Michael Alznauer

Leading Naturally

The Evolutionary Source Code of Leadership

Management for Professionals

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of Leadership

Springer

Michael Alznauer
Change Support Team
Bonn
Germany

*To my **clan***
in love and appreciation

*and to my **professional community***
for the genuine joy of cooperation

Upgrade: Evolutionary Leadership 2.0

[Original preface from the German edition]

When I first published the evolutionary-psychology-based approach to leadership in 2006, I was focused on doing something about the confusion that was being construed by the ever-growing number of management fads on leadership. Fully convinced of not being the only one following this path, I found academic support for my ideas a couple of months later in an American journal.[1] Shortly afterwards *Evolutionary Leadership* was named book of the week by a leading German newspaper,[2] in Switzerland it was quoted as "an interesting demystification of the leadership notion".[3] This particular wording delighted me, as it contained the implication of just how little sound knowledge there was in the field. A change of perspective on the leadership discussion and its best practice seemed evident.

It is questionable whether the contributions to the subject of leadership have since increased in terms of clarity and substance. Have management diagnostics, leadership development and management education become more accurate in recent years? Is any particular (professional) body currently involved in systematically testing, expanding and reflecting on the function of leadership, contributing to its effectiveness? There appears to be little evidence of that.[4]

All of this need not be of any concern—assuming that our organisations and communities are thriving on excellent leadership. Firstly, I'm not convinced of that. Secondly, evolution is still in progress, with no reason to consider the process finished. Evidence has yet to be submitted to prove that hominid groups are more successful than other life forms (e.g. ant hives). What if successful leadership were the decisive criteria determining the existence of our species? Something, in fact, I

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[1] Vugt (van), Mark. "Evolutionary Origins of Leadership and Followership". Personality and Social Psychology Review. 10.4 (Nov 2006): 354–371. Print.

[2] Buch der Woche. (2007, April 28). Hamburger Abendblatt.

[3] Cash (Schweizer Wochenzeitung) [Zurich] 15 Mar 2007, n. pag. Print.

[4] There appears to be a small exception in the initiative launched by management expert Gary Hamel, vid www.managementexchange.com

consider to be more plausible than the alternatives frequently listed in this context, e.g. science and technology, advancements in medicine, climate control or economic growth.

Actually, one of my favourite tongue-in-cheek theories goes as follows: The Neanderthals (Homo Neanderthalensis) became extinct, because their leadership skills were inferior to those of the modern man (Homo sapiens sapiens). Darwin's original theory of evolution and natural selection was wrong in stressing the role of selective forces acting on individuals. Did he not recognise that never in our past was there a time when our ancestors solitarily roamed the planet in constant competition with other lone individuals? Surely, there was never a moment in time when such an ancestor would have been suddenly struck by the notion that life in groups was more attractive—and subsequently search for a group for himself to join.

Since the beginning of humanity, our existence is embedded into groups and communities! The infamous tagline from the movie Highlander "There can be only one" is certainly not valid for us mortals. We have always been born into communities and have struggled for survival together in groups. Selective forces on human beings have always acted decisively on competing groups, never just on individuals!

So when did leadership make its first public appearance? At that precise moment, when an individual increased the probability of a group's survival—and others followed, having recognised the advantage that would bring to them. It would have been equivalent to the proverbial cutting of one's own throat had they acted otherwise. Groups that were led well were consistently more successful in surviving than groups demonstrating poor leadership! From here onwards, over a period of thousands and thousands of generations, this original approach to survival has left traces in us, residing somewhere in between instinct and behavioural impulse, frequently separated from conscious reasoning.

From this point of view, the *Evolutionary Leadership Approach* has been discussed continually during the past years, revised and developed by our team during the course of consultancy projects, field studies and management conferences. Currently, a circle of top executives, evolutionary scholars and leadership experts have come together—inspired by the open-source ideology[5]—to systematically develop the approach in cooperation with the Neanderthal Museum. More on that later. To summarise at this point: Primarily, this book establishes a pragmatic order and tidies up the confusing world of leadership. Secondly, it provides the phenomenon with a secure theoretical base. And thirdly, it *supports* you, to accomplish your leadership task more efficiently and effectively.

After about 6 years, it was time to pick up the original publication of Evolutionary Leadership from a safe distance and take a critical look. As mentioned, the first

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[5] In 2012, the first Open-Source: Management conference took place in the Neanderthal Museum. A selected circle of invited top executives and leadership specialists agreed to establish the idea for this approach and its ongoing development. For more on this, see the appendix.

issue received recognition from many directions. At the same time, there was a call for more specific and hands-on recommendations.[6] Not that our team didn't welcome the opportunity to provide consultancy services to support practitioners—*honi soit qui mal y pense ...*

Nevertheless, the emerged idea of ***Open-Source: Management*** does deserve a deeper explanation and more transparency at this point. My promise, you will find more specific and hands-on recommendations for your daily leadership task in this edition! However, if your interest focuses on checklists for employee reviews and guidelines for setting staff objectives or in methods for workshops and facilitation, then you would be well advised to look for that in the extensive offering in existing publications. Those are not topics covered here. Our inquiry can be defined by the following question: How come there are managers, who are perceived to be well skilled in all of the above-mentioned tasks, without being perceived as good leaders? How can that be changed?

The *Evolutionary Leadership Approach* is capable of offering such a wealth of groundbreaking inspiration that our recommendation lies in urging you to simply practise taking the perspective into your daily work! Look at your routine workload from the viewpoint offered here. You will immediately recognise how well you are capable of coming up with solutions to your specific situation all by yourself.

The currently available, completely revised, edition differs from the original—apart from a multitude of details—in the following core aspects:

- ***An extensive increase in substance!*** Fortunately, 6 years of development do not leave the quality of the approach unscarred. Furthermore, we can now provide—after years of implementing the management diagnostic tool presented in the first edition, Managing Profiling—a database with over 300,000 pieces of data related to business executives, which have allowed us to further analyse the Evolutionary Leadership Approach and probe the personalities of business leaders.
- ***The title has been changed!*** The current edition no longer simply bears the original title of Evolutionary Leadership; rather it is now called Leading Naturally. With that I wanted to emphasise that leadership is something that we naturally need to advance further on our path! Furthermore, the connotation naturally also implies that it is given by nature, in that sense to be taken for granted, or somewhat provocative: a constituent feature of the human condition?[7]
- ***Many "excursions" have been scrapped!*** Many thoughts that accompanied and inspired my journey to Evolutionary Leadership have been taken out

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[6] e.g. www.getabstract.com

[7] Do you remember the movie The Horse Whisperer? In his character, Robert Redford was influenced just as much by the horses, as he influenced them, simply by subjecting himself to the natural order in which horses cooperate. I am convinced that a similar set of rules exists for human cooperation and leadership! Let's assume for a moment I was right: Would it then not be tremendously important to know these rules and act accordingly?

of the revised edition, so as not to exceed the scope of this work. Not with the intention of avoiding theoretical discussions, e.g. the merits of evolutionary psychology, but rather to ensure that the intended character of this book can be maintained.[8]

- ***This edition considers itself to be part of an ongoing process!*** In the first edition, it was my immediate intention to introduce Evolutionary Leadership into the discussion. Today the emphasis is to develop the approach further, with all those who wish to make a contribution to the improvement.

With this in mind: Would you be interested in joining our community and actively contributing to the ongoing effort of developing practical leadership and management know-how? In which case, please consider this book as the evolutionary source code of leadership. Relate the content to your personal experience, give the perspectives offered here a try, enrich the source code and thereby help to develop it further. Let others take part in your conclusions, engage us in an exchange of ideas, challenge us and become part of the Open-Source: Management Community.[9] Find your contribution in the following edition of Leading Naturally, after all:

We can lead better!

Bonn, Germany   Michael Alznauer

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[8] Feel free to engage in a discussion at any time, e.g. by email.

[9] Contact details: open-source@open-source-management.de

We Can Lead Better

> *"Once you understand human nature, you have all the principles that govern the essence of things."*
>
> Xunzi, Philosopher

It is amazing how insufficiently understood the phenomenon of leadership remains, even after many decades of research and thousands of years of practice. A first and immediate implication: leadership works well, even without having to understand it! So why should it be of any concern?

Well first of all, it's quite simply *fun*! We all feel the basic need to solve puzzles, to help us understand the world around us. We may even approach the development of a "theory of leadership" in a similar way that we try to figure out *whodunit* in a crime story. Don't you sometimes feel an urge for reasoning and theorising? Well I do! My suggestion: Let's work together on a new and more effective perspective on leadership. Admittedly, there may be more to it, with more **practical interests** frequently pursued. When we grapple with the phenomenon of leadership, we hope to find out how to become a more successful manager.[10]

In addition, I consider leadership to be one of the most fundamental **social phenomena**! It clearly matters a great deal, whether or not we are led and by whom! A short cursory look into companies and political organisation is enough to provide evidence of this. Can I convince you that our common future will be largely determined by the quality of the leadership approach we choose? Unfortunately, as true life demonstrates: Leadership is not only important—leadership is also difficult! Apparently, we human beings are sometimes stubborn and unruly, sometimes easy to get along with and obedient. We are complicated. But does that alone make it so incredibly hard to understand the key mechanisms underlying the leadership phenomenon?

No, I don't think so!

In addition to my over 20 years of experience in management consulting, coaching and management diagnostics, it was **Evolutionary Psychology** that inspired me to look behind the scenes of the leadership phenomenon. Briefly explained, Evolutionary Psychology maintains that the idea of evolution is not

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[10] Allow me, for the sake of the text's better readability, to use the masculine form in writing terms. I can assure to be absolutely convinced that sex is no determinant for successful leadership.

only important in terms of our physiognomy, but it also provides insights regarding our *psychological world*. Could it possible be, for example, that the desk you're sitting at in your office is positioned so that you are facing the door with your back to the wall? Do you have a regular place to sit at in meetings or at the breakfast table? Do you feel a rush of adrenaline when a colleague publicly thwarts your recommendation—or a driver abruptly pulls over from the adjacent lane in a traffic jam? Does your blood pressure rise, when your boss calls you and asks you to come to his office immediately, without giving any indication on what this will be about? You probably know these situations things, right? Isn't it amazing that I can easily bring up these assumptions about you? I know nothing about you and have no idea what you have experienced in your life. But my assumption is that there are some patterns underlying our behaviour, which are more likely than others. And the Evolutionary psychology suggests that these do not occur at random.

> My claim is that you will only be able to engage in successful leadership, by considering our evolutionary nature, and not acting against it.[11]
> Leadership is nothing to be negotiated freely between leaders and followers, nor is subject to management fads. Understanding how the leadership phenomenon was defined by evolution is fundamental to systematically increasing success as a leader!

However, the approach taken in this book would most likely fail miserably, if it would fundamentally require reducing **human beings** to their instincts. I am completely convinced that we are more than "biological machines" and our future depends considerably on defining this *more*. So we have to take a very close look behind the scenes of the leadership phenomenon. And at the same time, we need to keep an eye on what is happening on a daily basis between leaders and followers! And last but not least, we need an approach that is capable of professionally putting all of this together into one clear picture!

How can we imagine, what the mystery, surrounding the phenomenon of leadership, looks like? Our situation resembles, on the one hand, to have a huge number of puzzle pieces available (detail knowledge, research results, etc.). We can therefore build on the impressive achievements of all those, who have made these pieces available. Unfortunately, they failed to provide us with a template of what the competed puzzle looks like. And even worse: We don't even know which pieces

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[11] However, Evolutionary Leadership has nothing to do with approaches that try to provide managers with "manipulation-knowledge" on human nature (e.g. Nigel Nicholson, How hard-wired is human behaviour? In HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, June–August 1998, pp. 134–147). Whilst the followers are depicted here as hanging on evolutionary psychology puppet strings of their leaders, we will show how they are firmly attached to them themselves.

belong to a different puzzle, and most likely, there are a considerable number of pieces missing, without which we cannot complete the picture. One thing we do know: When the puzzle is completed, it will display a treasure map! How should one go about this task? What tools should one choose?

The *evolutionary leadership approach* uses two perspectives from which practically relevant deductions can be made. If both lead to similar conclusions, the risk of becoming the victim of one-sided thinking or having missed the topic would be greatly reduced:

1. **Evolutionary psychology perspective:** successes and failure, during the development of our species, have left clear traces on our psyche.
2. **Action-oriented perspective:** Survival means to successfully complete tasks. Since the scope of tasks human beings were confronted with was not random, they also left traces in our behaviour patterns: instinct and culture blend together.

Our approach gives us—in order to stay in our story—a rough guideline regarding the underlying principles of our picture template, telling us which pieces are essential, and allows us to identify those belonging to another puzzle. These we can then confidently set aside. There are too many topics and ideas being discussed or published under the heading of leadership that are astonishingly irrelevant to the core phenomenon.

The **current state of leadership research** can be summarised as follows: researches have collected heaps of *puzzle pieces* (individual data and facts), which they realign every now and then by colour and size. These pieces represent an inexhaustible source for the design of a wide variety of (leadership) *pictures*; each *puzzler* (coach, consultant, author...) may use any to draft his ideas. There seem to be hardly any criteria for validity, with success being determined primarily by the extent of *entertainment and marketing value* provided. Unfortunately, most participants have also lost their creativity a long time ago. The *leadership galleries* are full of *forgeries and plagiarisms*, and the leadership literature consists mostly of—to put it kindly—repetitions.

Do we even have a chance to pursue a different path? Let's look again at the task at hand: The described situation confronts us with a fundamental challenge, to distinguish in the "jigsaw piece salad" the *relevant pieces from the irrelevant*. It is at this point that evolutionary psychology arrives at the scene, without giving us a template to trace, but providing some rules. We are no longer acting in an open space, with a structure now having been provided for our picture. We are now able to justify: This piece of the puzzle belongs here, this one doesn't.

Of course, this approach is not entirely unproblematic: How do we make sure that, once completed, we are not looking at an extremely imaginative but unfortunately completely *irrelevant* picture? Evidently, evolutionary psychology needs to be considered more of a thought experiment, than scientific research based on empirical observations. Neither do we have witnesses, nor can behavioural evidence be found in fossils. In the worst case, our thought experiment could end up being an arbitrary fantasy. To remain reputable in the creative design of our image, we will be guided by accepted research methods.[12] To my knowledge, the thesis of the evolutionary leadership approach does not stand in contradiction to scientific research, e.g. from ethnology, anthropology, psychology and biology.

The design of an evolutionary psychological approach needs to be established progressively. In other words: We should not have a *finished picture in mind* and then desperately try to use the pieces available to make something that resembles our expectations. If one piece does not fit, we will not force it. We need to look step by step, what picture has already been established and what type of piece could fit next. Discrepancies require credible explanations—or a complete remake of the picture. What the final treasure map will ultimately look like, we will only find out as it is being created. In this respect, we have already a rough sketch of the result, from the 1st edition of *Evolutionary Leadership,* which can now be further refined. The approach has been extensively tested in practice, upgraded during critical dialogue and received a wide variety of inspiration from various directions and has thereby gained greatly in clarity.

Interestingly enough, many valuable publications have been presented from scientific research, independent from our approach (e.g. in 2009: *The Evolution of Leadership*, a collection of studies edited by Vaughn, Eerkens and Kantner and *An Evolutionary Psychology of Leader-Follower Relations* by McNamara and Trumbull, followed a year later by *Selected* from van Vugt and Ahuja). We have since sought an active exchange with academic researchers.

We will begin our joint journey (through time) of the leadership world by first taking a short look at the *problematic initial situation* (1). What is somebody confronted with today, when trying to understand more fully what the leadership phenomenon is about? Equipped with this understanding, we will go back to the origin of our phenomenon and sketch a "map" for our further voyage. I will explain why leadership should be considered an *evolutionary defined task* (2) and what serious implications such a perspective bears.

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[12] A good theory should be able take a large amount of data and organise it into meaningful statements and theses and abide by some comprehensible criteria (Miner, JB, Theories of organizational behaviour, 1980, Hinsdale Ill.: Dryden Press): It should lead to the understanding of a phenomenon, allow predictions and facilitate influence, define clear limits for their applicability, make research aware of important topics, produce generalizable results and allow further testing by containing clearly defined variables and terms that are confirmed not only by the research, which it derived directly, but also be compatible with known facts and express theses as simple as possible.
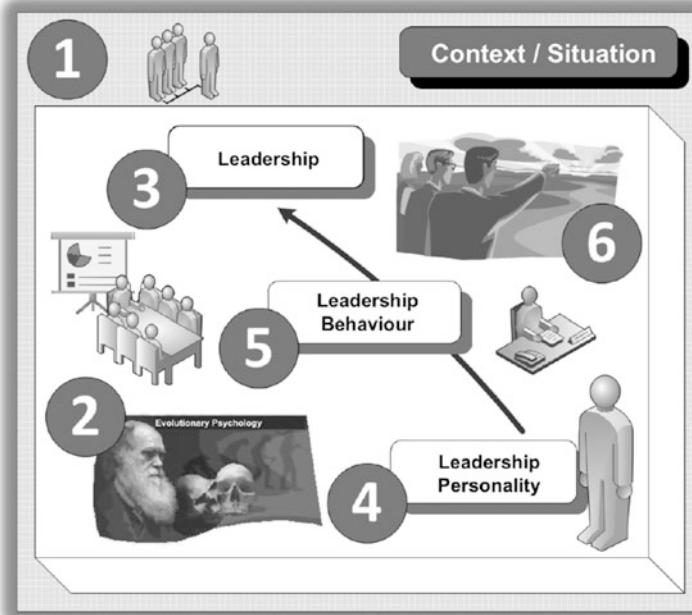
Fig. 1 Book structure

Based on this, I will carve out the *core leadership tasks* (3)—and give suggestions for coping with them successfully. It seems to me that I have gained a much better understanding, in particular, of these core evolutionary tasks since writing the first edition. This can be recognised, not only in their refinement, but hopefully also in a successful presentation.

At this point, we then bring the *actors* into play, those who deal with the defined tasks. Here we try to clarify the question "What the ominous *mystery of leadership personality* is all about?" and will examine what benefits the evolutionary perspective on leadership can provide for *selection* (4) and *development* (5) of managers. We conclude our trip with a look into the *future of the leadership phenomenon* (6): What role can and should the *leadership phenomenon play on our journey* in this world?

If you wish to revisit the milestones from this trip at a later point in time, here are some reading recommendations:

The symbol indicates that it is the point of an important intermediate step in designing our "puzzle": *A core statement or conclusion* that you should examine critically.

▶ ***Examples, supplementary thoughts and explanations*** can be found
  marked with a grey bar.
  These texts are "small trips" to the right and the left of our path that serve
  to provide an in-depth understanding of the landscape in which we are
  moving.
  Highlighted text passages contain the promised references to **practical
  implications** of previously developed ideas. It is here that, hopefully, your
  need for "tips and tricks" will be satisfied.
  I would like to give regular examples, on how to deal with the evolution-
  ary perspective in practice.

Let us first take a quick look at the unfortunate situation we are faced with at the
outset, when trying to deal with the leadership phenomenon.

Sometimes I'm not sure, whether I'm not being too critical here. There are, for
example, those moments, when I'm asked whether everything that can be possibly
said about leadership has not already been said (sharp tongues then add: ". . . just
not from everybody"). In fact, there is an incredible amount talked and written
about leadership. It goes without saying that leadership is relentlessly exercised
pragmatically on a daily basis. What is there left to do?

The Despicable Problem of Leadership

> *"While generally accepting the fact that genes have something to do with one breed of dog being friendlier (or more malicious) than the other, some scientists are reluctant to the idea that they influence the way we think and act."*
>
> Gary Marcus, Professor of Psychology

Some years have passed since the first edition—and one would wish that a revision of this chapter had become necessary, even to the extent of me having needed to rewrite it. Unfortunately, I found little reason for this. Albeit, I am absolutely aware that screening the entire development on leadership comprehensively is a task no individual could possibly complete, not even a small group, for that matter. I would therefore, at this point, ask you the favour to share any (critical) feedback with me and let me know of any (conflicting) evidence that you consider to be significant.[13]

I still believe that the number of publications and proceedings on the topic of leadership is frightfully out of proportion to the level of insight we have in truly understanding the phenomenon. In all honesty, we should be somewhat discomforted in recognising how little we really do know about leadership![14] Current publications, such as "Leading Radically"[15] or "Leadership 2.0",[16] may have titles suggesting new insights, without really getting us anywhere: In best case, they are just putting more pieces of puzzles onto our already cluttered pile.

Peter van Eyk,[17] currently Head of Human Resources Development & Management of the *Vivento Group at Deutsche Telekom AG*, and an expert in the field of management, once confronted me: "authentic leadership, radical leadership, spiritual leadership, emotional leadership . . . and now evolutionary leadership. Which

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[13] You can reach me by email: Buchkritik@Evolutionäre-Führung.de

[14] Not surprising therefore, when *Oswald Neuberger*, one of the most published German researcher on leadership, almost cynically demanded back in 2002: "Instead of hastily piling facts on top of facts and extracting dubious variables without adequate measurements and then providing spontaneous recommendations without having adequately analysed the relations, the theoretical focus should lie in paying more attention to existing practice . . ." (*Neuberger*, 2002, pp. 433–434).

[15] *Reinhard K. Sprenger*, Frankfurt: Campus.

[16] *Maren Lehky*, Frankfurt: Campus.

[17] Inner-circle member of the *Open-Source: Management*—Initiative; interview in the appendix.

one is it going to be?"[18] Does this thought reflect what's going through your mind? That would make sense! After all, there are far more publications on the subject of leadership than we are ever capable of reading (and maybe shouldn't even want to!). Many self-proclaimed expert managers write about how they themselves became successful (mostly completely diverse and extremely individual accounts of personal experience) and it seems many *seminars* provide you with more knowledge about the personal values of the trainer than "real life". We are left to combine all of this with the *experience gained ourselves* from being led. Taking little bits and pieces here and there, we then assemble something that suits us and comforts us by allowing some orientation. In other words, subjectivity, randomness and arbitrariness govern the field!

You may be wondering, whether we are, possibly, fighting a losing game in trying to get a grip on the leadership phenomena? Unfortunately, things are made even worse, by the failure to clearly determine what exactly *defines successful leadership*. As a rule, literature distinguishes between (A) the successful career of the manager and (B) the manager's contribution to the success of a company, whereas the clear identification of this contribution is determined to be a herculean task, i.e. something impossible to a mere mortal[19] (considering that Hercules was a divine hero).

A spark of hope may, at least, come from the attempt to identify the "*failure factors*" of leadership.[20] Regrettably, victories are not won by simply avoiding actions that would otherwise guarantee defeat.

> ▶ How good would you consider the advice given to a professional skier consisting of the recommendation not to fall or not to strain a muscle? Leaders are even worse off, compared to sports professionals: There is no evidence to suggest that a successful track record of leadership is any indication that the leader can now guarantee future success.

Apparently, following clearly defined procedures or sticking to training methods cannot guarantee successful leadership. It therefore seems questionable whether statements, such as "he is a good leader", can be valid at all, in such a generalised way. The very traditional line of research, trying to identify *the* characteristics or behaviour patterns that distinguish successful from those lesser so, has not come up with any substantial outcomes. Leaders differ from each other just as significantly as all other people do.

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[18] These are all titles from more or less current publications on leadership.

[19] *Neuberger, O.*, Führen und führen lassen, 2002, p. 305.

[20] e.g. *McCall, M. W./ Lomardo, M. M. / Morrison, A. M.*, Erfolg aus Erfahrung. Effiziente Lernstrategien für Manager, 1995, und *Mintzberg, H.*, Manager statt MBAs. Eine kritische Analyse, 2005, p. 136.

It has, apparently, even after decades of leadership research, not been possible to provide tangible results that provide generally accepted explanations and provide valuable recommendation for practitioners.

The search for the leadership personality has repeatedly "served" us just the usual facets about human nature. This fact prompted *Neuberger* to mercilessly comment that many studies "... go even beyond the fragments of wisdom contained in calendars".[21] The contribution of **management literature** to providing solutions is "... worthless to such a degree that it is, with a few exceptions, practically not worth looking at". The most interesting input from this management world at least touches (some free of theory) on the principles of evolutionary psychology: to focus on **tasks** essential for survival as a starting point for their considerations. It seems that Malik first ventured into this direction.

All in all, we can still consider to be standing on shaky ground, which does not inhibit numerous authors and researchers to contribute further to the already chaotic realm of leadership definitions. Neuberger debunked these approaches as totally irrelevant: "Anyone believing that we can demystify things by choosing different wordings is wrong".

Evidently: Our search must approach the **core of leadership**, not its surface; it must apply to the phenomenon, not to the search for the *right terms*.

As already mentioned, the **theory of evolution** will be of valuable service to us. What is your opinion? Is this valid for a psychological phenomenon such as leadership? There are authors who refuse to consider this acceptable[22] and remain critical: How can the genetic structure possibly influence behaviour? Fortunately, there are also studies that provide answers to such questions and render our approach worthwhile.[23]

So let's investigate our idea a little further, the assumption that leadership emerged in parallel to our own evolutionary development. Let's face the question: What puzzle piece got all of this started? When looking for an answer, we need to go far back into primeval times...

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[21] *Neuberger-quotations* on this page from: Führen und führen lassen, 2002, S. 10/25/205.

[22] *Hemminger, H.*, Der Mensch – eine Marionette der Evolution? Eine Kritik an der Soziobiologie, 1983.

[23] *Marcus, G.*, Der Ursprung des Geistes. Wie Gene unser Denken prägen, 2005.

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Part I

Leading Naturally

The Birth of Leadership

> *A community, which includes a large number of well-developed individuals, increases in number and defeats other and less gifted societies, even when no individual member can gain an advantage over a single other member of the that same society.*
>
> Charles Darwin

Can you imagine what the small community living near Erfurt for numerous generations some 350,000 years ago, accommodating three outbuildings, a "workshop" area and a "butchers shop", hunted and consumed more than 1,000 animals (including rhino, deer, beaver, forest elephants, cave lions and wild boar), did without leadership or management (Engeln 2004)? In my opinion, this question is entirely rhetorical.

To determine the birth of the leadership phenomenon to a distinct time of our humanity is, of course, somewhat nonsense. However, from my perspective, it is difficult just as difficult to follow authors who believe that management is historically very young, not even hundred years old, with most of the development falling into the period after the Second World War (Malik 2001).

If we replace the word "gifted" with "manage", in the above quote from Darwin, then we have the construal, for which I am arguing in this book. Leadership is not just a purely situational and cultural social phenomenon. It has archaic roots, something we should not ignore!
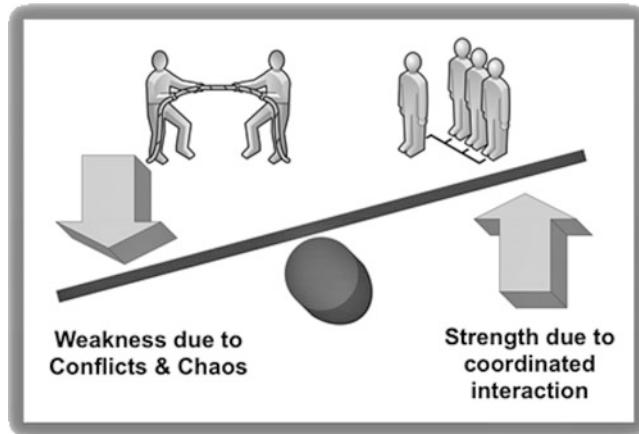
Fig. 1.1 Opportunities and risks in cooperating

▶ These origins can be compared in their impact with an ***autopilot***, which makes a variety of behavioural patterns available to you, all with differing probabilities. It does not force you to act in a specific way. It is even very likely that numerous impulses are competing within you for recognition at any given moment. This is when you feel torn apart, so to speak, "two souls in one chest". The urge that ends up coming out as the "winner" depends on many situational and psychological conditions.

Encouragingly, our behavioural flexibility is much higher than those of creatures driven by instinct (e.g. sharks) or stimuli-response organisms (e.g. amoeba). You and I can even withstand promptings of our autopilot.[1] However, it cannot be disabled or removed.

So let's have closer look at the birth of leadership, when did it emerge and for which ***recurring aspect of the struggle for survival*** did leadership represent a valid solution. Well, from the very beginning, our ancestors lived in an environment filled with critical tension that effectively provided the success model "group" as a side effect. It's like with a sports team: In itself, it's a great thing; however, if its members are divided and disordered, their competitive strength will suffer (Fig. 1.1)!

