe it makes sense to provide my own overview of how philosophers, over the centuries, have addressed the fundamental questions of life that arise in people's daily lives as profound

dilemmas and challenges concerning existence. These are questions about our origins, the soul, freedom, the meaning of one's own life, and the scope people have to arrive at their own meaning and purpose in life; in short, questions of inspiration and meaning.

At its core, philosophers have traditionally viewed the essential question of life for humankind as the choice between pleasure and the pursuit of knowledge as the path to lasting happiness.

This fundamental question and the resulting life choice form the basis for the practical challenges of life and constitute an invitation to create meaning in one's own life.

In short, philosophers concern themselves with questions regarding the meaning of life, our leadership within it, and our relationship with the communities of which we are a part.

Plato

We begin with Plato. In him, I see the unsurpassed philosopher who laid the foundations for everything that followed. Plato produced a unique body of work, in a unique style, of unique significance, which remains relevant and well worth reading to this day.

In its classical form of education, Plato's teachings aim to provide guidance on how, in theory, a person can live a happy life. In this, philosophising as a reflective activity plays an important role.

In Plato's work, Socrates plays the leading role. In dialogue with others, Socrates systematically and tenaciously explores the questions of God as the origin, the soul and freedom; the question of the meaning of life.

Philosophy and education go hand in hand in this context. On the one hand, the soul is trained through philosophical discourse with others; on the other, the body is exercised through sport and the pursuit of pleasure.

In Plato's time, the parameters for reflecting on human existence were definitively redefined. Prior to that, a community leader or priest, initiated for this purpose, would train a select few from the elite to manage and master the wisdom of humanity and what it means to be human. The initiated leader's task was to train the willing and capable chosen few, thereby preparing them to shoulder responsibility within the natural community of which they were a part. Now, with philosophising as practised by Socrates, a public order of reflective dialogue emerges, in which anyone willing to reflect can participate. Socrates conducts a horizontal, meaning-creating dialogue,

and indeed with anyone who is prepared to engage with his questions and thoughts, whilst also being willing to express their own questions and thoughts.

What do I see in our time as a meaning-creating Platonic dialogue? We do not so much discuss problems with the other person, but rather allow the other person to explore what the guiding thought is – the leading idea – that gives direction and quality to their actions and behaviour. Is this idea actually adequate, given how it plays out in practice? It is not uncommon for us to be guided by ideas and guiding principles that do not work out at all well in the situations in which we find ourselves. By critically questioning these guiding

principles, we can find the turning point, the opening towards a different idea and guiding principle as the basis for our conduct in the social situation.

As a philosopher, Plato concerned himself with the essential practical questions of life, and articulated those questions and the associated thoughts in a 'meaning-creating' way. He wanted to offer people guidance on how to shape their lives in such a way that they might lead a happy and meaningful life . The key question for Plato, as expressed in the dialogues of Socrates, was, as mentioned: is life about the pursuit of pleasure or the pursuit of knowledge? In this regard, the most important themes for Plato were the way in which the human soul should be nurtured and the way in which society should be organised.

These meaning-creating questions arose – and continue to arise – because people are increasingly living their lives within human-shaped communal contexts that have been .

What does that mean, in my view? People can no longer evade the questions concerning the meaning of life. This places them in a world of forces and powers that govern and direct their own lives. We are confronted with the imperfection of our human existence and, as human beings, are burdened with a moral responsibility. This requires each of us to participate in philosophical inquiry.

Philosophical inquiry involves, in a reflective and exploratory manner, describing the questions of life that preoccupy us in dialogue with one another, in such a way that it can have a meaning-giving effect on those involved. Philosophical ical inquiry does not lead to definitive answers that silence the issues once and for all, but it does provide exploratory and imaginative thoughts and concepts with which we can examine, shape and appreciate the reality we experience.

To this day, philosophising remains a creative activity of the reflective individual. In our age of restlessness and the drive to achieve, philosophising has been pushed into the background, and we have little experience of the profound significance it holds for our daily lives. We are, to a greater or lesser extent, losing the desire for the meaning-creating activity of engaging in dialogue with one another about fundamental questions such as our origins, the soul and freedom. If we are no longer interested in engaging with fundamental questions, that would be a pity. Have the meaning-creating questions and dialogue in our lives, within organised contexts, been exchanged for packed diaries?

I wish to contribute to giving philosophical inquiry – as a neglected field – a new space of its own: that is, supporting people who are searching, who live with real questions, in exploring

the essential dimensions of meaning-creating work as an animating force that gives these people the inspiration to try things differently and, building on those effects, to reflect together in a way that gives meaning.

Aristotle

Plato marks the transition from a clairvoyant exploration of ideal spheres to an exploration based on sensory perception. Aristotle was the first philosopher to take this great step in its entirety, bringing humanity to a new level of exploration and inquiry.

For Plato – as expressed by Socrates – it was clear that it is human knowledge that advances humankind, rather than the mere satisfaction of one's desires and the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. Through various dialogues, Socrates examined this question of pleasure versus knowledge. Aristotle takes this pursuit of knowledge as his starting point and generalises it as something worth striving for by all people.

Philosophical inquiry, as introduced by Aristotle, requires us to demonstrate the skill of a researcher: to seek out, on the basis of observation and the concrete description of real events, the forces at work, how to direct them, and how, at times, to curb them. The The art lies not in getting bogged down in abstractions when engaging with another person and their issue, but in guiding them to reflect together on what has happened, based on a concrete portrayal of what was actually at play in that situation. Through this concrete description, the issue comes to life for both the narrator and the investigator, enabling the characteristics of this story to be interpreted and the forces at work within it to be articulated. This forms the bridge to identifying the next step that will effectively advance the process surrounding the issue in practice.

Aristotle explores the question of the soul. He takes 'movement' as the most fundamental and clear manifestation of a human soul. The body is able to move because of a soul. He elaborates on this proposition across a variety of themes. This exploration of the question, the process of coming to know, of gaining insight through one's own thought, was, for Aristotle – and perhaps also for all people today – the most inspiring and joyful thing a person can do and experience. In action, what matters is doing what is right. This is where the virtues formulated by Aristotle come into play.

From this perspective, the philosophical investigator finds themselves at the heart of the meaning-creating process that can support others in arriving at inspired thinking, feeling and acting.

Aristotle is both a researcher and an educator. Drawing on his own intellectual powers, he explores the realms of soul and mind, and he teaches the many people around him in his own school. Aristotle mastered, like no other, the balance between the essential and the practical, the spiritual and the material, activity and the search for meaning.

Since Aristotle, there has been no one else who, drawing on the same inner freedom, the joy of independent thought, virtuous action and the exploration of fundamental questions—and engaging in dialogue with pupils on these matters—and philosophised so comprehensively.

Plato brought the ideas down to earth and made them accessible to humankind. We can interpret this as thought – logic. Aristotle constructed his own concepts from observation, which created – and continue to create – meaning. We can interpret this as observation – logic. This laid the foundation for 2,500 years of philosophy. Plato and Aristotle have become the primordial movements of philosophy, from which even we cannot and do not wish to escape.

It is only in our time that the poetic, lyrical, free exploration of fundamental questions has once again been permitted to the some extent. In the periods following Plato and Aristotle, our philosophical endeavours led us into a gradual process of: falling away from the cosmos, finding our way into faith, undergoing a drive towards scientification, proving truth, and now arriving at a zero point, where we no longer believe it makes sense to investigate the

fundamental questions through philosophy. In the organised lives we all lead, a conscious effort is needed to give shape to this enlightening conversation, this meaning-giving process, this inspiring dialogue. Philosophical inquiry can make a significant contribution here. How can we consciously develop and put these qualities into practice in the present day? This calls for a research methodology capable of supporting healthy and inspiring approaches.

I shall return to this point later when I outline the methodology of 'social evidence' that I have developed.

Augustine

Following these Greek philosophers, philosophical inquiry became trapped within a narrow context of interests and considerations designed to legitimise the actions of the powerful elite within the state system. Philosophy became subservient to a programmed mind. The ecclesiastical institutions of faith, which had emerged in Roman times, also began to engage decisively with the practical questions of life. Human souls became ensnared in faith and systems of belief, as well as in systems of political power. The answers to the fundamental questions, which dominated the human soul, was entrusted to the organised institutions of Church and State.

Augustine expresses very clearly how the questions concerning God as origin, the soul and freedom must be addressed, arising from a desperate struggle with the image of an all-determining God and a powerless, sinful human being, who was nevertheless endowed by God with spiritual and soul-related qualities present in potential, which far transcend all that is encountered by living beings on earth .

Among the Greeks, philosophising could still take place within a space of independent thought and dialogue—precisely with others—that had only just been wrested from the gods,

but for Augustine, man has come to dwell on earth, in the murky and obscure existence of passions and desires that drag him down. It is from this vantage point that an image of God emerges—one of perfection and all-encompassing nature—precisely as man consciously enters the barbarity of his own soul. Man becomes aware that he is evil in a world of God, who is good is.

Man has fallen from the Divine creation and is confronted with the forces at work outside the earthly paradise. Man is no longer able, by his own strength, to rise above this pleasure-seeking existence and to find and tread his own path to that glorious world of the Creator. He must therefore surrender and allow himself to be guided by what the divine word of wisdom, divine revelation tells him. Divine love can save him if he resigns himself to his fate and accepts and lives in accordance with his relationship to his God as all-pervading.

Goodness has slipped from humanity's grasp. The freedom of thought and will has been granted to humanity only in God's hands. The only love that can save humanity is divine love. Thus, all essential qualities of the soul—such as love and freedom, which a person can develop through consciousness—have become disconnected from practical human existence.

This raises the question of free will. Is the will free, or is it predetermined? This is where opinions diverge. 'Fate is predetermined; genes determine everything,' says one. 'A person is free in their choices if they develop consciousness,' says another. In philosophical inquiry,

the researcher's own standpoint guides the process. For example, do I focus more on the past and search for causes, or do I focus more on the future, concentrating on choices and possible steps? Here, too, we encounter the tension between the context in which a person lives and works – which strongly influences them – and that person's inner orientation and strength, their ideal and the impulse that sets them in motion. Dialogue between people sets these different viewpoints in motion. It is perhaps precisely this multiplicity, this paradox of the life of the soul of the human being, that can provide us, in philosophical inquiry, with a sound framework for dealing with the dilemmas we face in practical life.

After Augustine, we had to wait for the courageous souls who were prepared to break through the frameworks and boundaries he had established and to set out on a new path of inquiry. It was a long wait.

Cusanus and Spinoza

Cusanus and Spinoza became the medieval philosophers who broke through these frameworks; drawing on their own intellectual power, they addressed our fundamental questions concerning our origins, the soul and freedom with mathematical precision. Through them, these questions once again became human questions that can help us to examine and come to understand the realities we experience.

Alongside religion and art as pathways to exploring human issues, a scientific approach developed.

Philosophy was tasked with laying the foundations for methodical scientific approaches to these issues. This once again gave philosophy access to a broad social sphere, and through its connection with and legitimisation of scientific thought, philosophical reflection on a scientific basis retained a major influence on the guiding ideas of administrators and other influential figures. Scientific philosophers emerged alongside intuitive philosophers.

Scientific 'philosophers' such as Kant and 'philosophers' who think from their own intuition, such as Kierkegaard, focused their attention on the social order and how to act within it as individual human beings.

The scientific philosophers moved to universities and became professors. The intuitive philosophers remained at home and led a struggle to gain attention for their ideas and insights within society.

Questions concerning God as the origin, the soul and freedom become detached from people's everyday, practical religious lives. They are no longer part of a public dialogue but have moved into academic circles, where they are resolved in an intellectually and methodologically sound manner. The debate on the meaning of life disappears definitively from society. People lead a purposefully organised life and, alongside this, may turn to faith or science to find answers to their life's questions. Those interested in philosophy are left with no option but to study it at university.

This, however, has consequences for people and their inner lives. The human soul remains unfulfilled, and no universally organised answer can be found to the questions of meaning that dwell there, nor to the search for inspiration. The only thing that works here is for people to help and support one another in taking their next step and in gaining new insight into their

life's questions. For this to happen, it is essential that a person reveals themselves to another as a person and that one's own 'I' emerges within one's own soul and addresses the other's 'I' within their soul. This seems to me to be the core of philosophical inquiry: working from one's own 'I', the core of one's own being within the soul, and addressing the other through this 'I'. This means that philosophical inquiry is not so much about the problem itself as about how the other person deals with this problem. In particular, it is important to relate everything to the person of the other and of oneself, to appear as one human being to another and to make contact with the other person.

Some of my colleagues support patients who are supposedly 'beyond help'. These patients have been through many channels, and ultimately the care providers have reached the end of their tether. My colleagues do nothing other than engage in a meaningful conversation focused on what the other person sees as their question and how they are dealing with it. Taking a small new step sets the question in motion. The patients' reaction is: 'Gosh, this is the first time anyone has really addressed my issue, and that I'm allowed to explore it myself, and that I've found a step I want to and can take, one that takes me further'.

Kant

With Kant, the dilemma between matter and spirit reaches its climax. How should a person live, now that material existence and meditative existence have become completely separate for the individual , and has thus also become a problem for the social order and its leaders? Kant finds his sublime answer. We must distinguish between the 'Thing' itself and its 'appearance'. We can examine the 'appearance', but we cannot know the 'Thing itself'. This brings us to the point that every human being now has the responsibility to find their own relationship to everything that takes place within them and around them. To this end, Kant formulates his maxim: Every human being acts in the way that would be best for the whole. In doing so, Kant links human self-interest with the interests of society.

This way of thinking was greatly stimulated by the events of the French Revolution. It was not God-given authority that governed society, but the voice of the people that became decisive. No longer is moral action prescribed from above; rather, action born of one's own morality takes precedence.

Here, the question of freedom and necessity is redefined. Freedom is acting of one's own accord, guided by one's own insight into what is necessary. With Kant, the individual comes to the fore, and the paths of individualism and collectivism begin to run as parallel currents of human development. The self and the community – that is what it is all about.

Now, too, personal responsibility for one's own development. Human beings can break through the limits of 'being' imposed upon them and enter new territory. Every person can act as an individual, and we can regulate this new social dynamic that arises from this by introducing guiding principles which people, out of insight, apply themselves in their actions. However, this does not happen automatically. It requires dialogue and interaction. This brings us to the question of how I connect with the other person, how I perceive their suffering, and how I take responsibility for helping them find their own way forward. We are each other's guides and can help one another find our own paths. For example, I find it very helpful when, from time to time, whilst working with a client, I emulate a colleague by mobilising that colleague's strength within myself and presenting myself in that way. It then

becomes my own strength, which the client recognises as effective and helpful in addressing their own concerns.

Humanity takes centre stage in cosmic and worldly events. Humanity is no longer a self-evident, natural part of what is developing and unfolding. Humanity becomes the actor who will determine events and who, in doing so, takes their own destiny into their own hands. This is where humanity's great gamble begins. How will humanity relate to itself, with the world they encounter, and with the invisible, unknowable realities that influence and possibly determine their existence? The question of God as origin, soul and freedom is henceforth addressed within a new context, one created by humankind itself.

We are definitively entering a horizontal space, a space between people in which things are determined. It is humankind that changes, that transforms itself. We must withdraw from the determinative vertical space, in which we, as human beings, are part of a reality that is unknowable and controlled by others. From now on, one person guides another in self-exploration.

Hegel

With Hegel, the genius emerges who attempts to incorporate the new paradigm into an all-encompassing, comprehensive system. Hegel recalls Plato and how he presented the world of the mind as determinative of our existence. We can approach that world through our thinking. There we find the question of the whole and the parts, time and space, truth and representation.

Thus, Hegel becomes the inspiration for those who wish to build all-encompassing social systems for the benefit of the individual and of humanity. We hold the reins ourselves and must mobilise the spirit, shape matter and organise ourselves as a community in a way that gives everyone the opportunity to participate. We are definitively breaking away from the vertical, hierarchical social order based on nobility and nobility of character.

Humanity embarks on a journey of discovery in the creation of its own external and internal worlds. This opens up a new avenue for exploring the question of the soul. The question is defined as a question of consciousness. What is the nature of human consciousness, and how is it shaped by memory? An opportunity is offered to the inner exploration of what exists but has not yet penetrated into the conscious mind, the unconscious or subconscious. This is the task of the philosophical researcher; this is his focus.

In this investigation into consciousness, the exploration of self-consciousness comes to the fore. Here we find the first steps towards the study of the individualised soul. One's own personal spirit appears within the soul and takes up residence there.

In art, this is made visible and audible with great spectacle. Art individualises. It is a personal expression, rather than a depiction of what is generally regarded and believed. There, people find a new point of reference for shaping and giving meaning to their lives. Art forms an adequate foundation for philosophical inquiry. Faith and religion, too, individualise. It is now primarily science that seeks to define and determine the framework for human life and social well-being.

Schopenhauer

Amongst and within people, an indomitable will to be and to rule manifests itself. Now that traditional frameworks have been broken down, power relations are not definitively fixed, and people are left to their own judgement, the impulsive nature of individualised existence is breaking through into the social order. People can be mobilised by others for ideals which ultimately lead to their own ruin.

How, in a world detached from God, within a soul accessible to the individual self—in which all possible forces may reign—can a person determine and shape their own destiny and that of others? There arises an urgent need to give the neglected, reflective, meaning-giving aspect of life —the spiritual foundation of existence—with new content, meaning and a mode of operation that is accessible both to the individual's steering of their own existence and to the meaningful development of the social order.

Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard is the exponent of this uprooted, searching individual, who must acquire the meaning of existence through his own efforts. This requires a complete break with all old, traditional ways of life and modes of thought, which still hold the social system in a stranglehold and create a tension between what takes place within the human soul and what is socially tolerated in the spheres of life .

Kierkegaard seeks, through his own efforts, the path back to the Greek and Christian philosophical sources, not only as a source for knowledge and thought, but also as a way of life.

Kierkegaard opened up a critical, self-critical and also imaginative way of exploring and living, which pointed the way in which the ' modern, lonely human being' must seek his way back to the sources and towards his next step in life.

The individual, lonely soul, living within a social system in which his voice must be heard, finds his existence increasingly embedded in an economic order dictated by organised enterprises and institutions. Control and direction are divided between social actors who seek to define value creation on both the material and spiritual level. We have now become completely dislocated and alienated from what once guided humankind. The process now unfolds entirely amongst people with their interests, their aspirations and their power.

Nietzsche

Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche is an individual soul who, through his own strength, seeks to restore the fragmented essence of being human and of humanity, and to give the new human being a new core. Humanity will have to pull itself out of the quagmire of 'being' and give itself a purpose. The ceaseless recurrence of things, the instinctual force of life and survival, the focus on what were essential impulses, the renewal of a Christian culture from the primordial sources as uncovered by the Greeks – that is what Nietzsche wanted to do for humanity.

A process of spiritual exploration is often seen as following a path in which one must first break things down before rebuilding. One must first let go of something before they can

integrate something new. Personally, I am more inclined towards the opposite approach. People must first integrate their past, come to terms with it, and then draw strength from it to take a new step that casts this whole body of knowledge and experience in a new light. I base this on the philosophical insight that life and living together are not objective but intersubjective phenomena, in which we go through a cycle time and again and in which we must continually give meaning to our lives anew. That meaning is not fixed or predetermined; we help to create it ourselves. That is where the freedom of existence lies.

With **Heidegger**, philosophy reaches a point where it becomes apparent that the technological marvel which is taking hold of all areas of life is becoming the dominant driving force in society, linked to an expanding global economy in which all people are coming to participate. Philosophy has little more to contribute to this than a discourse for a small elite, which clings to the fundamental questions of God as the origin, the soul and freedom, but which it cannot answer to an extent that can compete with the promising powers and forces of technology and the economy.

Here, human beings are challenged to find their own relationship with the world and with themselves. In this, they are dependent on other people. The other is the mirror in which I look.

Foucault

With Foucault, we return once more to the source of philosophising. The central questions are those of God as the origin, the soul and freedom. He enjoys engaging in dialogue with others, his students, and to explore these questions together. This centres primarily on power and sexuality. These dialogues thus provide a framework for the practical life of the modern, individualised person, who, whilst fully embedded in the economic, social and political system of a global scale, must find their own way. Foucault ultimately returned to the Greek source of philosophy. There, the focus was on ‘Know thyself ’, but also ‘Take care of yourself’ . These two questions must be at the centre of our attention.