Leadership offered an additional ***evolutionary benefit*** because it could reduce conflicts and improve coordinated interaction. It made survival of the group more likely! If that had not been the case, we would not have the need to deal with the phenomenon today.

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[1] In terms of human behaviour, the theory of evolution neither defines genetic compulsion nor suggests the impossibility of change, as occasionally wrongly implied.

▶ In my opinion, there is no real need to engage in awkward discussions when asked (1) how does leadership increase reproductive success and (2) how, in terms of leadership, do we distinguish between evolution and culture? First of all, there is no "management gene" that needs to be passed on to ensure the existence of leadership.

Secondly, it goes without saying, the reproductive success of the entire group was increased—and thus carried forward the phenomenon leadership.

Where exactly, along the line of this type of dissemination, the boundary lies between evolution and culture,[2] I will consider negligible, as long as experts remain to answer the question in regard to other key issues.

Leaders did not have to be heroic saviours of mankind, nor was it their job to guarantee general well-being—they only had to make sure that the group accomplished the current **common goal** better. This task existed. There were individuals who took on this task. Leadership was born!

Many approaches—no matter from what field—make a crucial mistake: they define leadership as a specific structure or set of behaviours. When we perceive leadership as a task, we change the rules of the game!

The alternative means to accomplish this task may certainly vary—the essence of leadership (the evolutionary phenomenon) does not!

If you are interested in joining me to shed some light on our ancestral human past—maybe even with an interest on some thoughts on evolutionary psychology—then you should follow me through Part I of this book. We will outline our map of leadership step by step.

Alternatively, should you already be curious about the practical application, then feel free to go directly to Part II and come back to the underlying aspects later on.

1.1   Life in Communities

All of today's findings suggest that the development of our species has always occurred in groups. A number of researchers have even considered **community and cooperation** as the basis of life itself, which appeared almost immediately after coming to existence onto the stage of evolution (Fortey 2002). From a point in time, well before the infamous chicken and egg question was to be addressed, our

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[2] "Culture is based, amongst others, on the genetic tendency to imitate the successful (or at least success promisor)" (in *Karl Eibl*, Kultur als Zwischenwelt, 2009, S. 113).

Fig. 1.2 Social autopilot

ancestors came to the conclusion that they could handle the decisive *struggle for survival* better with companions (e.g. hunting, upbringing or defence).

Evolution has never—unlike some contemporary writers—said that the group is always superior in *everything*. A **team dogma** would be absurd from the perspective of evolution! Judging from the benefits of *collaborative work,* it can be well assumed that not much is done better alone.[3] We have always been individuals and group members at the same time! Not surprisingly, we come ready equipped with numerous psychological stress factors that have a noteworthy influence on our archaic autopilot (Fig. 1.2).

Fundamentally, our ancestors made a deal with each other, one that could not be refused and—in the truest sense of the word—was sealed with blood! As D'Artagnan, the Musketeers from Alexandre Dumas' novel, would say: "All for one and one for all!" I like to refer to this deal as the *mutual promise of achievement* and will elaborate on this later in detail.

> We can, with very little doubt, assume that our ancestors agreed on an archaic **mutual promise of achievement**: "If you do your part of the evolutionary deal, I also do my share. Then we both benefit".

I am convinced that this *primordial trade* is a fundamental principle of our human survival and therefore constitutes an essential part of our "psychological

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[3] Weaknesses and threats to groups include, e.g. the illusion of being invulnerable, peer pressure and social loafing (Weinert 2004).

hardware" (archaic autopilot). That's why reliability, predictability and trust are so important to us.

If short-term interruptions (e.g. illness) did not allow our ancestors to fulfil the promises they made, then other group members would compensate. As long as a group could afford to, it would support those in need.[4] In the case, however, that the needy would take advantage of the support given to them, the deal was off. In those day, to be outcast was essentially a death sentence.

The phenomenon **relationship** is defined by Mother Nature for the mutual benefit of those involved and can be characterised by something, which we will call the *deal dimension*. Obviously, there were no ancestral lawyers to negotiate this deal objectively. Consequently, it seemed beneficial to create a different kind of bond to each other. This was, and still is, characterised by a type of "irrational glue" that lets us stick together, which we will refer in the following as the *emotional dimension* of a relationship.

Every relationship contains a **deal dimension** and an **emotional dimension**. Depending on the characteristics of the connection, these can vary in dimension and significance.

We cannot maintain such connections with an infinite number of others. Interestingly, aspects about group size seem to be anchored in our archaic autopilot. The smallest community—the *couple*—increases with offspring to a **core family** (Fig. 1.3).

For various reasons (e.g. transport, food, defence), it can be assumed that the group size in primordial times was not that large. Presumably, two to three core families (a group of about 15 individuals) would establish a survival community or a **household**. 10 to 15 such households (150–200 individuals) had close connections to each other and would support when threatened. I leave to others to decide when to call which community a tribe, clan or family. Nevertheless, these group sizes have a *natural* feel for us.

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[4] There are archaeological remains, which show that even severely injured group members, who would never have been able to reciprocate, were cared for and kept alive for a substantial time.
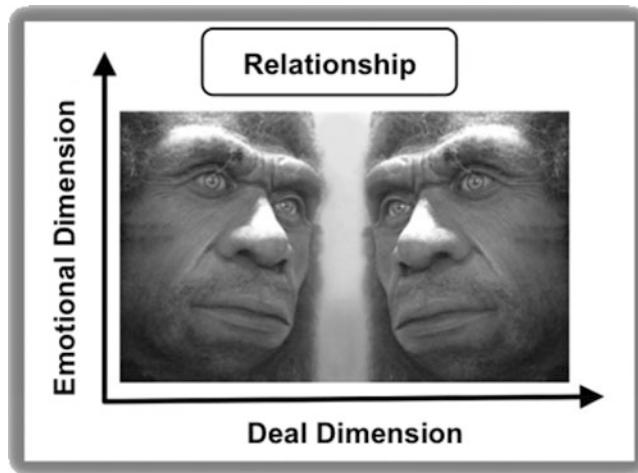
Fig. 1.3 Being connected

> ▶ These group sizes or units have proved to be practical throughout our
> entire history. So you should not be surprised if the productivity of your
> project group decreases noticeably as soon as you exceed the number of
> participants, from, e.g. 7 to 15. Some companies are very proud to have
> no organisational units larger than 150 employees. Count the number of
> friends and acquaintance you have. And how big is your extended circle?
> I would dare to claim that, when answering these questions, you run
> across these same numbers.

Life in the group seems to do us well—at least on average. In this context,
modern studies provide interesting results: members of organisations, who are part
of a harmonious well-established working group, are usually emotionally, mentally
and physically better prepared to cope with the working conditions. They are
happier, rarely complain about stress and call in sick less often than the odd man
out, who is not part of a group.[5]

Therefore, because we are so eager to be included in a group, we willingly
transfer a part of our autonomy. When on vacation, all of our friends want to go to
the beach and only we ourselves would prefer a visit to the museum; we quickly
reconsider whether the exhibition is really that important. Team sports also show
that we, as human beings, actually also collaborate just for fun, which in no way
indicates that we are perfect cooperating partners.

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[5] Weinert (2004, S. 417).

> With our ability to cooperate, evolution simply provided us with an additional benefit to increase utility, next to our valuable selfish instincts. There seemed to be no need to eliminate the mechanisms of self-interest—at least not yet.

A prerequisite for us to enter into the co-op mode is the assumption that the other person does not want to harm us. That is what has become known as trust. For our ancestors, it was a much easier issue than it is for us today.

Back then, everyone knew what was to be expected from others, because you already knew each other for your whole life. Our ancestors were born into a *culture of trust*.[6] Studies show that neither friendship nor contracts are the important factors promoting collaboration, but rather the "dark shadows the future casts onto our presence" (Allman 1999). Sentences such as *You always meet twice* express this instinctive knowledge. As long as our counterparts behave as expected, i.e. predictably, there is no reason not to trust them.

> ▶ If homo erectus (one of our ancestors) took away someone else's food, it would not necessarily be a reason for mistrust between these two, as strange as this may at first seem to us. It was only about whether this action was to be expected. Perhaps there was anger, disappointment and revenge from the looser—mistrust would only have risen with a loss of the **predictability** (foreseeability, reliability, consistency, etc.).
> The situation is comparable to you "promising" your child, who is playing with others in the sandbox, that it will not get an ice cream if it continues to take away shovels from his/her playmates. Should it really turn out to be an ice cream free day, your offspring will certainly not be delighted or grateful. However, you will have strengthened the trust in you: What Mum or Dad say is true!

Although we have always been born into groups, we did not necessarily stay there. It appears to have been very important to be, at least, tolerated by the group or better accepted, in best case even acknowledged. Pragmatically, such is nature, this recognition is established in terms of the *value of the individual* for the group. Even today, we still suffer, if we can't feel that we are of value for someone or if we lack a specific role within the group.

Interestingly enough, the group has always developed mechanisms to ensure that no single individual overestimated their own value, saving us from becoming

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[6] The topic of trust has not nearly been addressed or researched to the same extent as the thousand of publications on leadership. Surprisingly, it may turn out to be the second most important factor influencing the success of companies (*R. Berth*, Erfolg, 1993).

megalomaniacs. Today we would speak of arrogance, snootiness or condescension. These things disturb the peace amongst each other—and with that reduce the potential performance of the group. Those affected by this illusion of grandeur would have been brought *back down to earth*.

> ▶ It can be assumed that our self-esteem could possibly be a subjective scale to measure the extent we are accepted by others. Isn't it fascinating what we are prepared to do and endure to protect or even increase our self-esteem? And isn't it just as impressive how ruthlessly we retaliate when people threaten our pride, even if it is done unintentionally or accidentally?

I must admit that I cannot understand how specialist from neighbouring disciplines (e.g. anthropology, ethnology, archaeology) could possibly describe our primaeval groups as egalitarian. For me it is quite clear that there have always been differences in terms of the individual contribution to *survival* (deal component) and the degree of *mutual support* (emotional component) within groups. These differences unfolded into what we today refer to as *social structures*.

1.2   Living in Social Environments

Our communities were never homogeneous, equal and conflict-free areas. Therefore, many methods have been developed over the millennia of cultural development, to limit the associated risks for groups. At least when quick decisions are necessary and a major challenge appears, the predominance of pragmatic success seems imminent. When it comes to survival, you just do not have time to deal with the sensitivities of every single individual involved. These can be ignored and clarified in retrospect. In times of hardship, for example, even those populations who have a fundamental tendency for very liberal, democratic leadership tend to foster tight hierarchies. We can therefore say that, in certain situations, communities equip individual members with power.

The *concept of power* has roots in many cultures and can be found in the context of accomplishment. It points out that the powerful have competence, which others are lacking. The phenomenon, therefore, is based on differences between people and is founded on individual effectiveness!

▶ Even small children have delight in experiencing their ability to have an impact, even when the outcome seems completely nonsensical to us adults. Maybe you have experienced putting a pacifier into a baby's mouth for the seventh time, who then spits it out again immediately and is elated about the enjoyment of your reaction? The baby is tracking the impact it has—and has a huge fun doing so.

There are many different types of potentates and, in principle, a great variety of power sources: Some people can run faster or hunt better; others are better at speaking, fighting, flirting or problem-solving. A real difficulty arises, however, from the fact that there is no deeply satisfying operation to deactivate the pursuit of power, no ending "turned-off" state. We take great pleasure from growing our sphere of influence and in achieving more and more. The aspiration for power is infinite, except for limits set by the environment or defined by community.

The evolutionary psychologist *Mark van Vugt*[7] indicates that we have developed strategies to deal with too dominant group members. In an entertaining manor, he refers to them as STOP (Strategies To Overcome the Powerful): gossip amongst group members is, in his view, our first line of defence against rebellious group members or misguided leaders. If that does not display the desired effect, the next step is public debate with critical inflections. This is where irony and sarcasm come into play: clearly visible criticism, spiced with humour. In the next stage, we develop a tendency to—more or less visibly—disobey, followed by the deposing of the leader or deserting. The final solution according to *Van Vugt*, pleasantly rare in our day and age, is *assassination*! However, there are clear signs that even dictators are tolerated for longer, if they provide economic security and well-being to the community, i.e. if they fulfil the fundamental task of leadership.

▶ In large organisations, these natural self-healing methods and control mechanisms directed towards the leader, STOP, no longer seem to work very well. Once certain (power) structures have been established and become a cohesive whole with the associated culture, they are difficult to change. Now, in principle, the group members are still left with a choice. They could simply leave the community, no longer believing in the leadership. However, this solution is not always available to everyone (e.g. current market situation for employment, regional restrictions, age, etc.).

This situation is particularly evident, when looking at the issue of national communities. What can we do when we no longer believe in the success model of our country's leader?

Power is inextricably linked to (human) nature! Something we definitely have no need to regret. After all, it is very useful that we all have different skills. Power in

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[7] *Mark van Vugt and Anjana Ahuja*, Selected, 2010, p. 144.

itself is not a social problem. It is the abuse of power which is the cause of serious trouble! Only, how do you recognise the difference? You should be very suspicious when:

1. Individual skills are used for purely selfish objectives, which effectively terminate the mutual value proposition (deal dimension)
2. Simultaneously, no concern is shown for the self-esteem of others and/or no consideration given to existing social structures (emotional dimension)

> ▶ Whilst the wrought iron gate, manufactured by the apprentices as part of their training for the mansion of the director, may be selfish, it does at least develop the skill sets of the apprentices and could even increase their self-esteem. However, an affair with an employee, who is then tacitly transferred to another department, has a completely different dimension. Ancestors, who were not able to control their selfish impulses or use their resources (power) only for selfish purposes, would have ended in exile, be killed or imprisoned by the community.[8]

I have no idea at what moment in time the term *hierarchy* was first used to express the negative connotation of power (abuse), presumably because higher-ranked individuals within a hierarchy were more likely to increase their status, sexual reproduction rate and wealth—and concentrated only on these. However, this should not lead to the proverbial throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The anarchistic goal of ending the exploitation of man by man cannot be achieved by eradicating hierarchies. ***Power is nothing that can be abolished!***

Incidentally, even if we were to dispose of official rulers, the phenomenon of leadership would not be eliminated. New leadership structures would immediately emerge. From our perspective, there is hardly anything more self-evident than leadership. Leadership is independent of any *formal* hierarchy.

What does, however, make sense is to establish ***transparent power structures*** that can be approved or rejected by the parties involved. It should be able (for the followers) to detect and penalise the abuse of power.

In conclusion, social structures and specific roles arise in groups almost automatically (e.g. followers, knowledge experts, drivers). Even those members "on the edge" of a group (outsiders, punching bags, scapegoats) have a cohesive function,

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[8] *Richerson, P. J., Boyd, R. & Paciotti, B.*, An Evolutionary Theory of Commons Management, Draft 4.0 May 30, 2001, Chapter intended for: Institutions for Managing the Commons, Stern, P., managing editor, National Research Council, S. 12.

despite their low-level integration. Presumably, you can contribute interesting anecdotes on the topic of "scapegoats in business enterprises". Almost everyone has a story to tell, because it constitutes a recurring topic in human interaction. These roles, however, are not to be confused with personalities, as they are repeatedly redefined according to tasks at hand. Wouldn't it be interesting to witness today how the joker from your school class deals with his employees?

I assume that the social phenomena described so far were already created in the archaic world of our primal ancestors. And in exactly that world, a new successful model of human collaboration emerged: leadership! It is a method to control *the tension between conflict and cooperation* that arises when shared goals are pursued in a group.

1.3   Leading a Life

As a special problem-solving method, leadership was initially just another *experiment of nature*, because similar problems had already been dealt with differently. For example, there is no evidence that insect societies require a leader to solve similar survival tasks. Their super organism is based—starting with a magnitude of about 100,000 individuals—almost entirely on the principle of self-organisation (Wieser 1998). But we are not insects and obviously function differently in social interaction. Therefore, it may not be that useful for us humans to unnecessarily strain the, undoubtedly fascinating, subject of *self-organisation*.

On the other hand, leadership is not even always required! A loosely related collection of people (in our framework: no deal component and no emotional connection) can do well without it. This will only change, when these people "have something to do with each other". Then, an effective unity can emerge and leadership can establish itself as a valuable problem-solving method.

Leadership proved to be a benefit to our ancestors from the very beginning! Otherwise, evolution would have quickly put an end to this experiment. Those communities that were able to handle major projects successfully certainly lead a more successful life. The issue was not about an individual increasing his chances of success (maybe he would even be killed whilst hunting for big game); it was decisive that the entire group persisted successfully.

Cooperation and leadership cannot represent alternative forms of collaboration; they require each other and certainly emerged at the same time!

What then is exactly the evolutionary primal task of leadership? Quite unspectacularly, from the very beginning, it was a matter of ensuring the collective success of the group (Fig. 1.4)!
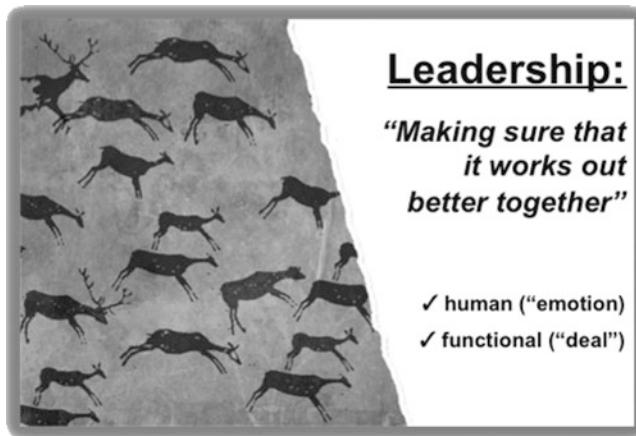
Fig. 1.4   The primal task of leadership

When we then ask what exactly "it" is that should be made to work, then we are looking for the reason for which the group came together in the first place—perhaps even better: their purpose!

Expressed prosaically, one of the most fundamental questions of each lead group, even today, is: ***What is our mammoth?*** For what purpose did we get together in the first place? With respect to the primal task, it does not even make any difference whether one is a mountain guide, a department leader or the head of a family! The task is always to make sure that things turn out better together.

> ▶ Just as you can create an association for various purposes, without changing the laws of association, the basic principles of leadership remain the same. However, there is another similarity: if you cannot find fellow campaigners for your association's purpose, there is neither an association nor a leadership task for you!
>
> And please don't fall into the trap of merely reducing the purpose or meaning of a group to the customarily invoked target agreements. Do you really believe that your team feels deeply moved to join forces on a sales increase of 15 %, a process optimisation or securing income? (Fig. 1.5).
>
> *Tip:* Do not attempt to replace *the mammoth* of the group by simply establishing organisational units, or (simulated) group experiences. The evolutionary psychological success factor of leadership cannot be replaced in this way!
>
> ### *Therefore, work diligently to identify a common, attractive large task for your team and continuously keep it in mind!*

But back to our thoughts: one of the psychological "starting guns" for our leadership phenomenon would have been the interpersonal capability of
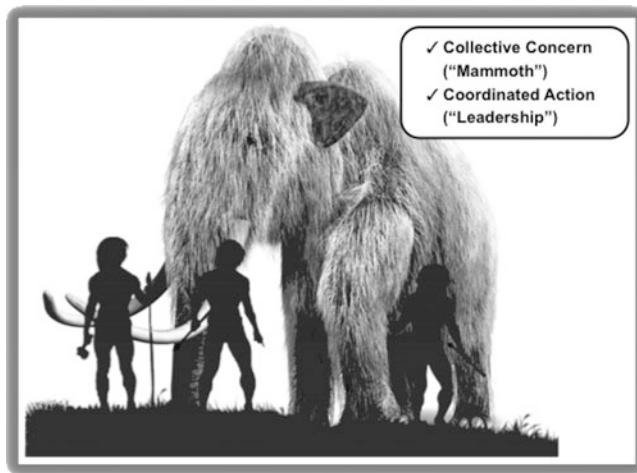
Fig. 1.5   More successful with leadership

observation and imitation. We are one of the few creatures that use this capability in a significant way, beyond the stages of infanthood and childhood. We can always serve as a role model or orientate ourselves towards someone else.

Things got really exciting when one of our ancestors consciously realised for the first time that he served as a role model. Particularly, in connection with our innate need for status, the phenomenon leadership took on further shape.

Let's look at this aspect in a little more detail. What type of person was it that took on a leadership role in our primal past? It would have certainly not been very useful for our ancestors to assign the responsibility of the leadership task randomly. Was there such a thing as a prehistoric "assessment centre"?

1.3.1   The Leaders

It may cause immediate discomfort to bring leadership into context with the theory of evolution. In a presentation I was once asked whether this meant that leaders were the genetically better equipped, essentially, those *chosen* by nature. Has evolution warranted that an exceptional subset of our species is allowed to lead the masses of the weak? Here and now, let me state very clearly: I believe that is ***extremely unlikely***!

▶ I also don't share Freud's (1921) assumptions that people in archaic times
lived together in primal hordes led by a forefather, who understood to
implement his will according to his needs because he did not require the
recognition of others and was not emotionally connected to the group.
Someone like that would have, in my opinion, invariably been the first
sociopath and—as I will illustrate later on—would not have endured for
very long as the *forefather*.

Leadership is neither about certain people (the weak and feeble) needing to be
saved nor is it about a group of elite individuals taking on the responsibility of
saving the world from chaos and destruction, as *Weibler*[9] assumes in his anthropo-
logical explanation of leadership. From this perspective, hierarchy is (literally holy
order) the only alternative to chaos, and people have to be lead, even against their
own will, to be "rescued" from their destiny. Honestly, who would ever have had
such deep philosophical thoughts 2–3 million years ago?

> ### *Leaders are not a small group of supermen!*
>
> Leadership will evolve even in the most pitiful community of
> underprivileged, as soon as there is a task, which needs group
> collaboration to be accomplished.

It has also been quite difficult for me to follow the image portrayed of a leader as
the selfless hero and lonely warrior. Instead, I prefer the picture of a problem-
solving individual, socially connected and frightened. The world of our primal
ancestors was no doubt a tortuous, overflowing jungle teeming with danger. Many
of the other creatures inhabiting the same space were better equipped and much and
by far more dangerous than our ancestors were. Instead of trying to rage through
their world, it seems more likely that our ancestors were simply preoccupied with
trying to survive. Heroes have the habit of dying early—and in terms of evolution,
that is a crucial point!

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[9] *Weibler, J.:* Personalführung, 2001, S. 10.

▶ Only after the large reptiles (dinosaurs) disappeared and resigned their role as sovereign ruler of their world were mammals freed from over 100 million years of irrelevance. Make no mistake: The predecessors of our ancestors were cowards by nature; otherwise, they would not have survived. "We can only imagine how they cringed, with their sensitive whiskers trembling, under stout and woody cycads for protection, whilst lizard-footed dinosaurs stampeded thunderously past them; they waited for nightfall, before scouring hastily over the left-overs from the meals of the giant reptiles" (Fortey 2002, S. 339).

I think our scared-cat nature has been preserved. What we fear is deeply rooted in us. We still drag the *primal anxieties of our ancestors* around with us. We are prone to seeing *alarm signals* around us. Our behavioural reactions are strongly influenced by them. Our ancestors fled immediately from the danger zone. They fought for their lives—like most living things—only when it was inevitable. Instead of being heroes, they simply went about their tasks despite of fear. It was from this world that the *first leaders* emerged. But how did the group select them?

Empirical studies have repeatedly confirmed that certain individuals are increasingly perceived as leaders. Apparently we have *prototypical expectations* about leaders. In particular those behaviours, which researchers have labelled as "intelligence" and "dominance", play an important role. Can this be explained from our perspective? Did intelligent and dominant hominid do better, on average, in completing the tasks of a leader? Well, that depends, of course, on our understanding of leadership.

▶ Whilst we have been spending many decades trying to define the degree of intelligence with quotients, modern intelligence research now refers to *process intelligence*. This can be understood to mean the capability of being able to solve problems in a certain environment. So this (cross-culturally valid) concept of intelligence correlates mainly with relevant success in life and not primarily with school grades.

To me stands without question that only the extremely capable group members were followed. For these primal followers it was important, a matter of life and death, that the leaders had an excellently idea of how to solve the tasks at hand, I.e. "We're intelligent". Those people, who combined such an understanding of the situation with problem-solving influence[10], must have been very valuable for these early groups.

Whereas the intensive proliferation of *intelligence* may be considered quite useful, a wide spread distribution of *dominance* would lead to "murder and mayhem" within a few generations. An evolutionarily stable strategy would therefore

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[10] *This seems to me a much better way to express the concept, compared to the term "dominance".*

only carefully promote the latter and ensure that dominant behaviour can be socially curbed. Asserted selfish interests, without a valuable contribution to the group, would have sparked resistance. The *primal sociopath* was exiled or exterminated.

In the unforgiving landscape ruled by evolution, **stupid assertion** effectively eliminated itself.

▶ *Eibl-Eibesfeldt points out that in social orders of higher mammals, domi-nance is not decisive for the determination of rank. "The rank is primarily determined, amongst others, by the capacity to resolve conflicts, protect the weak, deter enemies, take the initiative and organise activities. Only to a lesser extent by the level of aggression displayed. These competences require intelligence and experience, next to assertiveness, . . . Instead of a dominant relationship, a leadership relationship is established", an interesting point of view!*

We can therefore quite possibly assume that there was something of an assessment that centres in primal times. The criteria were not highly differentiated, but valuable: *process intelligence* and *problem-solving influence*. Later, the *ability to deal with language* (now known as communicative competence) would have been added.

Expressed somewhat buoyantly: the trial period of our first executives would have endured somewhat longer. They could certainly not have done whatever they chose, but were rather under constant scrutiny to succeed. Once they failed at completing their tasks, the situation became difficult for them. Leadership has always been a **competitive situation**: once a group had made the decision that their survival was more likely under the leadership of a different member, then change would have been imminent.

From an evolutionary perspective, we must, at this point, ask ourselves what benefits did it have for an individual to take on the leadership task. First of all, he also benefited, as everyone else in the group, from the **collective success**. It is hard to imagine that the most competent hunter would hold back his skills, so as not to be forced into taking on the strenuous leadership position. He was hungry and most certainly put all available sills to work. He, no doubt, enjoyed receiving **recognition** (not only from the opposite sex) after successful completion as well as the **privileges** conceded to him by the group.

What we, today, refer to as a *sense of responsibility* is certainly something that almost all group members had. I do not believe that leaders significantly stood out

on this aspect and were motivated to take on their role because of this. I prefer the idea of a process of elimination: egoists, lacking a sense of group responsibility found less acceptance and followers!

> From an evolutionary psychological perspective, it seems likely that the successful completion of the primal task of leadership continually resulted in increasing a certain **standing**,[11] **status and privilege**.

All those who were successful try to (and this is still true today!) maintain their status, for obvious reasons. Once, however, they start concentrating their effort on the preservation of privileges and neglect the actual primordial task of leadership, legitimacy and support for them is withdrawn. The result is a vicious circle: the more you focus on privileges, the more likely they are lost! Either the leadership role changes hands or a ***dictatorship*** is established!

It can still be demonstrated today that leaders may well vary from group norms and special treatment is acceptable, however, only if they strictly continue to meet the expectations tied to the leadership position (Hollander 1961).

> ▶ *Tip:* Resist the temptation to invest the power and benefits received on your career path directly into securing your position. At first, it may seem (politically) a clever and cunning thing to do. However, you are going down a dangerous road: Your staff will withdraw acceptance and support, and your career development will ultimately be at risk. That road follows a typical path: increase of pressure and more control mechanisms, growth of demotivation, conflicts proliferate and, ultimately, career rescue by job hopping.
>
> ***Therefore: Invest your newfound power predominantly in improving your performance of the core leadership task.***
> ***Expand on the legitimacy granted and earn your privileges!***

I doubt whether leaders had constantly defend their position, as some authors assume. In the origin of his role, the leader was never set out to be a violent dictator; he was, to a considerable extent, empowered by the group and so valuable that they would protect him—instead of attacking him. If necessary, he was even protected by his followers, who put their own lives at stake (very much like the king in a game of chess). If the leader were killed in a fight with another group, the entire battle would have been in vain.

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[11] The term "standing", i.e. reputation or prestige, nicely combines the idea of influence with social awareness.

> Group legitimised their leaders because they are useful to
> them. Because of this, the group would grant them *social
> power*, in addition to their *expert power*, which had allowed
> them to take on the leadership role in the first place.

As the confrontation with greater challenges increased (e.g. armed attacks) or was sought (e.g. construction of irrigation systems), the value of effective leadership grew. The development of the early leaders towards more influence and power ("big man") took its course.[12] Something that we can still see today, not surprisingly, we seem to be more willing to give leaders power in *times of crisis* (e.g. threat from terrorism, economic crisis, climate disasters). No wonder leaders like to tell us about the imminent threat of such threatening events.

We can recognise that leadership emerged within the existing tensions of (a) challenges the group faced, (b) the contribution made by the leader to the group's success and (c) the behaviour of the group or individual followers.

Let's shift our perspective at this point and have a look at the (psychological) *world of the followers*. The evolutionary psychologist *Van Vugt*[13] is convinced that there is a kind of "follower instinct". We accept a hierarchy, because well-run groups offer tangible benefits to everyone. He claims: we are fundamentally fine in being lead—without accepting domination!

1.3.2 The Followers

To imagine our ancestral followers as weak individuals, who trembled and bowed in the face of an assertive leader, seems somewhat absurd to me. Even more absurd is the assumption that they had a "desire to submit themselves in obedience" (Neuberger 2002). However, I can well imagine that it may invariably have been very useful politically, at certain times in our history, for a leader to paint the picture of the "feeble followers" and spread it around—in its origin, this is simply not correct!

Let's not forget: every follower has always proved to be a *successful survivor*, having done a great job. Which major task (e.g. battle or big game hunting) could a

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[12] This is where the protection against existential threats would have started to play a more important role. Just as the constant fear of early civilizations that the world could lose its structure. "Whoever is responsible for fertile land or fighting in the front lines against evil—as a priest against misfortune, as a king against visible enemies—can demand from those on behalf whom he is fighting, their submission and obedience. His rank and his power will grow with the responsibilities exercised". (*Manfred Drenning*, Tauschen und Täuschen, S. 55)

[13] *Mark van Vugt and Anjana Ahuja*, Selected, 2010, S. 8/9.

leader possibly have accomplished successfully with submissive, weak and fearful followers?

> This *caricature of a follower* would not have had much of a chance in reproduction. Whoever lacked physical strength needed some alternative *capabilities*. In any event, the qualification criteria would certainly not have been cowardice and general incompetence.
>
> The ancestral follower was *a successful survivor*!

In light of this, every leadership theory needs to provide answers to the question why individuals would *voluntarily* follow a leader and let him get away with things that would restrict their own personal development. I suspect that there were three early roots of followership, to which leadership tethered itself psychologically.

- The *principle of survival stays in your group*: Our ancestors knew that their life was safer in a group. Wherever the majority of the others would go was a good place to be.
- The *module social learning* (demonstration and imitation): We are—in comparison to pre-social species—born "unfinished" and must spend a lot of time learning, in order to survive. It is our basic psychological feature to be attentive copiers, i.e. to "follow" carefully what is going on around us.
- *Learning by reward*: our entire argument so far is built on this aspect. Collaboration, leading and following, has to be worthwhile, worth its while! If this were not the case, the "experiment leadership" would have been abandoned quite quickly a long time ago.

The large difference between group members and their leaders is, in evolutionarily terms, very much a new phenomenon and was certainly not embedded in our archaic autopilot. In our ancestral groups, there would surely have been mutual recognition and acceptance. Is it not almost tragic what picture has evolved over just a couple of thousand generations?

> ▶ What should employees think of their bosses when they are confronted with book titles that read something like "Dealing with difficult employees", "Just 30 minutes for effective delegation", "Charismatic leadership: An analogy of cats and dogs", "Horse whispering for managers: Brutally simple leadership" etc.?

To me it is much more amusing when colleagues excitedly report that staff in companies are becoming increasingly more competent. They leave the impression that this is a brand new phenomenon and requires completely new management

principles. Wouldn't we be better off—not only in this aspect—to occasionally reflect on the old principles? You know my answer to that one.

At the same time, I am of course very much aware that a considerable amount of time has passed between the origin of the phenomenon of leadership and our world today. And as you may already have come to know me a little bit, you may well imagine the appeal that a cultural history of leadership has on me. How did the development proceed? Allow me to express a few thoughts on this, in the next chapter.

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Leadership's Path into the Presence

> *In the beginning, before the first animal, before the first emotion, there was a nerve cell that had evolved directly from a bacterium. The innermost core of the neurons in our brain, those millions and millions of mitochondria, are pretty much identical with these primal bacteria. We have this billion-year-old system in each of our cells.*
>
> Robert Ornstein, Brain Scientist

Our preceding deliberations lead to the hypothesis that we have an "*archetype of leadership*" in us, which requires no methodical installation and can also not be overridden.[1] However, it has, evidently, developed itself further. It was culturally embedded and has taken on various shades of different colours through the varying lights of history that have shined on it. A **social history of leadership** is, to my knowledge, still pending and this is not what is intended here either.[2]

Nevertheless, I do want to consider some **strands of human development** separately from each other in the chapters to follow, together with the potential impact they have had on leadership. All in all, the relative importance of these facets seems to have grown over the last couple of years, so that theses chapters have been revised quite considerably, compared to the first edition.

Whenever the evolutionary psychology crops up, it comes with a certain concern. Are we approaching tomorrow's problems with a stone-age psyche and outdated tools? Some authors seem to believe that "all the downfalls that we have had to endure" can be associated with this human deficit. A somewhat pessimistic attitude, don't you think? Let's, instead, remind ourselves of some extremely successful operations from our history (Berth 1993).

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[1] "It is an anthropological truism that all societies, from the most egalitarian to the most stratified, have some form of leadership. Forms of impermanent and situational leadership exist in even the most 'egalitarian' societies" (Vaughn 2010).

[2] Whereas a considerable work in preparation has been completed, at least in terms of scientific management, by *Werner Berg* (1999); something only for true fans of management history.

It was around 40,000 years ago that we were able to increase our ***innovative strength*** with astounding implications; we began to ***differentiate*** priorities and ***integrated*** these almost simultaneously within the larger part of our societies. About 14,000 years ago, leaders were able to drastically change the scope of their ***planning and managerial impact***: from nomad and hunter-gatherer existences to that of farmers and shepherds. Completely new insights were required to move from the previous one-day planning schedule to a 365 times longer planning cycle. About 6,000 years ago, we had the courage to exchange our small groups for gigantic social systems, which have been growing ever since. Some 2,500 years ago, we came up with religious systems, which pleaded for compassion ***beyond our kin***. The incredible developments since are what fill the libraries of today. Should we really be led to believe that our psychological and behavioural patterns developed so far define an unsolvable problem?

Dear pessimists: ***The game is not over, yet!***

However, we are not yet ready to take a look at the final part of this game. Such a fascinating topic shall be saved for the finale of the book. Let us begin by accompanying our leadership phenomenon—after its birth—through childhood and adolescence. In doing so, rather than just follow it through the "stages of life", we will address topical key aspects and shed light on them from differentiating perspectives.

Hereby, you are able to read each chapter independently from one another, to further differentiate our jigsaw and the "images in your head". Decide for yourself, what resolution it should have. Once you are happy with the evolutionary psychological and historic background, you can jump to Part II of the book any time.

2.1   Our Consciousness Unfolds

Consciousness, the state of being aware, remains one of the toughest unsolved mysteries in biology to date. Consider the fact that it operates largely below the threshold of our sentient brain's activity. Our access to the regions where we evaluate courses of action, make decisions and evaluate goals is surprisingly limited (Koch 2005). This is simply because these functions were already required, well before our cognition had words available, when our consciousness was still in its infancy. Our actions were originally initiated primarily by emotional impulses that were part of our *"archaic autopilot"*, a very fast, energy-saving and highly effective method.

Today, we can no longer grasp what capabilities we developed without language and with only a rudimentary awareness. Planning ahead, recollecting the past and strategically approaching the complexity of life, all these aspects were most probably not part of our skill set in the early phases of human life. Today, these issues govern the daily chores of the modern manager.

Our primordial thinking can most likely be thought of as "***thinking in images***". There are numerous attempts to reveal these remnant archaic images in our heads, which are often referred to as ***archetypes*** (Fig. 2.1).
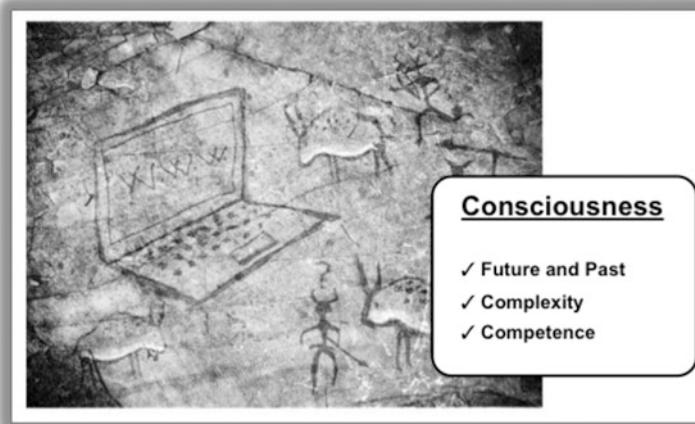
Fig. 2.1 Our consciousness unfolds

According to C. G. Jung, these are "the remains of an early collective psyche" which "is innate in the brain structure". He sees these archetypes as psychological framework of universal prototypes for ideas that are not acquired, but have always been there, since the very existence of the hominid genus. He considers these archetypes in a functional proximity to instincts and regards them "gigantic historical prejudices" (Schmidbauer 1999). Is it then much of a surprise that we can easily recognize close similarities to our evolutionary psychological deliberations?

With the emergence of linguistic components, the process gained fundamentally in momentum. Our associative, figurative "primal thoughts" began to be overshadowed by words. Today it is not even uncommon to find awareness equated to language!

We can assume that the development of our consciousness had an impact on our understanding of time and the complexity in our minds. Let us take a closer look at these two aspects.

2.1.1   Understanding of Time: The Beginning of Future

It seems to be fashionable to speak of *the future manager*, who creates astonishing opportunities and defines the forthcoming rules for success, in order to beat the competition. We dream of our ability to not just haphazardly influence the future but rather to be able to consistently and strategically shape it. Not trial and error should characterize our approach, but vision and foresight.

Current literature frequently differentiates leaders into two categories, *problem-solving* (focused in the here and now) and *inspiring action* (taking advantage of opportunities). It is repeatedly claimed, with utmost regret, that there are not enough visionaries seeking future opportunities. Possibly, this is simply *natural*!

Our early mind was hardly capable of looking extensively into the future. Our ancestors' time frame was geared to the here and now, in a similar way it still is in many of today's animal species. Tomorrow simply happened, after surviving today. Hence the primordial task of leadership was aligned to the present: Make sure that things get done together! We could substantiate: . . . get things done *here and now*!

> The expansion of the leadership task (making sure things still work out better together *tomorrow*!) would undoubtedly not have been possible until much later, well after thousands of years since the emergence of the leadership phenomenon.

Mother Nature initially aligned us humans to solve imminent problems. This is the method of choice for survival. The principle goes like this: "*observe problem ⇨ act for a solution now*". We feel hungry and start searching for nourishment immediately. When we do not have any impeding problem, we revert to social grooming. Throughout today, numerous cultures follow this principle, often ridiculed, scolded or envied by our performance-orientated meritocracies, conditional to their currently prevailing disposition.

Presumably, we would have a clear conscience in referring to ourselves as *"social problem-solving creatures"*.[3] We were well provided to attain this success pattern, with sensitive antennas for cooperation, on the one hand, and with perception skills for difficulties and dangers, on the other hand.

Should you, once again, be annoyed about your boss or your partner only ever addressing shortcomings, instead of acknowledging your strong points, you can simply lean back and say: "Oh well, he's back in prehistoric mode again!"

The fact that our ancestors eventually expanded their experienced time frame, which allowed them to behave more pre-emptively, never eliminated their fundamental mode of problem orientation. And that's a good thing! Even nowadays, tomorrow takes place, after having survived today. Do we need to contemplate the strategic future of a company, whilst we are trying to save it from bankruptcy? We simply never developed to be creatures that are primarily oriented to the future. Those of us, who are, are considered by many to be unfit for life, confused or even just crazy.[4]

The *beginning of future* may require "re-enacting". Just as there is this special moment in our childhood, when we develop an understanding of what it actually means to do something "in one week". And there is this other moment, when we decide to refuse a piece of candy today, in exchange for a whole bag of sweets tomorrow.

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[3] If we wouldn't pretentiously already refer to ourselves as Homo sapiens.

[4] Possibly, what a famous German politician was trying to express, when recommending, to those of us who have visions, to go and see a therapist.

It is conceivable that only those groups survived, which consisted of a ***well-balanced mix of individuals***: many present and problem-oriented doers, with just a few forward-thinking visionaries. Now it simply became necessary to make sure that they respected and were able to learn from each other. I don't think that it is coincidental that leaders have always wanted to have "visionaries" (fortune-tellers, oracles, economic forecasters, futurologists, etc.) by their side.[5]

> ▶ ***Tip***: Do not let the numerous demands for visionary and future-orientated managers confuse you or lead you into aimless activism.
> Do, however, make sure that you find enough time to distance yourself from the daily grind of your routine responsibilities, so that you can gain a thorough understanding of the concerns your group has regarding the future (e.g., forthcoming requirements, long-term orientation).
> ***Concluding: It is acceptable for a few—suitably capable—specialist to deal with questions regarding the company's future.***

The expansion of our time frame left us with a couple of less desirable side effects: suddenly, we could "lose" ourselves in (future) concerns and in coming to terms (with the past). Our inner mind would increasingly signal the existence of problems, for which there was no immediate representation in the outside world. We began to lose our natural ***presence***. We started to become frightened by things that did not actually exist.

Psychologists have termed the concept ***situational orientation***. We are so busy trying to figure ourselves out and gain an understanding of the situation that we loose our capacity to take action and risk becoming dysfunctional.

We can assume with a high probability that Mother Nature has not equipped us very well with the capacity to take care of the future. Demanding a higher number of visionaries may make as little sense, as it does to ask our children to better ration their chocolate and not eat all of it at once.

I dare to formulate the thesis:
Visionaries are a statistical exception!
The fundamental problem is not having too little of something (future orientation). It is that, by nature, something else is dominant (problem or action orientation).

From my experience, avoiding ***aimless activism*** seems to present a great challenge for many executives. Even if we are able to avoid this, *future orientation*

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[5] Very entertaining reading: *Anett Klingner* (2012).

(forward thinking, strategy development, vision, etc.) does not automatically take its place. How often have you attended a strategic meeting, a forecasting workshop or participated in a vision project, where you would consider the result truly fascinating?

The challenges we faced, together with our problem-solving capacity, seemed to have invoked each other during the course of our history. The advance in our cognitive abilities, the development of our consciousness and the extension of the time frame into the future, all of these greatly enhanced our capabilities; however, they also increased our capacity to create complexity in our minds!

2.1.2   Complexity and Dynamics: The World Out of Joint

The number of existing problems, we need to face concurrently, seem to be increasing constantly. At the same time, we accuse ourselves of not being able to handle the growing complexity and consider ourselves to be living in awfully challenging times. However, it is very much debateable, whether our experience of current developments is truly more dramatic than that, which our ancestors faced. First, their initial situation was far worse than ours. Secondly, they also had to cope with existential upheavals. Then, as now, we are looking for solutions to get our (inner) world *back under control*.

Many people are increasingly failing to do so and are becoming dysfunctional in trying, due to the sheer extent of their worrying and pondering. The development of our mental abilities has, most probably, always been a *blessing and a curse*. Thinking very often creates the concerns in the first place, for which we then try to develop solutions, by thinking even more. We can, therefore, ask the somewhat cynical question: Are people becoming *too* intelligent, thereby failing to be able to take action and leaving themselves incapable of success?

Perhaps the complexity of the world is, objectively, not increasing as rapidly, as it is indicated everywhere. Maybe, we are just increasingly able to produce a greater complexity within ourselves. This would emphasize how important it is to distinguish (a) the essential from the irrelevant and (b) to protect us from data overload. Many questions can be found within the field of complexity and dynamics, for which we still need good answers.

For the group, leadership is a *method of complexity reduction*. Followers want to rest feeling secure, knowing that the concerns for solving the group's problems are in best hands. We have already discovered that the feeling of uncertainty increases the demand for leadership. And this remains the case, even in light of the explosion in overall development of human skills.

2.1.3   Competence Explosion: A Vision of World Dominance

During the course of the development of our cognitive capabilities, all of us became more powerful! Everybody! Evolution made no distinction between leaders and

followers. Ultimately, it was not two groups, which developed independently of each other, not in comparison to the two groups of finches on the Galapagos Islands and in Europe. We have already shown that followers are successful survivors, *by nature*, in their own right with an appropriate self-concept—and we are all their descendants. Allow followers to remain *stupid and weak* would have made absolutely no sense for nature. In contrast, this may be a little different, when looking at things from the perspective of a leader!

Given the competitive struggle for leadership, there are two options: On the one hand, I can continuously improve and thereby **have an edge** on my competition, and on the other hand, I can actively take measures to ensure that everyone else is weaker than I am.

Leaders probably started very early—for the sake of maintaining their political power—to take the task of "keeping followers stupid and weak" into their own hands. To paraphrase a saying: If you're one-eyed, you become king, by blinding the rest of the world!

Even today, many executives can be found, who constantly stamp out all the lights that surround them, so that they are the only ones left to shine in brilliance. Ill informed and stupid followers are less inclined to challenge a leader. The price: The group consistently fails in accomplishing difficult tasks as the team becomes increasingly incompetent. In the struggle for the group's effort to survive, this becomes a serious barrier!

Dictatorial-repressive societies were, and will always be worse off than those, who are well lead, even more so when there are truly challenging group tasks to accomplish. This also applies to business organisations!

And now we are faced with a problem: The followers are continuously becoming more and more proficient, and as their leader, I can no longer stop "keeping them stupid". So now what can I do to secure my leadership position?

Abuse of power and violence are no contenders for a solution, as they violate our evolutionary notion of good leadership in a massive way and cannot, therefore, constitute a sustainable strategy. When groups consume a large part of their energy for internal struggles and resolution of conflicts, too little remains to ward off the outside competition. Just look at those countries weakened by civil wars.

▶ **Tip**: Resist both the temptation of surrounding yourself with week followers and keeping your followers dumb, just to protect your legitimacy for leadership.

Concluding: In a competitive environment, you only have a chance of playing a winning game with a strong team.

The currently well-established *self-concept of leaders*, to be better in everything in comparison to their followers, is beginning to falter. Even amidst our ancestral leaders, there were surely individual followers, who had some specific skills better developed. I can hardly imagine that the "historical chief" single handily produced the best arrows, knew the game behaviour, had the best physical constitution, read the weather, etc. Even then, there were certainly already specialists.

All in all it can be presumed that successfully accomplishing the task of leadership did not get any easier, as our consciousness developed. In addition the groups themselves became bigger and bigger during the course of human history.

2.2   Our Group Sizes Are Increasing

There is evidence that a mere 11,000 years ago, numerous villages grew over many generations to become larger systems of settlements. Some 6,000 years ago, larger societies were formed. It became a disadvantage for individuals, not to be part of a large community. This transition proved to be a significant challenge to our prehistoric mind: *fear and distrust* of strangers grew and the need for defence was established.

Thousands of years are not so easily eradicated from our minds: The number of people, who we know well—there are usually no more than 150 individuals—has practically not changed since the lifetime of our ancestors, even though we are living in mass societies today together with millions of others (Fig. 2.2).

Our psyche is it set up to maintain stable social relationships with only a *limited group of people*. After all, any form of cooperation can be promising in principle, but it can also be dangerous and *nerve-wracking*.

Smart as we were, we simply began to rebuild our beloved small groups within the larger groups. It "... was, as it always occurs among people in similar circumstances: an inextricable network of interests, jealousies, greed and of course conflicts" (Herzog 1998). The first primal *cartels and associations* were established.
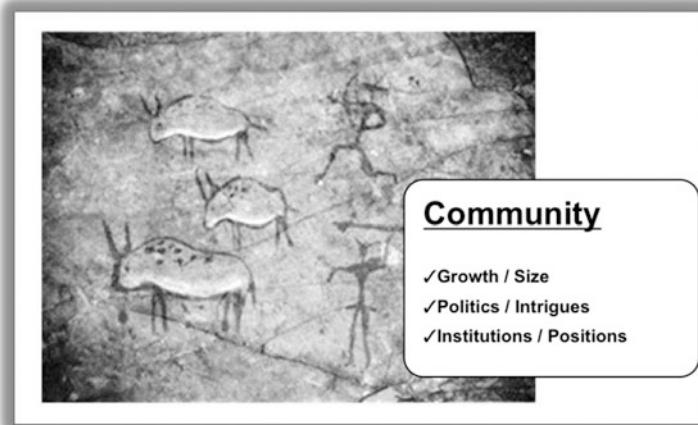
Fig. 2.2 Our group sizes are increasing

What a wonderful solution: We could experience the feeling of security and inclusion within the community—and build influence and prestige within our "*gang*" towards the outside. Next to us, individuals and less coherent groups often stood astray. Consequently, when they entered the competition, they also started to get engaged in *"politics"*!

For as long as followers and leaders were in immediate contact with each other, privilege, power and performance were inseparable. When our ancestors became sedentary, cities and empires emerged, many people no longer were in direct contact with their rulers. At some point along the way, it was even possible that purely *formal rulers* were put on the thrown; merely symbolic, without any real power (e.g., puppet kings, figureheads). In the immediate vicinity of a leader, however, our archaic patterns still govern our perception strongly. People immediately surrounding a leader are difficult to fool.

The larger an organization becomes, the more members no longer actually know each other. Gradually, the individual "standing" of a leader, very much important in small groups—to be taken literally—was no longer important in larger groups and gave way to "image" (i.e., the reputation or images that a leader portrays of himself). Formerly, the legitimacy granted by the group was a decisive factor, and then suddenly the decision *"from above"* gained in significance.

There are those, who tell me today, that it is no longer possible to advance a career in large cooperation by demonstrating effective leadership alone. This is deemed to require a totally different skill set. In these conversations the word politics is often dropped; it has become a question concerning the "***great game of power***".

2.2.1 Politics: The Game of Power Gets a Life of Its Own

Social recognition and personal status have an important function regarding our survival in communities. The pursuit of these is even rewarded by a hormonal reflex. Even from this biological perspective, it can be regarded as a deep-rooted incentive (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 2004). However, it also produces a side effect: When chemistry and pleasure come together, dependence is never very away. In this case, the addiction to *power and prestige*!

In overseeable small groups—in which we all originally lived—we are "grounded" by the other members. Whenever we consider ourselves to be too important, people from our immediate environment are best at bringing us, quite literately, back down to earth.

Things started to change massively, as our communities grew. ***Politics tend to find fertile ground, particularly in larger systems*** (Fig. 2.3).

Fig. 2.3 Political capital

The struggle for influence and standing can be seen as the roots of politics. Political competence has much to do with acquiring, maintaining and strengthening power.

In this context, reference is often made to **political capital**. According to scientists, this consists of two intangibles: **standing and relationships**. The claim is made that our political capital increases when (a) we promote the status and promotional prospects of those in our immediate environment, (b) we demonstrate a consistently loyal behaviour towards them and (c) we participate successfully in a network with mutual favours, agreements and support (Badaracco 2002).

Should these findings be correct, nature has once again set up things pretty cleverly: We have standing, if we are of value to the group. However, this construction was conceived for an overseeable, comparably small group size.

In larger communities it is now—troublesomely—possible to *compensate* for inferior performance with relationships!

A very special relationship, of course, is the one with the leader! Most certainly, it has always been a concern for individual group members to be close to the leader and thereby secure a favourable status for themselves. To recognize this, we only need to take a look back at the times of the royal courts. Our ancestors would have been well aware of who was a member of the "inner circle"—and adjusted their behaviour to match that of those.

> ▶ **Tip**: Make sure not to establish or accept any special relationships to employees in your group, which would harm achieving your leadership task. Pay attention to each individual's specific contribution to the common goal!
> **So: Can you officially reprimand your best friend, when he jeopardises the group's goal with his behaviour?**

The communities continued to grow and good relations with the leaders suddenly brought with them a new kind of privilege: The promotion into a leadership position of your own. The **careerist** was born!

The character of our primal phenomenon of leadership was increasingly "bleached", as more and more people were led by leaders, who were not legitimated

by the group itself. Even today, it is difficult for executives to distinguish in staffing between "I like the candidate" and "the candidate would be a capable leader".

> The moment when the contribution to the success of the group was no longer significant for the nomination of a leader, a new historic role was born: ***the careerist!***
> The phenomenon probably emerged from the social ***relationship to the leade***r. This is something completely different than the task of leadership itself!

In the clearly defined communities of our ancestors, someone would hardly have been appointed to lead the hunt "from above", without having the required skills. Everyone would have been penalised immediately for this stupidity with hunger.

Only within large communities, whose time came with the agricultural societies, could the wrong person (for at least a certain period of time) remain unrecognized. This renowned agricultural revolution had other notable consequences: the significance of coordination and organization became more relevant for success!

2.2.2 Organisation: From Clans to Institutions

Organising was probably not much of a problem for our ancestors. For a very long time they simply did, what was always done, in the same way it had always been done. Essential knowledge and experience was accumulated over generations. "Even the camps of Homo Sapiens, who emerged from the darkness of the Ice Age thousands of years ago, were arranged according to a recognizable, recurring pattern . . ."[6]

Knowledge of these things was probably spread over several heads, who—formulated in modern terms—shared their experience "on the job". If something did not work out, trial and error would eventually lead to success. Once a successful way was found, it would not have been questioned, but ***simply continuously repeated***. There were hundreds of thousands of years in our history during which successful procedures and knowledge demonstrably almost never changed. They were virtually "crystallized" into the group.

> Let us consider the ancestral tribe as the ***first organisational structure***.

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[6] *Roman Herzog*, Staaten der Frühzeit, S. 8.

This corresponds with modern definitions: "An organisation can be understood to represent a structured social system consisting of groups of individuals, who work together to achieve mutually agreed upon goals . . . The formal organisation is a system confronted with problems for which it finds solutions" (Weinert 2004). Fits, doesn't it?

The purpose of the primordial organisation was simply to ensure that the clan survived. Our ancestors weren't able to convene strategy meetings. They didn't have to! Mother Nature provided us with a *"built-in survival strategy"*. The individual programs had *attributes of projects*. Their activation was timed! It made no sense whatsoever to never interrupt hunting, to dwell in sex eternally[7] or to eat indeterminately.

A rather dramatic change occurred some 14,000 years ago, when societies went over to agriculture and stock farming. The communities became larger; a division of labour was not only optional, but very much necessary. The era of *specialists* (e.g., bakers, soldiers, healers) had arrived, who were increasingly organised in *discrete groups* (e.g., guilds, armies). In addition to families, new structures and institutions emerged, essentially as "*mock families*". It was now essential to keep these brotherhoods, guilds, and religious organisations alive.

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is for members or leaders to let organisation "die", even after its original goals have been reached? It seems desirable to find news goals for the group (an example: today's rifle clubs, home guards in their origin).

This development was perfected—and perverted—more recently, when corporate American lawyers succeeded in having companies recognized as "*legal entities*".[8] Ever since, we are faced with pseudo-beings lacking a moral system! In our opinion, that is someone who defines his relationships exclusively with the deal dimension and is legally authorised to ignore the emotional dimension. According to DSM IV,[9] we can clinically consider such a person a psychopath (Fig. 2.4).

This trend turns tragic, when the original purpose of human communities is lost from sight: *survival and safeguarding the quality of life of its members*.[10]

Our ancestors took their archaic behavioural patterns and needs of their families with them and transferred them to the newly created organisations.

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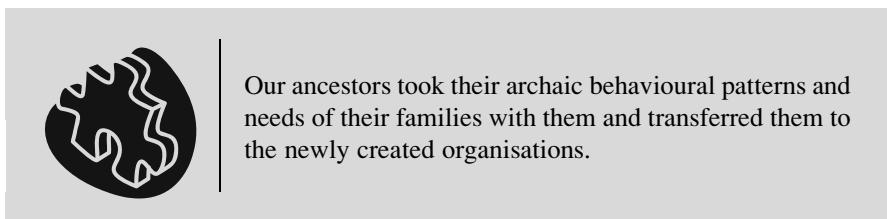
[7] Please, no joking now . . .