Instead of getting bogged down in abstractions, we must return to the events as they unfold. We return to observation and then ask the question of meaning. It is not a matter of uncovering truth; for Foucault, it is about creating meaning. This creation is an act that is just as essential as our material creation of our own world of existence.

With Foucault, but also with Arendt, Habermas and Levinas, a new cycle of exploring the essential questions of our origins, soul and freedom begins. In doing so, we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors, yet free ourselves to ask and reflect on these questions anew. What is remarkable about this is that human beings, as individuals, have arrived at their own souls; every human being has become an essential component of the social order, yet has become alienated from the other, from the natural bond with the other, and is now setting out on a path that leads them to seek out and explore that other. From ‘know thyself’ and ‘take care of thyself’, we are now moving towards ‘know the other’ and ‘take care of the other’ , no longer based on paternalistic relationships, but as free individuals bearing their own responsibility. Philosophy is uniquely placed to guide and document this issue. This can underpin the work of the philosopher as a researcher.

In doing so, the philosopher may realise the following:

'He (Foucault) was at the very heart of what is probably the most important thing in our time. By this I mean an extremely comprehensive and profound shift in the realisation that the West has gradually been shaped by history and by time. Everything that organised this realisation, everything that lent it continuity, everything that promised its completion – all of that is crumbling. Some people would like to patch it up again. He, on the other hand, told us that – even today – one must live time differently. Especially today." (in Sloterdijk: Philosophical Temperaments from Plato to Foucault)

An exploration of 2,500 years of philosophical inquiry forms a long cycle which ultimately, in a new way, returns to its beginning. It is the enduring questions that guide us through changing times, and it is our reflective effort to fathom what is happening; this helps us to establish a relationship with our own existence and to develop an eye, an ear and a heart for the existence of others.

It is fascinating to see how, over this vast span of time, the questions have remained the same and how, time and again, steps have been taken to address these questions in keeping with the spirit of the age.

I believe we stand on the threshold of a major leap forward in philosophical inquiry, by first of all distancing ourselves from the already determinative, prescriptive, scientific discourse and, with the aid of free, meaning-creating discourse, refocusing together on our fundamental questions and thereby engaging in reflective dialogue with one another in a new way and within a completely open context. We do this together, from the perspective of and with a view to 'the other'. Here, a new foundation for philosophical inquiry is emerging. We learn to see through the eyes of the other.

In our philosophical enquiry, set against the backdrop of our organised lives and our personal responsibility for them, it is fruitful, first and foremost, to engage with questions concerning power and freedom – two polar forces within the human soul that seek to, and are capable of, exerting a significant degree of control over our organised lives.

Power and Freedom as a dominant polarity in organised life

Power and Freedom

In the present day, people all over the world are primarily concerned with organising their own lives. They do this as employees, customers, citizens, students. Each of us participates in organised global affairs, whether we like it or not. In doing so, we deal daily with organised institutions that manage the processes within which we organise ourselves.

I distinguish between a vertical and a horizontal dimension in this organisation. The horizontal dimension manifests itself in how our lives unfold in relation to one another. The vertical dimension manifests itself in the forms and systems through which we control our lives.

Perhaps the most important force at work in *vertical organisation* is power. It is linked to a layered structure and positioning within a hierarchical framework. It is used to get things done.

Perhaps the most important force at work in *horizontal organisation* is dialogue. It operates on the basis of the freedom that every person can attain in their thoughts and actions, from which people can arrive at reach sound judgements. It is used in the creation of meaning and the imparting of significance.

Both forces operate between people.

Both forces are linked to personal leadership, community-building and the search for meaning, to action and reflection. These are the fundamental human dimensions and dynamics through which a distinct human world is built.

In everyday language, power is often associated with negative forces such as violence, abuse and victimisation. Freedom is generally understood as doing as one pleases. These are manifestations that occur within the closed natural community. However, this clouds our view of the original power of authority and freedom in organised life. Authority is a fundamental force that operates between people in organised contexts, just as the force of freedom does. They operate creatively within the human construct, the organised world . Power is essentially linked to action, to taking the initiative. We do this to advance a cause. Freedom is essentially linked to reflection. We do this to gain insight and to imbue the cause with meaning. The forces of power and freedom appear and disappear; it depends on human cooperation, which has a beginning, a continuation, but also an end. They are fundamental forces of the soul that operate between people.

When it comes to power and freedom, our attention is first and foremost drawn to the ‘what’. The ‘what’ is linked to the human will and the realisation of goals. However, when it comes to power and freedom, it is actually primarily about the

‘who’ and the ‘how’, and it is this ‘who and how’ that ought to be at the centre of our attention. Who is it that takes responsibility here, andhow does this person operate within the community? Power and freedom are thus linked to the acting individual and their relationship to the community in which they operate and act.

In this sense, power and freedom operate as forces within organised life through the individual personality when the individual exercises them. For power and freedom to function effectively, it is essential that the individual personality has developed the capacities for free thought and free will and is capable of arriving at free judgements together with others. In this way, the individual overcomes existing prejudices and impulsive urges, and a community of people can arrive at balanced judgements built upon diversity.

In this way, people can provide a counterbalance to the temptations of abusing power and restricting the freedom of others.

Interacting with one another

In both public and private interactions between people, the issue of power and freedom arises in ‘how we interact with one another ’. Bernard Lievegoed distinguishes three forms of

interaction and calls them: conversation, negotiation and conflict. We are all familiar with these three forms of interaction. In our encounters with others, it makes a fundamental difference whether we are engaged in conversation and respond to one another, whether we are coordinating our interests and seeking a compromise that satisfies us both to some extent, or whether we engage in a struggle and try to overcome the other person. Whereas the force of power dominates in the struggle, in dialogue it can be the force of freedom. Much depends on how we express ourselves in our language and whether we are able to give voice to the essential aspects and also to understand these in one another. It is therefore precisely in our speaking and listening to and with one another that the difference is made in these ways of relating to one another. It is precisely in conversation that power and freedom enter into a close, positive connection with one another. If I use the power of the word, do I allow the other person the freedom to express themselves, and can we understand and accept our differences?

Three ways of relating to one another

- **Having a conversation with one another**
- **Negotiating with one another**
- **Fighting with one another**

In this sense, conversation is fundamental to our human interactions. In my view, following centuries of human development of the soul, every person is, in principle, capable of allowing their own 'self' ' to emerge in their soul, so that, as a unique personality, they can engage in dialogue with others, consciously express themselves and consciously take on board what the other person says. We can ensure that the forces of power and freedom operate in a healthy mutual balance in our interactions with others, if we consciously choose to do so.

Alongside the significance of conversation—conscious human dialogue—we can be mindful of the context in which we live and work, and how this strongly determines our behaviour and conduct, and how we present ourselves in our interactions with one another.

Power and freedom in natural and organised contexts

We have previously noted that people today live in two contexts: the natural context given to us, and the organised context created by us.

The natural context is shaped by the natural communities which we receive in the form of family and nation

and possibly also religion, from the moment of our birth, and in which we grow up and are shaped during the first phase of our lives. Very soon, however, we begin to function within organised contexts such as school and sports clubs, and start participating in socio-economic life as consumers and workers.

We have characterised the natural community as a closed context. It finds its meaning within itself; it is inward-looking, and it distinguishes itself from other communities. In these closed and inward-looking contexts, power plays a major and dominant role. Power relations are more or less fixed, and individuals must conform to them. The father is the father, the priest is the priest, the leader is the leader. In a sense, life is predestined, and even today it is still possible to to fit completely within the broader framework of values and norms, regulations

and rules that have been established and practised over generations. All those who deviate from this within the closed context run into trouble and are not infrequently called to order – and sometimes expelled – through the exercise of power and, at times, violence.

I have characterised the organised community as an open context in which meaning is not predetermined and in which its raison d'etre essentially lies in serving others outside the community. It is the other person – be it a customer or supplier, owner or employee, manager or professional – whom we serve, and we do so not on the basis of fixed, eternal connections but through temporary and changeable ones. In this context, it does not matter so much by whom, or with what background and origin, you are served; it could be a Muslim Turk or a Dutchman from the Twente region; what matters is the respect with which the service is provided and whether this fits within the culture of the organisation in which the process takes place. This is where personal leadership, embraced on the basis of freedom, comes into play.

In these organised community contexts, people are confronted with functional power, which is tied to the position and role the individual occupies within the structural framework of an organisation. The CEO wields a different kind of power to the head of department, the team leader or the professional. In day-to-day socio-economic functioning, these forms of power tend to relate to one another horizontally; we are mutually dependent on one another in this regard. What can a CEO do if the professionals fail to deliver? How does a team leader depend on the willingness of team members to commit to the cause? What do we do if the customer leaves us? We can participate of our own free will, and we can withdraw from power.

In a naturally closed community, there is hereditary power and a predestined sense of community; in an organised community, there is plurality, functional power and freedom of choice.

Opening and closing

An organised community in an open context may begin to exhibit the characteristics of a closed community if it starts to shut itself off from its surroundings and turns inwards. 'Everyone pulling in the same direction' and 'doing as you're told' can be enforced through hierarchical power, but such a community will not survive in the long run. People will withdraw from this, either formally or informally and seek their own space and path. This often arises from pain and struggle, conflict and confrontation. Here, the power of psychological and social forces prevails.

A naturally closed community can strive for openness if it wishes to give its members the opportunity to take steps beyond the context of that community. The children go their own way, the parents build a personal life for themselves, and there is open dialogue and mutual support. The believer is allowed to explore other views. Here, the power of freedom is at work.

It is precisely within an organised context that we can develop our personalities in surprising ways to a level we would not previously have dared to dream of. In a natural context, this tends to involve conforming to the fundamental values the community wishes to represent, remaining within the assigned role and becoming thoroughly at home within it. Here, we take on the authority of our ancestors.

In our global social system, in the public sphere, I believe I can observe that it is still largely the traditional political and religious contexts that divide people and set them against one another. Here, power and freedom play an ideological role; they bind people and determine their fate. By contrast, it is precisely our socio-economic dialogue – taking place within organised contexts in which each of us plays different roles – that enables people to connect with one another, serve one another and help one another move forward.

“Two kilometres away, we are bombing one another because of our differing beliefs, whilst here on the terrace we are drinking coffee and being served by the very person we wish to destroy by force just a short distance away”.

Power and freedom in the personal community of trust

Power and freedom take on an entirely new dimension when we turn our attention to a third kind of community—one that has become possible for everyone in our contemporary world— the personal community of trust.

Because we are able to move within different circles and contexts – indeed, to change the location and context of our lives on a global scale – we are enabled to form lifelong relationships with those people we meet and with whom we wish to connect personally. It is these people, with whom we share personal motivations and ideals, who will make up our personal community. They will form the foundation of our personal existence. We are able to in one another’s personal communities and, through this, to forge a global network of connections. Here, a new kind of community emerges in which power and freedom can form an intense, positive bond with one another. In these contexts, personal love, a genuine respect for the other’s difference, and a mutual willingness to help one another take the next step can be developed.

It is these personal networks and communities which, I expect , will increasingly provide a foundation for our lives, to such an extent that they will begin to overshadow our existence within natural and organised contexts. We are no longer making ourselves so dependent on family and work, but are increasingly using the freedom and power of our personal capital to give shape and meaning to life, together with others.

The new personal community of trust is underpinned by the unique individual personality.

The unique individual personality

The unique individual personality is emerging. The unique individual personality possesses free thought and free will. This is the fruit of centuries of human consciousness development. We have evolved from group beings belonging to the natural world into individual beings who have created our own organised world.

It is the presence of the other personality that leads us to our own identity. In this way, as human beings in the public sphere, we shape humanity through our diversity and vulnerability. We reveal ourselves to one another through our shared actions, and we speak and listen with and to one another to give meaning to these actions. We lead a life of action and reflection, and we do so from within our personal community.

It therefore comes down to this: in the future, people must be able to reach sound judgements together, based on individual, free perception, their own standpoint and their own step, their own action, through which their will is expressed. I take the initiative. In this, power and freedom come to stand in a positive relationship with one another. This requires us to develop an awareness of four essential dimensions in our interactions with one another. We can characterise these four dimensions as: *who, what, how and why*.

Who, what, how and why?

It is always an actor – or actors – who make a fresh start, take the next step, ask a question, take the initiative or gain an insight. We do this ourselves and we do it together. *Who is this person*, who is this biography, this life story?

We strive for a result; we want to understand the content; we observe and examine the facts; *what is this actually about*. That result is not only hidden within us but, in fact, often manifests itself outside and amongst us. We can identify and share the 'what'; we set ourselves a common goal.

Then the question is, *how we go about it*, how the process will unfold, and it is precisely in this that we coordinate with one another. We draw on previous experiences; we want to experiment, evaluate what has happened and give it meaning.

That brings us to the 'why' question. Initially, we can only answer that from within ourselves. *Why am I doing this, and why am I doing it this way*? This introduces a moral dimension: an acceptance of responsibility, and an awareness and internalisation of the consequences of our actions.

It is the *'who' and 'why' dimensions* that define our individuality and for which we bear personal responsibility. These are the dimensions of our personal leadership.

It is the *'what' and 'how' dimensions* that can either unite or divide us, where we stand in harmony and cooperation with one another or, conversely, work against one another.

In the 'who' and 'why' dimensions, the power of freedom comes to the fore; in the 'what' and 'how' dimensions, it is the power of authority.

These four dimensions come together in the process of judgement-forming that we undertake together.

Four dimensions in our interactions with one another

- **Who is this person**
- **What is this actually about**
- **How do we go about it**
- **Why am I doing this and why am I doing it this way**

Reflective judgement and power

My colleague Alexander Bos explored the process of judgement in depth in his doctoral thesis ‘Judgement in Groups’. He distinguished between the ‘knowing path’ and the ‘choosing path’. The ‘knowing’ path focuses on the past. We reflect on our observations and discover within them the active guiding beliefs that steer our behaviour. The choice path focuses on the future. We consider possible steps and anticipate the potential effects of those steps on others. In a lemniscate-like process, we move between the ‘knowing’ and ‘choice’ paths, thereby forming our judgements together. In this way, we lay the foundations for sound decisions that we also wish to put into practice. This process of forming judgements lies between perception and decision-making, between reflection and action.

Being able to contribute to sound judgement requires us to develop the ability to view reality through the eyes of another. Can we connect with what the other person is going through, with the step they must take, and the suffering that goes with it? By learning to see through the eyes of another, we achieve a greater awareness of ourselves. We come to see the world differently, judge it differently and ascribe a different meaning to it than we might initially wish to, based on our individual (pre)judgements.

Arendt, following Kant, refers to this process of changing perspective – of putting oneself in the place of others – as *‘enlarged thought’* or *‘enlarged mentality’.*

The unique personal stories

Today, it is the individual stories that matter and give us a sense of direction in life. They are linked to unique personalities who share these stories with one another. The wonderful anecdotes about the concrete life situations people find themselves in – and the extraordinary experiences they have within them, which they translate into inspiring stories – create a space of freedom for meeting one another, getting to know one another and spending time together. Within this, we experience freedom of thought and action, and within it we can arrive at free judgements together, living between the past and the future a present in which we can make decisions, take the initiative and change course.

Action and reflection

Working and living with the forces of power and freedom, we are therefore compelled to learn to adopt two positions: the position of action – taking the initiative – and the position of reflection – giving meaning to the events that unfold. These two are interconnected. This calls for a process of spiritual development.

We can cultivate our capacity for judgement by reflecting collectively on the past, becoming aware of the consequences of our actions, learning from them, and being able to act in the new situation from a renewed perspective.

This requires us to have the capacity to forgive the past (not to forget) and to seek new steps that can take us all forward – the search for a new beginning.

This requires us to be able to assess the future and to face it with open-minded anticipation. The future holds a promise, an opportunity, a possibility, a next step. This also requires us to work well together and, in doing so, to do what is right together.

Let us Good cooperation as the philosophical essence of good organisation

If the core task of life and living together, both now and in the future, is that we turn towards one another from a place of conscious selfhood, then living and working together is an essential component of a meaningful and fulfilling life.

In our organised existence, good cooperation is essential, both now and in the future. However, good cooperation does not come about of its own accord. It requires both a willingness to work together and the ability to do so. How do we achieve effective collaboration?

The philosopher Kant lamented that human beings, unlike all other creatures of nature, have not been endowed with an instinct for freedom. This plays tricks on us in our organised existence. Human beings and organisations are not naturally predestined but require joint thinking and action born of freedom, based on a shared understanding. This is a constant struggle

for humankind, and we can observe this all too clearly in the way managers and professionals interact within organisations. Managers would like their professionals to possess the right instinct to act appropriately in any given situation. But that is not a given; no, we are bound to seek cooperation with one another. This takes us further when things go well, but it also gives rise to complications. Complications can lead to conflicts, and these are not easy to resolve. Even if we think we can use methods to achieve effective collaboration, practice shows us the limited effectiveness of these methods and the importance of the personally acquired ability to seek and find the right path, together with others.

Two examples from my professional practice may illustrate this.

A first situation

Two colleagues work together frequently in the consultancy practice. They regularly travel to clients together and share an office. They have been doing this for several years. One colleague is older and more senior; the other is younger and still finding their feet in the profession.

The younger colleague is ambitious and wants to play an increasingly important role, particularly when working with the client's premises, play an increasingly important role. The older colleague, who is far from ready to step aside, finds this difficult to accept.

Gradually, the relationship cools. The younger colleague strives to be able to act independently with the client, whilst the older colleague does everything in their power to remain the primary point of contact with the client.

This leads to a tense relationship. Both find it difficult to broach the subject with the other; at first, they still think things will sort themselves out in time. But they do not. On the contrary, further complications arise. When they bump into each other or travel to a client together, they make small talk or remain silent.

Gradually, both withdraw into themselves and let habit take the helm .

Unexpectedly, a confrontation arises. The younger colleague has received a query from a manager at the client organisation where the older colleague is project leader. He does not report this to his colleague, fearing that he might be sidelined by him.

A week later, the older colleague finds out and, at their next meeting – after holding back for a moment – he explodes and he heaps accusations of unprofessional behaviour on the younger colleague. The younger colleague retorts and withdraws.

Both lose sleep over it.

The younger colleague decides to speak to the older colleague and try to put the relationship back on track. One evening, they head to a restaurant and, over dinner, talk things through. They reflect on the past period and see what sort of behaviour this has led to. In a sense, it comes as a shock to the older colleague to realise that his behaviour is actually completely at odds with his belief in mentoring young colleagues and giving them opportunities.

That hurts. The younger colleague emphasises once again how much he continues to learn from the older colleague, but that the time is right for him to take on greater responsibility.

The older colleague suggests that the younger colleague take over project leadership for this client and, in that role, also manage his older colleague. They decide to give it a go.

As this situation illustrates, people can become entangled with one another. These entanglements mean that one's inner world becomes preoccupied with all sorts of feelings and considerations, which, however, are no longer directly connected to the other person. The 'I' withdraws, fantasises and goes round in circles within itself.

Only when two personalities look each other in the eye again and share a common understanding of how the process is unfolding does the situation become clearer; only then can a step be taken, a change made, and the relationship restored to a healthier state.

Entanglements can go so far that intense conflicts arise and those involved perceive one another merely as ghosts. At that point, access for the 'I' is cut off and the forces of conflict take over the soul.

A second situation can be described as follows:

The manager of a department comprising several teams would like to take his staff out into the countryside. It is time to discuss a few matters and to make clear the direction he wishes to take. This stems from the realisation that, over the course of the past year, he has become somewhat distanced from the teams and the team leaders. Senior management has demanded much of his time and attention. He no longer feels comfortable with this.

He discusses this idea with his four team leaders. They are very reserved in their response. Will it actually achieve anything, they ask; they're all doing just fine as it is, and it's not unpleasant to be able to work independently. Do they fear further interference from the boss? Even after an hour of talking and trying to persuade them, there is still no enthusiasm amongst the team leaders. He decides to shelve the idea for a while. Yet he notices that, at an increasing pace, the teams are going their own way. They are all busy, working hard, but there is no collaboration between them. Much more could be achieved, and to a higher

standard, if they were to look out for one another a bit more and work together. That should start with the team leaders. The boss brings this up, but now the team leaders put up fierce opposition. They seem to have found common ground in their resistance and actually seem to enjoy the distance from the boss.

The head of department is losing sleep over it. How do we bring everyone back together?

At the next meeting, the boss raises this issue. How to proceed? He has no idea. There is a moment of silence. Then he begins to question the team leaders individually. After some hesitation, they open up. They've become somewhat estranged from their boss, have no idea what he actually wants, and see absolutely no added value in his approach. That's a bit of a pill to swallow. But the boss takes it in his stride. It then turns out that the team leaders also have differing views and judge the situation differently. 'Let's not argue about it, but work it out,' the boss suggests. The team leaders agree to this.

The head of department organises an off-site meeting where they look back on the past two years and look ahead to the next two years in a completely personal way. Everyone comes up with a personal resolution, and together they also agree on a shared resolution for the future.

It has become clear to the head of department that paying constant attention to his team leaders is vital for achieving effective collaboration , build mutual bonds and foster trust.

It makes a huge difference whether we interact with one another on a functional or personal level. In a functional approach, we hide behind our roles and positions, addressing one another solely in terms of results and problems. We talk past one another, as it were, each focused on our own goal and our own reality and truth. In a personal conversation, we look at one another and make genuine contact. That is when something shared can emerge. The 'I' is present and can connect with the other 'I'.

Good cooperation

Good cooperation is encouraged and pointless complications are avoided when people can embody the following qualities in their actions.

Personal engagement: not functional, based on a uniform or a role, or the task, but from the person themselves. That person emerges. This immediately appeals to the other person to become visible too. You address what needs to be addressed; you state what matters to you; you do not shy away from it or let it slide, but you take the bull by the horns.

Taking a stand: You take a position where you stand firm and stay there for a while. Taking a stand is not the same as expressing an opinion. Taking a stand means standing up for what matters, representing an important value; it is something that can be used to guide others.

Being authentic: You stand on your own two feet and draw only on what you can genuinely represent. You rely on the capital of insights, skills, willpower and judgements. You do not allow yourself to be tempted to use what will not last because it was not your own.

I would like to see these qualities more often in organised life and work. This requires constantly overcoming our selfishness and fear of life through the ongoing cultivation of our own inner world, our soul and our consciousness, in collaboration with 'the other'.

It requires personal leadership!

Good collaboration

- ***Personal conduct***
- ***Taking a stand***
- ***Being authentic***
- ***Personal Leadership***

Part 2: Inspiration and Meaning

Amidst the multitude of management concepts and models in management literature, we rarely find any focus on the inner self. The emphasis is always on the human task of organising well – indeed, usually organising successfully – with a great deal of attention paid to systems and structures, management approaches and strategic orientations, as well as working methods and techniques for working successfully. But is it not precisely within the human soul that things are born, where ideas arise, impulses are given, experiences are gained and lessons learnt, and where change and renewal take place?

Attention to purpose and inspiration plays a fundamental role in effective organisation. If we do not touch the human soul, if we do not nurture its inner workings, then much will vanish like snow in the sun. It is precisely passion is what sets us in motion, and it is precisely this movement that is the essence of the soul. Through movement, through exploration and temptation, we arrive at new thoughts and actions and can connect with processes of change and learning.

Inspiration in Dynamic Organisations

The changing spirit of the times

As an organisational development consultant, I have been working in various countries across a variety of organisations for 50 years. I facilitate change and development processes that span several years and in which people, together with their organisations, take decisive steps.

Initially, I was very focused on creating the right conditions, with the unspoken expectation that only then could things turn out well. Later, I focused more on people and the community and

the right kind of entrepreneurial initiative. Today, I try to draw attention to sound processes, a fruitful reflective dialogue and a biographical approach to people and organisations.

I have been, and still am, regularly surprised that the effects of my interventions are entirely different from what I had expected. That was the case, is the case and will remain so, I think.

People in organisations today are not only confronted with more complex – and, as a result, system-driven – work processes, but are also involved in all manner of change processes. All of this is increasingly coming into conflict with what they see as their original professional responsibilities.

As Bernard Lievegoed put it: “We are confronted with a zeitgeist of constant change”.

I would characterise this zeitgeist of constant change – as far as work and organisation are concerned over this fifty-year period – as ‘ the shift from hands-on work within a small, fixed social context to operating individually within a complex organised system and with an extensive network’.

This shift is evident in the way work processes operate, how people collaborate within them, and the tension that exists between their thoughts and actions.

In the five decades of working life I have experienced, I have seen just about everything change in terms of how work is carried out within organisations. What has remained the same, however, is the way in which leadership is organised. We have seen an increase in management, roles and hierarchical layers, and a growing distance has emerged between management and professionals. The top-down approach remains in place, although the roles and responsibilities of managers and professionals have shifted quite significantly over the years. In a working world entirely dominated by systems, managers and professionals find themselves navigating complex environments with demanding tasks, hoping for the best. It requires each of us to exercise personal leadership in order to find our way.

Ultimately, we will have to reassess our ideas, visions and practices regarding leadership. I characterise this shift as the transition from vertical management to horizontal leadership. In my view, leadership is ultimately about caring for the soul of the organised community, how this mirrors the communal soul of humanity and shapes the soul of society.

To guide you through this evolving concept of leadership, I would like to outline key moments and developmental stages from these fifty years of leadership practice.

The early years of organisational development

In 1970, I was recruited by Shell International as a member of the international staff. After studying sociology and business administration at what was then the NEH (now Erasmus University) and serving fourteen months as a second lieutenant on the staff tasked with reorganising and modernising the teaching methods of the Army's 33 schools, I wanted to work for a large international company. Shell's head office was right next to my parents' house in The Hague. I was taken on and, after a few months of familiarising myself with all aspects of the Shell organisation, I was sent to NAM (Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij), where a major organisational development process was underway at the time. As a sociologist, I was something of an experiment for Shell, and upon arrival at NAM's head office in Assen, it turned out there was no position available. The then director, Jo Bongaerts, asked me to take a look around and explore what I might be able to contribute to NAM's development in terms of people and organisation. After a few weeks, I was fully immersed in all organisational development activities, and after a year I took over the responsibilities from my NPI colleague Bernhard Kloke, who had overseen organisational development as an internal consultant during the early years.

After my first few weeks at NAM, I came to the conclusion that everything I had learnt during my sociology

studies and what I was trying to apply at NAM wasn't understood by anyone. I decided to start from scratch. "I'll just get involved in what's going on, observe what's happening, and try to contribute something now and then"—that was my next step.

Before long, I was facilitating social skills training sessions for all NAM staff (then 1,500 employees) and taking part in conferences on new leadership. We took the first steps towards project-based working. We introduced work meetings across the various teams and departments. We set up management teams for the different units. We became involved in

long-standing conflicts between departments and held discussions with managers about their roles and approaches. It was a process of ‘trial and error’; every step was thoroughly evaluated and lessons were learnt.

Looking back, I can once again see the enormous resistance this work provoked among many department heads. ‘We don’t understand any of this’, ‘what sort of nonsense is this’, ‘let’s just get back to work’ . I also see the few enthusiastic managers who saw this as a liberation and, with vigour, drove the development of their staff and department.

The old way of thinking – bosses and staff, thinkers and doers, ‘stop whingeing and get on with it’, ‘to each his own’ and ‘standing above it all’ – was put at risk by organisational development.

Staff found these activities both exciting and threatening. Exciting because there suddenly seemed to be scope for everyone to contribute something other than ‘just do your job and leave the rest to us’. Threatening because now you suddenly had to speak up and ‘did you actually have an opinion of your own?’. Much of what wasn’t right was now brought to light, and difficult changes were finally being implemented .

I see this period as marking an initial breakthrough towards a different way of running the business. Inspired by the drive for renewal of the 1960s, we sought to open up a new space within organisations where people could more fully realise the meaning of their work, their personal development and their sense of involvement in the bigger picture. Many were absolutely opposed to this, but there were also plenty who were keen and went on to do just that.

In those years , De Baak began to grow and flourish as a management training centre. All manner of new approaches were offered there. Bernard Lievegoed, the pioneer of human-centred organisational development, was the initiator of the first management training programmes there.

After eight years at Shell – four of which were with the NAM and four with Shell Curaçao – I moved to the NPI (Netherlands Pedagogical Institute), which had been founded by Bernard Lievegoed and 12 colleagues in 1954. At that institute – from which a global movement of consultants specialising in human and organisational development emerged, and which inspired concepts such as ‘lean thinking’ and ‘U-theory’ – I spent 28 years facilitating human and organisational development processes across numerous organisations in many countries. For more than thirty years, for example, I have been supporting German Sparkassen in their development. These Sparkassen have transformed from a centrally managed, expert-staff-controlled operational model – in which frontline staff were the implementers – into an organisation operating from a market- and customer-oriented perspective, with central departments providing support and the Vorstand guiding strategic development. I have had the privilege of facilitating this transformative shift in many organisations. The essence of the work there was to introduce, alongside the familiar operational frameworks and working methods, a different framework and a different approach when it comes to change. In a nutshell, this means that everyone in the organisation participates in two processes. The operational process, which is output-driven and in which you hold a position, exists alongside the development process, which is input-driven and in which you fulfil a role. The operational side is a management matter and is carried out with the aid of systems;

development and change are matters of leadership and are carried out through dialogue. The operational process works vertically, whilst development and change work horizontally.

Over the years, a methodology for change and development has emerged which I later named the 'methodology of social evidence'.

Methodology for Development and Change

After many years of grappling with unfamiliar issues in uncharted territory, a number of things have become clearer to me – particularly over the last twenty years – regarding the change and development of organisations and how people interact with one another within them.

First and foremost, it has become very clear to me that change is primarily and first and foremost about *the inner world of people and organisations*. Within us as human beings, processes take place that are of a physical, mental and spiritual nature. We can learn to recognise this when, for example, we become aware of how differently life is experienced when you are ill or healthy. How different is the experience of life when you're feeling good about yourself compared to when you're just going through the motions. What is going on inside us, and how do we steer it? Similarly, the organisation of which we are a part has an inner life of its own. There are habits, established rituals, gossip, entanglements and all manner of things. It is precisely now, when change is involved, that this inner world is powerfully addressed. It seems as though, when change occurs, all the skeletons come tumbling out of the cupboard, old feuds and legacies resurface, and inner barriers are reinforced. This shows us that, with a certain regularity, the same issues arise during change and that the same challenges emerge time and again, for which a new path must be sought. These change-related challenges are often rooted in the organisation's very beginnings. Just as we, as individuals, have our own limitations and can actually grow significantly if we can turn those limitations to our advantage, the same applies to the organisation. How remarkable it is that organisations which have been in existence for some time and in which new generations work are nevertheless confronted time and again with the same difficult issues, which appear to be ingrained in their very nature. In my long-standing relationships with client organisations, where I have sometimes dealt with four or more senior managers, I see the same issues cropping up at regular intervals, which are then viewed and tackled anew. As a rule, organisations have a poor memory of changes they have undergone in the past.

As Kunneman puts it, these are the 'slow issues' that exist in marshy terrain, which call for change. A clear and unambiguous action plan formulated on high, dry ground is of no help here. They require us to proceed in an exploratory and experimental manner.

That, then, is *the second lesson.* All our *familiar working methods*, which are mainly used by managers and professionals in their work*, are* actually *not suited to bringing about change*. They do not help us navigate a process of development and change.

The *most basic assumption* in management – namely that if a superior tells a subordinate they must change, the subordinate will do so – still persists, even though the reality of change management shows this to be rarely the case and increasingly so. It is far more realistic to assume that those involved will feel immediate resistance and will be unwilling to change anything beyond what they themselves consider meaningful. Change is, after all, a dialogue-

based process: we will all have to change, and we will do so – indeed, we want to – if we can see for ourselves what the point of it is.

A *second, related assumption* is that change is imposed from the top down; in other words, those at the top decide what needs to be done differently at the bottom. The approach, therefore, is for a small elite group to devise and prepare the change, after which those involved must be persuaded, the framework conditions adjusted, and the change ultimately enforced upon them. Change, however, is primarily a reflective process in which we ourselves come to realise that something is not working properly and, moreover, gain insight into new possibilities by discovering the new through exploration and inquiry. That process requires leadership from people who are personally capable of actively involving all those concerned in the change right from the start, by allowing them to conduct their own research into the issue and to experiment with relevant new ideas.

Change is about the inner world of people and organisations

It is the intractable issues that lie buried in murky depths that invite change

None of our familiar working methods are actually suited to bringing about change

The most basic assumption in management is that if those higher up tell those lower down that they must change, they will do so

A second, related assumption is that change flows from the top down; at the top, it is decided what needs to be done differently at the bottom

These two assumptions touch upon a deep-seated issue, namely how we view organisations and what meaning we ascribe to them. Is the organisation a production machine that churns out results? Is it a community of people who wish to achieve something together for other people? Is it the driving force of a society that ensures our very existence?

I assume that an organisation is all three, and that it is therefore a multifaceted entity which serves entirely different objectives and secures its existence on the basis of entirely different values. This has led me to the image of the organisation as a mirror of the human soul.

Organisation and Soul

In my book '*Inspiration: a philosophy of organised life'* I explore the idea that the organisation is a perfect mirror of the human soul. I describe this human soul not as harmonious but as paradoxical. It is a contradiction, a polarity, a field of tension in which nothing is self-evidently right and from which anything can arise. Just like the soul, the organisation does not have an unchanging existence, as the mind and body essentially do; rather, the soul is something that appears and disappears in our thoughts,

feelings and actions, and reveals itself in the meaning that we – our own 'self' – assign to our own deeds and behaviour. Thus, the soul appears in organisations as a dark dungeon, in which people are trapped within their coercive systems; it appears in organisations as creative units brimming with life and creativity; it appears in organisations as military battle formations; and in organisations as exploratory trailblazers. Everything in which the human soul can manifest itself as a pre-existing quality can be found in organisations. In

organisations we find good and evil, darkness and light, happiness and sorrow, creation and destruction. The organisation is a moral being capable of determining people's destinies. A decisive factor in this is the nature of the leadership displayed within the organised community, leadership that belongs to us all. Leadership guided by what ideal? That question applies to everyone, including myself.

Horizontal leadership and IMO.

In 2005, I decided to establish IMO (Institute for Human and Organisational Development). Within a few years, this institute had grown to comprise nine groups of consultants in as many countries, totalling fifty people today. We work with 400 client organisations of varying nature, size, and type of product or service, and support senior leaders, managers and professionals through challenging change and development processes. We are a sort of 'GP' for organisations that have to deal with difficult issues, challenges that require a long-term process of change and healing. Every colleague operates independently with an entrepreneurial spirit, is a member of an IMO team and works collaboratively with other colleagues at clients' sites as an IMO colleague. We deliver masterclasses in horizontal leadership and horizontal consultancy. In doing so, we utilise the methodology of 'social evidence', which we share and further develop with one another at annual meetings. Time and again, we return to the issue at hand, to the processes, the dialogues, the initiatives and the learning processes that this entails. We act as horizontal leaders within our clients' organisations ourselves and engage with those challenging yet rewarding change processes, providing guidance for them – just as I have practised from the very beginning at Shell and subsequently through a process of discovery.

In Brazil, Russia, Finland, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, Israel and China, there are passionate and committed organisations at work that we support. The people involved find meaning in what they do, in the struggles, the setbacks, the successes.

Ultimately, this process is based on the principle that everything derives its meaning from how it serves the organisation's client in their process. It is the client at the centre of our efforts that provides us with a focus to hold everything together and ensure continuity. Everything else pulls us apart; it is our client who brings us together and keeps us united. Therein lies the most important tangible fruit of our work. With this customer-centred purpose, we can also give meaning to all the work we do with our suppliers and other stakeholders. We can then discover, by asking ourselves the 'why' question, what the deeper meaning of our working lives is. We can discover how, as individuals, we can develop together into more conscious people who take responsibility for our work, the organisation, for one another, and for the world and the Earth. This gives us a genuine foundation for meaningful change and development, both for people and organisations. That is our leadership ideal in action.

A long journey of exploratory learning alongside others in many organisations worldwide has led me to the question of the soul of the organisation and how this soul sustains the soul of humanity and of society. Demonstrating moral leadership in this context brings about a spiritual development that gives every human being and their creations a future.

A small-scale study among senior managers

The issue

A key question that preoccupies us is how we can approach the complex ways of living and organising that we experience at home and at work from the perspective of the quest for meaning, and how we can find openings and paths that lead to just action and to the fulfilment and inspiration of all those who 'play their part' within the organisation at work. The 'vertical organisation', with its hierarchy and functionality, its operational goals and systems, may be too inflexible and closed to creating space, time and attention for meaning and inspiration. The 'horizontal organisation', which focuses on customer service and collaborative processes, on development and change, and on reflection on the 'how' and 'why' questions, lends itself more to the creation of meaning in our organised lives. How do we create space and time for reflection on essential *'why' questions* that preoccupy us within the organised context? How do we bring Sunday into Monday?

Recent research (TNO) in the Netherlands shows that 20 per cent of people in work are facing burnout. A quarter of days lost to sickness are caused by mental health issues, costing 9 billion euros a year. Of the 7.2 million people in permanent employment and the 1.1 million flex workers, it is primarily those in permanent employment who experience burnout. The main causes are that employees have a heavy workload and little autonomy; they experience less freedom, and more is demanded of them. On average, people work 3 hours of overtime per week, which affects their private lives. People see reducing the workload as the solution.

More space for reflection and contemplation, greater freedom and the ability to make their own decisions contribute to a healthy relationship between people and their work.

So there is still work to be done to transform organisations into healthy organisations in which people can work in a way that is both inspiring and meaningful.

An important dimension for creating meaning and inspiration that we discovered in earlier research is the presence or absence of a connection between 1. what inspires the person with ultimate responsibility within an organisation, 2. the way in which senior management collaborate with one another in day-to-day operations and during change processes, and 3. the way in which professionals are able to respond to client needs and requests. If these three are interconnected, this may manifest itself in greater fulfilment amongst those involved in what they do and achieve together, a strong shared connection with the organisation's ethos, and a sense of operating and acting responsibly, with an eye for the practical and moral issues surrounding the preservation of our humanity and the Earth. We call this 'horizontal organisation'. If, on the other hand, these three are disconnected – in the sense that everyone is merely preoccupied with their own issues and no dialogue takes place between them – then inner fulfilment, a sense of purpose and inspiration, as well as commitment and connection, will be weaker.

1.What inspires the person with ultimate responsibility within an organisation

2.The way in which senior management collaborate with one another in operations and during change processes

3.The way in which professionals are able to respond to client needs and client enquiries

If these three are interconnected, this manifests itself in a greater sense of fulfilment amongst those involved in what they do together and achieve

A strong shared connection with the organisation's mission

A sense of operating responsibly

Acting with an eye to the practical and moral questions surrounding the preservation of humanity and the Earth.

Research

In order to shed light on this question of horizontal organisation from the perspective of organisational practice, we invited seven senior managers from organisations in the Netherlands to share their insights. Over the course of three discussions, held at my kitchen table at home, this issue was discussed in varying groupings. Ultimately, six participants set down their findings on paper following a year of research, and this book gratefully draws on three of their contributions.

Ultimately, it appears that what inwardly motivates the senior manager when dealing with personal and organisational dilemmas creates (expands or, conversely, restricts) the space for others within the organisation to engage in a more reflective manner with the issues that matter to the person with ultimate responsibility, the managers and the professionals alike, and to address these issues. It is precisely this involvement in addressing the complex questions that arise in value-creating processes that provides deep fulfilment and inspiration, as the meaning of things can be experienced more profoundly.

This is clearly demonstrated by the following three representative contributions from leaders with ultimate responsibility.

Three reflections from senior leaders

Reflection from the head of a large school community

The connection with the human aspect as the most important touchstone of good organisation has been abandoned. The individual has become merely an economic component, one that is one-dimensionally measurable and controllable. The system is now the starting point, as are those who hold power within it. This causes feelings of fear and guilt.

We can no longer find answers to our inner questions and must seek new answers to new questions.

The traditional pyramidal hierarchy, based on fear combined with ignorance, is in need of replacement. Whilst we search for new ground, we see an increase in power as a consequence. Less trust. More rivalry. In the phase where the old authority no longer works and the new authority does not yet have sufficient grounding, we see that there are more rules. We secure our position within the system and are often afraid to implement changes.

Identifying the sticking point, articulating where we want to go, and engaging in dialogue about this – all of this requires courage on the part of those with ultimate responsibility.