[8] For this a law was used that was passed to secure the rights of Afro-Americans.

[9] Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

[10] Today, companies frequently have the predominant purpose of increasing the wealth for its shareholders. It seems reasonable to assume that this came with specific challenges for the leaders, as well as explicit, very fundamental threats.
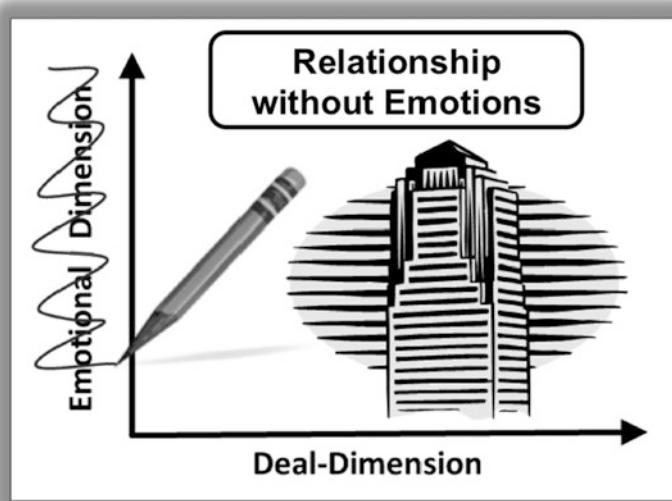
Fig. 2.4 Organisations as legal entities

Let's take a careful look: Does not the "death" of a company (e.g., merger or bankruptcy) demand a period of mourning of those involved? Doesn't it feel like pain, when we've put years of work and passion into a company and then, all of a sudden, it changes its name? Even if the workplace itself is in no way at risk? If then try, so to speak as an as an "antidote", to no longer identify with the organization and emotionally protect us from pain, something else goes missing. We feel empty and going to work becomes a duty and a burden.

> ▶ *Tip*: Be careful not to fall into the trap of creating organisational
> structures, for reasons of efficiency or profits, which that contradict
> human disposition (e.g., by extreme Lean Management)!
> Give your employees the opportunity to contribute individually and
> thereby gain in social standing. Make sure that individuals do not brag
> about themselves at the expense of other team members.
> ### *So: Never forget that your organisation is a social system.*

In the past thousands of years now plenty of things have changed: People these days work in companies, earn their money and then go away again. They no longer assemble around a unified purpose. At some stage, even the terms we use lost their meaning. Abstract organisations were mistaken for living communities and group members with job descriptions. We are now taking note of difficulties, which would have been predictable, from the perspective of Evolutionary Leadership (e.g., sinking *loyalty*).

Today, the members of a work group do not even have to be in the same place at the same time to do their jobs. Organisations are less of a social meeting point than they used to be. Should we, in future, be left with only *virtual teams*, we will no doubt be left feeling that something is missing. Currently, we can only speculate on the consequences this would have in combination with our established evolutionary preferences and patterns. "Unfortunate, but inevitable" should not be the last response.

With all the changes going on, we should keep one thing in mind with *Peter Drucker*: "The company is, above all things, social. It consists of people. So it should serve the purpose of effectively making use of the strengths of the individuals and not focus on their shortcomings. Only with the help of the organisations, it is possible to implement that—that's the reason why we have organisations and why we need them" (Drucker 1998).

In the view of another impressive management thinker, no one should be forced to work in an organization that "does in no way feels like a vibrant, open community, but more like a planned economy". And as he comes to the conclusion, at the end of his book, that organisations will only make full use of their potential "when it is completely human",[11] then he has us fully on his side!

2.3   Increasing Our Possessions

Parallel to the development of organisations and positions, language and consciousness, politics and career, an additional aspect of human history has grown in importance: *individual possession*. This topic, in its entirety, is "several sizes too big" for me as a mere leadership specialist, serving as the basis for various different models of society (or at least it was). I will therefore only consider here are the aspects that I feel relevant for our considerations. In particular, one feature has an outstanding importance in connection with our leadership phenomenon: the property of *possessions as a source of power*.

Capital and wealth, in our mind, have only recently become an issue, compared to our total evolutionary history. The marauding hordes only took what they could carry. The experts agree that the motivation to own something can have quite different motivational sources. A specific, common "ownership instinct" has not yet been identified (Eibl-Eibesfeldt 2004).

At what moment in time the term "*individual property*" started to make sense is difficult to determine. Ultimately, someone was reluctant to let another have the beautiful staff—the stone wedge or the shell necklace—and was also in a position capable of refusing to do so. We also know that every group member would be very careful in such matters, so as not to incite contempt from others in the community. Egoism, power differentials and "property" have always been recognized as a risk for the harmony amongst the group. It was in this environment that our archetypes of *fairness, property and companionship* were established (Fig. 2.5).

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[11] *Gary Hamel*, 2013, S. 206.
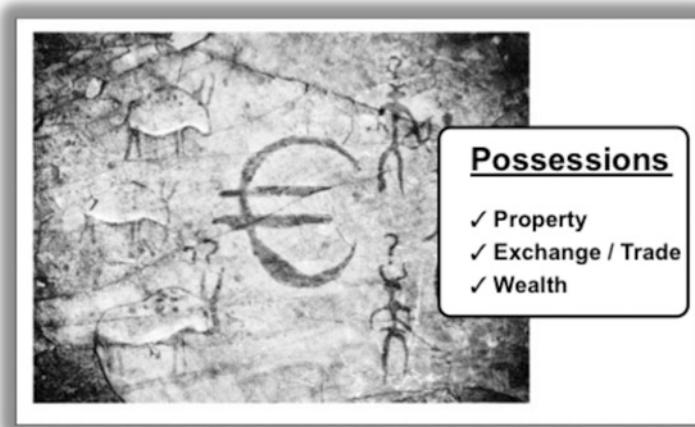
Fig. 2.5 Influence with wealth

Initially, individual property was a requirement to engage in ***barter transactions***. Imagine one group had plenty of meat, but it did not have enough material for the production of hand axes. Then, all of a sudden, the neighbouring group, whose situation was exactly the other way around, became extremely. Or, on an individual level, if I made two bows, I could trade one for a fur coat. Property, however, always remained to be something quite exclusive. Where harmony was at stake, corrective cultural traditions took place (e.g., the obligation to huge feasts and sharing of gifts amongst all).

Finally, when people took possession of land, around 10,000 years ago, many things changed greatly. The transition form nomadic life (obviously possession could not be accumulated for very practical reasons) to sedentary life made it possible to keep ***provisions*** and to pass on ***property to the next generation***.

Both gave our development and culture a huge boost, whilst simultaneously generating new problems: Firstly, the conflicts over possessions and, secondly, new principles of hierarchy. "Wherever archaeologist turn their attention to, they find evidence that the first farmers incessantly fought each other—with fatal consequences".[12]

At the same time a ***source of power*** was established that no longer depended on individual skills, but was (a) from his possession ("this unique club is mine, I dare you to take it away from me . . .") or (b) the opportunity to decide on its distribution ("I'll give you some of my grain, if you get give me . . ."). In consideration of the implications for our leadership topic, a truly mindboggling matter!

The new forms of power, based on wealth and distribution, inevitably affected established mechanisms of the group (leadership) structures. All of a sudden, it was

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[12] *Matt Ridley*, Wenn Ideen Sex haben, S. 184.

necessary to make the decision on whom to follow, having to choose between the most able hunter or the one with the largest storage of grain.

> Having **"ownership power"** could suddenly allow someone to claim a leadership position, without being any ability of contributing to the mutual purpose of the group. This would become increasingly problematic in combination of exerting influence on the group with a lack of understanding for the task at hand.
>
> Property represents just a single source of power and only promotes the dominance dimension of leadership. ***Wealth does not constitute intelligence for success!***

Must we discuss the extent in which the abuse of power increased form this stage on? Loads of *models for alternative societies* were drafted, because the "vast majority" of members from these communities were not willing to accept the side effects of this development. Most of these drafts were not sustainable, as their ignorance of human nature did not allow them to be of lasting effect.

Some researches maintain that stable **central leadership roles** would not have been possible without the emergence of individual property (Erkens 2010). Formerly, the legitimacy of the group was only obtainable with competence and performance. There were too few possessions available to "buy" or "blackmail" a larger majority.

We can only presume at this point what impact the cultural developments surrounding the concept of property rights had from this stage onwards. The previously established archaic patterns were, however, not deleted! Consider these to be "*hard-wired into the human condition*".

Our *Evolutionary Leadership* approach is based extensively on the assumption that cultural differences have no effect its essence. So let's finish our trip by having a look at the topic of culture. And after that we'll be ready to take the pieces collected and put together our puzzle of the "*essence of leadership*"!

2.4 Cultures Differentiated

"We humans are part of a single community of brothers and sisters, not much more than 100,000 years old, which, so far, has not had enough time to develop fundamental differences, but merely established some external adjustments regarding skin colour and appearance" (Engeln 2004). We are all genetically related to a woman who lived more than 150,000 years ago in Africa. All other families that lived at the same time became extinct (Wells 2003). What then is the big deal about cultural differences—when they are obviously ***not primarily genetic in nature***? Basically, we can distinguish two sources of cultural differences:
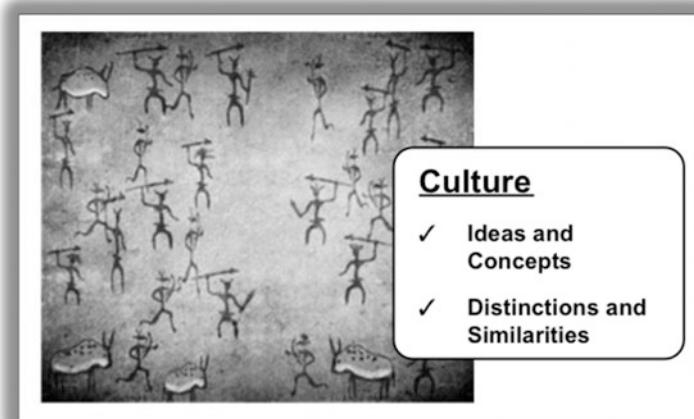
Fig. 2.6　Population and cultures

- All evolutionary-related mechanisms of our species naturally react to ***environmental conditions*** and some phenomena could have been triggered ***more frequently*** in some groups or in different regions (e.g., skin colour in response to solar influence).
- A completely different form of cultural influence, however, lies in the transfer of ***ideas and concepts***. It can be assumed that an "own world" developed in different groups, a kind of "ideas and values habitat". It can also be assumed that they formed a universal core, based on the fundamental, primordial human condition. In our context, we can, for example, point out that every society has a word for leader (Buckingham 2006).

Ones (2005) explains that the basic structure of personality is very much comparable in all populations all over the world. Predictions that we can make about behaviour are also very much comparable. However, the specifications regarding the various elements do differ.

So fundamentally, we can assume all humans, irrespectively of how these shimmer in the light of different cultural colours "tick alike" within the scope of our basic structures (Fig. 2.6).

Suddenly, a couple of decades ago, new terms started to appear, such as "*intercultural competence*" and "*cross-cultural leadership*" and spread in management. The discussion was sparked when some extremely strong failures occurred, as the attempt was made to transfer experience and strategies into other cultures, without reflection. Mostly in entertaining anecdotes, it was shared that there are clearly a variety of observable rules applicable to different interpersonal situations. In a conversation, for example, some cultures prefer a distance from each other of only a few centimetres, whereas others my already consider this a threat. Some

Universally Positive

✓ trustworthy, credible, fair, honest
✓ energetic, determined
✓ Intelligent, far-sighted, plans ahead
✓ encouraging, constructive, motivated,
  team-building, "win-win" problem solver
✓ Informed, communicative, effective
  negotiator
✓ quality-orientated, determined, reliable
✓ coordinator, skilled in administration

Universally Negative

✓ Loner, unsociable, uncooperative
✓ irritable
✓ Vague
✓ egocentric
✓ reckless
✓ dictatorial

Depending on Culture

✓ ambitious, commanding
✓ careful, sympathetic, sensitive
✓ Independent, individualistic
✓ logical, neat, formal
✓ sincere
✓ mundane

Fig. 2.7 Expectations of different cultures on leaders

people want to be involved in the decision-making process, whilst others appreciate clear instructions from a superior. There are examples over examples.

Where do management specialists stand on this topic? *Malik* formulated quite uncompromisingly: "The idea of cultural dependence is obvious and understandable, but it is wrong. There is a misunderstanding between the what and the how of management. *What* effective managers do is pretty much same in all cultures, or at least very similar . . . So you will find, for example, procedures for defining objectives and controlling mechanisms in any well-managed organization" (Malik 2001). Ultimately, he says, it is **not worthwhile to make any particular fuss about what is referred to as cross-cultural management**. There are simply just certain customs and traditions in every country that one should "know about, firstly, as a matter of being polite and, secondly, in order to be respectful". He draws a comparison to another field of activity and points out that there are very few examples national or cultural specific games of sport. It is only about differentiating between good and bad management.

On the one hand, we can follow *Malik's* arguments entirely, in respect to our evolutionary purpose of leadership. On the other hand, there may well be distinctive differences in how leadership is perceived in various cultures, which should be taken into account. Researchers have been able to show that the prototype of a leader does vary according to different populations, religions and cultures. Studies have also shown that it is possible to distinguish cultures based on attitudes towards work, needs and values (Laurent 1983).

This is supported by an extensive cross-cultural study (research program *Globe*), which provides insights into business leadership in 62 nations (Fig. 2.7) (Weinert 2004, S. 529).

Does this then mean that there are—contrary to our initial claim—universal leadership traits and competencies?

No, it does not!

Let us reflect on that at a later stage in this book (cf. Chap 7). It is far too significant to deal with it in just a couple of sentences here. In any case, we can readily assume to hold a whole bunch of universal beliefs about leadership. We could say, ***archaic biases***! which of course fully confirms our approach that leadership is a primal phenomenon.

Another question is the extent to which individual ***management techniques*** are transferable to foreign cultures. Two researchers had already developed some statements back in 1961 on this topic, which yet remain to be falsified (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961):

- There is a ***limited number of common human problems*** for which all peoples must at all times find some solution.
- Whilst there is variability in solutions of all the problems, it is neither limitless nor random but is definitely variable within ***a range of possible solutions***.
- All alternatives of all ***solutions are present in all societies*** at all times but are differentially preferred.
- In a society that is going through ***change***, these differential preferences will not be clearly recognizable.

Mintzberg also says in his latest publication, perhaps we tend "... to exaggerate our differences. Or maybe culture has more influence on *how* we fill roles, and less on what roles we fill"[13] (Fig. 2.8).

Also from the perspective of comparative cultures, there is enough evidence to suggest that an *essence of leadership* makes sense.
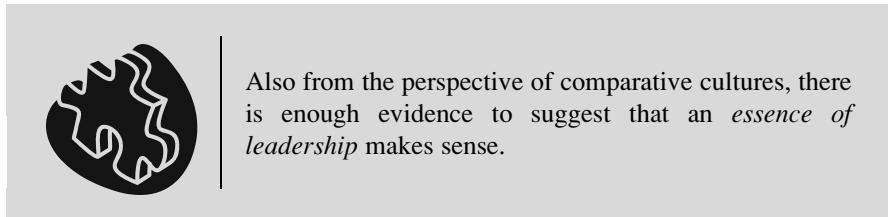
At this point we can say that we have not returned from our journey with empty hands. We have a lot of material from which to distil the essence of leadership.

The ice on which we stand is becoming thinner, as we are shifting from gathering pieces to putting them together. So let's play it safe: let's start with the pieces we gathered when defining the evolutionary purpose of leadership—as we then identify additional key tasks. True to the motto: If you do not fulfil theses tasks, you will lose your legitimacy as leader! (Fig. 2.9).

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[13] *Henry Mintzberg*, Managen, S. 138.
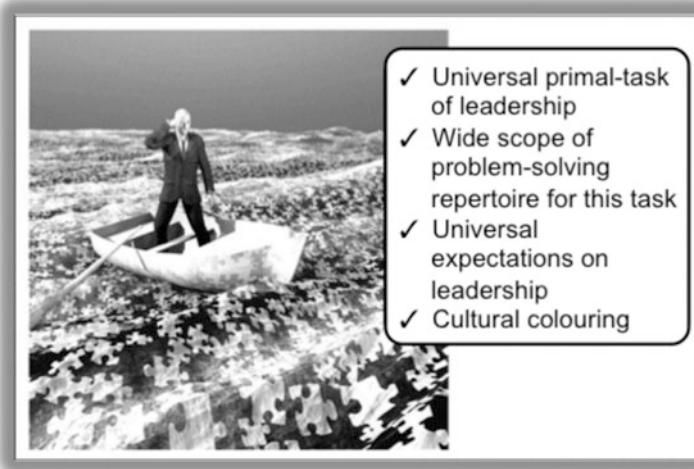
Fig. 2.8 The puzzle takes on some form

Fig. 2.9 All pieces of the puzzle are aligned

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Part II

Die Essence of Leadership

The Purpose of Leadership Is Conclusive

3

The effective leaders, which I know of, are different . . . in almost every aspect that can distinguish an individual. The only thing they share is their ability to get the right things done.
Peter Drucker, Management-Thinker

Our previous thoughts can leave us to assume why leadership, on the one hand, cannot easily be tied to specific behaviours or characteristics and, on the other hand, be subject to certain rules and conventions. Thus, a paradox is solved, which we faced at the beginning of our journey: some people are more successful leaders than others, but they cannot be described on the basis of their personality or their behaviour. Our puzzle has, apparently, been successful to the extent that we were able to put together some parts which previously appeared incompatible. We can, at this point, lay down fundamental assumptions that the group of people who are successful in their leadership:

- Are more capable than others in the group in *successfully accomplishing* the greater, overlying mutual purpose
- Understand better what it takes to gain the legitimacy from the group for their leadership and to retain it

From my perspective, the "problem of leadership" is neither determined by the confusing diversity of the tasks involved nor in the ambiguity of the role. Furthermore, the concern that as a leader, you can be torn between the conflicting expectations of employees seems overrated to me. Those expectations that really matter can be deduced quite clearly from the original patterns surrounding the phenomenon of leadership. Although there appears to be no sample solution for leadership, as, similarly, there are no predefined solutions for the much simpler games of chess or football, you can always do better or worse in our "game". There are means that lead to a higher probability of winning the game than others.

An essential aspect, from our point of view, is that only those who are likely to succeed do not act contrary to our evolutionary human nature. In order to deepen our understanding of this nature, we have followed the development of leadership from its very beginning. Now we have reached a point of being able to work out the essence of this task. I promise you that you will no longer make any crucial mistakes in your leadership role when you abide by the recommendations that I will be putting together in the next chapters! To depart creatively from the essence of these will jeopardise your success. "Over time, the issues leaders need to deal with will change, but not the purpose itself. The task of leadership remains the same".[1]

In the first edition, I was busy explaining the requirements needed to appropriately accomplish the primal purpose of leadership and keep the position. I have considered which expectations followers have and how they can be met and also identified those which are irrelevant to the primal purpose. In retrospect, it seems fair to say: I have tracked leadership with an evolutionary psychological approach! From the beginning, I was particularly preoccupied with the question "which key tasks can be inferred from the original purpose of leadership?" After all, these would then define the scope of successful leadership. It was important for me to focus on tasks which could be assumed to be independent of contemporary and cultural influence. Four fields seemed obvious at the time:

1. A leader must have an effective idea of how the group can be *successful* (***success model***).
2. A leader must ensure that all participants are *aware* of what really matters for the whole group and what needs to be done to reach the mutual goal (***shared reality***).
3. A leader must ensure that all barriers to reaching the mutual goal are *recognised and dealt with* successfully (***problem-solving***).
4. A leader must ensure that *necessary decisions* are made (***issue orders***). In this context, I was also sure that it is of equal importance for leaders not to jeopardise their main source of power: *the legitimacy granted by followers*.

Of course I knew that experimenting with ideas would not invariably have to lead to exactly four core tasks. In particular, the keywords were provisional in their denotation. At that point, I had therefore asked you to submit recommendations and engage in a critical discourse on the definition of these tasks. Since then, many things have happened, and I have been in continuous dialogue and collaboration with hundreds of leaders (mostly from business[2]) to expand on my findings. This means that you will find in this edition—and every forthcoming edition—the current status of thoughts and developments, in particular with the support of the

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[1] *Henry Mintzberg*, Managen, S. 29.

[2] It would be interesting for me to resolve this current "limitation" and also deal with leaders from nonprofit organisations, from politics or law enforcement, military and fire department. Let me hear from you if you wish to contribute.

Open-Source-Initiative: Management. My primary intention in writing this book is to outline a clear, credible and practical picture of leadership. Whether it ends up with 5, 7 or 9 core tasks is almost beside the point. And that each core task is described in three sub-points is undoubtedly more a reflection of my desire for structure than a compelling imperative.

- In the first edition, it seemed important to me to clearly differentiate between the *task: leadership* and the *task: promoting a career*. In retrospect, I believe not to have dealt well with the issue that people are apparently capable of success, without being a good leader in our understanding. I had seemingly fallen for a bias! Today, it seems to me self-evident that being a successful leader does not only mean to be granted the legitimacy from the followers but also to *acquire a leadership position* in the first place. Our ancestors were invariably faced with a similar challenge. And of course it's consequential that it only then becomes an important question, how to sustain the legitimacy granted by the group.
- From today's perspective, I had also underestimated the challenge of putting together **a performance-oriented team**. For one, in a competitive environment, it cannot be taken for granted to belong to the group of survivors. Secondly, even performance itself cannot be taken for granted. After all, Mother Nature has derived meaningful ways for us to use our available resources sparingly.
- In addition, we should not take an exclusively introvert perspective, i.e. on the lead group. Success (survival) always happens in **a specific environment**! It's downright embarrassing to me to not have provided ample space for this aspect in the first edition.
- Likewise, the aspect of a **time-based perspective** has been given a greater emphasis. It makes a difference whether one focuses on the fact that things are successful now or keeps an eye on the fact that things should also be turning out right tomorrow. We have already included this aspect in Sect. 2.1.1.

Here and now, I would like to open up for discussion the seven challenges (**core tasks of leadership**) that a successful leader has to cope with:

1. Primarily, the task of getting into a leadership role in the first place has to be solved. These days this aspect is probably discussed mostly in terms of career management (**making a personal claim and being granted legitimacy**).
2. No later than having stepped into the leadership position, there has to be a concrete idea of how group success can be established (**a thorough understanding of how the group will be successful**).
3. Then it must be ensured that everyone involved is and remains aware of what is really required from the entire group and who needs to do what to reach the mutual goals (**building the foundation for collaborative action**).
4. Now it is time to turn the strategy into reality. The leader manager must ensure that any encountered barriers are identified, circumvented or removed. Nowadays, I consider decision-making a mere requirement for this task (**making sure the success model is implemented**).

5. Meanwhile, responsible leaders will make sure that their group can maintain their level of performance (***making sure the team's performance level is competitive and stays that way***).
6. At this point it becomes evident that the success of a group depends highly on the environment in which it operates. A successful leader will not allow the interfaces to the outside world to develop at random (***securing the habitat of the group***).
7. If the candidate is not only out for a career (the first core task to accomplish) but also keen to demonstrate effective leadership (2–6 of the core tasks), then it is very likely that he will be successful and preserve his gained legitimacy from the team. The apex of the endeavour will be to provide the group—and himself—with the safety of continuing to do so and thereby secure a place in history (***contribute to a joyful future***).

In addition to these seven core tasks of natural leadership, at least two more are pushing forward. These are less of an evolutionary psychology kind, being more action-oriented, and have to do with the fact that we can be understood to be social problem-solving beings. Allow me, therefore, to broaden the evolutionary perspective and to take the opportunity to offer you an effective overall picture. Each agent influences the success of his action by:

• The degree of ***professionalism***, with which he is dedicated to in each upcoming task at hand
• An appreciation of the ***context*** in which the task presents itself

This framework actually seems fully sufficient to me and will warrant that your efforts in leadership end up being a success! It's not a question of having access to an infinite repertoire of techniques and models. You do not need to turn your personality inside out just because you do not conform to that intimidating list of leadership traits you have unfortunately been given or because the feedback from your latest assessment centre appears unfortunately worrisome. It's simply a matter of doing what needs to be done to fulfil the tasks outlined below—with everything that you as an individual readily have at your disposal!

First, let's shed some light on the phenomenon of *professionalism* before addressing the individual *core tasks* in detail. Should you have a craving, this may also nourish your appetite for some hands-on practical advice. I would like to conclude this chapter with some tangible recommendations on what impact your *current setting* should have on your leadership conduct. Only with the perspective on the specific setting of your particular leadership task do I consider the approach to be firmly anchored in place.[3]

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[3] I will not go so far as *Professor van Vugt* who aligns evolutionary psychological "triggers" to the specific situational characteristics.

As of today, we are able to derive practical scopes of action and recommendations for leaders by combining (a) *evolutionary leadership theory*, (b) *the specific setting* and (c) the individual leader's *behavioural pattern*.

Even if we will never be able to industrialise the processes of leadership, I would dare to announce that in the next stage of our evolutionary management model (see Appendix, Open-Source-Council: Management), we can already provide some first guidelines for "programming".

You may consider, by the end of Part II, that the *combination* of core tasks and their underlying subtasks can lead to a high degree of *complexity*. No one said that leadership would be easy! This intricacy, however, can be simplified and allow for some proposals after analysing the specific setting (i.e. *contextual priorities*). At this point, we still do not have recommendations on what to do. We have, however, defined the scope of action for the specific setting! The real—highly individual— challenge is then for the leader to solve the respective tasks using the existing behavioural repertoire he himself has available!

It could be very feasible to consider writing an entire book on any one of the leadership core tasks if it was our intention to focus on providing the entire scope of action with which each of the core tasks could possibly be addressed to find solutions. It's not unlikely for that to actually happen some time in the future. Today, let's first create a framework for it!

Approaching the Task with Professionalism 4

A man who has nothing in which he is ahead of another is not a leader.

Zhuang Zhou, Philosopher

I have just gone quite far out on the limb, promising you that you will be a successful leader, if only you consider the recommendations put forward in this chapter. And at the same time I claimed, somewhat provokingly, that to "creatively" deviate from these aspects substantially would clearly jeopardise your leadership position. Whilst I may have been walking on thin ice with these claims back in 2006, only having had my own consulting experience to substantiate them, it appears the ice has thickened. Numerous findings from researchers and practitioners have significantly stabilised the surface on which we stand today.

> Just as taking the ball into your hands is not considered, in most cases, to be a successful example of creativity in football, deviating from the *fundamentals* of evolutionary leadership will be damaging to your success.

However, within the framework of the *basic principles*, flexibility, creativity and alteration are of enormous importance for success. Of course, you can smirk and remind us that there have been football players who used their hand with the artistic skill of a genius to win the game. But would you seriously want to recommend this approach and include it into the basic training of junior and professional football players? All right, I hear you: that's exactly what numerous business consultants seem to be doing, who have considerable success with the attitude that the ends justify the means. But that's a different story.

Of essential importance is the following: almost all successful athletes mastered the known standards prior to developing artistry and acquiring ingenuity. In the world of management, in my opinion, we are infinitely far away from the level of *professionalism* that is found in most sports. One probable reason for this could be that in sports, success is immediately obvious.

> ▶ When the face of your tennis racket is pointing to the ground, as you are just about to hit a forehand baseline stroke, you simply loose the point. End of that story! Everyone knows that everyone can see that. No top-seeded player would refer to his position in the world ranking to justify this little piece of individual creativity in his game. Reference to individual style is, more often than not, merely an indication of incompetence.

What would happen if we were to demonstrate a comparable level of professionalism in our field of leadership? Let us briefly consider how being professional is actually defined. Basically, the terms mean nothing more than to earn your living through the work you do. Even before the sixteenth century, the term was used in France for someone who publicly offered a specialised service in exchange for payment. The term *amateur* was used later on simply to differentiate from those who would simply do things because they enjoyed doing them without making a living from them. The idea, of an amateur being a dabbler in his field, is modern and not a necessary prerequisite. Throughout history, there have been numerous individuals who contributed greatly with their work without having been paid for it. The third in this league, the *layman*, generally refers to a non-ordained member of a church (originally in contrast to the church's clergy).