Learning to live with uncertainties and paradoxes, and moving away from the idea that everything is under control. It takes courage to make choices concerning matters that are existential and linked to meaning and purpose. This requires letting go of old 'certainties' within the traditional system and daring once more to trust our feelings and intuition – the good. This means taking the next step towards people and humanity. It requires facing up to our own fear and uncertainty on the path to renewal. It demands depth of thought, so that we can then begin to envisage and experiment with a new future without knowing where it will lead.

This calls for leadership… from all of us. Leadership, therefore, belongs to all of us and is thus horizontal.

Where are our questions?

Where are our existential questions, such as: What is my deepest desire? Where do I want to go with my life? When am I truly motivated? What is the purpose, the meaning? Do I dare to trust my feelings, my intuition, and remain true to them? Do I dare to ask others questions without judgement? Do I dare to be in a constant state of wonder, to explore? What do I have to face? What discomforts do I have to endure or seek out?

The journey towards humanity, meaning and purpose, and the step beyond fear, therefore begins with ourselves. Turning inwards first means that you must have access to yourself. For me, accessibility is a key core value of leadership. This is different from simply being open. It is about engaging in dialogue and showing who you are. You can only be accessible if you yourself have access to your inner self – where you ask the existential questions; where the muddy and swampy questions lie, as Harry Kunneman so puts it. That's where you begin to connect most deeply with who you truly are.

Adriaan Bekman says that at the heart of leadership lies an enterprising approach to others, which sets their issues begins to shift, and we find and take the next step towards doing what is right. These perspectives require leaders to have made friends with their own feelings, thereby creating space for the other person's issues and development. A leader who is well aware of their own behaviour, who knows which feelings they tend to suppress, has space for others and is approachable. Such a leader has better control over their own behaviour and is less overwhelmed by these feelings. This means making friends with all your feelings – both positive and negative. The wonderful effect is that you explore and develop yourself further in relation to and through confrontation with the other person.

Making friends

Societally, we are seeing a shift towards horizontally oriented authority. Authority based on horizontal. Given the horizontal nature of this authority, the individual's identity will take centre stage, necessarily in connection with others, for I exist only in and through my relationships with others. I become who I am in and through these relationships and the exchanges that go with them.

When I try to take stock of everything, I believe that our transition to horizontally oriented authority is only possible if we break free from the vicious circle in which we currently find ourselves. The vicious circle of our restlessness, filling the void by affirming ourselves, and the resulting dependence on the system. Breaking free from this by showing courage and

making choices that concern matters which are existential for us and connected to meaning, purpose and humanity. By trusting our feelings and intuition once more – doing the good. By facing our own fear and gaining access to ourselves and being open to others, by befriending our feelings. For in a horizontal society, it is about the true from person to person.

We are on the cusp of moving away from traditional pyramidal authority towards horizontally oriented authority. The old norms and the sense of security they provided no longer work, and at the same time we have yet to discover our new sense of security. This creates a sense of confusion. This is necessary. Confusion is a driving force that prompts us to ask questions and helps us to discover the new reality.

Reflection by the head of a government agency

There is no set formula for horizontal organisation. There are no blueprints and no step-by-step plans. Everyone must find their own way. You need to enjoy solving puzzles and embrace complexity.

It requires willingness, a pioneering spirit and an open mind, courage and stamina . And you must be firmly convinced of your vision; as a person, you must be sure of yourself. Because you will encounter a great deal of resistance along the way, sometimes from unexpected quarters. It requires constantly adapting your strategy, seizing (seemingly) small opportunities to make progress.

Being aware of the organisation's and people's backgrounds can help to identify and understand their fears, and to choose the right interventions.

I want to do justice to people's talents and to the meaningful values that bind them together by giving them (back) a say, ownership, responsibility and control. This causes a great deal of discomfort and anxiety in the initial phase, which, incidentally, can last a long time. We have all been brought up and shaped differently. Horizontal organisation requires personality, identity, and I don't think this way of working suits everyone.

When I look at my organisation and the process we're going through, I've underestimated just how much discomfort this paradigm shift would cause. That makes me realise I need to make even greater efforts to get to know people right down to the very fabric of the organisation, and not to listen too readily or exclusively to the enthusiasts. I do, however, want to gain energy and to enjoy the fact that more and more people are getting involved in this values-driven way of working. But also to be mindful of those who need more time, or who ultimately can't make it and choose a different path – to respect them and say our goodbyes.

I, too, experience discomfort myself, just like my colleagues and supervisors. This discomfort becomes more pronounced when the exploratory process comes under pressure or is restricted. For example, due to a reluctance to act, a need for control, or an inability to grasp a reality that is complex. This happens at all levels: the supervisory board, management team, and the front-line operations. And sometimes this fluctuates greatly, shifting from one group to another. Just as the management team finds a better balance, an imbalance arises again within the supervisory board. The teams also present a mixed picture. It is striking that changes within teams can either be helpful – if we manage to bring in the 'right' people – or

sometimes make it clear that horizontal organisation is no a piece of cake. It takes time, effort, reflection and investment in relationships to work together in this way.

What role do I play in this? How can I improve myself? How can I bridge differences in vision? Is there a need for greater clarity and guidance from me as the person with ultimate responsibility, and how do I deal with that? I'm transparent, but does that help, or should I filter what I say after all? I work on the basis of trust, 'until proven otherwise', but am I sometimes too trusting? How do I keep my patience when I see the same issues cropping up again or 'they' still don't get it? How do I challenge my organisation with my ambitions without 'overstretching' staff?

Key concepts in horizontal organisation are: reflective capacity, trust, safety, openness, 'setting boundaries peacefully'. It also involves seeking alternative language, or at the very least being aware of the impact of language.

Horizontal organisation requires effective collaboration and the selection of key figures who share the vision, can promote it and translate it into day-to-day practice. Where things always turn out slightly differently, people demand (more) attention, there are sometimes serious concerns about quality, business risks, etc., and system checks are, above all, initiated by ourselves across the organisation.

Day-to-day practice is challenging. I realise that I must always remain confident and steady as an anchor for this change process, translating the vision into the right words in every situation that arises.

Reflections from the head of a large healthcare organisation

When I walk into the White House early in the morning and John is at work, he comes over briefly to place his hand on my shoulder. He stops by to say hello. John doesn't say much – just short sentences – and sometimes searches for the right words. But I feel that we don't need many words to feel connected. Being able to serve as a director of an organisation that supports John in leading a beautiful and meaningful life is a great privilege for me. I draw my personal mission and drive from these kinds of warm encounters. Our work matters.

John is a bit older, gentle, friendly and a little fragile. We also know clients who are very different. Clients with extremely challenging behaviour. Young, strong as a bear, with behaviour that is sometimes quite aggressive behaviour. Our support process always requires an individualised, contextual approach. What should we do in the here and now with this specific person in this specific situation? That requires not only knowledge and skills, but also practical wisdom.

We see our core mission as facilitating a meaningful life for our clients. To support our ambitions, we launched an organisational development process several years ago: our Values Programme. Three 'values' help us to guide our professional development and reflection. *Encounter*, meaning relational attunement as the starting point of every interaction; *Development* as identifying and taking the next step that is at stake in the individual's life story, and *Support* as determining what can be achieved through one's own strengths and what support is required. More than just values, these are actually three process-oriented terms that invite us to continually seek the most appropriate contextual

application. In doing so, we draw on theoretical insights, biographical work, aspects of quality of life and positive psychology.

The design of this organisational development programme is based on horizontal organisation. Dialogic working, professional personal leadership, and reflective conversations and working methods as sources of learning processes are key principles in this regard. It is therefore not an instructional programme, but rather a collaborative development and research programme. Initially, this took some getting used to for our staff. After all, we do not constantly give them instruction but rather set them on their way with a question. It strongly appeals to the development of personal leadership.

We have structured it so that a process owner leads the programme, supported by a group of ambassadors acting as a steering coalition. My personal commitment and drive as the principal are clearly visible to the organisation. We are developing as an organisation through a rhythmic approach. Sharing our own stories and experiences acts as a catalyst in this process.

It is a pleasure to be able to work on the organisation's development in this way. I see a high level of commitment, great strides being made by clients and growth in our professional expertise. I am proud of what has been set in motion. But I also encounter dilemmas and challenges….

An example: I have invited two trainees to tackle the issue of 'young staff'. How can we make the best possible use of the talents and ambitions of our young staff aged between 20 and 30? What motivates and inspires them? How, and in what areas, do they wish to develop? They are given a budget to work on this issue with young staff over the course of a year. We set them off on a research expedition without any SMART objectives or 'deliverables'. I do, however, find letting go a bit of a dilemma. I myself was brought up and trained to formulate and monitor matters in a results-oriented way. So I do find such an open-ended question, framed as an experiment, rather nerve-wracking. Different voices are speaking within me. An exercise in trust and letting go? Or a lack of clarity and a lack of direction on my part as a director? Can I – or should I – explain this to other stakeholders?

Over time, we have built up our story and our way of working together. A collaborative effort within the Executive Board, with managers and professionals working together and in consultation with our Supervisory Board. I realise, however, that alongside our approach, there are other management paradigms. What do the changes at the top mean for our horizontal organisation and collaboration? How do we have a constructive discussion about this, and what will the outcome be? New input, as well as new focus and opportunities?

There are issues to mull over. Horizontal leadership allows you to reveal yourself as a person. Gaining insight into my own dark side, and acknowledging and recognising areas of difficulty, mean that leadership is also a gruelling process to work on day in, day out. Sometimes it's like ploughing through a swamp. But when John puts his hand on my shoulder, or when I see the pride in the eyes of committed staff and enjoy the strides we're making in our development, it's a joy to be able to fulfil such a role as the person with ultimate responsibility.

A number of key points distilled from the reflections

These three reflections are representative examples of a large number of reflections, from which I have extracted a number of key points that point the way towards developing horizontal organisation and horizontal leadership.

The organisation's purpose and the contribution it makes to the customer are central sources for developing and giving meaning to the work that is done. When people can connect their personal purpose with that of the organisation and see and experience the meaning of their work for the customer, this enhances the quality of the work and fosters a sense of fulfilment in the individual concerned.

We are shifting the focus from a strong emphasis on the vertical dimension of the organisation towards a more horizontal approach to management. This places great demands on the personal commitment of the person with ultimate responsibility, their connection with the community of people they work with, and a constant contribution of the *meaning* – and thereby open up new avenues that nourish the organisation in fulfilling its mission.

In our shift towards the horizontal, we can distinguish various dimensions in how we orient ourselves in our work. This requires an inner shift, a step that involves leaving the safety of a management position behind. It is an invitation to everyone else to join us in this shift. For example, it might involve:

From boss-oriented to customer-oriented

From hierarchy to dialogue

From function-oriented to process-oriented

From task-awareness to role-awareness

From operating functionally to acting personally

From pushing and driving to pulling and inviting

From rushing to slow down and take one's time

From following instructions to taking the initiative

From carrying out tasks to taking responsibility.

From being a team member to exercising personal leadership in the team.

The strength of the vertical structure – the power with which work is carried out and directed, and the scope the person with ultimate responsibility has to take the initiative and innovate – can be shared with middle-management and the professionals who carry out the work with the client. This means that management can take place at every level, and that management tools are available for this purpose. We are thinking of:

Taking the initiative to drive improvement

Developing your skills and knowledge in your profession and in leadership

Managing through financial and numerical data to find the right balance

Understanding your place on the map and the paths that can be taken

Collaborating with others to create added value

Dealing intelligently with systems and consultation processes.

We see one another as leaders, each of us leading our own process. We engage in a leadership dialogue in which staff from different hierarchical levels discuss and advance key issues and change themes together. The dialogical and rhythmic management of the various bodies within an organisation—such as the Supervisory Board, the Works Council and the Clients' Council—by the person with ultimate responsibility provides a foundation for leading the organisation in an enterprising and open manner.

The dialogue between leaders with ultimate responsibility within organisations, in which they can share, as individuals, the real issues, dilemmas, victories and defeats, concerns and aspirations with others, strengthens their perspective on their own leadership and provides encouragement drawn from personal inspiration and their own impulses to embrace this leadership and share it with others.

In my book *Horizontal Organisation*, I have elaborated on these key points in greater detail.

Part 3: Horizontal Leadership

Ultimately, everything converges in our leadership. Leadership was and remains the key to creation, to finding meaning, to survival, and to spiritual fulfilment. Traditionally, this has been a process between leaders and followers. For centuries, community leaders determined the fate of the community's members. But in a borderless global economy, every person can move towards the place and the moment where their own drive, their own mission, can be fulfilled through their own initiative and insight.

Leadership is an essential communal process in which we all participate today. Organisations, as manifestations of the human soul, depend more and more on the leadership that each individual demonstrates within them. We all become leaders of our own process, from which we also bear responsibility towards others.

The mystery of leadership

I find leadership a fascinating subject full of secrets. There are countless publications on this subject, with just as many interesting approaches, and yet for me it remains a secret, a mystery. In a research project spanning many years into leadership, in which I interviewed many leaders on the subject of leadership – specifically *their* leadership – a theory was rarely, if ever, discussed; instead, every leader had a wholly personal answer to this question.

I also noticed that well-known leadership authors such as Covey, Quinn or Kotter, as well as lesser-known authors, base their leadership theory or -model on a personally chosen starting point. They choose a starting point such as trust and reliability, or communication between leader and follower, or creating added value and achieving results, or initiating and implementing change and innovation, or the difference between being a manager and/or a leader. Leadership, I concluded, is based on personally acquired capital. You can only lead yourself and others on the basis of what you yourself have acquired , and you can only describe it on the basis of a self-chosen starting point, which ultimately leads to your own leadership practice with its own concept or model.

Looking back, however, it struck me that everyone links leadership to the fortunes of the community, and that when we discuss leadership together, important issues immediately come to the fore – issues that people grapple with in their daily lives and work. A common essence of positive leadership – and a focus for leaders – is how one person can help another to take the initiative and assume responsibility. In practice, however, we also see countless examples of how leaders cause problems for the community, hinder well-meaning staff, frustrate cooperation and wield their authority, whether appropriately or not.

Leadership in healthcare

I have been advising organisations in the healthcare sector for many years, and over the past 40 years I have also held positions on supervisory boards. The healthcare sector, which previously relied heavily on the compassionate care provided by its staff to patients, has now become a commercial industry. Many specialists dominate healthcare organisations, where the primary focus is on a culture of treatment. Basic care suffers as a result; it is falling short.

The leadership of these institutions has evolved into a management system that attempts to keep everything under control. This is also enforced by funders such as the government and insurers. Everything must be accounted for and demonstrated through statistics, and this demands a constant administrative effort from managers and, in turn, from professionals, which in turn comes at the expense of care for the patient. This does not foster their leadership.

An example. In one hospital, the chief executive was concerned about the issue of patient care. He had the idea of investigating exactly how long patients actually stayed in hospital and why the duration was what it was rather than something else. To his dismay, a series of cases came to light where nobody knew the exact answer to this question. Not the patients themselves, nor doctors nor nurses, nor GPs, nor managers. He decided that every Monday morning, he and his management team would address the specific cases that arose and obtain immediate decisions from those responsible. This had a shock effect throughout the hospital. Everyone was so busy with all sorts of things, that the patient had more or less been lost sight of. Subsequently, this director launched an investigation into the various work processes, how different departments collaborated within them, and how managers and professionals demonstrated leadership in this regard. A surgeon, who had to undergo an operation in his own hospital, provided shocking accounts of how, even as someone familiar with the organisation, he experienced a complete lack of any shared vision regarding dealing with patients; that there was no collaboration; and that, as a patient, he had to steer his own process, make his own decisions and stand his ground. It became very clear that there was a leadership problem here. There was no clear direction regarding patient care from the top; managers were doing their own thing, as were the doctors; the nursing staff were busy with all their specialised tasks, which meant that patients repeatedly found different staff at their bedside who knew nothing about their case. In this hospital, this became a key issue for managers and professionals, and leadership discussions were held between those involved to determine where the patient fitted into the picture and how to improve the situation. It suddenly became apparent that significant progress could be made. It proved possible to take a patient who presented for an urgent examination – and who would normally have to spend a whole day waiting , could be guided through the process within an hour, culminating in a final assessment by the doctor in charge. Appointments were better planned, and doctors and other specialists were able to carry out their work on time. Inwards where, in the past, one person would dispense medication, another would care for the patient, and yet another would be at the bedside the next day for something else entirely, the work process was changed so that patients saw familiar faces at their bedside who carried out the various tasks. They were also able to answer all the patients' questions and listen to their concerns. When a shift in mindset occurs – initiated by the person with ultimate responsibility – and people begin to take pleasure in coordinating their efforts around the patient once more, and managers and doctors communicate with one another in clear, understandable language, then suddenly a noticeable difference becomes apparent for the patient, for the manager and for the care professional.

Another example. In a care home for elderly people with dementia, there has been talk for years about 'customer treatment' and 'customer care'. In a horizontally organised discussion between the director, department heads, team leaders and carers, it becomes clear that, whilst there is much talk about these concepts, very little of it is put into practice. The pressure on carers has increased enormously in recent years, and the protocols governing all procedures have been tightened up, meaning that carers must shower a patient within a set number of minutes and, on any given day, ensure that a precise number of residents follow this

showering protocol . This proves to be an impossible demand, leading to some very bizarre situations. During this discussion, it becomes apparent that many of the measures are actually counterproductive to residents' needs. The director reflects on the policy being pursued and acknowledges that he would actually prefer things to be different, but that demands are being imposed from above. Nevertheless, processes are being set in motion in which managers and professionals are given the freedom to try out different practices and demonstrate their own leadership. This leads, for example, to a move away from a single, uniform mealtime for the whole care home, allowing the various wards to run their own programme in consultation with the kitchen. This results in variety and much more tailored care for residents.

The elderly person with dementia who gets up early is not forcibly kept in bed, but can get straight to work, whilst the lady in the ward who sleeps late can do so at her own pace.

It leads to a noticeable sense of relaxation among residents and staff, better cooperation, a personalised focus on each resident, and a surprising and heart-warming outcome for everyone. It is also more effective and efficient.

It is precisely in the care sector that we can see good leadership at work. If those with ultimate responsibility, managers and professionals share a genuine common focus, wonderful things can be achieved with limited resources.

I've read a wonderful example of a care home in India with eighty residents, which was set up by the residents themselves and where everyone has a role and a task, people look after one another, all processes are carried out by the residents themselves, and a thriving community has emerged that functions excellently with minimal resources.

Horizontal leadership

It is precisely in the care sector that horizontal leadership could bring about a real improvement, which would render many of the measures dictated from above by politicians and insurers – and imposed by senior management – largely superfluous, whilst strengthening the link between leadership and the organisation's core process: serving clients well, .

An inspired person in charge who cares deeply for the patient and their immediate family, a collaborative management team that guides all those involved in finding the right path, motivated carers and practitioners who support the patient's life but do not take over responsibility entirely – all of this together can lead to a different way of living and working, a liveable, well-organised reality for everyone involved.

Leadership as a process

For more than forty years, I have noticed that there is a clear correlation between the effective functioning of an organisation as a community and good leadership. However, there is no formula that automatically leads to a good outcome. Good leadership is exercised in entirely different ways, and organisations can succeed or fail.

All this has led me to *view leadership first and foremost as a process within the organisation*, as a specific work process and, at the same time, a process of development for the entire organised community – far more so than as a model focused on the leader's performance. Just as there are many taxi drivers operating taxis in all sorts of places around the world, each

doing so in their own way, developing their own approach and possibly demonstrating leadership – and just as many theories can be devised about driving a taxi – so too are there leadership processes in all manner of organisations around the world, and there are leaders who do this in their own unique way and develop as leaders in the process, which in turn feeds into explanatory leadership models. Leadership is therefore something that everyone can demonstrate in their own way; it may appear but can also disappear again.

It has also gradually become clear to me that *leadership is all about the moral questions we must ask ourselves today*. Moral questions are questions of meaning, and these can mainly be posed as 'why' questions. Why do we do this, and why do we do it this way? Day-to-day practice divides people; everyone goes about their own business. Asking the 'why' question brings people together. In doing so, moral criteria can be applied. For example, the impact of our actions on the customer, on the supplier, on the wider community, but also on the environment, and on the freedom and safety of those involved. Leadership has a guiding power; it is a moral force at work within the community. In my view, leadership is primarily about questions that give meaning – 'why' questions – and we can no longer leave these questions to the sole leader who determines our fate.

All around us, we see countless far-reaching events that affect our society and its organisations. In such situations, good or bad leadership stands out immediately, and, above all, the tendency to point the finger at the leader who determines our fate. However, such leaders can only exist today if the members of the community also demonstrate leadership themselves. None of us can, in fact, pass on the responsibility entirely to the leaders who determine our fate.

We all become part of the leadership process and bear moral responsibility within it. This is a dimension of life that is by no means automatically addressed within organisations or in our society. It is time we began to do so on a broad scale.

This idea – whereby leadership is viewed as a community-based process of a moral nature – has led me to observe more closely which dimensions of the leadership process and of the moral character of leadership emerge in organisations of entirely different natures, mission and place in the world, and in organisations with different cultures and positions within society.

Natural and organised leadership

First of all, I have noticed that leadership has traditionally been demonstrated within traditional natural communities such as a family, a nation or a religion, and that leadership is also demonstrated within the organised contexts in which we work – and often live – today.

In the natural community, leadership is bound by the fixed laws of nature, such as the natural succession from father to son or, mother to daughter, and this leadership strives to perpetuate the natural community with its traditions and customs. There is, as it were, an implicit moral dimension hidden within this. For example, one does not abuse or mistreat one's children, and if it does happen, we are shocked. In the organised community, by contrast, this leadership is more closely linked to management and functional tasks, and in principle anyone can assume this leadership role provided they participate in the organisation's leadership process. Moreover, change is a constant feature there, even more so than the desire to preserve the status quo. It is not self-evident to raise moral questions in such a context. We

do things that we cannot and do not wish to justify, but which we permit or impose on one another under the pressure to perform. The well-being of people and nature is, in the organised community, constantly put at risk.

I have also noticed that leadership in organisations can function effectively and morally as a process when three conditions are met.

1 The first condition is that those with ultimate responsibility have an inspired vision of the organisation's fortunes, a vision linked to the organisation's core mission. This vision is linked to values that are largely shared by the wider community and which correspond to what is morally valued in its wider environment. Consequently, there are certain things we do not do, such as defrauding customers, putting managers under unreasonable pressure, exploiting staff or abusing the natural environment.

2 The second condition is that the managers/leaders of the organisation are capable of fulfilling their functional, specialised responsibilities, whilst also being willing and able to collaborate when it comes to change and innovation, and to commit themselves personally to these efforts. This is not just about the 'what' and the 'how', but also the 'why'. That question may always be asked.

3 The third condition is that the organisation's professionals are customer-focused and serve them in their own way with specific products and services, and that they continually improve their own work processes to this end, whilst maintaining a constant attitude of learning.

When these three conditions come together – that is, when the inspiring vision from the top is aligned with the horizontal management practices of the managers, and these are aligned with the professionals who form the core of the customer process, and all are prepared to ask (or have asked) the 'why' question or to have it asked, then these organisations and their leadership will flourish. If they fail to do so, the organisation will face serious difficulties in identifying the right next steps in its development.

Today, organisations and their leaders are all challenged to fulfil their social responsibility, and they can only master this responsibility if each of us is willing to contribute our own leadership.

The history of leadership

Here I outline three concepts of leadership that have successively prevailed over the centuries, how these three concepts manifest as leadership forces within organisations, and I conclude with a possible concept of leadership for the future.

Concept 1: The Leader

Leadership is about the leader. The leader is the initiated individual who connects the visible and invisible worlds. The leader determines the fate of the members of the community. The leader does this by virtue of being initiated into the secrets of what determines the community's destiny. The leader is followed and revered by the community. Important decisions concerning life and communal living are entrusted to the leader. After all, the leader possesses the higher wisdom.

The chieftain, the pharaoh and the priest functioned as initiated figures in ancient cultures, who connected the visible and invisible worlds and determined the fate of the people in the community.

The CEO or person with ultimate responsibility—who is well looked after by others and who makes the most important decisions determining the fate of the organisation and the people within it—is a reflection of this. Safeguarding and nurturing the entrepreneurial drive, allocating resources, and defining the mission and vision from a top-level position are manifestations of this. Supervisors monitor the quality of this leader.

The initiated leader connects The invisible Upper World

with

The visible Lower World

Concept 2: Leaders of units

Within the community, various ways of living and working emerge, led by different people representing different parts of the community. The captain of the ship, the philosopher, the healer, the tailor, the farmer, the entrepreneur, the politician, the mayor and so on oversee various processes in which others work and live, and which are guided by the leader of that process. These leaders have absolute power over what others in the process do and say. They determine the fate of those involved and can intervene if people wish to go their own way. If this fails, people are ‘killed’ or ‘ostracised’.

The leaders of organisational units are a reflection of these socially powerful figures. They set the objectives, assess performance, manage the systems, and influence strategy and policy.

There are several leaders who stand side by side and together form a leadership community. They link their own visions to their own realities

Concept 3 : functional management

The community becomes organised. All societal processes are carried out by organisations. Leadership is linked to a role within the organised community. Hierarchy and functionality emerge. Structures and systems are introduced to maintain control over the process. Entrepreneurs, bosses and deputy bosses emerge who organise and manage the work. Specialisation and differentiation require greater coordination. From a pioneering organisation, organisations grow into a differentiated whole comprising teams and units.

Managers are a reflection of these bosses and under-bosses. They organise the work, establish the framework, exercise control and arrange meetings.

Leadership has become a system that governs the organisation. At the top, the vision is formulated; at the bottom, the tasks are carried out; and in the middle, the threads are tied together.

Organisations and leadership

These three leadership forces, namely:

· the leader as the person with ultimate responsibility

· specialised unit leaders

· functional managers,

together form the leadership system within organisations. Distributed and shared power call the shots.

The person with ultimate responsibility holds power over the mission, strategy and resources. They determine the organisation's fate and influence the fate of the people within the organisation.

Unit leaders hold power over the processes and establish the framework within which others must work. They can form the backbone of an organisation. Without them, nothing can be achieved.

Functional management organises the activities and oversees operations by determining what the professionals can and cannot do, as well as the way in which they work together.

If these three are linked, leadership is highly effective within the organised community. In practice, they may be disconnected leadership within the organised community.

Concept 4: the professional as a leader

Employees, as professionals, collaborate independently with others within their work processes. They usually work autonomously and must resolve their issues in collaboration with colleagues. Managers and leaders are too preoccupied with one another and their own issues to be able to devote much attention to the professionals. Professionals who do not develop leadership within themselves struggle to cope in today's world.

It is the professionals who have so far been excluded from leadership but who, in day-to-day practice, can no longer function effectively without personal leadership. They collaborate with others and can influence this to a large extent themselves. They take responsibility for their work and their way of working.

The professional leads the customer process in collaboration with others. Professionals independently integrate the various functional dimensions into a workable whole.

Today, we live in organisations characterised by these four leadership forces, each with its own dynamics, all striving to maintain control over the complexities of organised life.

A key question regarding leadership is how these four forces can be combined so that an organisation does not lose its strength through shared, disconnected and fragmented leadership.

Example: *In a large German drugstore group with over 3,500 shops across 13 European countries, three major warehouses and distribution centres that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to receive goods from suppliers and deliver them to the shops at the right times. Staff from 60 different nationalities work in a three-shift system. Each centre has a director, department heads, te team leaders and staff. Work is carried out at a fast pace and the necessary changes are implemented with vigour. However, the centres' management has noticed that problems and delays are increasing and are becoming increasingly difficult to resolve. In a discussion with department heads, team leaders and staff, it becomes clear that there is a lack of coordination between the different levels, as well as within each level. How can this be bridged?*

They find the answer in a change in the relationship between the levels. Instead of managers and staff who do not understand one another, it is recognised that everyone can demonstrate leadership, albeit in different areas.

The staff/professionals lead the customer process. They ensure that the flow is smooth and the goods reach the right place.

The team leaders lead the teams and facilitate teamwork.

The department heads coordinate the processes and align the various interests.

The person with ultimate responsibility oversees the interplay within the wider context of the company.

How does this work in practice? At the heart of the matter is a regular reflective leadership dialogue. From their different leadership roles, those involved discuss current issues with one another, and in doing so it becomes clear to everyone what step they need to take. In this way, necessary changes are elegantly integrated into everyone's daily practice. Whereas in the past people often pointed fingers at one another and the question of blame was on the table, the issue is now addressed head-on in direct dialogue, and the necessary steps are initiated. All of this is always done with the customer and the supplier we work with in mind. What is striking is that these reflective conversations are not conducted in a purely functional manner; rather, each person emerges as an individual, and the meaning of what we are doing can be rebuilt together time and again. It enables everyone to work more from the perspective of the whole rather than focusing solely on the interests of the individual part.

Achieving such a relationship with one another does not happen automatically. It requires constant practice on the part of those involved and tight, consistent management of this process. It demands that those involved overcome an inner barrier; it is a process of trial and error. But eventually, a sense of familiarity develops and those involved come to regard it as effective and meaningful.

Vertical and horizontal leadership

Alongside traditional vertical leadership – where 'those higher up manage those lower down' – horizontal leadership is being introduced. Everyone is a leader, and these leaders coordinate with one another. We address one another as leaders and ensure that, both in reflective discussions and in operational meetings, the consequences for one's own actions within one's own area of responsibility are made clear and acted upon.

Ultimately, we cannot view the organisation solely as a vertical structure with vertically operating systems and functional leadership; rather, we can also view it as a map on which places and routes are marked out, and where everyone can act as a personal leader within the spaces and times that suit their responsibilities.

To achieve a good balance between vertical and horizontal leadership, it is important that everyone can develop their leadership skills and has the appropriate tools to work with and steer their own process.

This means that the tools used at the top must also be made available to others – middle managers and professionals – in a format suited to their needs.

This involves: implementing change, developing one's own skills, being able to manage based on figures and cash flows, knowing the map and being able to navigate it, collaborating with others, consulting, and being able to use systems.

Rather than building even more complex systems and overhauling existing ones that are designed to be controlled from the top down, it seems to me better to equip people with the tools that enable them, together with others, to steer and manage the work process and collaboration themselves as leaders. Regular cross-functional dialogue then serves to bring people together.

A radical change

In the practice of organised life, we may well be in need of a radical shift in our perspective on leadership.

Let's start by turning our view of reality on its head. The professionals are the leaders and the managers are the staff. The professionals carry out an organisation's core process – the process involving customers, suppliers or other stakeholders who provide or receive services. Managers organise the framework conditions and are the intelligent staff who relieve the professionals of all manner of organisational and monitoring tasks.

In this concept, professionals suddenly become involved in leadership. They become discussion partners for the various management layers that various levels establish the framework conditions.

This puts the excessive focus on all manner of management tasks and issues into perspective and shifts the emphasis back to where it should lie: namely, serving others within the core process.

This also means that professionals finally gain access to the key dimensions of work, such as cash flows, collaboration, strategy and objectives.

In my practice, across many organisations in many countries, this has proven to lead to a highly workable vision of organisation and leadership. The senior executives step down from their pedestals and engage with clients and professionals to experience how they carry out the core processes together and demonstrate leadership in doing so.

An example: *A pioneer has imbued his retail business with a thoroughly fundamental philosophy that rests entirely on the new vision of leadership I have outlined here.*

In the shops, branch managers work alongside their staff to deliver the best possible customer service. They know the figures, they know their role, and they are constantly involved in the next steps in developing the company's philosophy and the shop's operations.

Keep it simple and straightforward. Sell good products at fixed prices. Ensure the shop is well-organised and attractive. Sources of frustration and inefficiency in the work processes are tackled together as much as possible. If you're at all taken with this philosophy, working in a shop is a pleasure.

Any issues that arise are dealt with and resolved on the spot. Just as almost everything organised by people is imperfect and has to be recreated time and again, so too are repeated attempts made here to create an inspiring experience. As Goethe once said: "Alles ist ein Versuch", everything is a try. As a customer, you can experience this in the shop.

The management of this company reflected on how to overcome the growing pains. They took a fresh look at leadership and asked themselves: in what ways do employees demonstrate their leadership, in what does the team leader, in what does the department head, in what does the director? Managers and staff took part in this. The surprising thing was that, in this leadership dialogue, the different levels understood one another much better than they had previously in the top-down discussions and arrived at good solutions together.

Such a leadership dialogue requires a great deal of practice, especially from the managers. They are not used to it. Managers, too, like to solve problems and tell staff what needs to be done differently. Their joint conclusion was that this actually doesn't work at all when really difficult issues are on the table. The biggest change lies in a different way of listening to one another, responding to what the other person is saying, sticking to the facts, and arriving at concrete steps. If you work hierarchically, top-down, and you have to go down through several levels, the process grinds to a halt. Those at the bottom don't understand what those at the top mean. Those at the top see this lack of understanding as resistance. This is a structural problem in leadership within many organisations, which, in my view, has never been properly addressed.

You could sketch the picture as follows.

The management team stands on the table, overseeing the whole picture and free to intervene in anything they deem necessary. The department heads have a chair representing a specific area of expertise and must work together with other chair-holders within certain parameters. The team leaders are on the shop floor and can see what is happening both above and below the table, where the professionals are seated, and must try to bring it all together. The professionals, beneath the table, wonder what is going on up there and carry on as best they can with the practical work assigned to them.

It is time for professionals to become part of the leadership and to step out from beneath the table. Their leadership is evident in their interactions with clients, their collaboration with colleagues, their professional judgement, and the initiatives they take to ensure everything runs smoothly. Team leaders guide team members and the team towards the objectives and ensure the immediate conditions are in place. Department heads bridge the gap between

upper and lower levels, left and right, and steer the units in the right direction. Senior management moves through the whole organisation and charts the course for the future in collaboration with all stakeholders who influence the organisation and may depend on it.

There are two key areas in organisations that we share: customer service and the leadership we demonstrate. It is in these areas that we reveal ourselves as individuals and commit ourselves fully. That is where the difference is made. In this, we all stand together on an equal footing. We should recognise this and create the appropriate spaces for reflection in which this horizontal dynamic can unfold. At the same time, we can simplify the vertical structure and reduce the many burdens it places on our shoulders. In other words, organising horizontally. This allows everyone to find a better work-life balance and enables a significant increase in a sense of purpose for all those connected to leadership.

How might this work in practice?

Part 4: Horizontal Organisation

Organisations are primarily viewed as units based on hierarchy and functionality, within which people deliver outputs that serve the interests of various stakeholders. Organising and reorganising take up management's time and attention. Yet the interactions between people take place at a horizontal level – for example, in the customer process, in team collaboration, and in work processes.

What would it look like if we organised ourselves more horizontally and aligned the vertical dimension more closely with this?

Introduction

Let me first briefly summarise what has gone before.

Our view of organisations is governed by two principles. The first principle is hierarchy; the second is functionality. An organisation is structured vertically and is driven forward in an output-oriented manner based on functional authority.

This layered structure – top, middle, base – is the framework within which things take place. The top operates strategically – the middle management organises – the front line manages the customer process. Each has its own objectives and, ideally, the work across these three layers is coordinated through consultation.

Work processes are managed and steered using measurement and control systems.

A completely different aspect of organisations, one that is not so prominent in our view, is that of purpose, collaboration, inspiration, change and development. One could view this aspect of organisation as polar to the vertical, hierarchical, functional aspect.

This aspect is, in fact, input-oriented and unfolds horizontally and exploratively. It is about developing an eye and an ear for issues, for new ideas and impulses, for how people interact with one another, the dialogue between differences, our inspiration, and the question of the meaning of it all.

One could thus go so far as to say that all our attention is focused on ensuring the organisation functions well, and that the meaningful, inspiring side of organisation largely escapes our attention. When things really get out of hand, well, then we wake up and ask ourselves whether we need to change course.

But there is another way!

Horizontal organisation

Forty-eight years ago, I started working at Shell working on change issues through the lens of organisational development. The practices of managers and staff would sometimes become bogged down in vertical hierarchical contexts, particularly where this concerned the functioning of leadership and collaboration across departmental boundaries.

We trained managers in various leadership styles and we trained staff in social skills. That proved insufficient. Working methods also had to be changed. We developed project-based work and work meetings; we set up management teams and broad-based meetings where policy was discussed.

Throughout these steps, it became clear time and again that change does not happen automatically and that the vertical movement from top-down and bottom-up was not the appropriate approach to bring about change.

Following my organisational development work at Shell, I was able to continue exploring ways, in various countries and with different organisations, to ensure that change took place in a more effective, horizontal manner, and also to operate horizontally within the organisation's core processes – the customer-facing process

In my doctoral thesis "*Dynamic Organisations: The Customer at the Centre of Our Efforts*", I described the fundamental transformation of a vertical, hierarchically organised company that operates from top –down to a customer-focused organisation in which change initiatives are addressed and implemented horizontally. This account was based on years of research and consultancy work with German Sparkassen. What sets these banking organisations apart is that they define their objectives in the context of the customer. The well-being of their customers is paramount. '*If the customer is doing well, we are doing well too'*. In principle, these customers are all citizens and businesses in a city or region. In these Sparkassen, there are very short lines of communication between senior management and frontline staff; after all, everyone works directly with customers. The central support departments act as service providers within this customer-service process.

My research showed that three dimensions are important to customers, in the following order: first and foremost, the relationship – recognising one another as individuals; secondly, the service – helping one another to reach sound decisions; and thirdly, the product-price ratio, also in relation to other options. In contact with the customer, it is precisely this horizontal approach that is essential.

Particularly now that customers are acting more and more independently, and there are multiple ways in which business can be conducted, a horizontal approach is required. Within the organisation, this calls for effective and rapid collaboration between professionals from different units. This horizontal collaboration is greatly facilitated when managers and staff work together to address change-related issues. These change processes are led by process owners who do so out of a personal commitment. They ensure that decisionmakers , experts and members of the target group work together to design and implement this change. In such processes, people move right across the organisation and work alongside those they rarely encounter in day-to-day operations.

The customer is always the focus.

It is not a given

Although companies with a horizontal organisational structure generally fare well in the long term, it is by no means a given that companies and their leaders will commit to a horizontal structure. This requires, in fact, a relative vertical 'in-control' position of senior management, which thereby wields considerable authority over what can and cannot take place. Moreover, those with ultimate responsibility are generally not inclined to engage personally or to enter into direct, personal dialogue with all stakeholders. This is not considered desirable within the usual repertoire of behaviour. Indeed, maintaining a distance and staying at the helm is what takes precedence and receives the primary focus.

Furthermore, senior middle management is deeply attached to its positions as heads of departments and units. It is in control and manages the contribution, sometimes in a competitive relationship with colleagues, particularly where top management's attention to their contribution is concerned.

Team leaders and professionals, on the other hand, benefit greatly from operating horizontally. They are part of the direct dynamics of working with clients and benefit from being able to address the issues at hand in a flexible and direct manner.

When organisations focus primarily on customer service and collaboration with multiple stakeholders – including suppliers, owners and employees – and senior management sees itself at the centre of this community of collaborating people rather than standing or sitting at the top and at a distance, then the foundations for horizontal organisation are laid, as our experience over many years in numerous organisations across many countries demonstrates.

Methodology of horizontal organisation

Horizontal organisation requires its own methodology, its own approach. Over the years, a methodology for horizontal organisation and horizontal leadership has developed that can support us in shaping this.

I have named this methodology the 'methodology of social evidence'. The word 'evidence' has been chosen here based on the core idea that, whereas in nature everything is evident, is linked to laws, in the social sphere this is only the case if we ourselves create this evidence through conscious care and the conscious attribution of meaning.

The three key terms we have identified as essential to social evidence are: process – dialogue – biography.

– *Process:* everything unfolds as a process; everything repeats itself rhythmically, yet always differently: in a different place, at a different time, with different people, in a different situation. If things are to come about successfully, this requires a sound process.

– *Dialogue*: we create shared values, in a client–supplier relationship, in a collegial relationship, in a teacher – apprentice relationship, in a manager–employee relationship. If we are to create values, this requires good teamwork.

– *Biography*: we give meaning to our lives within the context of our own biography – our own life story – and in relation to the biographies of others, both people and organisations,

with whom we are connected. If we are to experience the meaning of it all, this requires a connection to what we are striving for in our own biography.

Process **Rhythm**

Dialogue **Value creation**

Biography **Meaning**

In order to be firmly present in this social context – well-grounded and open to the new – we can make two *movements of the soul* within the social sphere, in what unfolds between us.

One movement is from *the outside in*, from external sensory perception to the internal processing of these perceptions. We focus on the outside world, which we can perceive and internalise:

– we focus on phenomena: we constantly observe and examine what appears;

– we focus on others: we examine what others see.