Every person, who makes a living from his occupation, should undoubtedly, in my view, do this with the *conviction of a professional.*[1] In no way should we, in this matter, distinguish the mason, the kitchen help or the professor from the football pro! All workers, who go about their occupation professionally, operate on some basic rules:

- Professionals accept the relevant *basic principles* of their task and act accordingly! Should their task require, for example, a particular lifestyle or dress code that would never be questioned.
- Professionals set their *own individuality*, whilst exercising their job, behind the task! The principal rules and regulations determining success will be in their focus, unconditionally.
- Professionals do the things that have the *highest probability* of leading to success! If something turns out to be more effective, compared to how it was done before, it is simply adopted. Personal preferences are questioned earnestly.

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[1] The issue of similarities and differences between professional athletes and managers is the subject of a discussion with a medical specialist. The interview with Dr. Peter May (MVZ Dr. May and Dr. Fehring, Bonn) can be found in the appendix.

Our approach leads in form and content to a philosophy of management, which is quite related to that of the renowned management writer *Fredmund Malik*. This is of interest, as we arrive at a similar tenor in numerous issues—even though we started from a different outlook. *Malik* considers leadership as a craft and emphasises that it is absolutely not about something being new, modern or "in".

It should only ever matter whether or not something works and is of best practical use in respect to fulfilling the leadership task. Similarly, in respect to the question of cross-cultural differences in leadership tasks and skills, Malik comes to the same conclusion as I do: "Good management is universal, invariant and independent of culture" (Malik 2005).

Amateurs and laypeople may find themselves wondering in quiet moments, where their personality is left, in light of pursuing an occupation with a professional mindset. Novices, in particular, often experience the constraints of professional activity as a massive restriction and limitation of their freedom and spontaneity, overlooking the fact that these are, when inspected with somewhat more scrutiny, nothing more than the acting out of past habits. They often confuse spontaneity with arbitrariness or lack of discipline. Also, in leadership development, the question is often asked whether one is now no longer allowed to behave like a "normal human being". What do you think?

You're right! Of course, the answer depends on how you define a normal human being. Of course professionals also have their own personal strengths and weaknesses, individual motives, preferences and reasoning. However, they know when it is appropriate to employ them—and when not.

> ▶ How comfortable would you feel sitting in an aeroplane, listening to the announcement of the pilot that he has just had an incredibly lousy start of the day and is still, unfortunately, suffering a little from last night's drinking binge and doesn't, in any way, feel up to scratch for this ridiculous piloting, especially with the difficulty of getting his overweight body into the cockpit in the first place?

Well, as we have already concluded, the correct behaviour for pilots is laid out clearer, than it is for leaders. Executives cannot reference a checklist for departure or for an instrumental landing procedure. Leading people does not follow the same rules as the use of machinery, analytical methods and tools. And that is exactly what our evolutionary leadership approach points out. Those climbing up the career ladder tend to graciously ignore this simple fact.

Let's get back to how experienced coaches in professional sports operate. We can identify the following aspects to be valuable in our context:

- The *basic techniques*: Our approach assumes that leaders, to fulfil their primal leadership task, have always put to use whatever they have personally available. That's why research has not been able to identify neither specific behaviours nor characteristic properties that are specific to leaders. For practitioners this means that leadership does not consist of—like a game of chess—a limited variety of

pieces with well-defined available moves. The game is much more complex and is based on our ability to have an impact. The ways we move the pieces depend, in terms of factual context, on any conceivable practical skill and, in social context, on communication competence (not synonymous with "good speaker" or "eloquent presenter"). So essentially, *any* improvement of individual competencies is beneficial for the performance in a leadership role. What performance improvement is *actually* achievable will depend on the collective task, the group, the competition and the leader himself. There cannot possibly be a universal solution available here.

- The ***rules and regulations***: The complexity of the game is not entirely random or arbitrary, because we humans are the pieces of the game and the board is our world. The outcome of our evolutionary development of leadership defines the regulatory framework of the game. I will be elaborating on this later on.
- The ***strategies***: Within the rules and regulations there is so much *scope* that there are different options available for successful leadership. History, for example, has shown that there are two possible approaches for leaders in following the "basic principle of having a competitive edge": One is they can improve themselves and the other is they can make sure that everyone else is worse. However, the evolutionary rules enduringly ensure that not all strategies are equally sustainable. In immediate opposition to the case described above, the group, which consists of purposely weakened members, will ultimately lose out to the competition.
- Successful ***self-management***: Clearly, it cannot be taken for granted to always achieve things we are actually capable of. We often tend to ignore our conviction and understandings. Frequently, we fall far short of our potential. Just ask a smoker! To actually do "the right thing", we need exceptional general skill, such as discipline, self-organisation, impulse control, the desire for quality or the ability to deal with our own emotions, anxieties and whims. Professionals are renowned in that they train these "psychological muscles".[2]
- The ***practice of standards***: During the course of everyday life, we come across a variety of situations that allow us to practise what we will be faced with in leadership roles. Of course, a seminar can offer such an opportunity. When we look at sports, then we can note that there are very few successful people who have spent as little time in training as executive leaders do. Clearly, a different form of development is more predominant here. Compared to boxers, for example, who go through rigorous training sessions week after week, the world of business leaders seem to have more resemblance with that of street fighters.
- The ***game itself***: "Real life" does seem to have more of a similarity with street fighting. This may well be the reason why there are a multitude of successful

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[2] The importance of this aspect was made evident to me in meeting with **Günter Reichart** (currently board member at EWR AG, Worms). You can find the interview I conducted with him in appendix.

business leaders who have never had the privilege to complete a related preparation. In the business world, we refer to this as being "thrown in at the deep end". Regardless of the duration and professionalism with which an athlete is trained, without competing, he will never be a champion. There seems to be sports, where life itself can offer adequate preparation (e.g. fighting) and others, which require a track of arduous training (e.g. tennis). In principle, we can count leadership to the first group. However, I am convinced that the majority of professional boxers would send most of the street fighters to the boards and the best of each category tends to combine talent and systematic training.

> To get things straight, a leader can and will develop his own ***personal style***, because he is unique, with his very own individual potential in how to fulfil the primal task. Nonetheless, he cannot get away with violating the principal rules of evolutionary leadership! He must meet the expectations of ***his task and his role***!

Since our approach requires an *essential stability* for this role, such should be identifiable—and reasonably independent from the general intellectual, moral and cultural climate. I am always surprised, when I read, over and over again, to what extent leadership has changed—only to be further informed on aspects that seem evident, in an almost predictable way, from an evolutionary leadership perspective, i.e. they are primal.

Many book titles (such as *Rethinking Leadership*, *Leadership in Transition*, etc.) not only add to the confusion of current and future generations of leaders but also, regrettably, are largely responsible for a lack of professional leadership development. For athletes, that would be comparable to a situation where they have just spent the last months focusing on endurance training after years of concentrating on increasing agility and before that centering on the testing for most suitable clothing. All of a sudden, it is brought to their attention that the best athletes in their field take in a lot of protein and 78 % of them are 1.87 m or taller.

What skills should possibly be developed, if, time after time, there is always something new, "the next best thing"? Isn't it almost similar to the software industry: Do I really need this particular software version, knowing that the next update is just around the corner? In respect to the evolutionary leadership approach, my recommendation would be: chose the original!

Only when the discipline and its underlying rules are really clear can a system of training and development be reasonably established. The professional path to true mastery begins with the novice and leads through acquisition and subsequent mastery of standards. Look at the early works of Picasso or Dali—and you will know what I mean. More detailed considerations to the topic of leadership development are found in a later chapter (cf. Chap. 9).

Reference

Malik, F. (2005). *Management: Das A und O des Handwerks* (S. 12). Frankfurt am Main: FAZ-Institute.

The Art of Natural Leadership

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> *There is a way to win the people; win their hearts and you will win the people. There is a way to win their hearts; amass what they want for them; do not impose what they dislike on them. That is all.*
>
> Mencius, Weiser

Professionalism can be considered the overlying quality of contributions made to a community. Its basic principles were well defined long before we differentiated between work and wages, somewhat casually put into a mathematical formula

$$\textbf{Professionalism} = attitude \times \left(\frac{competence}{\text{task}} + education \right) salary$$

Not unlikely that a specific amateur performs better than most professionals in his field, he simply does not get paid for it. This is where it also becomes clear that an amateur, who is dedicated and enthusiastic, is not necessarily a dabbler. What a pity that we have lost sight of the original meaning of this term.

The task itself is a key variable in this formula. To the extent that it is possible—even with the best of attitudes—be professional in one task and a complete dabbler in another, and enjoy the heart and soul of being an amateur in the next.

This brings us back to the core tasks of leadership, as defined by the evolutionary process. Let's dig a little deeper into the phenomena! If you want to join me, just follow step by step. If you are more concerned about quickly increasing your level of leadership performance, choose a different approach.

Each of the following chapters begins with a comment, explaining the precondition, under which you can skip it.

The principle is very simple: should you consider the respective core task as something you have already achieved or something irrelevant to your situation, you should invest your time in the next chapter.

5.1   Personal Standing: Claiming a Position and Gaining Legitimacy

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- You are well accepted and settled in your leadership role
- You have a competitive edge on your employees in essential areas of your responsibility
- You have stable "backing from above"
- Your reputation in the organisation is good and undisputed
- Your are considered a successful "careerists"

Leadership made easy! Do you sense a desire to lead? I'm going to tell you in brief how you will *definitely* be entrusted with a leadership position quickly.

Our evolutionary model of leadership assumes that the differences between the members of a group will determine who is granted the legitimacy to lead. This means it can happen to anyone of us—provided we have membership in a group, in which all other members are less capable of completing the primal task of leadership. This, by the way, answers the fiery debate whether leadership competence is something innate or something learnt: neither–nor.

Leadership is a task! And, seemingly, can initially be fulfilled *by any one of us*. Here is the easiest way:

- Define a ***task*** that cannot be accomplished by one individual alone (e.g. establish a badminton team)—and make sure that you are quite good at it.
- Gather, in some way, other ***people*** around yourself, who share your interest and bring less competence with them (in this case, people who are interested in playing badminton, without much prior experience).

- Refer your conduct to the defined key tasks of ***evolutionary leadership*** from now—after all, you do not just want to have a leadership role briefly, you want to maintain it over a longer period of time.

That's it! Great, isn't it? This principle will always work for everyone! What? I hear you saying that these recommendations are somewhat feeble and not of much use for your working life? Well, maybe there is a truth in that. After all, the choice of badminton in the example was not randomly chosen.

At the workplace, this method will probably not prove to be feasible. After all, you probably do not get to choose which collective task you will be working on. Maybe you should just keep in mind that the method described here will offer anyone the opportunity to at least practice and gain experience in completing the defined key tasks of leadership. Not bad either, right?

> We are prepared to follow someone, if he/she has a clear idea of how to promise us a more successful future. We emulate him and do what he proposes.
> We now have a clear benefit to support this person and are even willing to grant him particular privileges.

▶ African Savannah, 1.7 million years before our time. With eyes that signalled fear, the small clan hid in the shadows of the protruding rocks, distraught, sweating. The Scruffy One is bleeding. Some others are no longer amongst them. Instinctively, they all know that it is not over yet. Instantaneous death is creeping around the corner. They had never seen him so furious during the bright time of the day. Whimpering paralysis!
Half-Ear, one of the youngest hunters in the group, is surveying the surrounding terrain. He has changed, ever since he survived his plunge into the canyon, where he survived on his own for five periods of darkness, rejoining the group some weeks ago. He can do things no one else is capable of.
Everyone observed carefully, as he summoned everyone to heave rocks and large branches onto the small ledge. The Scruffy One was the first to help him. He was the one back in the camp who spent the evening continuously re-enacting the enduring horrors of the collectively hurled rocks and the part that Half-Ear played over and over again. No one really knows whether they will survive, with only 13 members of the group left over—however, they now have, next to the Scruffy One, a new role model.

The group had witnessed how Half-Ear saved them from the four-legged predators and the gruesome death. He solved an existential problem for them! Today we would say: Half-Ear kept calm under extreme pressure and remained fully functional, took on responsibility, demonstrated expertise and proved himself

as a role model. Who would doubt the fact that his social status rose and he was made the leader of the group—at least for comparably threatening situations?

As practitioners these days, we tend to encounter two types of people stepping into leadership positions. On the one side, there are those who have a personal desire for this role. It is often said this group of people make an active *claim to leadership*. From my perspective, it's more likely to be an issue of promoting a career and therefore could be refereed to more precisely as *career* claim! This would correspond roughly to an athlete with a highly competitive mind-set. I have this picture in my mind of a boxer dancing around and hitting punches into the air whilst shouting: "Come on! Here I am, come and get me, I'm ready, waiting for you!" The other type consists of those who fall into a leadership position "out of the blue". Someone with the necessary authority has simply *transferred* the related responsibility to them, or the group simply relates to a particular person, who then becomes the leader. Whether either of these paths correlate stronger with subsequent leadership success has not yet, to my knowledge, been thoroughly researched. Until then, it seems that we will have to live with the prejudice and continue to believe that individuals with a desire for competition and a lust for power are the better business leaders. I can well imagine that they are superior in fulfilling this first key task in leadership. Whether they are the better leaders overall will remain to be seen.

I had promised earlier to give you some recommendations of how to get into a leadership position. So now, all of a sudden, we need to get into some career advice. There are numerous publications available on this topic. You will, however, find that many of the recommendations found are in extreme violation of the evolutionary leadership approach and should therefore be "savoured" with extreme caution. Let us indicate a clear preference for advice that can be genuinely aligned with successful leadership.

5.1.1   Display: Offering Your Own Capabilities Effectively

Let's make no mistake about it: Invisible people tend to be spared from being promoted to leadership positions. You must give the people around you the opportunity to recognise and evaluate your potential personal contribution to success. It's not about the infamous "whisking of hot air", which most functionally skilled people shy away from. It's about not making it unnecessarily difficult for others to give you the recognition you deserve.

Please do not fall into the common trap of accusing—maybe only unconsciously—everyone around you as being ignorant and careless just because they have not taken notice of you. Mother Nature has invested massively more energy to identify free riders in a group than detecting inconspicuous high performers. Understandably! After all, the former bears a far bigger risk of impairing the group!

In order to attract the attention of decision-makers, you should have a personal competitive edge (in something essential), something that can be easily recognised by others. Here, however, we have a problem. People, in general, are becoming more and more competent. 50,000 years ago, getting a leadership position may have simply resulted from being able to predict the weather better than anyone else.

Nowadays, it's far more challenging to get a head start. Most effectively, this can only be done, these days, by identifying something, which allows you to become *specialised*. There are many indications that the entire human development was significantly shaped and driven by the division of labour and specialisation within our communities.

An interesting aspect was raised during a recent discussion in the *Open-Source-Circle: Management*: Is there an evolutionally psychological motivated answer to the question of who ends up being the leader in a group or is prepared to fight for the position—and who does not?

Let's face it, an essential aspect of being motivated to lead lies in the fact that only the position in a leadership role will provide you with opportunity to *make more money and gain in more prestige*. "I'm an administrative clerk" sounds neither particularly sexy, nor does it raise the suspicion of facing a particularly wealthy person. A moral-ethical debate on the reasons why it's always the celebs, no matter what part of society they have sprung up from, that end up getting all "the glory, the gold and the women" would certainly find an interesting audience. But it's fundamentally also very much irrelevant. We can assume very primal patterns to be at work here and they function irrespectively of what opinion we have about them.

In this context, it's not even significant where the own personal motivation to take on a leadership role comes from. If you, however, have committed in doing so, it will not be enough to make a significant and visible contribution to the collective task. In the best case, all team members will be expected to do that.

Of course you can also just wait until someone passes by and has the wonderful idea of offering you leadership responsibilities. However, having a dose of motivation and competitiveness would obviously be considered to be quite helpful in such a situation. My assumption is that our ancestors probably inferred on the later success of a leader, from the energy they demonstrated with and during their "application" as a candidate. Don't we do the same? Take a look at what happened during presidential campaigns!

Nevertheless, it is just as unlikely to become a leader, just because the idea is attractive and it is wished for, as it is becoming an astrophysicist by dreaming and stargazing. Usually, the person, who does the best job, is entrusted with it. And that means the decision is about competition. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be clear, for example, with a large group of performance-oriented, well-educated young people! They frequently respond with an astonishingly offended reaction, after having been told that they are not well prepared *to compete for a leadership position*. Instead of taking this up as caring recommendation, they feel their strengths have been overlooked. Sometimes they can be seen in a defiant attempt to prove that they are very capable of picking up a leadership position somewhere. As we already discussed, it is not even that unlikely for this to happen under certain conditions; however, it does in no way change the stage of personal development they're in.

There are evolutionary psychological arguments that following is established in human mimicry. When babies and children imitate the behaviour of their parents as

role models, then they are being lead. Therefore, leadership—in addition to competence—will always involve an element of showing (up) and being attractive!

Do you lack the courage to take the interpersonal stage? Is the ability to represent not necessarily one of your strengths? Do you tend to cut yourself short? That is perfectly OK! Assuming you do not care for a leadership role. But please, don't be mad at me or with the company you work for if this initial little bit of the first key leadership proves to be a (unsolvable) challenge for you.

5.1.2 Legitimacy: Getting the Benefit of the Doubt

We can safely assume that competence and contribution of each individual member of our moderately sized primal groups were quite transparent. Both free riding and being "invisible" were probably not that easy. In today's large businesses and particularly in virtual organisations, in which we only come together to work and where personal interests are "out of bounds", this can no longer be taken for granted. In our primal communities, experiencing each other was not an option— we were "familiar" with every other individual in the community; we knew and recognised each other. Today, this, in itself, has become a task and involves figuring each other out, step by step, on a daily basis. Once we succeed in the first step (being recognised), we have already accomplished a lot. In this way, all the little TV star and C-list celebrities in our societies are allowed to rise up. But they are also the best examples that, in itself, this is not enough.

Within our societies, we can identify the entire scope, from "the invisible third hand" to the "empty suits". Once the extent of face-to-face interaction has been reduced, the reputation that precedes gains in importance. Therefore, the origin of the development that we are discussing here may just be founded in the size, to which the organisations we operate in have recently grown.[1]

Of course, even our ancestors possessed an individual reputation and were extremely motivated to maintain or expand it. There are few psychological phenomena that emerged in early forms without reason, all of a sudden and unexpected. No one will ever have been thrilled to find a stupid, incompetent and lazy character scrounging in the group, let alone to follow him. The alternative to the *need of recognition*, and being approved of, would have meant losing the benefits of social inclusion, be expelled or killed (having virtually the same implications in those days).

The combination of competence and reputation determines the outcome of the decision, whom the legitimacy to lead is granted.[2] An interesting question: legitimacy from whom? Ever since the primal ages, there have been at least two sources:

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[1] Probably 15,000 years ago.

[2] Even today you can still witness participants performing the art of "letting your competition appear stupid" in every assessment centre, without losing approval from the group. Quite often, this person goes on to win the top prize!

on the one hand, the recognition from the group as a whole (prestige-based) and, on the other hand, the most powerful members of the community (power-based). It was always meticulously observed who was granted the favour—because it was risky to mess with the wrong guys. Many millennia later, these people are accurately described as *minions*. They were "made up" much earlier, because it has always been important to establish a valuable network. What is termed to be a careerist today was probably established from the benefits that you could reap as a group member, by being close to the powerful. It may well be assumed that this has a different origin than the leadership phenomenon.

To avoid misunderstandings, in no way am I taking on a moral position to degrade the value of favouritism. Quite the contrary! It strikes me as something completely natural! Even to the extent that it raises the interesting question whether we should not stick to investigating the phenomenon of favouritism instead of leadership. After all, leadership positions in most of today's organisations today are assigned "top-down".

What is necessary to warrant a decision maker to grant his legitimacy? To answer the question, we need to understand the concerns he has. As a common denominator, he wants power and the capacity to keep the privileges related with it. For this he will need members in the group who, in this order:

1. Are absolutely ***loyal*** (i.e. who adopt his goals as their own, who do not question the hierarchies and who will "throw themselves at the bullet" aimed at the Mighty)
2. Are ***hardworking and helpful*** in contributing to reaching the goal of the work to achieve the objectives of the Mighty
3. Make ***life easier*** for the Mighty (i.e. not be the cause of additional problems, but solve problems or at least keep them away)

Mind you, it may be meaningful and useful to take these recommendations into consideration, to cope with the first key evolutionary task. However, we should not make the mistake to believe that the phenomenon can be reduced to this extent. Maybe you are successful in being appointed to a leadership position "from above" and are given the responsibility for some staff of your own. But just because you now have subordinates, it doesn't necessarily mean you have followers.

Our primal leaders were granted their legitimacy from the community. The ability to do something that grabbed the attention of other members in the group, wanting them to listen, replicate and follow, called for useful strengths and the insistence that things are done your own way (obstinacy). And this is exactly where we suspect the deviation from the requirements to the "number 2"—or numbers 3, 4, 5, etc.—as stubbornness is not very likely to be a preferred characteristic.

If we were to create a similar list in terms of the basic expectations from the group, as we just did for the powerful, what would this look like? First of all, of course, it is clear that we should not have well-structured job profiles in mind here. The leader-follower relationship is not defined by an objective cost-benefit analysis

of collective investments, but a holistically experienced ***archaic feel-good analysis***.[3]

I would imagine the archaic checklist to have looked something like this:

1. ***Will this person ensure that the collective purpose is reached?*** (i.e. can we see hands-on evidence of success?)
2. ***Do we feel safe?*** (i.e. we experience ourselves as part of a community, free from enduring anxieties, with confidence and consistency)
3. ***Do we feel safe and protected?*** (i.e. we experience ourselves as part of a joyous community with emotional warmth)

Let's carefully consider that the person who scores highest on this specification list would be granted the legitimacy of the group to be the leader. As you may have already compared, the two checklists are not necessarily contradictory. It depends a great deal on whether "number 1" conforms to the criteria of the archaic feel-good analysis—or not! Researchers should not be surprised to discover that dedication to a leader is not motivated rationally by input-output analysis but "quite to the contrary, follows prevailing moods and sentiments" (Weibler 2001).

Our ancestors' decision for or against a leader has always been ***emotional***. Existing circumstances assured that the leader "is one of us". Today we would say: "He became one of us!" Independent of these conclusions, another question is well worth asking: Why should anyone follow me?

By this stage, we can assume to have arrived at the point where the (leadership) offer made to the group was accepted. Just in case we had specialised in this first key task and thereby defined ourselves as "careerist", this would be an excellent time to start looking around for the next leadership position. In any other case, we must, from now on, start meeting the expectations of the group in respect to the remaining key evolutionary tasks of leadership.

Job hopping was not fashionable some millions years ago. Growing levels of dissatisfaction amongst our ancestors (in terms of the ***archaic feel-good analysis***) would have resulted in them teaming up to do something about it. Presumably the exile or death of the great leader would have been the result; disempowerment alone would have been too risky, as dominant people simply do not "go back into the ranks" without some reluctance. *Kipnis et al.* (1984) showed that, even today, people in similar situations form coalitions. Without going for the final drastic steps, we have come to expect of our ancestors that they will try to influence their superiors in their interest. This "getting together" seems to be a typical pattern that systematically occurs with discomforted followers. *Wunderer* (2003) also describes how successful collaboration "leading from below" results in reciprocal consensus

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[3] Research shows that the individual's evaluation of uncertainty contributes to the willingness of submitting to a leader, such as the call for a "strong hand". I am convinced that this only applies if the leader himself is not perceived to be the cause of discomfort. There are indications that our ancestors were not very friendly in dealing with failed leaders.

through mutual consultation: An allegiance is established in opposition to the leader and forces join in a common destiny.

> In summary, **primal revolutions** can be assumed to have happened. A group has something which could best be described as a "social radar and immune system" and coordinates its actions directed to the leader.

What can we infer from the evolutionary leadership approach to avoid this fate? The question is how can you, as a leader, make sure that you do not lose your legitimacy, as soon as it has been granted?

5.1.3 Initiation: Distinctly Taking Up the Leadership Role

I can fully understand that junior leaders are initially troubled and worried about not being able to live up to the trust installed on them. Even though they now have the authority, they are scared about not being able to fully convince the group to follow them. They have an immediate feeling that their newly acquired power entirely on its own may not guarantee them being followed.

And yet, it is quite simple in principle: Dear executives, use the description of the key tasks of evolutionary leadership described in this book as your checklist—and you will almost certainly be able to convert the employees assigned to you into avid followers. But let's stay with our established approach to proceed in step by step.

In the most unfortunate circumstance—and at the same time the most likely—the procedure here is to continue doing what was done before. Why is this so likely? Firstly, because you're good at it, secondly, because it is the reason that you were rewarded with the new role in the first place. So what can be wrong with that? Nothing! But you have a *new* function! The fact that you were professional in your previous function is no longer all that relevant.

Surely you are already familiar with the fact that it is often good **specialist performance** which is considered as a valid indicator for an effective leadership performance later on. The best specialist is made the boss. Why has this, since many years, critically acknowledged practice proved to be so difficult to eradicate? Well, because such an assessment does initially make quite a lot of sense! The candidate has demonstrated confidence and energy. As we have indicated ourselves, he conforms to the requirement of bringing together standing and competence! We grant him legitimacy for a new leadership position—and often our assessment will be wrong. However, often also means not always!

I know of many specialists who I could easily imagine to be a successful leader of a specific group. We must be careful at this point not to join in the general bickering; such a decision always brings with it the effect of having "one less of a

good specialist less and one more of a poor leader". And certainly we must not make the mistake of falling for candidates who are simply trying to cover up the fact that they have no idea of the issues underlying the department they would like to lead. Of course it is neither enough to have just studied business administration (or any other "management" degree) nor, for that matter, to master the keyboards of psychological and communication methods. The expectation that we have in our leader is that he makes sure we are successful. To be able to do this, he must obviously have *some expertise on subject matter*.

Leaders must also be ***good specialists***—only that their subject of specialisation in this new role has changed (into something new). The tiresome debate about the amount of specialist skills a candidate needs compared to the amount of leadership skills actually misses the point!

Frequently, this is the point where voices can be heard demanding the ***general all-rounder***. It is called to our attention that we need more of this type. This is ill advice, especially for younger people, who are misguided into holding completely the wrong expectations. For them, the idea is quite attractive, in a stimulating sort of way, to be able to deal with all sorts of different things and run into the danger of becoming "nerds", variety instead of thoroughness, amusement as opposed to hard work, outlines contrary to detail and tweets rather than documents. This is not the way for anyone to reach the level of mastery in any field. Success requires real understanding, and that comes neither from "topical tourism" nor from superficiality. If success were easy and convenient to come by, everyone would be successful!

It is important to keep in mind that leadership is fundamentally a competitive issue. Only accumulated wealth can provide a degree of competition advantage. Whilst the farmer would not usually be in competition with the labourers regarding the leadership of the farm, the hunter in command must continually demonstrate his superiority. We take notice of people, who have special capabilities, who are better in something than others. It's nice when someone knows the rules and basic techniques of many different types of sports. Maybe it enabled him many entertaining afternoons or even the job of a sports teacher. The probability, however, that he has a leading role in one of those sports is not that high.

In summary, we can get into a leadership position in both ways, either by being "favoured by someone" or by having "demonstrated competence". Whether we are successful in the new position is decided from now on!

► ***Tip:*** Interrupt your habits and routines after having taken on a new leadership role. Take some time to think about the new requirements and reflect on your situation and the expectations held towards you. Clearly demonstrate early on that you have understood this and are committed to measuring up.

Therefore: Invest significant time and commitment to the leadership function.

What then is this ***leadership function in the start-up phase***? It consists of securing the benefit of the doubt for the time period necessary for success to prove you right! It's not difficult to imagine that this can only be limited period of time. The shorter, the better for you and your team. The clock is ticking! In due time, the promising new leader will turn out to be a swindler.

Let's clarify which ***promises every leader*** has always given to his group of followers:

• *The future promise:*
   With me, the group will venture into a promising future!
• *The impact promise:*
   I know how to ensure our collective success!
• *The relational promise:*
   I am trustworthy, fair and I am part of the team!

You can blindly assume that the group will hold you up on these promises, regardless of whether you actually stated them or not.[4] If our theory is correct, then they are innate!

Your personal responses to the relevant questions associated with these primal promises are, however, highly individual: What future offer do you have for the group? What exactly are your intentions and how do you intend to get there collectively? What can anybody expect from someone like you and what set of rules are you going to define? Now what?

► ***Tip***: Instead of going back to business as usual after taking on the leadership role, you should develop some initial answers to these questions and present them to your staff.

Therefore: Have an "inaugural address" prepared. Present it and make sure to have, in the new role, an individual talk with each member of your group.

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[4] A relentlessly unhappy promise would be contained in the message: "I will bring you success!" The leader's promise should always follow the logic: "If all of us implement my model of success collectively, we will all succeed!"

Imagine the first step to be like the scene in a black-and-white western movie, where the hero makes a "sketch in the sand" around the campfire on barren ground. Here he described his plan to the company of men quickly and highly comprehensible how the enemy can be defeated. Glances are exchanged, one or another question is answered, and, conclusively, everyone nods in a silence. They come apart and prepare to fight.

Do you have such a *sketch in the sand*? Now is the time!

It would certainly be tragic if the group began to wonder and ask themselves what difference it would actually make in light of the collaborative goal for you to be there at all. In this case, you would not have completed this first key successfully.

> ▶ **Tip**: Consider what you can contribute to the collective success of the group in your new role, something that no one else can do. At the same time, check where the group has weaknesses and focus to compensate for these.

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Therefore: Make a considerable difference.

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If you want to reverberate on this first key task of leadership, then why not go ahead and simply read our bygone episode from the life of Half-Ear a second time. Feel for yourself the claim he made, after walking away from the group and encouraging them to follow him. Let the expectations that he raised with the group go through your mind and the hope he installed in them that his strategy would work as they followed. Only in retrospect did the benefit of the doubt turn out to be justified. Can you be equally convincing in your team, even without it actually being a matter of life and death?

All persuasion and legitimacy will have been worthless if you despair in answering the question of how in the world you are going to ensure that the group will be successful. Even your *sketch in the sand* must be followed quite soon with a carefully crafted model of success. And this brings us to the second key task of evolutionary leadership. A real challenge: careerists fail at it, because they do not know the subject matter! The infamous "old hands" fail at it because they do not know how to carry forward their experience!

5.2   Model of Success: Knowing How to Ensure Collective Achievement

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- You work in a traditional field in which processes and methods are subject to little change
- You have clear instructions that clearly convey what your personal contribution is expected to be
- You are experienced and your fundamental setting is changing slowly
- Your area of responsibility has a foreseeable future
- You have long proven yourself as "analytical and entrepreneurially minded"

Every person—probably every living being—has a model of success. It simply comes from processing individual failures and achievements. It is effective from early childhood. As a rule, animals tend to repeat what works well; what isn't successful no longer appears as frequently from now on. Understandably, evolution rewarded this method. After all, mistakes were penalised quite drastically in the early phase of our existence! At the same time, few people (we seem to be the only living beings) take time to muse or feel obliged to invest in clarifying their model of success. Apparently, Mother Nature did not think this was necessary. Indeed, we are not very good at analytically differentiating our unconscious behavioural patterns and strategies, our motives and complex perceptions. What should be the point? Everything is working out just fine![5]

Our brain uses our perception, which allows us to become aware of objects and external events, to establish a ***model of the word around us*** and allow us to make predictions about the future. The oldest and most frequently used predictions form, so as to speak, our knowledge base, which is not that readily changeable. Therefore, *every* person acts according to a personal, rather stable, theory of achievement. The relationship between those ***images that we carry in our minds*** and the real world establishes a more or less far-reaching analogy. Our experience can emerge, on one hand, in the form of our intuitions, and on the other hand, once made available to our consciousness, analyses and defined further into more complex and differentiated constructs.

Now transfer this image to a whole group! Everyone in the group has their own experiences of success and failure. Group members adapt to each other; they establish customs, traditions and unwritten laws.

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[5] I suppose this is probably one of the reasons why this 2nd key task of leadership tends to be such a challenge for many managers.

> The principles are similar to such an extent that I believe the following distinction makes sense:
>
> - *Individual model of success:* The current final result of all of our personal experiences in regard to being successful!
> - *Collective model of success:* The "habits, rules and strategies" with which a group acts to realise their goals.

▶ The skull had already been cracked for some time—and still Urg continues to ram the head of the former leader bloodthirstily again against the rock. No one dares to look up. Everyone fears him and avoids his company. There is always the likelihood that he breaks out in unpredictable assaults. Urg senses the fear surrounding him and the suppressed aggression. Both excite and make him suspicious. Always busy terrorising the male members of the group, he is aware of the females only when he wants to satisfy his sexually excitement. The stable boost of testosterone, adrenaline and endorphins give him the feeling of invincibility. When he is hungry, he takes what is available. When he has to wait, Urg starts to rage like a lunatic and everyone around tries hard to soothe his temper. He felt terrific.

Weeks later, the whole group is exhausted. No one knows how to trail the prey as well as the previous, now-dead leader. In constant fear of Urg, the group forgets what they used to be capable and, in addition, it drains them from all energy. He never allows anyone to distance themselves from the rest of the group, just to keep an eye on things. Foraging for food is almost impossible and everyone is hungry. Besides, the days and nights are getting colder.

One morning the horde continues south, whilst Urg remains lying in a pool of blood, surrounded by smaller rocks and some heavy branches. Several males and females have severe injuries, but they follow Krumm, the eldest of the group, quietly and with a confidence that they have not felt for weeks. He is the only one who has previously completed the journey south into the warmer regions successfully. He carries in his head clear images of those places, where foraging could be considered promising and also where danger can be expected to lurk. He provides the group with peace and security. Even under the former leader, he was the one most capable of resolving conflicts most serenely. He was never exposed to the attacks of Urg, whose body is already being picked by scavengers. He was too weak and inconspicuous to be considered a threat. But Krumm's experience appeared to be more valuable for the group—and they did what was necessary.

Quite obviously, Urg's individual model of success had absolutely nothing to do with the group's collective model of success. A number of anthropologists assume

that the "invention" of stoning, many thousands of years ago, considerably shifted the rules defining the game of power. Now, numerous weak could actually get together against one who was strong. And, what is much more significant, without the need of physical conflicts. Interestingly enough, we have effectively expanded our repertoire here to become even more effective (e.g. gossip, intrigues, defamation, extortion, etc.), but that's another topic.

We expect a leader to be able to explain the reasons, when success doesn't happen. In order to so, he requires a suitable understanding of the group's *relevant tasks, problems and solution*. In the simplest of case, this is a question of experience and skill, in the most difficult, a reinvention of the future!

> If you want to complete your leadership role effectively, you must have a clear idea of how the group will be successful. At this point, it is a question of the ability **to theoretically and conceptually** conceive success.
> If you do not accomplish this leadership task, there are only two options: Someone more competent takes your leadership position—or the group will perish!

A fascinating question: How is success created? In many cases, "Mother Nature" has made sure that our cerebral brain is not necessary to be successful. We don't need to know anything about biology to reproduce, nothing about nutritional physiology to eat properly, nothing about sociology to be happy in a family or a group and nothing about our hormones to enjoy the sun. We do not require knowledge of zoology to drink cow's milk and of neurophysiology to do something good for ourselves "hard times". However, there are nonetheless those areas where behavioural flexibility and learning are essential. And this is where we enter the world of strategies and models of success, the world of experience and understanding.

Will we ever be able to understand our world? In principle, the answer is yes! Our knowledge structures fit into this world because they evolved during the course of our evolution and manifested themselves in adaptation to the real environment. Our understanding is, first and foremost, the result of our **confrontation with the environment**, through our actions. This is how we obtain **proficiency**!

Merely theoretical knowledge or abstract plans, without applied action, are simply intellectual exercises, by which we conjure a world in our head that does not exist. This, in particular, should be given more attention in the training of leaders (and, e.g., also controllers). We don't need the know-it-all, rather the connoisseur! A wine connoisseur is something completely different than, say, a scientist who specialises in wine. I would put my stake on the idea that we are actually weakening our leadership by the numerous training systems. Inevitably, methods are taught that are supposed to work regardless of context and the specific rules of a scene: The "standard repertoire of the manager!" In line with the familiar figure of speech "whose only tool is a hammer, everything will look like a nail", these overeducated and under-experienced managers then implement the same

standard solutions. As they can demonstrate a visible effect, they feel confirmed in themselves and their model of success.

> ▶ Leaders must gain in personal **_experience_** and get **_in touch with the real world_**. Figures, tables and study programmes and charts are not an effective substitute for active confrontation with the performance-relevant field.

The primal task of leadership required something commonly referred to as **_thinking outside the box_**. A model of success for the big picture requires focusing beyond details. The leadership role is about more than simply knowing what your specific domain is about. If one of our ancestors had been brilliant builder of spears, with skills astonishingly mysterious to the rest of the group, he would have no doubt have had much prestige, based on his contribution to everyone's survival. However, nobody would have followed him into the wilderness, if someone else had more experience in hunting or travelling. A good spear is only one small component. Maybe a leadership role would have been possible in a "spear manufacturing company", after all he knew how to manufacture effective weapons.

The true ability in regard to the second key task of natural leadership probably lies, despite daily increasing complexity and dynamics, in:

- Identifying the essential and providing them with clear priorities
- Making clear to yourself that your own view on things will not be enough
- Making at least a credible bet on the future if you don't seem to be capable of predicting for it

5.2.1 Essentiality: Understanding the Formula for Success in Its Entirety

Essential means constituting or being part of the essence of something. Sounds obvious, but it is extremely difficult! For what is the essence of something? Maybe you have experienced the arguments as they flare up, when you are trying to get a group to agree on the required action for a collectively successful future? The essence is amazingly often disguised as "self-evident" and hidden in unremarkable dullness. It needs to be worked out painstakingly—and in the end, it frustratingly appears as something obvious and trivial.

> ▶ You might not believe how much thought, trial and error, discussion, revision and research and how much struggling and probing for the essence of leadership phenomenon was necessary to put this together. But when you've finished reading it—at least if I have done somewhat of a good job—many aspects and statements will sound obvious. I myself find it increasingly difficult to take a different attitude to leadership, as everything appears, to me, to allow to be integrated into the big picture of the evolutionary psychological approach.

At the core, we all are creatures of experience. For our ancestors, this form of intuitively acquiring knowledge about their habitat was the only possible way. Language, writing and analytical methodology were added gradually to instinct and intuition, pushing forward into the direction of science.

Each of these different approaches to understanding the world carries its own risks: Experience and habits can become obstinate, intuition is often no more than despotism and ignorance, analyses too often produce data cemeteries, and growing complexity often ends in paralysis. We do not need more *data*, rather a better *understanding*. To remain capable in making decisions and taking action, within the complexity that life offers, we must maintain the ability to capture the ***essence of a matter***. Many managers accumulate more and more information, in a desperate attempt to get their world under control, an almost absurd strategy. Sometimes the truly crucial message is lost in the "noise" which surrounds it. Leaders especially need to concentrate on *patterns* rather than on data and facts. They need to be able to get the *big picture*! In the leadership practice, four things are necessary for pattern recognition:

- *Reduction* of the data to the key essential components
- Connection of these components into *network*
- *Intuitive filling of the gaps*
- Systematic translation of intuition into *insight*

As long as we do not see the patterns, it is of little use to examine the individual parts with more detail and accuracy. We are standing at the same point, which led us to want to understand the phenomenon of leadership in our approach rather than simply amassing more ideas on the huge head of existing deliberations. Models of success cannot be deducted from giant databases, invented or loosely established! One cannot proceed with the attitude of "well then, let's consider how we want to be successful". This is where the mind-set of numerous large strategic consultancies is crucially mistaken. Models of success emerge from reality, rather than being discussed and decided upon in democratic creative processes. This so-called reality is, on the other hand, of course exactly the problem. After all, there are respectable scientists, who claim that there are an infinite number of realities and not a single one. But let's not get confused in metaphysical thoughts. No follower is seriously concerned about having these types of questions answered.

We are not incapable of leading successful lives in complex environments! The proof has already been provided—after all we are still there. More than 1.5 million years ago, our ancestors had already routinely solved complex natural difficulties (e.g. object recognition), many of which can still not be reconstructed in the artificial intelligence models of today. Complexity is nothing new! The question for the formula for success at this point: "How much can I omit, without losing the essence?"

Research on managers by the American psychologist Carol Moog registered a deep-rooted fear of simplification with them, afraid of omitting something, afraid of leaving something out. They always want to consider all possible options, so as not leaving any room for criticism from third parties. This is where I believe there is evidence to be found that many managers are not in a position to make assumptions about which information is decisive. However, this is a necessary function to be able to take care of the essential.

What exactly is required to get this key task of evolutionary leadership done? Back to good old Krumm, who led the group thousands of years into the warmer south after Urg had "abdicated". He knew his habitat and knew what was needed to survive. Can you claim for yourself to be able to do that?

Of course I cannot tell you anything now—by remote diagnosis, as it were blindfolded—about your *mission-critical environment* (clients, industries, markets, etc.). This is very specific! With which we have also identified one of the reasons why neither simply transferring functional strategies nor rashly assigning successful managers to a new position in an unfamiliar industry seems to be very effective ideas. Such steps need to be considered very carefully. We need managers who are experienced in their *surroundings* and specialised professionals for specific problems. *In no case whatsoever* do we need managers and consultants claiming to have universally valid solutions.

In this context, I would like to warn about an equally obvious and curiously ignored further danger: the danger of misconstruing the relevant environment! You don't think this very likely to happen? Then let us quickly have a look at the world of stock markets and the publicly traded stock corporations. These types of companies have a built-in difficulty of making the collective purpose "coming together to collectively guarantee survival" the centre of their activity. Participants quickly identify the objectives of top management as something quite different: "coming together to generate as much profit as possible for the investors".

Consequently, board members and executives of public companies have a fundamentally more difficult management task than the management of other forms of companies.

The often, far more critical problem lies, as already indicated, in the misjudgement of the relevant environment: the core markets for the businesses are clearly not represented in shareholders and analysts. Nevertheless, for example, many **strategic consultancies** are able to position themselves with a *trick*, focusing on the stock market as the core relevant market environment and thereby defining themselves as specialists in equity shareholder value concepts.

Of course they have to recommend measures that the capital markets will respond favourably to. Unfortunately, this is usually shockingly irrelevant to what the customers from the respective companies would react positively to. Overall, this reflects a very unfortunate development.

In summary, it is of course central for leaders to align their model of success to those aspects that are relevant for the survival within the respective environment (customers, market, etc.). Basically you would have to ask: to what else?

After working for over 20 years as a consultant myself, I am still surprised that many companies, when faced with the rather straightforward questions ("Why have we endured until now? Why have we been successful?"), can rarely produce a clearly differentiated and analytically viable response. Moreover, there tend to be, in one and the same company, numerous very different reactions. I believe, having answers to these questions is absolutely essential—especially in times where change, by definition, seems to be considered as something positive. Whenever it is not entirely clear how the existence of a company is explained, it is very likely to accidently start turning the wrong **existential knobs**.

Let us briefly abridge: In order to figure out a transferable model of success from the corporate best practice, we need relevant know-how about:

1. The environment in which we are trying to survive, i.e. the **habitat** (where and with whom are we living?)
2. The **model of success** so far (How come we survived?)

In these matters, experienced industry executives tend to have the clearer advantages—as long as they are able to compensate for the side effects of their experiences: they tend to ignore change more easily and use their knowledge more intuitively, rather than explicitly. Their inexperienced and, therefore, advantageously often unbiased younger colleagues, however, lack practice. Wise leaders, from both of these categories, will, therefore, never develop a model of success without referring to that of the group. Developing really good models of success requires communicative competences and the credibility to create "meaning".

There is another reason why it's not such a good idea to venture out on your own on the task of leadership. Do you remember our distinction between (a) individual and (b) collective model of success? Even though our own personal success theories define our individual types of success, on the one hand, they also tend to keep us from, on the other hand, exploring other forms of success. We're almost trapped in our own style of success! Urg can bear witness of the risks involved here!

5.2.2 Communality: An Expanded Perspective

Managers need to be constantly aware that it's difficult for them to refute or improve on their own model of success. Firstly, hardly anyone really tells them the truth; secondly, they are far away from direct market or customer feedback. In addition, our individual development encourages *biases*. We often only see those things that confirm our own view and live, in the truest sense of the word, in *our own world*. It can, therefore, be no surprise that this aspect bears considerable risks for those in leadership positions! Do we also have antidotes for this situation?

- Maintain and use additional, unofficial *sources of information*. Especially because leaders tend to have access to a large network, they should appreciate this natural advantage in obtaining (soft) information. Build on this advantage!
- Find ways and means to *systematically improve on your own model of success*. The first necessary step to take requires retrieving your own model of success from the depths of your autopilot and *bringing it to your consciousness*.
- Make sure to have critical and competent *partners for reflection*.
- *Integrate* evidence of additional performance-related aspects in your model, rather than arguing them away, when they compete with your point of view. Be as smart as you can!
- Take facts that do not match your model of success very seriously! They are often an indication that you have *not understood something essential*.

It is important to understand that improving the quality of your individual model of success simply requires the inclusion of others. However, we have not even touched on the fundamental problem as yet: It's all about clearly being able to describe the specifics of the *collective* model of success, not about optimising your individual one.

> ▶ You may be an impressive left wing on your football team. And surely you also have a clear idea of how the others should play, so that you will be able to shine in glory. But will that be enough to win against the other team?

Leaders need to have the capacity to work out a model of success for the entire group, in addition to their previously developed, very own model. In terms of role model function, authenticity and credibility, it is important that these two models do not stand in conflict to another. For example, if your personal success was defined in the past by your capacity to beat the competition, it could now, in your leadership function, turn out to become an obstacle. There are leaders who spend more energy in constant competition with their staff, rather than using this energy to fulfil the collective purpose.

In this respect, linking individual past experience with the model for the collective success is essentially the *integrating function* a leader has to perform. In order to do this quickly, systematically and professionally, he must retrieve (a) his own and (b) the demonstrated success model of the group from the autopilot and, in best case analytically extract them. I have seen many executives fail in both tasks. They will then be replying on a long trail of trial and error—if they are given the necessary time.

In addition, people are ***not machines*** and have the need to feel that they are not treated as such. Group members, who are experts in their filed, may well provide significant improvements to the collective model of success.

▶ Therefore, the situational approach to leadership derives from evaluating the group member's maturity, whether he should receive instructions (simple radical enforcement of the model of success), whether the procedures should be explained (explaining the model of success), whether he should be actively involved (including the member's expertise in the collective model) or whether the task should be delegated to him completely (relying entirely on the member's own model of success).

Can a leader afford to abandon his "model of success monopoly?" Doesn't he need to be the one giving the instructions to everyone else? What do you think? We have already noted that the phenomenon of leadership requires the leader to have an edge over others and allows others to be aware of this. If someone else makes better proposals, would you then not lose your legitimacy? I am convinced that leaders do not have to retain a model of success monopoly, but they need the model of ***success sovereignty***, i.e. in case of doubt, they have the last word in the matter.

The basic model ("sketch in the sand"), with which the leader has originally obtained his legitimacy, must be able to integrate the key elements of success from the individual models of each member in the group.

In true life, so to speak, the required steps of integration usually happen in a completely unsystematic and unprofessional fashion. From my experience, this leadership task is ***criminally neglected***, let alone recognised in the first place.

All the more, if the time invested by organisations in developing a common understanding of the procedures is really this limited, then the task discussed here can be assumed to be treated with utmost negligence. I am absolutely convinced that this circumstance is one of the main reasons for the problem, attributed to the lack of staff motivation. Whereas the real challenges for a leader only show up when the group members' model of success cannot be integrated into the big picture. At this point, collective top performance by the group is no longer warranted and necessary conflicts need to be faced head-on! And, here as well, the leader needs the success model sovereignty! If the basic model is questioned, the person who is offering it will be also be cast in doubt.

▶ ***Tip***: Make sure to differentiate between employees who want to contribute with their own expertise to improve the collective model of success and those who are offering an alternative to be able to compete with you. ***Therefore: Allow the entire team to join in process of developing the collective model of success and remain sensitive to any fundamental challenges of your legitimacy!***

Ultimately, it will boil down to the fact that different wagers on success (and wagers on the future) are in circulation! We are moving in a world of probabilities!

Our primal ancestors had to decide: Is the way south an alternative to likely starvation? Is it better to wait for the spring and the great herds—and to calculate a couple of mortalities into the equation? Should we attack the other group hiding in the big cave, to steal food, weapons and women?

Are these types of decisions really that different from the ones we face today? Absolutely not! There are different answers to any of the questions, because no one can have absolute certainty.

5.2.3   Strategy: Placing a Promising Bet on the Future

Nature offers an immense wealth of options to cope with life. There is no simple "winning strategy". Every organism is required to develop its own strategy for survival—adapted to its possibilities and to its habitat. In principle, it is possible (a) to compete for habitats or (b) to conquer your own, free of competition. Whilst most animals do not have much choice in terms of their model of success, the situation is somewhat different with us humans.

There seem to be, just to make a point in case, a whole range of research studies suggesting that the range of differentiating factors of success, in various industries, is far smaller than the scope of those between the best and the worst companies within an industry. In our wording, this would indicate that the model of success is of greater importance than the choice of environment. *Coureil* (1999) points out that it is possible to considerably increase the value of a business in most industries. This implies that it is just as easy to destroy value in a comparatively straightforward industry. We have already discussed the fact that for the larger number of industries, the model of success is more a question of ***patterns, dynamics and deeper understanding*** than an issue of amounting data and in-depth analysing. We can get support at this point, from the experienced practitioner *Jack Welch* (Welch and Welch 2005): "Forget the arduous, intellectualized number crunching and data grinding … Forget the scenario planning, year-long studies, and a hundred plus pages reports. In real life, strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like hell". For him, ultimately, it is only about three things:

- Do you have a clever, realistic and relatively quick way to gain a sustainable competitive advantage?
- Do you have the right people entrusted with the right tasks to implement the business idea?
- Are you improving in practice?

Interestingly enough, you will find these questions in three of our seven key tasks of natural leadership (model of success clarity, performance community, implementation).

In review, the second key task of natural leadership is highly challenging, because it takes place in an area for which Mother Nature has only given us the ability to learn and reflect. But precisely because of these properties, we are now one of the most flexible and viable of creatures under a variety of conditions. When leaders offer their potential followers their model of success, they also indicate their strategic concepts.

In real life, there is no "canned solution" for this task. Management schools, in particular, like to offer this and it is spread virally by "replication".

The tagline on the packaging of the can clearly reads: "What you can do without paying attention to context and references, if you are not capable of getting to grips with your model of success and your industry!"

When you open the can, the intensive smell will remind you, amongst other things, of cost reduction programmes, intensifying sales channels, lean management, marketing budgets, quality management and business process optimisation.

But what is there left to do once all managers have opened up the same can, warmed up and eaten the same preserves?

Chan Kim and Mauborgne (2005) take an even more radical step when they write: "The only way to beat the competition, is to stop trying". They point out what history has taught us: We have a tremendous underestimated capacity available to create new jobs and transform old industries. They examined over 150 strategic moves that were made from 1880 to 2000 in more than 30 industries and found neither a company nor an industry constantly outperforming another. Success, however, was found whenever strategies were systematically focused on avoiding the competition by opening up new, previously uncontested markets.

Every good strategy, in their view, (a) focuses on the big picture, (b) reaches beyond existing demand and (c) targets the audience quickly and with immediate understanding ("convincing slogan"). With this last insight to guide us, the authors lead us to, from our "drawing in the sand", our next key task.

5.3   Shared Reality: Ensuring Collective Action

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- As a team, you are fundamentally blindly attuned to each other
- The pictures in the mind of all participants are up to date
- You have regular team meetings, which cover aspects of practical collaboration
- You don't have any issues to evangelise on what is truly essential, over and over again
- You have a reputation as "sales-driven facilitator"

What good is it for one person to know the "formula for success"—without telling anyone else about it? Perhaps such an approach provides the basis for individual success: It effectively constitutes a monopoly. This is, however, only valuable if you do not need anyone else—in other words, the task does not require leadership. A monopoly on lighting fire was undoubtedly an impressive thing, many millennia ago, giving you recognition and power. A monopoly on how to hunt would have had a far smaller allure. If, in this case, you keep the formula secret to yourself, it's worthless. At the same time, it represents a model of success for a large collective task and will bare with it the foundation for the assumption for a leadership position.

Here, I would like to offer the following hypothesis: if personal success of an individual is established by *building a (model of success) monopoly,* he is less likely to be a good leader. This assumption is based on the fact that we are not very good at changing our proven individual models of success. As we have seen, I can very well position myself individually, with secrecy on my model of success. However, as soon as I take this strategy into a leadership function, it will no doubt immediately represent a problem.

In those situations, where it comes down to leadership, you need to *offer your personal model of success*. To keep it a secret makes no sense whatsoever, since leaders compete on models of success.

Furthermore, this strategy will undoubtedly turn out to threaten the collective success of the group!

▶ Let's for a moment visualise a young, human-like creature, some 1.5 million years ago, just as he is wildly chasing after a small mammal, together with other members of his tribe. His blood is full of adrenaline and his entire awareness is highly focused, fixated on the prey. No thoughts can distract him; likely pain is suppressed by endogenous hormones. A state, some athletes at peak performance may be familiar with in our culture. The group falls back into light trotting, gradually assembling; the hunt has failed, the animal escaped. Scenes of the hunt are mingling through the minds, the pulse drops, our boy is gradually becoming aware of what just happened around him. He is very much hungry. No unusual state for him. The group had made too much noise, startling up the animal far too soon, giving it an unrecoverable head start. Everyone is starving, now so weak that roots, leaves, maggots and carrion from the last days are barely sufficient for survival. None is left in a position for another fast chase. Suddenly, between the images of hunting in his mind, a scene crops up, one that did not actually take place. He sees himself and some women of the tribe boisterously running through the tall grass, scaring up animals, which flee early and calmly—right into the spears of the hunters, who were right there waiting for them, an arousing image. The boy rushes to the others, his mouth watering. He frantically gesticulates, running around wildly, trying to express the scene, pulls on someone arms, pushes another to stand in a particular spot. Five months later, he is the third member of the tribe to die of starvation. No one really understood what he tried to explain, when he attempted to illustrate the basic principles of driving game. The two exceptions, two intelligent, but very cautious individuals never joined in.

2,000 km further east, a young woman in another group was successful with a very similar idea. She has since gained a high reputation in her tribe, a successful hunter as a mate and she is pregnant. From each hunt, which is now far more successful thanks to her ideas, others bring the best pieces of meat to her camp and are proud for her to accept them. The shaman has painted a hunting scene in colour on the wall of the cave into which he had mixed some of her blood. When decisions are made in the group, almost everyone has her in the corner of their eyes, eager to copy her reaction. Everyone seems to have forgotten what hunger used to be about.

As a group, we are only successful if we have a common understanding of what leads to success and what each individual needs to do in this context. Then our actions are concerted, friction is minimised, and disappointments less likely. As a goal-orientated group, we need to *share mental images* that give us direction and reassurance for our actions.

5.3.1 Orientation: Clarifying the Irrevocable Core to the Model of Success

Assuming you have solved the second core task of natural leadership, you now know for yourself what is essential for the team to be successful. You know which individual sloppiness can be ignored and when not to leave any margin for personal scope. Without having this preliminary task completed, you would certainly be expected to start struggling at this point: you need to transfer the model of success—from your head into all others!

Our ancestors, of course, were not able to supply the group with a conscious and sophisticated model of success. They simply set an example and allowed others to understand what was required, allowing them to sense the impact this had on them and were imitated. This will work until today! We then say that a leader must be a *role model*. Being able to transfer the model of success in this way, however, requires at least two things that are not always necessarily given in today's leadership situations:

- A *shared daily routine* with your staff so that they can experience, first-hand, what you are doing.
- *Time* because behaviour only takes shape in other peoples' mind during the course of a certain period, requiring to understand the patterns that the actions are based on.

Whenever these are not given, we need alternatives. This is where a different method of transfer has grown in importance: *language*! No leader will be able to avoid communication to become an essential competence for him. This fact is probably one reason why many leadership trainings are, in the end, not much more than communication seminars. Another reason being that the phenomenon of leadership is still not very well understood.

> The term *communication* represents the phenomenon of "having an impact on others". Consequently, it has a great deal of importance for every leader; however, it does not represent any characteristic of the leadership phenomenon.

The extent to which someone communicates successfully can be measured by the extent that the intended impact is actually achieved.

In practice, a particular form of transfer prevails: intellectual and dominant! There is arguing, logically reasoning, negotiating and, if in doubt, coercing. This is no coincidence! The path to leadership frequently takes a course, which requires and promotes analytical-intellectual and diplomatic-assertive skills. As leaders themselves (must) have spent many years translating the world they live in, into a rational language, leaders are easily deranged: They consider the world—and the people in it—as rational! As a rule, this is a serious mistake!