The other movement is from *the inside out,* from our own impulses and ideals to the guiding narratives in action. It concerns the impulses and ideals that emerge in the stories we tell and that others can perceive in us through the way we act:

– we focus on the creative idea: we observe the guiding beliefs that determine our actions;

– we focus on the stories: we observe what we, as individuals, narrate as a story.

Observing phenomena

Testing with others

Two movements of the soul

Guiding beliefs

Illustrative stories

When we are consciously able to make these two fundamental movements of the social our own – from the outside in and from the inside out – and to do so repeatedly, we become well attuned to what is taking place within and outside us and can consciously steer this process, thereby demonstrating conscious leadership. I described this methodology in greater detail in the book *Inspiring Change* and in two academic publications (M&O).

In this way, we consciously create a social evidence amongst ourselves when we wish to put these key points and principles into practice collectively. Once this evidence emerges, it operates as powerfully as a law of nature and shapes both the social organism and our inner world – the soul – towards what we wish to be and are capable of being.

We can therefore summarise and bring together the above into a methodology of organised life, a ‘methodology of social evidence’. This methodology is relevant to the human soul and its creations. It aligns with recent developments in thinking about how people’s social reality can be investigated and approached, such as constructivism, developmental theory and systems theory. In particular, this methodology is based on the work of Bernard Lievegoed and his colleagues. Lievegoed was inspired by Boulding’s systems theory. Boulding distinguished between levels of systems, with each higher level representing an added quality. Lievegoed was particularly drawn to the principles of ‘Steigerung’ and ‘Metamorphosis’ as the core of value creation and development, they particularly appealed to Lievegoed. This prompted Lievegoed to seek out the process organisation, which he initially described using a Cloverleaf model:

This Cloverleaf model shows us how, through the interplay of: 1. customer service, 2. input–throughput–output processes, 3. information systems and 4. human capabilities, leadership can steer the organisation towards a healthy balance between these four. Organisational development is the constant leadership challenge.

Information Systems

Input – Throughput – Output **Leadership** **Customer service Processes**

guidance

Human capacity

Core orientations for horizontal organisation

Inspired by Lievegoed’s Cloverleaf model, horizontal organisation can be seen as focusing on four fundamental organisational objectives that must constantly be brought into a healthy balance with one another. This multiplicity of objectives corresponds to a multiplicity of organisational dimensions which, as it were, constitute the lifeblood of an organisation.

The fourfold objective of an organisation as a living organism is:

· 1.Systematically working with customers

· 2.Systematically reducing costs and improving work processes

· 3.Systematically stimulating the development of staff

· 4.Systematically promoting collaboration between teams and units as a coherent communication and information system.

I see the art of good organisation as steering these tasks in a creative and systematic manner, in such a way that optimal value creation is achieved for all four of these objectives. To this end, managers and professionals work together actively. It is precisely through the joint realisation of these four objectives that new energy flows into the organisation. We experience a heightened sense of purpose in our work, and this balances out the energy-sapping activities demanded by the vertical organisation to us.

For example, I have personally noticed for a long time that when I'm working at and with a client, I gain energy and new ideas from it, whereas after internal meetings, where organisational matters are discussed, I usually feel tired afterwards. When the team I work in is on a roll, I thrive. If there's friction, it comes at the expense of my happiness. If I'm developing personally, I can cope better with setbacks. If the processes are running smoothly and there's a sense of flow, I'm happy. If the process stagnates, I become grumpy.

1.Systematic Working with customers

I would characterise the process with the customer as the organisation's 'core process'. It is through this that the organisation's core value is realised. The core process constitutes the very reason for the organisation's existence. I have noticed that orienting the organisation towards the customer is by no means a matter of course. Managers and staff are heavily focused on their own work processes and often lose sight of the customer. The connection between staff members' work processes and the customer journey that the customer experiences with the staff members is essential for the well-being of both staff and customers. This connection between employee-customer connection is shaped within the customer interfaces. These include interfaces such as 'attracting the customer', 'the customer's order', 'delivering the service or product to the customer', 'payment by the customer' and 'after-sales care for the customer'. These interfaces involve a two-way flow. Employees and customers are, in fact, both customers and suppliers to one another.

I observe a fundamental difference in the connection between the customer and the organisation's employee depending on whether the customer is an anonymous consumer or a personal customer. The anonymous consumer is interested in products and services at a reasonable price but does not actually wish to enter into a personal relationship with the organisation, and vice versa. The personal customer, on the other hand, has a connection with the organisation and its staff and is interested in what the organisation is developing in relation to their needs as a customer.

Customers want a Personal Connection with the supplier

Consumers want service and a good Product-Price balance

A manager with final responsibility at a company decides to take over the business from the owner. The company is no longer a core business of the group. The new entrepreneur decides to visit all the company's customers and, through discussions, find out where customers perceive the company's strengths and weaknesses to lie. During these discussions, it becomes clear to him that some customers are genuinely interested in this company and would like to continue doing business with it, but there are also customers who base their decision on whether or not to do business solely on the product and the price – in comparison with other suppliers – that determines whether or not they do business with the company. The entrepreneur decides to set up two distinct processes. With the business customers, he will

continue to develop and invest; for the consumer customers, he will supply a good standard product at an attractive price. The entire organisation is structured accordingly. Business customers are provided with a process tailored to their specific orders, whilst consumers order standard products that are supplied as standard delivered.

The company and its staff thrive, work processes run much more smoothly and profits increase significantly.

The customer-focused process requires careful organisation of the business.

First and foremost, I consider it important to work systematically with customers. The entire process and its interfaces must be consistent. All internal processes affect these interfaces, which means that internal workflows must also be streamlined and coordinated with one another.

A bank customer wants a mortgage. After all sorts of information has to be provided on all sorts of forms, it takes weeks before a decision is made. There is only one procedure for all credit applications, whether complex or not. The bank director decides to differentiate the procedure for standard applications and complex, specific loans. More than 80 per cent of applications are standard. A decision is made at the start of the process and the loan is granted within a few days, followed by the administrative formalities. For complex loans, the best options are first analysed together with the customer before a joint decision is taken by both parties.

2.Systematically reducing costs and improving work processes

A second objective and challenge in horizontal organisation is to avoid unnecessary costs and improve inefficient work processes. This is necessary to ensure that energy is not wasted on pointless matters. It requires staff to regularly reflect on how work is carried out, what is working and what is not, and what contributes value and what does not. In this context, staff can put their own ideas into practice, which is an important source of motivation and inspiration. If a work process is carried out routinely, it quickly loses momentum and gets bogged down in a great deal of unnecessary effort.

I see *three ways* to achieve this.

Approach 1: Systematically cutting costs

Approach 2: Budgeting

Approach 3: Systematically improving work processes

Approach 1 involves systematic cost-cutting. This primarily entails a systematic review of material costs, staff costs and development costs. We examine how things can be done better and differently. Ultimately, savings can be made across all cost categories, with some cost items yielding immediate savings and others yielding savings over a specific period.

In a bank, cash is delivered to and collected from branches on a weekly basis. Staff analyse the cash flows from the various branches and identify certain patterns. Deliveries and

collections can be carried out with far less effort. The schedule is drastically revised, resulting in significant cost savings.

Approach 2 is the budgeting approach. Targets are set, activities are planned, cost estimates are prepared, budget monitoring is set up, and course corrections are encouraged. Material costs, staff costs and development costs are determined in proportion to what is earned. The result is an appropriate margin. All staff gain insight into the budget and contribute to it. Every staff member or team has their own contribution margin statement showing the costs they incur and the revenue they generate.

In a consultancy firm, every staff member is given their own contribution margin statement. The basic principle is: "how much money is lost if this staff member leaves ''. Employees can view their own contribution margin account and those of their colleagues, and can manage it themselves. Some employees make a larger contribution, others a smaller one. This is discussed collectively. Everyone is asked to strike a balance between their own interests and the collective interest. This makes all sorts of discussions about differences much more effective.

Approach 3 involves systematically improving work processes. The functioning of work processes is regularly reviewed: is there a smooth flow, is there good collaboration, are decisions being made, or is there stagnation, conflict or indecision? Bottlenecks are identified and 'red spots' are addressed, preferably using good ideas from the staff themselves who carry out the process. The nature of the work process and the way it unfolds largely determine staff behaviour. Is the process fully automated, or does it require entrepreneurial initiative from the staff member? This results in entirely different behaviour. The challenge here is to strike the right balance between streamlined and entrepreneurial approaches.

Within an organisation, considerable thought is given to what services might be offered to the customer. Plans are drawn up, but often they cannot be implemented. The process is analysed. There are many pointless steps in this process, and the process is radically overhauled. The process begins with a dialogue with the customer based on a specific customer enquiry. This saves a great deal of unnecessary preparation.

When changing or improving work processes, you come up against guiding principles that have shaped the way the process has operated. Sometimes there is a dominant principle, such as 'certainty', which is at odds with, for example, 'flexibility' – something that is important to the customer. Identifying the right guiding principle on which to base the process is essential.

Guests at a holiday park find themselves queuing when they arrive. Everything is geared towards certainty, and this comes at the expense of the guests' enjoyment on arrival. With a simple shift in focus – namely from 'certainty' to 'flow' – the process is reorganised. The customer is given a card in advance, enabling them to carry out various tasks independently on arrival without the intervention of a member of staff.

Horizontal organisation is not about the usual vertical cost-saving and efficiency measures, which are often isolated marked in red. Rather, it involves a permanent and active contribution from all staff members who, as horizontal leaders, take responsibility for ensuring that the work process and the interplay between work processes run effectively and inspiringly.

3.Systematic staff development

The personal development of staff members forms a key pillar underpinning the viability of horizontal organisation. This personal development takes place largely during the work process and particularly as the work process itself evolves.

I see *four paths* for personal development at work.

***The first pathway* is to improve the work process through one's own efforts by means of an independent development project.**

***The second pathway* is encouraging staff to act entrepreneurially and take the right initiatives.**

***The third pathway* is the horizontal and vertical movement of staff through the organisation.**

***The fourth pathway* is learning in the workplace.**

An employee's development project

Every employee is given the opportunity to carry out a development project independently from start to finish. This involves working on a current issue with the aim of achieving improvements for the customer, the employee and the team. To this end, the employee can and may draw on expertise from within the organisation.

Within an organisation, young staff are offered the opportunity to carry out their own improvement project over a six-month period. In groups of 12 to 14 staff members, each person is given the chance to lead a project themselves. There is a kick-off session during which they present their project to senior management and their line managers. Halfway through, the group reviews what is helping the projects succeed or, conversely, what is making them difficult. Advice is provided. After six months, the young people present the result. They demonstrate the benefits for customers and colleagues, the contribution to the organisation, and also what they themselves have learnt. Hundreds of young people have gone through this process. This unique experience gives them the confidence to take their own initiatives and shoulder responsibility as they progress in their careers.

Taking the right initiatives

There are change-related issues within the organisation that need to be tackled across the entire organisation. To this end, management can select process owners who, in a personal capacity, lead such an issue from start to finish and mobilise all staff members whose day-to-day work is affected by this issue to contribute. In a step-by-step process, they investigate the issue, ask people to experiment with new approaches, ensure sound decisions are taken by those in charge, and regularly reflect on the learning outcomes for those involved.

Within an organisation, the issue of recalibrating the driving force is being addressed. The organisation has grown rapidly and many new staff members have joined. From its very inception, the organisation has been driven by a strong mission: to provide sustainable care for young people with disabilities and also for older people. A process is being set up in which two process owners are tasked with initiating discussions amongst and with staff members on the question of how each individual experiences and perceives the driving force of this organisation. This leads to surprising stories, and the client is amazed at how quickly the new staff members have taken on board essential aspects of the organisation. Step by step, everyone is involved in this process and can contribute to it.

Staff members can move vertically and horizontally through the organisation.

Staff members are generally part of a team, and that team is in turn part of a unit. This prevents staff from exploring the organisation more broadly and deeply. Consequently, they do not gain a view of the company as a whole. When staff are given the opportunity to broaden their horizons – for example, by making working visits to unfamiliar units – this perspective on the bigger picture develops.

This also encourages staff to apply for internal vacancies. In doing so, staff can move horizontally towards customer-facing roles or, conversely, follow a path within the internal departments. In addition, staff can explore leadership opportunities by participating in key projects or taking on managerial roles.

Within an organisation, it has been observed that staff members have no idea what work in the field actually involves, and vice versa. Employees are offered the opportunity to work in a different unit for a week. This has proved to be a huge success. Staff members change their perspective on colleagues from unfamiliar departments and feel more connected to them.

On-the-job learning

As staff members are confronted with new aspects – such as new systems, different working methods or a new vision – there is a need to familiarise themselves with these. This can be achieved very effectively through on-the-job learning. Time and space are set aside for staff to explore these new aspects. Coaches are on hand to guide the staff through this process.

A new working method is being introduced within an organisation for customer-facing staff. For one week, an hour is set aside every day to explore and experiment together with how a customer conversation might unfold differently from what they are used to. Through practice, a bridge is built to real-world application. The background to this change is explained by experts. After a week, the staff feel capable of implementing this new working method.

Systematically promoting collaboration between teams and units as a coherent communication and information system.

I regard collaboration within teams and units, and between teams and units, as a key foundation for effective teamwork. This can lead to a coherent communication and information system, synergy, and enhanced quality and professional competence. What enables teams to function effectively and come together to form a well-coordinated system? First and foremost, this requires a distinctive team culture. Here I outline seven aspects that contribute to the development of a strong team culture within the organisation.

Seven aspects of a strong team culture

- **Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit**
- **Curiosity about change: the willingness to learn**
- **Interest in and respect for the customer**
- **Giving and receiving feedback**
- **Taking responsibility**
- **Goals and results are recognised**
- **Openness towards new team members**

1.Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit. New ideas can be embraced by a team and brought to fruition. Obstacles are overcome because team members encourage and support one another. Team members respond to one another and take action.

2.Curiosity about change: the willingness to learn. The unknown is appealing and initial uncertainties are overcome. Team members are willing to learn from and with one another. Mistakes are discussed; successes are celebrated.

3.Interest in and respect for the customer. It is precisely the customers who often provide new impetus through their wishes and desires. Good teams respond to this and seek new ways to meet customer needs. They regard the customer as their most important adviser.

4.Giving and receiving feedback. Team members are not afraid of confrontation. They are focused on the task at hand and give each other feedback. They do this with the process in mind and to improve their own performance.

5.Taking responsibility. Team members take responsibility. They do not shirk it and are willing to be held to account for it. There is a determination to achieve good results and to strive for them continuously.

6.Goals and results are recognised. The results achieved are made visible. Next steps are discussed and team members remain on track towards the next goal.

7.Openness towards new team members. New colleagues join the team. They are welcomed and trained. They immediately feel part of the team; they feel at home straight away.

When teams and units are organised horizontally and work together, an effective communication and information system can be built to support this collaboration. Through targeted meetings and carefully directed information, teams and units can chart their own course within the context of the bigger picture and contribute to a shared outcome.

Within an organisation, people work in teams. These include customer teams, expert teams, staff teams and management teams. Every year, each team works specifically on its own performance. As team members, they work together to identify ways to improve. There is also a dialogue between teams that work together. Over the years, teams develop towards strong performance. Employees are selected from across the organisation to act as coaches for a team other than their own. This creates an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues. Team leaders grow in their leadership skills. A fruitful system of collaborating teams emerges.

In summary

In recent years, I have seen the power of working with this fourfold objective of horizontal organisation. These are four key areas of focus for one's own leadership. By continually returning to these areas of focus as a leader, together with others, we become attuned to the organisation's genuine change and development challenges.

The vertical dimension in horizontal organisation

Managers and professionals are increasingly required to operate independently and demonstrate personal leadership in doing so. It is time to consider how vertical power can be restructured. The crux of this change is that all the levers of power traditionally held by the owners or senior managers are now also made available to all those involved. Starting from a horizontal perspective, we will restructure the vertical hierarchy.

This is 'a piece of cake' for any independent entrepreneur. For many employees, however, it is still often a 'world away'.

I see six fundamental resources – capital, power and entrepreneurial resources – with which top management or entrepreneurs have traditionally shaped an organisation, and which must be appropriately placed in the hands of managers and professionals.

These are:

Six fundamental resources

1. **Taking the initiative, generating new ideas**
2. **Developing competencies**
3. **Managing cash flows**
4. **Constructing and structuring the organisational map**
5. **Collaborating**
6. **Utilising information systems and consultation processes**

They are crucial for constructing the vertical dimension based on a horizontal approach to organisation. This is how we do it at our own IMO, and this is how we develop it with our clients. Here, we outline these six resources.

1.Taking the initiative, generating good ideas

We can also describe this as personal entrepreneurship. This begins with discovering one's own impulse that responds to a need or a request from someone else. An initiative is taken.

Four questions guide us: **who** is driving the initiative, **what** do we want to achieve, **how** will we go about it, **why** is this essential?

At a **personal level**, you can use this concept for your own initiative that answers a personal question for which you have not yet found a satisfactory answer.

On a personal level*, for example, the question might be how I manage my time. We're short of time, we're stressed by the sheer number of commitments, we have conflicting interests, we*

find ourselves in situations we'd rather not be in, and we miss out on situations we'd actually like to experience. This affects me personally, but also others.

We can analyse how we spend our time. First, we write down how we go through a day , a week, a month, perhaps a year. We discover patterns and ask ourselves which guiding belief is causing this pattern. We design a new guiding principle and redesign our diary. We set ourselves new goals for how we spend our time. After a while, we evaluate the effects on ourselves and others and refine our approach. Step by step, we move towards a new pattern that better meets our needs and our responsibility towards others.

At ***team level***, you can use this to design a process for tackling team issues that are not easily resolved. By examining and working through the team issue, the issue itself will change, and we'll develop new possibilities for the team to transform its own reality in a productive way towards a desired direction.

*At **team level**, for example, we can use this concept to redesign and improve our meetings. We analyse our current practice and observe the phenomena. We start too late, we have too many issues, we discuss things for too long, we see no concrete results, we finish too late and end up frustrated and dissatisfied.*

We redesign the meeting process. Who is responsible for chairing the meeting and for the preparation? What topics do we discuss, and what outcomes do we expect? Who takes on which role? What is our guiding principle for how we want to work together during the meeting? What does the new design look like? How do we document and evaluate the meeting, how do we learn from our experiences and improve as we go along?

We break through existing patterns and create a new dynamic for our meeting.

At the **organisational level**, we can work with process owners who tackle strategic issues. They can design and steer the change process; they are aware of the various dimensions of the change process they are managing.

***At the organisational level**, we can identify the change issues and seek out process owners who are willing to address them. The process owners design the process. By doing so, they begin to see how the process might unfold. They identify the next step, proceed step by step and observe the outcomes. They find people who can help and provide support, and who are willing to try out new practices. They engage in dialogue with decision-makers about the issues and ensure that decisions are taken and not postponed.*

The change processes are embedded within a dedicated framework in which decision-makers and process owners meet regularly to evaluate the progress of the process, identify bottlenecks and agree on the next steps. Everyone involved in the issue is included in the process and contributes in response to specific requests made to them by the process owners.

At the **societal level**, we can mobilise a new constellation of people who tackle an issue that affects our quality of life. This provides us with a language that can help us come together, understand one another and move forward together towards a new level of existence.

***At the societal level** we can mobilise a specific constellation of people around a societal issue who wish to bring about change in that area. In a step-by-step process, the initiators identify*

the target group and their ideas about how things could be different. They create situations in which these changes can be trialled. This yields unexpected effects that may influence decision-makers to support these new practices.

Personal Entrepreneurship at these four levels forms the basis for participation in the vertical dimension of organisation. The following five forms of capital support this.

2.Developing competencies.

An important dimension of capital is people's competencies and skills. Continuous learning is essential to develop these. We set up the learning environment directly within the work context.

Example

In a company, young employees who have been with the organisation for two years are given the opportunity to carry out their own project from start to finish.

In consultation with their line manager, they formulate a challenge that is important for the client, their colleagues, their manager and for their own learning.

There is an initial session in which the young employees present their issue and process to the client, the CEO.

Halfway through the process, there is a reflective session in which progress is shared, any obstacles are discussed and the next steps are determined.

At the end, they present their project, the results and what they have learnt.

The entire process is supervised by one or two process owners.