Many managers try to convince their staff *logically* of objective goals and change requirements, decisions, etc. Sometimes they succeed, most often not! These managers have difficulty in dealing with *emotional individuals* and—just between you and me—consider that to be *their* deficit. However, the problem lies elsewhere.

> It is not first and foremost the question whether we are **rational or emotional**! We all experience, are more or less good at reflecting on issues and can distance ourselves, more or less, from our impulsive behaviours! The basis is always our holistic experience of a situation. That is initially our truth, or rather, our reality, and then we react!

When managers spend months communicating the need for change and the measures planned, they are doing everything, from their point of view, to ensure a successful implementation. Nevertheless, how often does one hear about employees who consider themselves well informed? Few and far between! As soon as leaders now try to provide evidence that this is not the case, they can only lose. It's not about the absolute truth, it's only ever about our experiences, our individual reality. That is always true. Whenever I am not having the impact that I was aiming for, I must start doing something differently.

Successful communication involves **creating a shared experience**! This has nothing predominantly to do with selling substantive facts, but it requires dealing with the (inner) world of those involved: I am, first of all, an *experience* for them and then a *facilitator for reflection* on their experience. One principle of communication being that it is a process.

Evolutionary psychology assumes that we, as human beings, are fundamentally better addressed **visually and emotionally rather than analytically and formal**, since we have been thinking with emotional-visual patterns and experience, for many hundreds of thousand years longer, than with words.

▶ This point of view is supported by recent findings in neurobiology (Siegel 2006) and can be considered reliable. Our brain has specialised areas which are a kind of radar for the significant. Interestingly, the regions involved are proven particularly sensitive to social interactions. The relaying to our conscious self is done with the support of our emotions.

The colloquially customary distinction between thinking and feeling, incidentally, in no way characterises reality. There is no cognitive process in our brain that occurs without emotional involvement. To be even more precise, our emotional processes get to us significantly ahead of our cognitive thought processes, which can be considerably "tainted".

My assumption is that the alleged **charismatic leader** plays to their personal advantage at this point. But we should not let that fool us: issues of survival can well

be solved without charisma! It seems to me absolutely mistaken to consider this capacity to be a particularly qualifying characteristic of successful leaders.

> ▶ **Tip**: Have an inaugural speech prepared, based on the "sketch in the sand", elaborating on a more detailed description of your collective model of success.
> Use this description to establish the foundation for sharing the defining properties of your strategy, outlining specifications, assigning individual responsibilities and workloads, as well as allocating resources.
> ### Therefore: Consider yourself the evangelist in regard to the collective model of success!

Do I need to mention that ambiguity and conflicting messages should not be part of the deal from this point forward? A large and remarkable research study (Buckingham and Coffman 2001) demonstrated that a "yes" to the question "Do I know what is expected of me on the job?" was the foremost relevant statement, determining a strong and productive working environment, followed by "Do I have the resources and tools required to do job properly?" and "Do I have the opportunity, to do, on a daily basis, what I am best at?". This does happen to indicate an indisputable alignment to the collective purpose. At the same time, it was demonstrated that the employees' responses were influenced to a larger extent by their immediate superior and, to a lesser extent, by the policies and processes of the company as a whole.

5.3.2 Synchronisation: Aligning a Unified Course of Action

The leader's model of success gets its appeal by providing direction. Everyone knows what is expected from them and what they can expect from others.

However, in this respect, we humans are somewhat torn in two. On the one hand, we love focus and clarity, and, on the other, we greatly enjoy having a scope for action and creativity, a feeling of freedom. We do not like doing exactly what we are told to do. In these cases, we feel confined and experience a sense of wanting to regain our personal freedom. With children, we refer to this type of behaviour as oppositional defiance and assume that it will disappear with increasing maturity. Trust me, it doesn't really! To do justice to this fact, leaders must both provide orientation and leave some room at the same time! You must provide opportunities to relate and make sure to take the participants along on your path!

For leaders, it is extremely important to make absolutely clear which aspects of the collective model of success are crucial—because it needs to be clarified right

here at which point personal preference and individual creativity is called for and perhaps even makes a lot of sense.

However, there is yet another way to prevent the impulse for oppositional defiance, by integrating individual perspectives into a unified purpose. We have already discussed this point in the context of the second key task of natural leadership, when looking at collectively establishing the shared model of success. In practice, this corresponds to, for example, the understanding that someone will be more motivated to participate on a project, after being involved in its development and preparation. Some employees report, in a similar context, the fact that they need to make suggestions, which let their boss believe it was his idea in the first place. I find it sort of amusing that everyone involved is seemingly trying to manipulate each other by using exactly the same basic mechanisms. Not so amusing is the fact that the proliferation of manipulation has severe side effects: it leads to a cynical concept of human nature, to mistrust and social disintegration. Fundamentally, it is about something much more essential: how to reach an **agreement** in regard to the *decisive* influencing factors?

This is why leaders must have answers to the following questions:

- **Essence**: In which aspects is *no variability* acceptable to the model of success acceptable? In which aspects is *individual style* and personal capriciousness or freedom permissible? Undoubtedly, it would be absolutely inappropriate for workers repairing tracks of a high-speed railway to let their creativity run wild. Similarly, maintenance of a nuclear power plant reassuringly follows very obsessive instructions. Whether, however, a sales process needs to follow an equally uncompromising approach could possibly be up for discussions.
- **Integration**: How can individual models of success be integrated *into the big picture*? Not only do we want to decide where to participate, but we also want make sure our own essential ideas are considered. This is especially true when we ourselves bring along a high degree of competence. It would be foolish not to include the experience of all participants, and at the same time, it does not correspond to our nature to function purely like a machine.
- **Conflict**: Which *individual models of success* do not allow for integration into the big picture? There may be unbridgeable differences between the overall model and specific, individual ideas. Persuasion is virtually impossible in those situations, where personal success stories are based on years of experience. That is the reason why companies sometimes prefer to take up training new staff themselves rather than relying on "old hands".

Some time ago, I read the really exciting phrase: "I must follow you! After all, I am your leader". What comes to your mind when you read that sentence out loud? Spontaneously, it does not well match the stereotype of leadership. *Synchronisation* also means not moving too far away from the reality of the group yourself. Successful leaders are so close to the world of their followers that they do not become too distant from them or have expectations that are simply impossible to meet. What does an orchestra sound like that is out of touch with the conductor?

What would a dance performance look like, in which all participants follow their own rhythm, completely independent of one another?

Since *everyone* inevitably acts in accordance with a personal model of success, which cannot readily be changed, both the probability of being accepted as a leader and a consistent approach will become highly unlikely, when significant differences are not resolved.

> ▶ When an individual group member's personal model of success deviates from the collective model to such as significant extent that it cannot be integrated, then **separation makes sense**.

At this point, it is clear that management, without having establishing trust, will always be a form of coercion or manipulation. Either I believe in the promise contained in the leader's model of success as the underpinning model of the collective group, then none of the often referred to issues of motivation will be of relevance, or, alternatively, I need to be constantly reminded and persuaded to do a particular job—in effect, unceasingly. Who would be so stupid to do something without being convinced that it would lead to success?

> ▶ When I tell my child that it can easily reach the jar of candy, if it takes a chair from the room next door, the subsequent steps are very easily predictable. It believes in my model of success and needs no further motivation. The objective alone is, in combination with the immediate validation of my model, entirely enough.
>
> When I affirm that regular learning for school has a positive influence on the child's later success in life, it greatly decreases the impact of my influence. Even if the child believes me, it cannot immediately recognise the correlation; motivation decreases.
>
> I demand a change in behaviour by claiming that green hair is antisocial; I will establish a conflict. My child does not believe my theory, whilst being able to clearly witness the high social approval from its peers. It withdraws legitimacy, which it had granted to me as "leader".

The model of success has extremely linked to the **phenomenon of motivation**. When employees do not believe in the leader's model of success, not only does his acceptance decrease, it also creates created massive motivational problems.

When examining successful leadership, it makes no sense whatsoever to consider the issues of motivation, trustworthiness and model of success separately from one another. Most professed motivational techniques, in ignoring this aspect, are missing the point completely, in a very frightening way.

We can now state: leaders cannot afford to compromise in terms of the essential aspects of their model of success. Whenever someone does not stick to what has been determined to lead to success, everyone in the group has a problem. Success will not be achieved and the leader will have his legitimacy withdrawn. Why? Well, quite simple, he did not keep the promise he made in terms ensuring that the group is successful. It was expected from him that he would solve the problem, and in this context, I can only see only three possible consequences:

- The leader needs to make sure that the member in opposition *conforms*. This inevitably requires very clear language and unambiguous instructions.
- The leader provides the member in opposition with a task that provides a *different purpose* for the group, allowing himself to maintain the promise of collective success.
- As soon as it becomes clear that an individual member cannot be aligned to the unified course of action, he effectively surrenders his group contribution. In so doing, he becomes a *welfare case* for the group. Either the group decides to support him or he is no longer considered to be included. In the latter case, separation is inevitable.

Whatever option the leader decides on, he will have to live with the consequences. Doing nothing would probably have the most problematic implications and side effects.

As long as there are no fundamental differences with respect to the model of success, the concern should be to keep it in the minds of all parties involved and thereby avoid a *creeping decline* in the probability of collective success.

5.3.3   Presence: Keeping the Essential in the Conscious Minds of Participants

Occasionally I refer to executives as ***advocate of the essential***! They are a work-related pain-in-the-neck! Jack Welch asks in this context: "How can we be successful in our business?" (Welch and Welch 2005, S. 24). He reported that, in every large or small meeting in his company, there was always someone to bring it back up again. Every decision, every initiative was linked to it. Apparently, that is how the model of success was persistently carried into the awareness in its practical significance.

In our context, presence has at least two different aspects:

- ***The leader's presence:*** how often do we meet managers these days who seem to be absent or actually are? They are rushing from one meeting to the next, with employees in different locations and their heads fully stretched with operational issues.
- ***The collective model of success's presence***: how often do we bump into employees not even capable of recounting the 5–7 mission statements of their

organisation? What we find is that objectives are set in annual staff appraisals, the latest plans are presented in management and town hall meetings, and then ... it's left to that.

In the past, people tied knots into their handkerchief to remind themselves of something important. Apparently it's hard for us to keep essential in mind. We are usually too impressed by the bustling of everyday life. There are so many things in this world that seem to force themselves on us that the things, which really are of crucial importance, actually compete with each other for our attention. In those cases, where we ourselves are actually also not completely sure of what is really important, the problem grows exponentially.

The stage of working on the collective model of success is often an exciting and inspiring time, during which all parties are focused on what is really important. The talks, the discussions and the struggle for the real success formula are all excellent opportunities to make yourself aware of what is really significant. The difficulties come later: they start in the moment, when the collective give-and-take ends, at departmental boundaries, as soon as isolated realities once again form and solidify. They begin, when matters of importance are replaced with matters of urgency, when the information overload and workload of the daily grind distract our attention and the day-to-day routine starts having a life of its own. You will recognise this when executives find their ideas "get stuck" on their way up into the next levels of the organisation.

A book has been released, titled *Rethinking Leadership*,[6] assigning the **task of exchange** predominantly to the responsibility of middle management. Amazingly, this totally ignores that this management level also needs to be familiarised with the model of success. In addition, the lower management, identified to be responsible for the implementation, also faces this task. In my understanding, the shared reality is fundamentally linked to the leadership phenomenon, regardless of the hierarchical level. Actually, it is about the meaningful "translation" of the model through all the different levels. That is, in my opinion, the actual art of middle management: they are the experts for the most coherent translation.

Researchers have found that structures, conformity and shapes are created and maintained in many systems not by complex controls, but by a few principles or guidelines (Wheatley 1997). At best, these represent the essence from the model of success. Basically, most so-called *leadership techniques* (staff meetings, meetings, management by objectives, instructions, delegation, feedback, evaluation, criticism, control) are instruments that create a shared reality and have the potential to maintain its presence.[7] As, however, a surprising number of managers don't seem

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[6] Löhner (2005).

[7] *There is so much written about these aspect that, here, I can confidently refer to such publications.*

to be aware of this, they simply consider such instruments as a *waste of time*. In fact, they actually are, if you only understand them to be obligatory tools from the human resource department, which have to be (moderately alibi) completed as a matter of compliance.

The term presence also points to **being-up-to-date**! These days especially, a particular challenge lies in keeping the images in the minds[8] of your employees current. The statement "But we used to do things differently in the past!" is rarely an indication of a hard fact that the person concerned seriously wants to be recorded for future reference. He is pointing out a fundamental problem! Once the images in the minds of the group start drifting away from one another, collaboration becomes something difficult to do. If there are some who are still working to the standards of 1980, in ignorance of the revisions passed out annually after 1987 and the entirely new version from 2011, then speaking about motivational issues is a simple case of missing the point. It's not about having neglected to provide enough enthusiasm, but having failed in completing the third key task of natural leadership!

Let's assume you have just completed this key task. Your team has a clear vision of how to reach the collective goals. The responsibilities are clear, the plans are made—and all of a sudden you are facing the realities of true life. And that does not always work according to plan, expectations and models of success. We then have the habit of saying, for example, "What can go wrong, will go wrong!"

One author even recommends scrapping the word *solution* from our vocabulary and replacing it with the term *process* (Mary 2005). He points out that success never comes suddenly but only as a result of complex transformational procedures, of which the course (and often the result) tends to remain uncertain. The inevitable encounter with reality makes us happy when everything goes as we expected. Very often, however, "things turn out completely different than what we thought". We then experience all kinds of irritation, experiencing irritation of various kinds, fear, frustrations and disappointment. One thing seems certain: Life is not based on good intentions and wise foresight. It is necessary to cope with the unexpected and—at least temporary—failure. Filling the gap between plan and actual achievement is what we refer to as implementation!

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[8] I use the term "images in the mind" to illustrate the constructed reality of an individual, by which he filters, thinks and acts.

5.4   Implementation: Making Sure the Model of Success Is Applied

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- The performance level of your team is high and stable
- The processes in your area of responsibility are largely determined by IT or machinery
- You are good at improvising and willing to take decisions
- Operative organising is one of your strengths
- You have a reputation of being a "project-oriented driver, who gets things done"

Of course, in the beginning, it is important to reach an agreement on how the collective purpose can be achieved, comparable to the foundations of a construction site, before the building begins. **But that is exactly the point**: the time *before* building work begins! From now on, it boils down to actually getting things done, reaching goals. Ultimately, an issue of positive results! No fantasies, no benefit of the doubt, no more drawing from hope. The primal task of leadership is ensuring the collective success of the group! If that fails, our primeval manager would have had to vacate his position, just as quickly as the coach of a premier league football team is dismissed today. No one is interested in the reasons!

When the old shaman, thousands of years ago, performed his ritual to summon the rain, he had the confidence of his people. He "knew" what to do with drought. But he needed some successes in order to legitimise his power. When it was clear to him that the probability of rain was higher, when a specific cloud formation could be seen over the hill at a certain temperatures, his incantations were undoubtedly more effective. Guess what happened when the climate conditions changed?

Numerous studies have shown that leadership can hardly be regarded as an autonomous and straightforward implementation of a well thought out and coherent *strategy*. In light of ambiguous objectives and circumstances, incomplete information and opposing interests, limited resources, time pressure and inscrutable dependencies, *Neuberger* (2002) speaks, in this context, of mastering the art of "muddling through". **The essence of this is, however, that it is not about to "muddling through" as a leader on your own**. No one can successfully hunt on their own, without the support from others. It's ok to have difficulties. However, it is somewhat problematic for a leader to no longer have an idea of what to do. In this situation, the promise for collective success is broken! Getting the results is based, however, on a **collaborative effort**. It is the equivalent of an absolute malpractice to give the team a promise—even if it is only given implicitly, through one's own behaviour—that conveys "As your manager, I

promise you success". Every leader should be absolutely aware of the fact that success can only be achieved together with others.

> Once the group has accepted the personalised promise of success, after approving the leader and his model of success, it is important for him *to make sure he keeps his promise*. All pending barriers on the road to success have to be removed.

▶ Gray, the experienced group leader, decided that southwest was best way to increase the likelihood of survival. Several families, belonging to a foreign tribe that understands how to kill at a distance using sharpened poles, have occupied all-known caves in the area, during the course of the last couple of months. Starving predators are roaming the countryside. There have been more and more deadly encounters. Only 5 women, 3 men and 2 babies are following Gray. And they are going along with him, further than ever before. When the small group reached a river, they come across a river, and they would continue along its banks until they would find a narrow and shallow spot or a tree that forms a natural bridge to cross. That's what they have always done—their parents likewise—and their parents as well.

Today something is crueller than ever before. For days, the group passed alongside an incredibly wide river, the waves are extremely rough, the shore on the other not visible. The water is undrinkable and stings, when it gets into the eyes. All are suffering from extreme thirst, after having tasted the water several times. Big cats that have been following the group have killed another woman and her child. As they reach a spot, from where they can catch a glimpse of the other side, they build up camp. No one is prepared to follow Gray any longer. Everybody is exhausted and two of the men want to head back with their mates.

Three years later on, the group consisting of two couples and four children live a protected life on a coastal island, still under the leadership of Gray. It was Gray who first joined to logs together with leather straps and dared to make the crossing. Later, they eventually improved this technique and everyone made it across. No predators or enemies could follow them. The small source of fresh water, the birds, fish and plants make the place a safe haven. 20,000 years later, hundreds of Gray's offspring have survived in their very own way, from what the ocean had to offer. You no longer resemble their ancestor and have no idea that ship building is deeply rooted in their past.

The leader is confronted with a crystal clear demand: make sure that the group fulfils its purpose and can realistically look forward into a positive future! Life,

however, never seems to take a straight line, a predictable course and has its own dynamics. It is in the nature of life that nothing ever happens exactly the way it was originally planned. The feeling of uselessness, referred to as *frustration*,[9] keeps us from pointlessly wasting energy. It tells us: Be careful, check again before you invest more energy. If this, however, would be our only impulse, we would be very ill equipped to tackle resistance and overcome obstacles. We would be quickly "broken". Therefore, Mother Nature has given us an additional impulse: the capacity to feel **great joy in our self-efficacy**.

We feel great about actually getting things done properly. This feeling activates additional energy, the very forces we need to remove the obstacles, lying in the path to our goals. *Malik's* (2001, S. 81 ff) statement is interesting, in this context, that organisations were never created with the purpose in mind of making people happy and content. According to him, a bigger effort should be placed on getting people to enjoy their efficacy, rather than the work itself. The purpose of an activity lies mostly in its result, not in the activity as such, which can and probably will prove to be quite frustrating at times.

It is highly questionable whether Gray actually enjoyed battling the surf, fighting his way through the waves, without knowing how to swim, filled with worries about the destiny of his family and exhausted himself. But he surely put a fight and the result gave him an incredibly good feeling. To us humans, **the experience of self-efficacy in combination with a sense of purpose** evidently brings together an extremely satisfying blend of emotions. Problems themselves are certainly no fun. Realising that we can solve them, however, seems to give us a great deal of satisfaction.

Maybe even our whole life can be considered as a problem-solving process. Whilst lower organisms, certainly, always risk their lives experimenting, we can let **plans, models and simulations** die for us. However, we have to engage in *mental problem-solving*. This is quite significant, to the extent that our cerebral brain does not work very impressively, especially in situations of crisis, in other words, when it really matters. For these situations, evolution has provided us with two very much automated problem-solving mechanisms: flee or fight. Since reflection in threatening situations, apparently, represented rather an obstacle for our ancestors, our cerebral brain is virtually *shut down* in these instances. I call this our **Neanderthal mode**[10]: This is where we don't think, rather fight or flee from the situation.

There are authors who describe companies as diverse interrelated problem-solving activities. They claim that *leaders* are responsible for complex problems and *followers* for simple and easy ones (Gomez and Probst 1999). I do not share this opinion.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring the function of the greater whole. Whether they have to solve simple, complicated or complex problems is almost irrelevant. At the same time, there are certainly also followers who are extremely competent in

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[9] The term frustration stems from the Latin word frustratio and describes deception and disappointment.

[10] Hopefully, this disrespect—used only to dramatically emphasise the effect—would have been generously excused.

solving complex problems and will do so for the sake of the greater whole. Something different is expected from leaders: They must ensure that those **problems relevant** to the collective group task, as a whole, are solved! After all, Mother Nature is very much concerned that we do not "blow out" unnecessary energy that is hard to come by. However, before you can consider, which challenges to accept in the first place, you have to have them in your scope.

5.4.1   Navigation: No Unnecessary Wasting of Energy

Without doubt, there have certainly always been brilliant captains who temporarily allowed their sailboats to reach the destination almost by themselves, making use of prevailing currents and winds. I don't think it has ever been possible for someone to always succeed like this. No doubt, there were also situations in which the same prodigy would have had to take the decision to keep the crew at the helm for days and weeks on end. Perhaps it was even necessary to reduce the food rations by half at the same time. Any other approach may have endangered the survival of everyone. *Every* group occasionally faces unavoidable obstacles. Without a prudent, mindful and sensible assessment of the situation and development, successful leadership would hardly be possible. Only on the basis of this behaviour can the following question be reasonably answered: Do we need to tackle the problem head-on or can we simply bypass it? If a way can be identified, which enables reaching the target with a minimum of effort, it should be used. Gray would certainly have preferred finding a shallow ford to cross the water.

Awareness and proficiency can offer excellent protection. There are leaders who seem to have a very easy job. When glimpsing over their shoulder, you seem convinced of being able to take on their task immediately: often a disastrous miscalculation. It is comparable to people watching a good tennis player or giving advice to professional football players whilst comfortably sitting in your couch. Real mastery and proficient execution of the leadership function is renowned for elusive details and subtleties, which remain concealed to the inexperienced.

Awareness does not mean lying in wait "neurotically" in expectancy of all and any possible danger. This would be comparable to the corporate practice of including the 10,000th indicator into the controlling parameters. We speak of awareness in respect to the really significant problems and control functions. For this, we can obviously refer back to our collective model of success, giving us a pretty good orientation on the essential variables to watch out for. Of course, in consideration of theses aspects, a *systematic early warning system*[11] would come in handy.

Awareness is not particularly protuberant condition, when we are caught up in our *Neanderthal mode* (fight or flee). Our perception and attention are clearly

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[11] The term awareness indicates that even the intuition of the experienced and faint patterns of information must be taken into consideration.

focused on the issues currently causing us trouble, a good thing for survival, in principle. The problem with this behavioural pattern is, however, when even bigger problems elude us. Our perception is not only focused, but also, at the same time, very much restricted. Two Neanderthals involved in a heated quarrel over a woman would have definitely constituted a danger for each other. The situation would have become somewhat more uncomfortable, when neither of them would take notice of the mountain lion, stalking them from behind.

We humans are still subject to such **patterns of perception**. What does this mean for us leaders? A manager spends a lot of his time taking care of urgent issues. You often need to respond immediately to pending constraints and are continuously pressed for time. It requires a cool head and a certain capacity to distance yourself from the turmoil of daily operations in order to preserve your own awareness. This situation is further complicated by the fact that we do not usually realise the limitations of our perception, especially when in Neanderthal mode. Only when the stress level of the situation decreases do we feel our awareness creeping back and our perspective broadening again. We are now available again for the beautiful things, for faint patterns of information and for the sensitivities of other people.

> ▶ Managers, who are continuously carried away with everyday worries and
> problems, run **risk of overlooking the essentials**. For them, it is extremely
> important to withdraw on a regular basis from the hectic flow of events,
> maintain their own perception and regenerate.

Whilst controlling instruments in companies are being continuously refined, to an extent that we are almost losing our ability to warrant for the **interpretation** from the data created, especially in terms of quality, there seems to be a certain ignorance in leadership development to recognise the requirement to progress ourselves in becoming the most valuable (perception) instrument. Many of the most essential information cannot be found, for example, in the commercial departments of the company, but rest in the unstructured, conflicting and ambiguous minds of employees and customer, frequently hidden to us. The truly significant situations are often obscure, complex and dangerous. Leaders, who do not have the capacity to identify personally meaningful images from the available data, should quickly seek to compensate that.

It's best to create at this moment a short overview of some key concepts (better, key phenomena) that have significance on the subject of navigation:

• **Control:** An ambivalent topic. It is necessary for me, as a professional, to immediately get a grip on something essential, as soon as I recognise that it is getting off track. The key question is not control or trust. The key question is: How can control measures be implemented, without them being considered a sign of distrust? Control should be neither installed to *stakeout* staff nor arise from a compulsive desire to control on behalf of the leader. It should be done with an attitude of *caring*.

- ***Directing:*** The control instruments provide me with the ability to control the action. No one wants to be on the road blindfolded. Good management adds a chronological dimension to the figures: It's about choosing the appropriate moment, good timing, coordinating actions in the right circumstances and simply respecting the *proper time* that certain phenomenon require. The early farmers knew when it was time to sow the seeds, when to intervene in the horticultural process and for what duration of time they need not worry, when nothing is notably protruding from out of the ground. Many managers, for example, decide for themselves that the harvest must take place in the first quarter: far off from the *proper time* the phenomenon actually needs!
- ***Foresight:*** Directing and controlling are usually addressed to current processes or those which have already taken place. This can be compared to flying by sight or the muddling through already mentioned. Experienced pilots make sure that they are always "15 minutes ahead of the aeroplane": they prepare and take precautions, simulate scenarios and adjust plans to meet new forecasts. This includes considering possible side effects and long-term consequences of intended actions. The farmers were more successful when they began with foresight to build irrigation systems for the following year and warehouses for the winter.

Many managers consider themselves to a large extent as primarily decision-makers and problem-solvers. At the same time, it seems fashionable these days not to use the term problem. All of a sudden, we all only have "challenges, which we are eager to face with full commitment". We are all powerful, productive and constructive. This is of course nonsense. First of all, people simply do not like taking on all and any challenges. Some problems are pleasurable and tempting, whilst others are more of a threat and cause us stress. Secondly, ***accepting a challenge costs energy***, a good reason for not accepting them all. As we have successfully managed using our awareness to identify major barriers on our path, we should now consider whether avoiding problems in the first place could be an option. It is not a sign of weakness to compensate for deficits, take an easier route or consider alternative future promises. The only important thing is to continue fulfilling the collective purpose for the group.

> ▶ A manager, whose self-concept is defined largely in his role as a powerful problem-solver, **constantly risks draining his own energy and the resources of the group**. For him, it is extremely important to be more sensitive to energy issues and to elaborate on his own role.

Especially in recent years, the impression is reinforced that many actions and decisions of business leaders are directed more towards having an opportunity to experience their own effectiveness, instead of paying attention to keep their promise of success to the group. In companies, one change management project is closely followed by the next, large deals are made and the organisational structure is redefined for umpteenth time. The very simple conclusion: In most cases, the results are not justified by the effort it took. However, they are reasoned in

retrospect with the argument that the company would be much worse off, if nothing had been done. That may be true. Who is to know? But it's not about choosing the option of idleness; it's about deciding on the option of skilled navigation.

> ▶ Can we imagine the following situation? An ancestral tribe noticed that winters were getting threateningly colder and colder from year to year. Surviving the next winter is seemingly unlikely, because the period between frosts won't be long enough to build up sufficient supplies. One member of the group follows his "dream of keeping warm and having enough to eat" (vision). He has a reputation as an expert hunter and runner, for which he is respected. He heads south; some males and females join him, following their new leader. We now know today that such projects were completed successfully. The problems of hunger and cold were avoided, after realising that increasing exertion would have drained all remaining energy from the group. Our ancestors could not borrow money and buy more clothes to survive the ice age staying in their place. The selective recruitment of an even higher-skilled hunter was not an option. And let's not forget: Both of these last options would not have enabled the survival of the group.

Ultimately, it boils down to a simple fact, every day countless decisions have to be made through applied action. There are many authors and researchers who are led to believe that making decisions on behalf of the group is a key function of leadership. For me, however, they belong into back seats, maybe 3rd row, but, actually, they belong somewhere completely different. First of all, we have the core task of leadership, from which we derive the underlying key tasks. Decision-making is ranked much lower; it falls into a different category: It is not a task! So let's ask ourselves: what is the purpose of decision-making within the leadership context of keeping the essential in mind?