This is a formative experience for these young people, providing them with a foundation for their own entrepreneurial initiative within the organisation, enabling them to find their way and learn through discovery and experience.

3.Managing cash flows

Everyone (individual, team, unit) is given their own cash flow statement linked to their specific product, service or advice. This cash flow statement tracks what this product, service or advice contributes and what costs it entails. The contribution to the bigger picture becomes clear. The question is: "Which cash flow would not exist if this product, service or advice were not available?"

Examples

1. A consultancy firm is experimenting with personal overviews that show colleagues exactly what their contribution is in terms of cash flow: "What money would leave the organisation if this colleague were to leave?" Any money not directly linked to a colleague is regarded as overheads. The cash flow in the personal overview includes: revenue from the client, salary and training costs. The secretary, for example, is not included as she works for several

colleagues. This gives all colleagues a greater sense of awareness and supports entrepreneurial initiatives.

2. Within a company, we introduce the practice of working with real cash flows and actual figures in individual budgets. We ask those in charge to manage their budgets accordingly and to independently implement the appropriate measures where things are not working properly. This greatly increases vigilance.

3. I draw up my own financial overview of what is earned and what is spent. I become more aware of the decisions I make and the guiding principles behind these decisions.

4.Constructing and formatting the organisational map

Organisations are characterised by their vertical structure. This structure is based on hierarchy and functionality. Everyone has a function and a task.

It is a vertical structure.

However, we can also work with a horizontal structure: the map.

This is based on **individual – team – unit – company – group of companies**.

Together, they form the organisation's map. Every individual has a role and is part of a team; every team has its own focus and is part of a unit; every unit has a task and is part of a business; and every business has an objective and may form part of a group.

Everyone occupies a place on the map. There are roads and paths along which we can reach one another. Knowing and travelling along these roads and paths creates scope for manoeuvre that we can utilise.

The question is whether everyone finds their rightful place within the whole and whether everyone knows the paths that can be taken. Instead of reorganising vertically, we can move horizontally to a different spot on the map.

Example

In a Sparkasse, whilst drawing up the map, we discover that there are 33 teams at work. The teams are organised into 8 units, most of which are customer-facing units, whilst some are specialist or support units. Every leader has a clear objective in mind and works with transparent figures. At regular intervals, the leaders discuss the next steps. Once a year, there is a strategic conference for all leaders. Questions about 'what', 'how' and 'why' can be asked, discussed together and, if necessary, answered. Ultimately, everyone has a personal picture of the bigger company picture.

5. Collaboration

When people work together, synergy can arise, leading to greater value creation. This applies in particular to collaboration between people at different hierarchical levels. There is greater value added for the organisation as a whole than the sum of the individual parts.

Example: *In a lending process, there are 18 steps to be taken, and effective collaboration is constantly required. With a few adjustments, the process for standard loans (80 per cent) is simplified to five steps, making collaboration straightforward and effective. Staff are relieved and customers are satisfied. Results improve, which pleases the managers.*

6.Information systems and consultations

The horizontal organisation utilises information systems. These information systems support the formation of perceptions, judgements and decisions within collaborative processes.An *Example*. *A company utilises a multitude of information systems. The director wishes to analyse this and see whether things could be done better and more simply. External experts carry out research and propose an expensive, all-encompassing solution. The director is unsure about the proposal. He sets out to investigate for himself how staff actually work with the existing systems in practice. He discovers the problems himself; these lie mainly in unclear organisational structures and ambiguous procedures.He initiates a process of organisational improvement and development, during which new standards are established. A comprehensive solution turns out not to be the right one; money and energy have been saved. Information systems andconsultations go hand in hand.Direct communication between people is ultimately essential.There is a need for regular meetings in which plans can be coordinated and results evaluated. These meetings provide a forum for forming opinions, making judgements and taking decisions*.

Example. *A director of a large healthcare organisation notes that there is a multitude of meetings within the organisation and wonders whether this is actually effective and worthwhile. He proposes that, at every meeting, the question be asked: 'Who is this meeting intended for, and why?' For more than 50 per cent of the meetings, there is no clear answer to this question. The conclusion is that we could do without the majority of these meetings. Every meeting that serves a purpose identifies a person in charge who leads the process. All of this leads to significant time savings and gives everyone more scope to devote themselves to the essential matters.*

Future Outlook

In this way, we can move step by step towards an organised way of life in which people, as 'independent entrepreneurs' forming part of a larger whole, can take responsibility and develop freely as individuals. They develop their personal leadership, their role within an organised community, their contribution to that community, and their own creative role within it, thereby taking control of their own sense of purpose and fulfilment in life.

Horizontal Change

Horizontal organisation is necessary first and foremost when it comes to bringing about change. The traditional vertical organisation, with its hierarchical and functional structure and operation, is not suited to implementing change processes. It is more focused on management and control. It is primarily spatially organised and operationally oriented. Essentially, it is all about pushing and performing for everyone. Change, however, on the other hand, calls for pausing and reflection; it is the world of issues and inquiry, of experimentation and finding new steps forward. This requires a different organisational structure; it requires a temporal structure.

A temporal structure is a framework for development. At specific moments in a rhythmic cycle, we engage with particular questions. We explore and experiment, and identify the next steps towards a renewed existence. In doing so, we start with the issues we cannot resolve immediately. These are the issues that, in a certain way, keep recurring throughout the organisation's history. They concern conflicting visions, changing customer demands and preferences, a shifting zeitgeist, and new generations who want to do things differently. To address these issues, there needs to be an awareness at the top of the organisation that space must be created for them and that a principle emerges who is willing to tackle these kinds of issues. To this end, the principal seeks out process owners who can set the issue in motion, mobilise people to contribute, and seek decisions from those in charge. They carry out the change process together with those involved.

An example. *In an organisation working with children with disabilities, the four-member management team decides that the next step in the organisation's development is to adopt a horizontally organised structure. I am facilitating this process.They formulate the following four developmental questions:*

1. What qualitative and quantitative contribution do we wish to make towards our core mission: 'Living with a disability'?

2. How can the schools and boarding schools collaborate more effectively so that the right decisions can be made and implemented?

3. How do we involve our pupils, staff and partners on the path towards meaningful and purpose-driven structural change?

4. How and where do I experience our original impetus and values on the journey from a community of life to a working community, towards becoming an institution?

Answering these developmental questions required – and was met with – a development process that has unfolded along the following lines.

For each of the four issues, a member of the management team is responsible as the commissioning party. For each of the four processes, the management team has invited two process owners who will steer the process from start to finish, from the initial research phase right through to implementation. All stakeholders will be involved in these four processes from the outset.

Every two months, there is a two-day meeting to monitor the progress of the change processes, make adjustments and agree on the next steps. In the meantime, the project lead and process owners meet regularly to take decisions. The process owners meet regularly with all those who have been assigned specific tasks by them and have accepted them.

A ***dedicated development infrastructure*** is therefore in place, organised along four lines.

The four board members meet regularly to coordinate and adjust progress in their capacity as decisionmakers

The Board and Process Owners meet regularly to reflect on progress, identify and resolve any bottlenecks, and initiate the next steps.

Process Owners meet regularly with the colleagues involved in their process who carry out their own tasks.

The managers and staff involved take their own steps within the process in which they participate; they investigate, experiment and identify new opportunities that drive the issue forward.

Following the initial three-day meeting, during which decisionmakers and process owners mapped out their first steps, the process owners set to work. They speak with managers and staff who are involved with their issue. In these discussions, process owners identify promising starting points. For example, the process owners working on improving cooperation between the school and the boarding house discovered that there are persistent problems with the handover of children between the school and the boarding house. They asked young staff members who support the children in this process to work together to find new approaches, and this quickly led to very practical solutions. The process owners of the initiative seeking new opportunities to develop new target groups and treatment methods in collaboration with external organisations had already identified five 'gems' where this was already being practised. These could be built upon.

At a second meeting, clients and process owners shared the results of the initial steps and decided on follow-up actions that will drive these issues forward as part of an organisation-wide initiative.

Over the course of the year, it has become apparent that more young people have moved on to adult care facilities than have joined the programme. Cost-cutting measures are necessary; steps are being taken and the organisation is being adapted. This provides a further incentive to gear the organisation towards its future.

Working with clients, process owners and experts

Process owners are selected by the client(s) on the basis of their personality and because they have demonstrated in the recent past that they are independent-minded individuals who can take a stand themselves, engage colleagues, are skilled at dialogue and can reflect on their own actions. When dealing with major issues, process owners work in pairs and can thus, both together and separately, initiate and guide the next steps. Decisionmakers are senior executives who take personal responsibility for a change initiative. Management is not hierarchical and top-down, but horizontal and dialogue-based. The decisionmaker remains in contact with the process owners and stakeholders who are involved, and can make sound decisions based on this monitoring of the process. To this end, the decisionmaker involves their colleagues at senior management level. The processes are supported by functional experts from within and/or outside the organisation who possess knowledge of and experience with such issues.

Horizontal leadership is required of all those involved.

Leadership Dialogue

What we would like to systematically introduce into organisations is a horizontal, reflective dialogue on issues of change and questions of meaning, involving those with ultimate responsibility, managers and staff working together. When people from different

backgrounds, positions, roles and responsibilities engage in dialogue about what they see as fundamental questions that concern them, which relate to the organisation's development and to which there are no simple answers, a wonderful organisational spirit emerges – a shared spirit – in which everyone can act as an individual within the context of the whole.

These conversations are not conducted on a functional basis, but rather as a dialogue between individuals who, acting out of their own personal responsibility, share with one another their fundamental questions and insights relating to the effective functioning of their organisation, department, team and their personal role within the whole.

We work together based on the quality of personal leadership within a personal community.

It is our experience and observation that such reflective conversations, held with some regularity, are an enormous help to everyone in acting consciously from the perspective of the whole and doing what is right. This helps to identify the underlying issues that actually shape and determine the future of an organisation as a community.

In one organisation, the director, head of department, team leader and a few staff members discussed the issue of customer focus and effective work processes. In a specialised section of the hospital, management had noticed an increase in customer complaints: excessively long waiting times, incorrect treatments, and complaints from GPs. Through discussion, they conclude that the work process involving the customer is fragmented and ineffective. They conduct an experiment. Patients are guided through various departments within an hour, and after this hour a diagnosis is made by the attending doctor and concrete arrangements are made for further treatment. It takes a while before the various departments are willing to take part in this experiment. Once they are on board, everyone is surprised at how quickly and effectively the work is carried out. A new rhythm is established in the process; patients are guided purposefully through the various stages, and a clear picture of the patient and their problems is built up.

Part 5: The social impact in the society

Worldwide, we have placed key life processes within organised frameworks. There is an organisation active for just about everything. Through the internet, we can participate in many such frameworks and are kept informed and engaged by them. Organised life is a global phenomenon that offers us many opportunities but also causes us anxiety. The unlimited possibilities go hand in hand with a fear of commitment, feelings of insecurity, vulnerability and 'me-too' experiences.

The traditional mechanisms in our communities – such as solidarity, a sense of togetherness and caring for one another – are not to be taken for granted. We will increasingly have to learn to stand up for ourselves, whilst also remaining open to others who need help.

Keys to change for our social system

We are reaping the rewards of 70 years of a 'society that can be shaped'. Entrepreneurs, politicians, cultural leaders and religious leaders took us by the hand, and through hard work we have created a remarkably well-functioning, orderly society.

We live – certainly as Dutch people and in comparison with other societies – in an almost perfectly organised society. Our infrastructure in the fields of transport, education, healthcare, policing, tax authorities, small and medium-sized enterprises, and multinationals have, over the past 70 years, achieved a high degree of perfection. Moreover, there is an alternative for everything. For every product or service, education or healthcare provision, we can choose from various options. Our country is full of professionals who go to great lengths to do their jobs to the best of their ability. There are hundreds of thousands of managers who organise and coordinate. We take this for granted.

Yet this has not led to maximum satisfaction, let alone maximum fulfilment in people's souls. We are dissatisfied and annoyed by every little detail that goes wrong. A train five minutes late, an inappropriate remark from a professional, a mediocre TV programme – these things rile us up and disappoint us. Behind closed doors, dramas unfold between partners, parents and children. Feelings of insecurity, fear of the unknown, and the longing for happiness – these occupy our souls. Apparently, an almost perfectly organised society is incapable of answering our inner questions and concerns. Here we encounter an issue of a different nature: a question of meaning and inspiration. Why should we take in refugees? Why should we still believe our leaders? Why does my partner act like that, why isn't my child happy? These 'why' questions cannot be resolved by others; we will have to find the answers ourselves.

Whereas the meaning of life, of our existence, was once held out to us by ruling elites, we must now take it upon ourselves to shape and give substance to the meaning of our lives. Moreover, the hopes for salvation that are invariably linked to meaning – "things will get better soon", are no longer credible. Our children may well not have it any better than we do. Less prosperity, safety, security, and meaning.

Leadership in the hands of a select few who are supposed to provide the community with its meaning no longer works. We will have to take our share of leadership ourselves, of bearing responsibility for the meaning of our own lives and those of our loved ones.

Now that the traditional sources of meaning can no longer sufficiently nourish our struggle to gain clarity on the inner questions that preoccupy us, the question must be asked: " 'What are the new sources we can tap into ourselves when it comes to creating meaning in our lives?'

Here I see a fundamental paradigm shift: from vertical to horizontal. Whereas previously the elite could govern our lives and imbue them with meaning from above by virtue of their power, we are now reliant on encounters with other people through which we can build and anchor the meaning of our lives. Our partner, colleague, client, neighbour and supplier will play a role in our lives as -creating encounters with others. Direct dialogue with others in a meaningful process provides us both with inspiration and insights. Reaching a shared understanding with others on the questions that govern our lives gives us new perspectives. We can make our own decisions on the basis of mutual trust.

The ruling elites will have to realise that they no longer lead (or are able to lead), but that they can support the leadership of individuals and groups in addressing the real questions of life that we all face, wherever we are in the world. Moreover, our understanding and appreciation of all those leaders in politics, culture, the economy, sport, religion and other areas of society – those who strive for the community to build sound infrastructures within which we can act independently – would be a necessary source of support for both the 'elite' and the 'people' to remain connected with one another, even on a vertical level.

Keys to Change

In light of this paradigm shift, I have for some time been asking myself where the keys to change lie within our social system – or, to put it another way: where do I see the keys to social change?

This search has yielded ten keys with which we can develop our social system effectively and responsibly.

The first key concerns a guiding principle regarding the foundation of our social system. One might well ask what actually forms the foundation of our social system. One might think, for example, that the democratic political system forms the basis. One might also think that religious beliefs form the basis. However, I believe that, both now and in the future, it is the social institutions that form the basis of our society, and that a democratic political system and religious beliefs can exist precisely because of these social institutions, which organise and manage important processes for my life and ours. Are there reliable schools, hospitals, railways, shops, tax authorities, care homes, advisory bodies, police and army units to which I can turn for my needs for care, exercise and safety? As Peter Drucker once said: the leaders of these institutions determine the culture and morality of our society. Whereas Marx once spoke of an economic base and a cultural superstructure, today there is the institutional socio-economic base and the political/religious superstructure. The institutional socio-economic base generates, whilst the political/religious superstructure sets limits. It is therefore of the utmost importance that these institutions are able to lead a life worthy of human dignity and that they face up to their impact on people and nature in a morally responsible manner. Community building, the search for meaning and leadership are intimately linked here, and everyone who is part of our organised community plays a part and makes a contribution.

This brings me to the second key.

The second key: It is the people in the boardroom – the leaders and entrepreneurs with ultimate responsibility – who have the greatest influence on how our social system functions and the values on which it operates. Important decisions are made in the boardroom, and these decisions are based on a balance between self-interest and the public interest. It is here that the legal, moral and practical frameworks are shaped and put into practice. Those with ultimate responsibility balance two dominant forces: the impetus provided by the owner/decisionmaker and the needs of the customer/consumer.

The owner/client wields the power of ownership, combined with the impetus and the objective set as the desired outcome. The customer wields the power of their needs and the ability to choose whether or not to purchase. Balancing these two forces, the person with ultimate responsibility leads the group of people tasked with achieving the objective and serving the customer. Managers and professionals operate within the frameworks established and organised by the person with ultimate responsibility.

Those with ultimate responsibility balance the demands of these stakeholders, and in doing so I encounter two opposing viewpoints in the boardroom. The first viewpoint can be summarised under the concept of 'shareholder value '. This involves optimising returns/profits and primarily serving the interests of the owners. The organisation is a functional apparatus for achieving this, and the people are 'human resources'. The second view is that of primarily looking after the interests of customers and employees. The organisation, as a vibrant community of diverse stakeholders, takes precedence, and these people are involved in the further development of this organisation as a community.

The first view is found primarily in the boardrooms of industrial organisations and listed companies. The second view is found primarily in the boardrooms of social service organisations. In family businesses and non-profit organisations, these two views compete for precedence.

This 'divide in thinking' is linked to differing views amongst CEOs regarding the social responsibility of the entrepreneur and the company. One end of the spectrum goes: " 'I am responsible for this company and for ensuring its success'". The other end of the spectrum states: "I have a significant influence on social developments and wish to contribute to tackling and resolving social issues" .

How can we bridge this divide? With an increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility, senior executives are seeking ways to address the specific demands of various stakeholders through their corporate policy. Rather than representing a single interest, senior executives position themselves between the differing interests of various stakeholders. Objectives will need to be set that go beyond mere profitor the public interest. By focusing specifically on customers, the unifying force is harnessed; after all, it is in the interaction with the customer that all business processes converge. That is where we find that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating '. This focus on the customer is linked to a focus on the company's original impetus. What was the guiding idea from which this company emerged, and how does that idea live on today? Aligning the company with these two forces – the customer and the original impetus – ensures that those with ultimate responsibility remain strongly connected to the essence of their organisation as they strive to tackle the multitude of issues they face together with their colleagues.

I see **the third key** as lying in the hands of the consumer. What guides the consumer's decisions? Is the consumer aware of what they are perpetuating through their purchases? The choices I make as a consumer regarding how I spend my money have a significant influence on what can continue to exist and what cannot. I practise thinking in terms of supply chains and investigating the chains from which the products and services I purchase originate. What values do these contributing companies in the chain uphold, and do I share those values? When consumers become aware of how their spending is linked to social issues such as the environment, animal welfare, plant welfare, the health of the earth, social welfare and mental wellbeing, and make conscious choices in this regard, this will reinforce the effect of key two. How can we raise consumer awareness? The most powerful impetus comes from awareness arising from personal experience. For example, an illness may lead to a need to consume different foods that must be sourced from other suppliers. Understanding how a product or service is produced by the supplier also helps you, as a consumer, to recognise the supplier's ethical standards. This insight is communicated by social institutions that continuously investigate the quality and effectiveness of products and services. Within one's own network of people, knowledge gained through personal experience can be shared on an ongoing basis. We help one another discover new ways of satisfying our needs whilst taking into account the social impact of that fulfilment on society. Even in early childhood, we can learn how to make responsible choices in our everyday lives. Parents and children discuss this issue together. Teachers and pupils share their experiences and insights. As I, as a consumer, gain a better understanding of the effects of my choices on my own well-being and that of society, by making informed choices about which products and services I purchase, I can encourage what I value and curb what I find burdensome.

The fourth key is that every person obtains a number of qualifications during their youth that enable them to participate in society. Alongside swimming certificates and road safety certificates, these might include a driving licence, a vocational qualification and, as a new development, a customer service certificate and a leadership certificate. If a person is to participate fully in society, it is to acquire a number of skills to that end. First and foremost, it is essential that every person is enabled to live a self-sufficient life. Being able to cope in everyday life, at work and in social situations is a skill that society demands. The customer certificate assesses whether a person has gained their own understanding of a healthy lifestyle and is able to act accordingly . Nutrition and self-care are central to this. The Leadership Diploma, in particular, can help people learn to cope with unexpected situations, with processes of change, with self-management, with managing their finances and taking the initiative in these areas. Obtaining these diplomas is the aim for everyone; there are no dropouts. They are put into practice through the collaboration between masters and pupils. Instead of compulsory military service, we could introduce compulsory voluntary education. There is no age limit for those who wish to contribute as masters.

The fifth key is financial support for those undergoing a process of change. At some point, we all assume a social role that can be clearly defined. After initially living within a family context, we leave the family home to work or study. This is the first change: setting up your own household. The community could support this. A second change is the transition from studying to working. We set up our own business or apply for a job. This change, too, could be supported financially. A third change is changing jobs or professions. This change can be supported financially. The transition from work to retirement can also be supported financially. These changes can be supported by a 'basic income'. This is made available for a specific period. In this way, we recognise that people are changing their lives, are willing and

able to take steps in that direction, and can thereby take greater control of their own destiny. It is precisely during times of change that you need support.

The sixth key, I believe, lies in the redistribution of our tax revenue and the sources from which it is collected. To date, there have been two main revenue streams: VAT and income tax. These two streams have little guiding effect on individuals and businesses other than simply that we wish to manage them as favourably as possible in our own interests. If I have a better understanding of where tax revenue comes from and what it is spent on, I can contribute to the greater good with greater awareness. This is where the real political choices lie, which I can influence through my vote. Taxes should be levied on those societal processes that cause harm to people and nature. Tax revenue should primarily be spent on processes that safeguard essential human needs such as safety, work, housing, education and health.

Money plays a vital role in all six of these keys. Money corresponds to the soul; it preoccupies us, much hinges on it, and it largely determines my and our well-being.

The seventh key is our responsible handling of money. Money is in circulation worldwide, and everyone is affected by it. Money has traditionally acted as a mirror. It has no intrinsic value other than the value we attribute to it. This corresponds to the human soul. The soul, money too – unlike the body and the mind – has no intrinsic value other than that which we ourselves develop. In that sense, a factual and a moral power of the soul. It mercilessly reflects, in our handling of money, our practical and moral calibre. From what sources does our money come, how is it acquired, where is it spent, and what are the consequences of this?

How someone handles their money is a major social taboo. We are reluctant to show others where our money comes from and how we allocate it. This has a highly revealing effect. Socially, too, money is an almost invisible factor that only comes to light when it is acquired and allocated—whether justly or unjustly—in an extreme form.

Money is linked to need and fulfilment, to movement and development, to origin and destination, to idea and reality; it is an intersubjective entity, and so is the soul.

I believe I can perceive that the way we handle money holds great significance for, and has an impact on, the soul and the well-being of individuals and humanity. My personal life, the organisation of which I am a part, the society in which I live and work, my place within the global economy and the global community – all of this is entirely tied to money and how I acquire and allocate it. It strikes me that, for many of us, both in our private households and in the organisations where we work, insight into cash flows is not self-evident or transparent, and that it requires effort to gain a genuine understanding of the actual cash flows and what they bring about. There is a reason for this.

Whereas money used to be largely tied, in societal terms, to the real economic transactions within and between people and communities, and appeared as cash, it has now become a separate, independent dimension in personal and social life which, to a great extent, shapes many aspects of people's daily lives in a virtual manner through payment cards and bank transfers. We all live with invisible money, and we all succumb to the hidden temptations involved in dealing with money. This responsibility now demands of me a greater awareness of how money works, what it represents and, above all, the moral dimension and impact of money on life and our coexistence.

In this sense, a heightened awareness of the workings of money and the soul go hand in hand in terms of personal development. Dealing with money touches the soul deeply. In my experience, there is scarcely a greater joy than to make money of one's own available to another, enabling that person to take their next step in life. It is my experience that a community of people flourishes when everyone lives and works in accordance with the purpose of the whole and, as individuals, contributes to the well-being of others from a place of abundance. An awareness of money supports this awareness of the whole.

The eighth key is our cooperation. In our socio-economic existence, we are entirely dependent on one another. Our cooperation is essential for things to succeed. It is therefore of vital importance that we all learn to work together. This also requires an awareness of the different forms of collaboration. According to Bernard Lievegoed, there are three ways of interacting with one another and working together: consultation, negotiation and fight. Do I choose dialogue or do I choose conflict? Do I seek a middle ground and wish to negotiate?

We are all familiar with these three ways of interacting with one another. It makes our interaction with others whether we engage in dialogue and respond to one another, work together, or whether we align our interests and see how we can both get what we want to some extent, or whether we engage in confrontation and fight. Much depends on whether, through my choice of words, I am able to convey the essential aspects and whether we also understand these in one another. It is therefore precisely in my speaking and listening to and with the other person that the difference is made in these ways of relating to one another.

In this sense, conversation is fundamental to our human interactions. In my view, every person is, in principle, capable – as a unique individual, in dialogue with another – of expressing themselves and taking on board what the other person says. It is, however, a social art that can only be mastered through practice. It is precisely through good interaction that the moral forces within me come to the fore. It is here that my own interests and my concern for the other person are in conflict. What are my motives, how do they manifest in my actual behaviour, and what effect do they have on the other person? Working together with others requires me to ensure there is a healthy balance between my debts and my claims; it requires a healthy balance between my obligations and my expectations; it requires a healthy balance between winning and losing; and it requires a healthy balance between seeking to persuade and seeking to entice.

In our engagement with these eight keys, we experience the significance of the context in which we live and coexist. That context greatly influences the way in which we operate.

The ninth key is the context in which we live. I observe that people today live in two contexts: the natural context given to me and the organised context I have created myself.

I can characterise the natural community as a closed context. It possesses its own inherent meaning; it is inward-looking and distinguishes itself from other communities. In these closed and inward-looking contexts, hereditary power plays a major role. The power dynamics are more or less fixed, and I must conform to them. In a sense, life is predestined, and even today it is still possible to fully integrate my own individuality into the greater whole of values and norms, regulations and rules that have been established and practised over generations. All those who deviate from this within the closed context run into trouble and are frequently called to order – and sometimes even expelled – through the exercise of power and, at times, violence.

I would characterise the organised community as an open context in which meaning is not predetermined and in which the justification for its existence essentially lies outside the community itself. It is the other person – whether a customer or supplier, owner or employee, manager or professional – whom I serve, and I do so not on the basis of fixed, eternal bonds, but through temporary and changeable connections. This is where personal leadership comes into play.

In our global social order, in the public sphere, I believe I can observe that it is still largely the traditional political and religious contexts that divide people and set them against one another. Here, hereditary power and liberation play an ideological role; they bind people and determine their fate. By contrast, it is precisely our socio-economic dialogue, taking place within organised contexts in which each of us plays different roles, that enables people not to fight but to connect with one another, to serve one another and to help one another move forward. Because I am able to move within different circles and contexts – indeed, to change my location and context worldwide – I am able to form lifelong connections with the people I meet and wish to connect with. It is with these people that I share my personal motivations and ideals who will form my personal community of trust. They will form the foundation of my personal existence. Here, a new kind of community emerges in which personal love and a genuine respect for the other's difference can be developed.

Our handling of money, our collaboration, our formation of community – these are all underpinned by the unique individual personality. That is the tenth key.

The tenth key is our unique individual personality, which enables all the preceding keys to function.

The unique individual personality is emerging. The unique individual personality possesses free thought and free will. This is the fruit of centuries of human consciousness development. I have as a human being evolved from a group being belonging to the natural world into an individual being who has created my own organised world.

"Actions are the deeds of particular humans that individualise them, lifting them from being merely instances of a natural species to being persons who have a recognisable identity. In acting and speaking, people show 'who' they are, actively reveal their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world". (Labour, work and action: Paul Voice in Hannah Arendt. Key Concepts edited by Patric Hayden))

It is the presence of the other as a unique person that leads me to my own identity. In the public sphere today, we as human beings constitute humanity through our diversity and vulnerability. We appear to one another in our shared actions, and we speak and listen with and to one another to give these actions meaning . We lead a life of action and reflection, and we do so from within personal community.

What matters, therefore, is that in every situation, in every encounter, I am able to see the other as an individual personality, a unique 'I', and that in my encounter with the other I also wish to present myself as a unique 'I'. This enables everyone involved in the process to arrive at sound judgements and choices together, based on individual, free perception, a personal line of thought, and one's own step, one's own action, through which the will is expressed.

Ten keys to change

The first key concerns a guiding principle regarding the foundations of our social system.

The second key lies with the people in the boardroom – the leaders and entrepreneurs with ultimate responsibility who wield the greatest influence

I see the third key as lying in the hands of the consumer.

The fourth key is that every person, in their youth should obtain a number of qualifications that enable them to participate in society

The fifth key is the financial support for those who are undergoing a process of change

The sixth key lies, in my view, in the redistribution of our tax revenue, as well as the purposes for which it is collected

The seventh key is our responsible use of money

The eighth key is our collaboration

The ninth key key is the context in which we live

The tenth key is our unique individual personality, which enables all the preceding keys to function

The ten keys outlined here open the door to a space and time in which, acting on our own responsibility and together with others, we can build a society guided by moral principles.

We can do this in the light of what has united us for two thousand years as the 'Humanity Impulse'. With this in mind, we summarise the preceding points in the final chapter.

The Humanity Impulse in our time

Living together without distinction as to origin, religion, age or culture

In the global coexistence of humankind, we can observe a process of change that has unfolded over many centuries. Whereas in the past, people were part of a natural community and spent their entire lives within it, today they are part of many different communities.

In this process, the human soul has transformed from a group soul to an individual soul.This has had a profound effect on the human soul. For whilst, on the one hand, human beings have come to be fully themselves, on the other hand they have lost their natural connection with their fellow human beings. This change is also reflected in a shift in human religious consciousness. Whereas in the past people participated in supernatural revelations and venerated higher spiritual beings, today they are compelled to find their own path to 'higher beings'.

As an individual soul, a person encounters all manner of other human types throughout their life, differing in origin, religious views and political orientations; in other words, they engage

with everything that has ever been realised and shaped by people in the world.This brings people to the point where they must no longer cling to traditional views, values and beliefs, but are confronted with a great diversity of guiding views, values and beliefs. This, in turn, leads humanity to a situation where, on the one hand, they must develop themselves towards a higher consciousness and, on the other hand, they must grapple with these different realities. This represents a very significant step for both the individual and humanity as a whole.

All this can also be expressed in another way.

In the past, people were very firmly embedded in vertical structures. Within these vertical structures, salvation came from above and the practical tasks of life lay below. People had a fixed position within the community and were embedded throughout their lives in the established values and norms of that community.

Today, people are primarily stretched horizontally; that is to say, they must engage with many other people, collaborate with many, enter into dialogue, and continually bring themselves to bear within these relationships.

One can summarise by saying that modern people are stretched across the cross of verticality and horizontality and must themselves relate these two dimensions of life to one another.

What is essential is revealed in the desire to meet the customer's needs

The essence of the mutual horizontal relationship is that, in our global economy and worldwide social community, every person is served as a customer by other people and also serves others as their customer. This creates an entirely new reality for human beings. One might say that, as a customer, a person is connected to all social processes and all kinds of enterprises that serve them and meet their needs. Whether one is rich or poor, man or woman, young or old, everyone shares in this experience. Furthermore, every person is constantly challenged to respond to the requests of others they encounter. It is in these roles of being a customer and a supplier that we first find the opportunity to act as a unique individual in relation to another person. In these socio-economic processes where customer and supplier meet, there is normally no ideology, no fixed dogmas, no prescribed way of acting; rather, people are dependent on one another to do what is right in the situation.

In this, a person finds a wholly new opportunity to cultivate their soul. Here, too, a person finds the opportunity to encounter another human being as a unique being. When two people are willing together to do what is right, the soul of freedom will connect them. One can observe this for oneself in a special way. In the customer–supplier relationship within a socio-economic context, we are both customer and supplier; that is to say, each of us has a need and each has something to offer.

An example. When I go shopping, the shop staff serve me, but I also serve them because, through my purchases, I ensure their livelihood. Or I go to the pub and have a beer; in doing so, when I pay, I ensure the pub's survival so that the pub landlord can once again make a meaningful contribution to the wider community. In this context, it is possible that we do not merely interact with one another in a purely functional way, anonymously and focused solely on ourselves, but that we can perceive and engage with the other person's personality, their own individuality. At that moment, when we meet one another as people and are attuned to

one another, we can experience a very pure, clear, warm and meaningful encounter.The other person's true self emerges.

The philosopher Kierkegaard once described it as follows: when one truly concentrates on the other person, at a certain moment one can see a second face in the other's face. That is the 'second person' who appears in the soul. At present, this still takes place between us almost entirely unconsciously, but more and more people are able to take this step towards living at this level of consciousness.

From this perspective, it is also possible for every person to focus entirely on their client in their work. In the client, the person finds an unbiased partner. It is in these social/economic encounters, we find and shape our new raison d'etre.

Collaboration means bringing the other person into play.

When the other person is doing well, I am doing well too. When we participate in this socio-economic reality in this way, we experience two very essential dimensions of life.

The first dimension is how the inner and outer worlds relate to one another, and the *second dimension* is whether we are included or excluded.

Bernard Lievegoed once said at a meeting that humankind has crossed the threshold; that is to say, the protective boundary between the conscious and the subconscious has become permeable. This means that today, every person receives impulses from the subconscious which they must learn to master through their own efforts. These are not only pure and good impulses; they are also often impulses that lead us astray. These impulses manifest themselves in all manner of situations and have an effect on others within them. This can easily lead to people being preoccupied solely with themselves and using other people merely to satisfy their own desires. According to Lievegoed, this also leads people to quickly and readily resort to substances (such as drugs) to immediately satisfy or suppress these impulses. This is the context in which we find ourselves; that is to say, people are becoming less and less concerned with the welfare of the community and are increasingly pursuing their own goals. On the other hand, people can also, out of a sense of freedom and from their own sense of self, turn their attention towards others. People can bring another person into the picture. People can perceive another person and their situation, and support them in finding their next step. We can pave the way for one another. We can support this by embracing the idea that 'when the other person is doing well, we are doing well too'.

The second dimension of inclusion or exclusion follows from this. We are inclined to exclude everything that is foreign to us, that is different, that we do not know, or that we fear. In our society, this can be observed in all manner of ways. We exclude asylum seekers, we avoid unfamiliar visitors, we condemn other cultures and their customs. We want everyone to adapt to us. In contrast to this is a community of people in which individuals care for one another, particularly for those who cannot look after themselves, who lack the capacity and the means to participate of their own accord.

In my work as a business development consultant, I oversee processes aimed at improving the quality of care in nursing homes for elderly people with dementia. In this work, you can observe how this process unfolds for the elderly residents and the staff, and you can see how, on the one hand, the staff make every effort to care for the elderly, but you can also observe

how these elderly people have been removed from the community and their connection with the living community has been severed.

An example. An elderly gentleman who, until then, had a house and a large garden to look after is placed in a care home by his children because they are concerned that their father can no longer look after himself . From his very first day in the care home, this man sits in his chair, motionless. He no longer has a purpose in life. When I strike up a conversation with him and he briefly recounts his life story, I suggest he try going out into the care home's garden again. He reacts with alarm; it seems too tiring and difficult for him to do that now. This is how it goes in many cases, and this may well be the reason why 50 per cent of these elderly people die within their first year in the care home. Despite all the good intentions, this is still a case of exclusion. The question is how we can give elderly people, right up until their death, a meaningful task that they are willing and able to take on? How can elderly people and staff engage with one another? How can we work here with the mindset that if the other person is doing well , I am doing well.

Sunday and Monday

Until recently, we lived in a world where people worked six days a week and spent one day a week – Sunday – in God's house to hear God's message. For six days, people were bound to the world of work, and for one day they took part in the reflective world of creation.

A colleague of mine worked for many years as a minister in an evangelical church community, alongside his wife, who was also a minister. He delivered the sermon practically every Sunday, as his wife found it too demanding a task. During these many years of church ministry, he felt increasingly strongly that the essence of life no longer lay within the church but outside it, in people's working lives. So when, one day, he attended a meeting entitled 'Sunday in the Monday', it suddenly became clear to him that his mission – namely, the care of the soul – had to be brought into concrete economic life. That marked a major and significant step for him. Having now worked for several years with this mission in the business world as a human resources and organisational consultant, he has come to the conclusion that it is precisely within this economic reality that every human soul is searching for meaning. Every person asks themselves why they are doing this and why in this particular way; these are fundamental questions that are integral to leadership, and these questions must be addressed within the organised community. Today he is partly back in the church community to bring the Sunday in the Monday.

This is also how I view my role as a business development consultant.

Now and in the future, we will have to grapple with two questions seven days a week: the first is a 'Monday question' – namely, how I can serve my client in a meaningful way – and the second, the 'Sunday question', is how I can, together with others, give in a reflective way shape to the meaning of my work and life.

Inspiration and meaning as the fruits of inspired collaboration

In our socio-economic global community, it has now become possible for every person to embark on a path of spiritual development, in collaboration with others.

Bernard Lievegoed observed that the path of the soul's development runs through social impulses and takes place primarily within organised life. To this end, he provided new impulses during his lifetime under the heading of 'human and organisational development'. In my work, I have aligned myself with these impulses. Every day, I strive to support my clients in their organisational development processes and to help set them on their way. What particularly inspires me in this regard are the existential questions people face, which reveal themselves within this organised space and time and which can be taken a step further through our work.

This is particularly evident for me when guiding managers on how they can, in an animated and inspired way, find the next step in their development together with the community. For me, this is a very special source of inspiration for my own horizontal leadership.

Appendix: Practice

Practice makes us real professionals. That applies to every profession, every ideal, every life's mission.

I realised this when I successfully completed my final school exams by practising with a fellow student. My football skills also required practice, as did my violin lessons. During my studies in sociology and business administration, we practised giving presentations and conducting research.

Fifty years of practising in my profession have honed my craft.

Years of practising the saxophone eventually gave me the feeling that I could tell a story through my saxophone.

In this appendix, you will find a few basic research exercises that you can apply to your work and daily life. They can help your leadership to develop further in a positive way.

Dialogical research exercises

Research: the nature of the issue

We address the issue at hand and formulate it.This formulation can be done in three ways.

Formulation 1: We formulate the issue as a maintenance issue. The issue expresses the maintenance of the status quo.

Formulation 2: We formulate the issue as a problem. The issue describes an acute problem that requires a solution.

Formulation 3: We formulate the issue as a change issue. The issue describes a change that we are going to undergo, both externally and internally.

These three formulations are linked to three different processes.

A care process within existing frameworks, a problem-solving process requiring specific expertise, and a change process driven by a proactive initiative.

Exercise: 'Preliminary Personal Question' (developed by my colleague Bernhard Kloke)

A: - writes down their "Preliminary Personal Question" (visible to everyone) - What specific event or situation led me to this question?

B's: - what is striking about this specific event? How can it be characterised?

Pitfalls in characterisation:

Providing explanations / looking for causes / introducing beliefs, drawing conclusions, looking for someone to blame, offering solutions.

The B's explore together: Which of A's "held beliefs" are revealed by the events? A: – takes note of the B's' reflections and A: – reformulates their "Provisional personal question": it is now more precisely worded or has new content.B's: – give A practical advice. A: - notes down the suggestions and then tells the Bs what his next step is.

C: – monitors the process described here.

Exercise: Taking the initiative.

A useful exercise is to take the initiative in your own work situation.

To this end, a number of guidelines can be used to help you consciously set this initiative in motion and keep it going. These guidelines are as follows:

Formulate the problem that the initiative is intended to address.

Who am I going to involve in my initiative?

What is the result I expect to see?

What are the activities I'm going to undertake?

How does my inner guiding principle work?

How do I set up the process; what are my first steps?

Why do I want to take this initiative – what is my guiding principle?

Why do I want to invest in this initiative?

The trick is to balance your answers to these guiding questions in such a way that you can, as it were, visualise your initiative. To this end, you engage in dialogue with everyone involved in your issue, for example customers, colleagues, managers. As you develop your initiative, you can keep asking these questions and use them to make adjustments. This is particularly important when obstacles arise. In a step-by-step process, results will emerge that you can integrate into your day-to-day work.

As an explanation of this exercise, the following may apply.

These guiding questions can help you find your way when taking initiatives.

Initiatives are processes in which new answers must be found to difficult issues that cannot be easily resolved. The following seven guiding questions are helpful.

1. The issue is identified and illustrated using specific past events, drawing on the 4 Ws: who was involved, when did it happen, where did it take place, and what happened?

The background is described: the cause and origin of the issue.

2. Who is going to do what in relation to this issue, and with what outcome in mind?

3. Objective: what is the intended outcome? Create concrete images of the outcome with clear indicators.

4. My ‘personal management principle’ and official company policy: how do these two relate to one another?

5. Which network of people is involved? Who are the persons with final responsibility, the process owner, the experts and the sponsors?

6. Outline the process flow: define the start and end points with specific dates. Set out the phases and milestones.

7. Identify available funds and resources, and allocate the necessary investments.

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