5.4.2 Decision-Making: Supporting the Group Through Confusion and Impairment

To maintain an ability to operate, for the group as a whole, the existing forces must not cancel each other out. Stalemates must be resolved and paralysis needs to be mended. In such moments, the group expects a decision from the leader, in compliance with the collective model of success. It calls for the so-called strong hand. The group asks for this, not because it is weak and has a desire to be led but because its perception of the decision-making role is, in exactly these types of situations, inherently linked to the leadership role. That is exactly the reason why the group equipped the leader with power and privileges. If he does not use these, to the benefit of the whole group, both are withdrawn again. Even the strongest members of the group will call for *a decision or a withdrawal from the leadership position*—so that someone else in the group can get on with the job.

> The barriers, on the way to reaching objectives, include the conflict of different interests and perspectives from within the group, threatening an agreement on mutual targets. Since the leader has been put in charge, by the group, to ensure setting objectives for everyone, he must take the initiative.
>
> In this context, giving a direct order, binding upon all, is nothing pretentious or dictatorial. It is *the function and the responsibility* of leadership, in these types of situations.

▶ Gray, together with his group, may have found themselves exactly in one of these situations, after they managed to land on the island. After four days, it was clear that the land they were on was entirely surrounded by water. No one was left with enough energy to attempt heading back to the mainland. Even though they were apparently safe from predators and enemies, their prey, which they knew how to hunt, did not exist on the island. Whilst *Gray* and two of the females continued to forage for food, the remaining members of the group sat silently, holding the last bird egg and gazing yearningly onto the mainland. Five days later, the only remaining child of the group is dead. The male and three females placed their last hopes on putting pieces of wood together, in a remaining attempt to make the final crossing. Images of loneliness and hunger flicker into Gray's consciousness, together with scenes of people drowning and the bony corpse of a child. He somehow suspects that the group's breaking would signify to the end for them all. Following a gradually maturing impulse, he knocks down the man and destroys the small raft. The agitated group runs after the drifting branches and start throwing stones at Gray. One of these stones cracks open and something white runs down on the rock that was hit.

As night falls, things have quietened down on the island. The beach was filled with many brown shells. The group warmed up to each other. The blood on the male's forehead is washed away, and at last, after many days, he is for once no longer hungry. He slid his head under Gray's hand, who caressed him. It may take some more time before group finds out that not only the coconuts are edible, but the sea also offers an abundance of food. And it will take even more time for a new brood to establish itself in the group.

To a certain extent, in particular situations, leading points to *moments of truth*. Now or never (ever)! These are the situations for which their group has equipped leaders with power! Now, it is important to answer the following questions:

- Are the current balance and flow of power threatening the group's success? Do I need to use my power to clarify the situation again? (***Decision***) Leaders tend to disregard that certain issues simply do not lend themselves to cooperative or even democratic solutions. Whilst they are anxious about being accused of using their power, they ignore the essential: The real accusation that they risk to face, first and foremost to any other, is allowing the group to fail!
- Do I have sufficient strength to enforce the necessary decision? Do I have a realistic view of the existing factors influencing the situations, the force fields? (***Efficacy***) Leaders cannot allow themselves to be steered into a direction or position, which renders them incapacitated. They need to take care and maintain their strength, in the interest of the whole group. At the same time, to be effective, they need to be aware of the presiding dynamics and balance of power.
- Am I capable of using my strength without jeopardising my leadership role? Can I maintain my approval from followers? (***Legitimacy***) Since the strength of the leader comes essentially from being empowered by followers, they should not deprive themselves of this power source. If, to the contrary, you are actually trying to do this, the best way would be to abuse the power you have been granted.

There are people who consider the phenomenon of leadership, and even our entire social interaction, solely in terms of *acquiring and exerting power*. As little as I could think of denying the importance of striving for power, as a strength in itself, I would not come up with the idea to reduce our social life to this perspective. However, one would do well in not ignoring the fact the competition is inherently connected to the leadership phenomenon and, hence, a fundamental conflict will always remain: What am I focusing on, when I am exercising my power?

- Do I use my power to achieve the *collective* purpose of the group in the best possible way—and accept the legitimacy of the leadership role, which the group granted me on the basis of the advantages I can provide?
- Is my main concern to win the competition to the leadership position? Am I in the game to primarily gain *recognition and personal privileges*?

I have already described my basic understanding of the power phenomenon in Sect. 2.1. Power is based on differences in individual capabilities, being able to do things, which others cannot. There are many different types of power-*holders* and, in principle, a variety of sources for power-*acquisition*. The characteristic feature of power is that it works and it provides us humans with the good feeling of being able to make a difference. There are at least two basic problems of the phenomenon:

- The desire for power knows *no limits*, except those set by the environment. We like to expand our sphere of influence, allowing ourselves to accomplish more and more. There is no disengaging state of satisfaction for our power needs.
- We can source our power for purely egoistical reasons and even *in complete ignorance and at the expense of others*. In these cases, I am talking about the abuse of power.

Whoever establishes their leadership on the grounds of intimidation and more or less strongly displayed violence should not be surprised when their staff refuse to follow, as soon as positional power is no longer available or present. The so-called law of the jungle doesn't really exist, not even there; predators are certainly not the more successful form of life, in comparison to their prey. It's no coincidence that there are many more harmless herbivores on our planet than carnivores.

An important distinction to be made is the one between power awareness and **power motivation** or even **obsession**. The latter gets its insatiable satisfaction from defeating others. That can't possibly increase the probability of overall success for the organisation. However, every successful leader needs sensitive antennas for subtle signals of and, perhaps sometimes, even necessary power struggles. You must have an **awareness for power**, acknowledge it, stand and be prepared to exercise it for the collective purpose of the group. If you don't do so, then you are not doing justice to the position you hold.

One frequently underestimated issue with power is, it actually works. And, as human beings, we are seemingly "programmed" by nature to repeat doing things that work. Basically, this seems sensible—statistically speaking. In specific cases, it may be considered somewhat controversial. Some examples: A glass of brandy in the evening relaxes; it works. Throwing a tantrum in a meeting silences the others; it works. Ignoring your boss's decision and sitting it out for a week reduced stress; it works. Giving in to the erotic urge on a business trip without it being a threat to my marriage; it works. Not returning the call of the customer complaint two days before my vacation brings peace of mind to my life; it works. I would be willing to place a bet that all of these cases increase the likelihood of similar decisions and behaviours in future.

Why should all this be an issue when exercising power? Well, because behaviour has consequences and side effects. Many people like to eat sweet, salty or fatty food. Enjoy it; it works. The side effects, however, can be seen walking down the main streets in many countries and in patient files. So, what are the side effects in exercising power?

Have you ever noticed that after exercising power, the number of "unfortunate little mishaps" increases? Most of the time, it involves issues for which we cannot really hold anyone specific responsible for, because they virtually happen on the edge of the permissible or accidental. Despite repeated attempts, an employee, for example, was not able to coordinate the necessary steps with a colleague—and that led to misunderstandings, which now pose a problem. A necessary spare part was not immediately available for replacement—that led to expensive outages. Similarly, the urgency of the inconspicuous e-mail was not recognised, because the colleague's promise to a customer that we would call him back was written far down in the bottom of the text. Maybe the sudden illness of a co-worker on the "day after" also falls into this category, who knows? All of these things, I call them *response of defiance*, occur more often, with a high predictability, immediately after the exertion of power! Believe me!

Also fascinating to observe is the frequency in which many managers complain about their employees' lack of independence and creativity. They only work to rule,

make use of every occasion to hang around in groups gossiping and need a good dose of pressure at least every 3 weeks. Then things work for a reasonable time— and we start the procedure all over again. If only we could find better staff. After having made an example of a staff member, things seem to be running a little bit smoother. But it is still necessary to constantly get onto peoples back. Does this sound familiar? Then either your leadership position has the misfortune of succeeding a legacy that will cause you difficulties for some time, or you may want to have a closer look at what part you are playing in this viscous circle.

For myself, it has proven to be a valuable exercise to start by considering the exertion of power as a deduction from a ***legitimacy account***. The situation is quite similar to that of a bank, when it is faced with the decision, whether or not, to grant us a credit line. The amount will depend on how economically trustworthy the banks consider us to be (securities and income) and how much they are worried (risk policy, trust in our person). Let us, therefore, assume our employees have set up a legitimacy account for us, on which we have a line of credit. In doing so, they allow us to do our job. Mind you, we should not settle into too much comfort at this point, being led to believe that we can now follow our selfish dreams or start speculating. Employees have set clear terms and conditions. They expect us to use the credit line to reach the collective purpose.

Perhaps it is initially only a very small loan. After all, we do not have a track record yet. Should we start overdrawing at an alarming rate, the account will be closed. Our legitimacy is gone and our operational options are completely lost. In practice, the only thing we are now left with is the exertion of positional power— which in fact implies overdrawing on the account even further. In a software game, we would now see the message "game over" appear on the screen. Let's try again. We know that our credit is still very small and focus on proving to the lenders how we will make the most of their money. We clearly demonstrate that we are able to increase the probability of success. I call this: making a deposit. The confidence of our lenders grows. At the same time, they have the opportunity to experience us in a wide variety of situations and acknowledge our trustworthiness. Gradually, they expand the credit facilities. Mind you: Only because we have practically never used them! So what's the point?

Eventually a situation will arise when we will need the credit—perhaps even to the full amount—in order to continue in fulfilling our promise of success. Maybe, for example, we need to impose a decision, opposing the opinion of the entire group. Our bank will say: "Ah, ah, ah, what's he doing now? We don't like the looks of that at all. We'll be surprised, if this really works". And that's exactly the way it is. If all goes well, confidence and trust are restored to an even higher level than before. However, if there is no happy ending, our credit line is massively cut— or our account may even be closed. A simple system, isn't it?

The core of the matter is that as leaders we need this credit line. Whenever we lose our power, whenever legitimacy is withdrawn from us, we basically do not even have a chance. During the time of our ancestors, the game was over and done with. Today, our formal positions can allow us a little reprieve, but only briefly. It is at this point that many managers choose to voluntarily leave their companies, to at

least rescue their careers. The only problem is: They take themselves and their understanding of leadership with them. For as long as they are not really disappointed (i.e. they have not had the opportunity to recognise, for themselves, the reason for being deprived of their legitimacy), they will continue to look for and find explanations elsewhere.

"The requirement for decision making is the common indication of critical situations: These are defined as those situations, whose output determine the further development of a process. . ." (Hofinger 2003). Let's be honest: Which situation in life is not defined by its output, what's next? And basically, it tends to be even more complicated: managers operate—just as any other human being—in a world full of contradictions, where there is rarely a clear basis for decision-making. Since they have, however, taken on the task of ensuring that the specific social system fulfils its purpose, they *must*, under certain conditions, exercise their decision-making *power*! Even if they leave it to others, they can never escape having the full responsibility!

Leaders must therefore always make at least two decisions: (1) Is there really a decision to be made, right now? and (2) Is it up to me? These are the two basic questions involved in any decision-making policy. Against this background, the following different attitudes can be found:

- Leaders, who see themselves *primarily as decision-makers*, will often try to micromanage and stick their noses into virtually everything. They will inevitably be considered as a bottleneck within their company, its employees and as an obstacle to the group following them.
- Leaders, who tend to consider their behaviour as a *cooperative (decision-making) style*, are mainly looking for agreement and, not uncommonly, will eventually leave finding it to the participants themselves. When confronted with this, they defend their style with numerous good and ethically motivated arguments that anybody would immediately confirm. Nevertheless, they are considered by the first group and by very many employees as well more of a hindrance, weak in leadership and indecisive.

    And do you know what is actually quite funny about this situation? These two groups and the small number of other leaders all believe they are somewhere in the middle of these positions. Test these statements of mine and simply go ahead and ask the question once in a while. What is your opinion, in this context, on the following ideas?
- Many of the self-acclaimed decision-makers are mainly taking care of their own personal *need for control and security*. They want to keep things under control and start feeling extremely uncomfortable, when this is not possible. They would rather take into account, not to be liked by everybody.
- Many of the self-acclaimed cooperative leaders are looking for a way to deal with their fear of personal rejection. You have a *need for harmony* and are often not very experienced in the successfully resolving conflicts. They prefer pushing the conflicts out of the way.

So we are still looking for some answers on our two basic questions on decision-making policy. Does the evolutionary understanding of leadership help us any further at this point? I guess so. Would it have been really useful if nature had set things up in way that would require most decisions in groups to be made from a single head? In my mind, I can already see our prehistoric hunter, who lets the deer pass by him, simply because the leader of the hunt did not give him the signal in time to throw his spear. An absurd idea, isn't it? No one here needs leadership intervention, because the collective *purpose* (the "mammoth") and the collective *model of success* ("hunt") are essentially predefined components for any particular decision. Only when *problems* show up, as barriers on the way to reaching the objectives, which cannot be solved by an individual, does the leader have to intervene, e.g. if the hunting group had been suddenly torn apart. We can see at this point how the different leadership roles are intertwined.

And from another perspective: Were our ancestors at all in a position to develop an understanding, as the basis for mutual decisions, in communicative processes? Did our friend Gray convene a meeting to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of life on an island with the small group? He most certainly did not, but I suspect he was very much aware that his decision may have also cost him his life—if he just had bad luck or had come to false conclusions in his assessment of the prevailing distribution of power. And here we seem to have found another important criterion: the *distribution of prevailing power*!

Although Gray's group was still in agreement and shared their collective purpose of survival, the model of success had been questioned: Would the group survive by staying on the island or would they survive by successfully attempting to return to the mainland? The construction of a raft represented a competing model of success and could just as well have initiated a change of leadership.

In consequence, we have identified two fundamentally different decision-making scenarios for leaders:

- Is the current model of success being challenged? Then the decision is about the *fight for leadership* itself.
- Are different forces, within the model of success, having an impeding influence on one another? Then, a decision should constitute a *release from an inability to act*.

All other decisions are *objective and functional decisions*—and do not constitute an element of the core leadership task! Have you ever taken on a position, with your predecessor now exactly one level higher than you in the organisation, so he is now your boss? Then you probably know what I mean.

In their decision-making, leaders must be specialists in realistically assessing the prevailing ***distribution of power***. This requires power awareness. Their decisions must always contribute clearly to the collectively accepted model of success and maintain the operational capacity of the group as a whole.

All group members must be, in their decision-making, specialists in their ability to assess ***technical properties*** realistically. This requires technical skills. They should always be capable of justifying their decisions in front of proficient others.

Undoubtedly, it is extremely important for both leaders and the group to know when their respective decision-making is called for. I argue, against the background of our evolutionary leadership approach, that managers jeopardise their role, if they do not take decisions in the described situations. Whenever they take on decision-making responsibility *beyond these* situations—assuming competent group members—they risk becoming more of an obstacle for the group, rather than a benefit to them.

> ▶ Researchers have found that decisions for the group in hunter-gatherer societies are usually discussed openly for as long as it takes to establish a consensus. And interestingly, the happiest cultures are smaller societies such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland, which also have numerous opportunities of participation.[12]

Is that not a clear indication that the group and not the leader should make the decisions? In any case, that is often how it is argued. I could certainly also imagine an alternative explanation to these observations: decisions taken by leaders have a direct impact on other people and often change the existing distribution of power. This comes with risk, which should not be underestimated by them. I suspect, whenever *wise decision-makers* initiate group discussions and debates, they are not doing this to make group decisions. The main objectives, in my opinion, are others:

- They use these situations to analyse the prevailing distribution of power.
- They develop an idea of how these would change with the required decisions.
- They consider what reactions could be expected from their decisions, so they prepare for these.
- They search for solutions to the current problem, which have the lowest potential for conflict—and thereby fulfil their task!

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[12] Ostrom et al. (2002).

So what would happen if the decisions were actually made on the basis of group discussion? Is that not perfectly fine and also the best of doing it? Not very likely! In the case, where group members are already on the right track (e.g. they are already aligned to same model of success), their contribution is actually no longer required. Should they be on the wrong track, they are very rarely able to realign themselves back onto the right path through group discussions. There are studies that demonstrate theses difficulties (Schulz-Hardt 2003):

- During group discussions, more ***shared information is exchanged*** that has already been passed around before rather than previously unshared. This way, a sense of inclusion and relatedness is created. No one wants to be on the outside.
- ***Very rarely is new information*** introduced during the course of group discussion. This would irritate the feeling of community. In addition, the flow of information would also be reduced under the usual (time) pressure.
- There is often a ***premature consensus***. Members like feeling comfortable with each other and send each other signals of agreement.
- It is assumed that important information is more widely spread and members therefore tend to agree with majorities.
- In terms of content, ***mutual supplementation is uncommon***. Individual opinions which contradict one's own are perceived as untrustworthy or irrelevant.
- There is no attempt to actually come to a best possible solution for the overlying collective purpose. A greater courage to conflict is exhibited by those members who are trying to protect their ***very much personal agendas***.

In light of these research results, it would be easy to fall into resignation—or determine that these conclusions were to be expected from an evolutionary psychological perspective. Of course, for our ancestors, it would have been of greatest importance to maintain cohesion and remain a group member. Of course they were well behaved and sent signals of appreciation. And of course they were taking care that their interests were well protected. That's why nature had such positive experience with the phenomenon of leadership from the very beginning: Existing forces should not cancel each other out and the collective purpose must be reached. Group discussions, without a leadership role, are simply social events and will have a high probability of not promoting problem-solving. Or have you had different experiences in your meetings?

The *lonely decision-makers*, on the other hand, would argue that they end up having to take the decision themselves anyway and therefore consider group discussions simply a waste of time. Regardless of whether or not forced quick decisions are really required nowadays, they will, in this way, make choices that are completely unprepared and leave themselves totally unaware of what is actually going on around them. Even in the case of those decisions, which are predominately analytical, this behaviour can be considered absolutely stupid—and puts them in danger of, in the eyes of those concerned, abusing their power and thereby seriously risking the loss of their legitimacy. Simply because it is far more difficult for them to assess the distribution of power and influence it.

Let's assume for now that the necessary decisions have been made. They will, however, only ever have an effect if they are also definitely implemented. It is in my experience, sadly enough, from my experience, it is not an exception that managers make decisions, which nobody actually feels obliged to comply to. The power of decisions is measured by the extent that things actually move forward from there on.

5.4.3 Progress: Coming Steadily Closer to the Target

We have already concluded that decisions—together with models of success and planning—are not an end to the means themselves, but should bring us closer to our objectives. Step by step: We need to have plenty of *energy* for the journey, should not be drawn into distracting side shows (*focus*) and waste as little time as possible getting stuck in *decision-making situations*. We need *competent people* and *men of action* who remove barriers along the way to our goals. From time to time, we also need *wranglers*, just in case we lose an eye for the essential or risk becoming sluggish. Successful leaders will make sure that all of these functions are filled, whenever they are required! And they will make sure to have established the necessary *infrastructure*.[13]

> ▶ **Tip**: Put a pragmatic checklist together: Make sure you have functions on your "key chain" (strategist, process planning experts, drivers, knowledge specialists, implementation capacity, infrastructure/resources). It is okay for one person to cover several of these aspects, but do not neglect a single one!
>
> *Therefore: Working on progress is concrete and will reveal any weaknesses!*

In competence profiles, we often read about assertion as a required skill. Unfortunately! Firstly, because this would suggest that we are referring to a distinguishable skill, instead of considering the successful implementation as the result of complex interactions of various leadership initiatives, including the performance of all parties involved. Secondly, such a perspective clearly shifts the phenomenon of leadership into the realms of strength and power. Significant facets of successful implementation—such as quality, initiative, creativity, self-motivation and flexibility—cannot, however, be aroused this way.

We should be similarly careful when dealing with aspects of leader's ***motivational competence***. This is often brought into the equation as an alternative to implementation. As far as I am concerned, this topic is the largest piece of hot air,

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[13] Herzog (1988).

ever introduced to the professional business world. Fundamentally, being motivated for action is the natural state of any organism!

Our behaviour is *always* motivated—otherwise it would just simply not happen. At the same time, forces that act on individuals (e.g. hunger) cannot be simply talked away, as little as we can talk them into people. They either exist or they don't. So-called motivational pundits simply hype us up. They get us "drunk", appeal to our imagination and increase our flow of adrenaline. This is precisely the reason why we feel empty and drained after a certain amount of time has gone by. We, possibly, may even develop a strong yearning for this state of high energy, wanting to repeat the exercise—we have become addicted. It simply has little to do with what should to be going in our daily professional lives.

Once living beings have reached their goals, no further resources are used for the purpose. In these cases, they may possibly be motivated to reenergise. It seems that evolution uses resources quite economically. All living things seem to recognise that the efforts required to reach their goals also have the potential to stifle them over a long period of time and can end up threatening their very existence. Interestingly enough, the conservation of resources in nature is especially prominent in competitive environments. Apparently, it seems to be all the more important in competitive environments to not unnecessarily waste resources. The efforts we take upon ourselves seem to depend very much on the amount of energy and resources we have available, the goals currently perceived to be appropriate and the degree to which our subjective assessment indicates having reached a "saturation point". Mother Nature has endowed us with these patterns, allowing us to complete the tasks we have on this planet. We should be grateful for that.

But why is the topic of motivation in the workplace been given such a growing attention? For managers to be able to complete their functions, others need to adapt their behaviour to a collective model for success. As long as this is the case, the topic of motivation should not really be an issue within the context of leadership. The situation is completely different once employees no longer do "the right thing". But it's worth asking a simple question here: Why would this happen? From our perspective, only three reasons offer an explanation:

- The employee has lost interest in the collective purpose!
- The employee has lost faith in the model of success!
- The employee is not in the position to do what is required!

If we exclude the first cause, for the time being, we can recognise that the other two show up particularly often in times of change, when the ability of people to adapt is overstrained. Their demonstrated behaviour is no longer effective or considered desirable.

Since inappropriate behaviours of employees and managers risk the competitive advantage of companies, the idea is to "motivate" them. Correctly speaking: typically the intention is actually to ***get them behaving effectively again***, under the changed conditions!

When discussing motivation, we are talking about getting people to do the necessary things according to the model of success—whilst they are not doing that.

Instead of calling out for motivational pundits, we should have a closer look at the underlying reasons. The avoidance of demotivation is, based on experience, far more important than the incessant "invention" of yet another new motivational tool.

Meanwhile, companies are increasingly becoming aware of the fact that the best in people (e.g. initiative, creativity, enthusiasm and personal commitment) cannot be forced or simply "lured". Either they choose to give it voluntarily or not at all. This is the point where the magic word motivation often comes into play. Ultimately, it is the paradoxically futile attempt of trying to force someone, to do something voluntarily. The basic idea is apparently that it is the manager's job to do something motivating, so that employees demonstrate "correct" behaviour. Increasingly we are faced with a culture expressed by the following demand: "Hey boss, I'm feeling somewhat indifferent today. You come up with something".

▶ Our overall situation is comparable to that of an amateur and high performance team player. To begin with, it is a prerequisite that every player has an interest in the specific game. It makes no sense whatsoever for a captain having to force someone to participate or persuade them over and over again. The basic motivation for the mutual project needs to be brought along; otherwise, you should simply not be there. Full stop! Similarly, if a player spoils the game for everyone else, because he does not stick to the rules, in other words, does not perform to keep his promise as part of the deal, he will be asked to leave.

Motivation level 1 requires the player to be fully aware of the rules (model of success) and to work on his ability to do whatever is necessary (competence). At the same time, it is important not to harm the players' pleasure in the shared activity (no demotivation). Under these conditions, it is, in principle, quite possible to develop from an amateur to a professional.

Motivation level 2 requires a player to have a distinctive motivation for achievement (ambition/aspiration) and an increasing specialisation in line with his talents. He must also be able to optimally adjust himself repeatedly for training and competition (will/discipline).

As the performance intensity continually increases, it will depend on minute variances, ultimately down to highly specific talents, excellent conditions and individual nuances. Maybe at this stage, every top athlete has his own individual trainer with training and performance conditions personally tailored to him.

Motivation that requires to be constantly created is not worth anything. Unmasking the absurdity of popular motivation policies and practices has possibly

never been done more successfully than by *Reinhard Sprenger* in his book *Mythos Motivation*.[14]

In summary, if the collective success is at risk, the leadership must act. After all, that's how we defined the primal task of leadership. Considering this to be a motivational task is highly questionable. Perhaps the ideas and expectations of the parties are unrealistic (*then we would have a communication task*), there are "barriers obstructing progress" (*here we have an operational problem*), bottleneck occurs (*capacity problem*), coordination fails (*organisational task*), someone does not have the necessary skills (*recruitment or development issue*), or someone is seething with anger (*we would perhaps have a fairness issue*). Perhaps, whenever motivation is frequently called for, taking another close look would prove to be much more effective.

From that moment on, when we move away a little from both the so-called assertion and motivation skills, we move into the direction of a broader set of **implementation skills**: the ability to ensure that the collective promise is actually kept by all participants. As we have noted, a complex scope of tasks, which are heavily dependent on what type of barriers are faced, are obstructing the way to the collective goals. These may be external factors or aspects that take place within the group. Understandably, it is of crucial importance whether my implementation depends on a ragtag bunch of individual slackers or can rely on a high performance team.

5.5 Collective Performance: Forming and Sustaining a Competitive Team

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- You work together with remarkably competent and independent people
- Who enjoy challenging projects and objectives
- Your team resolves conflict amongst themselves constructively
- Directs its energy towards the collective performance, as opposed to competing amongst each other
- And you have a pedagogical approach comparable to that of a top trainer

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[14] Unfortunately, he argues rather consistently in his unique, entertaining and cynical style, assuming that everyone who joins in a collective activity to accomplish a greater whole is merely compensating his own "weak ego". I can definitely not share this perspective: Maybe it simply needs a strong sense of self to recognise and accept the own limitations. To get together for larger goals certainly does not have to be a sign of weakness. Rather, it is the core of our existence. Worthwhile to do your best!

Imagine a team that is incompetent for the task it is supposed to perform and has a reputation for being both caught up in inner conflict and a culture of mistrust. No one, including its own members, would put up anything for the success of this team. Presumably, they will fall apart.[15] If they happen to compete with better-established teams, we can already sense the imminent tragedy. Attempting to tell about the happy ending to this story would not be taken seriously. And rightly so!

But at the same time, we love movies and stories about such outfits, which suddenly grow beyond themselves and find their place in history. We love our sports teams, when they take us on their path from an underdog existence to the championship and eventually grow together to form a fascinating community of performers. We feel—even mediated by the screen—the boost of energy that drives the members to incredible feats. Our heartbeat increases; endorphin and adrenaline let us rejoice and jump out of our seats. The need for community virtually forces us to embrace our completely unknown neighbours, to laugh with each other and celebrate. What an elemental force!

These people, who initiate and direct these changes, whose names we associate with such miracles and who cannot rarely be seen as the ones standing quietly and alone, watching the wild ceremony after the grandest of triumphs, will be legends.

Whilst writing the first edition of this book, I must admit to having been doubtful and did not believe it deserved classification to the key tasks within an evolutionary approach. Today, I am somewhat more ambiguous in this point. Of course, our ancestors were not yet faced with the problem of having to recruit "players" on the free market. Their community was established by fate. Of course hunger provided for more than enough motivation to invest all ones' energy in the hung. Nevertheless, the symptoms of decay in communities, as described above, were undoubtedly already there. So differences existed, which had an essential impact on survival!

The fifth key task of leadership still seems to me the one most worthy of discussion. Before the next edition is published, I hope to find more insights from researchers and practitioners alike. At this stage, I have no intention of discussing all that, which has been used to fill shelves full of literature (usually in the context of the subject *team*) at this point. Let's rather stay true to our principles and see what we end up with.

From the core task of leadership (making sure that it works better together!), the significance of collaborate performance can be defined. Sustainable success is not possible without **strong followers**.
An executive, who is not aware of these facts and their consequences, will not be able to keep his position.

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[15] Communities split up, if they do not prove capable of overcoming a difficult phase—or they merge into other communities (personal conversation with Prof. Gerd-Christian Weniger, Director Neanderthal Museum).

▶ The young man's heart was still beating, as the supreme high priest, in his ceremonial gown, held it high in his hands, facing the cheering crowd assembled before him. Potions, smoke and trance have repressed his fears. He feels the pulsating energy of the swaying masses in front of him and his impression of being able to rise above all, incredibly powerful, he drives them on, again and again, before he loses consciousness.

The dawn has broken. The lengthy ceremony is over. The pain, which he can no longer get a grip on with drugs, have also returned, just as his troubled thoughts. The elders had never made a secret of the fact that his job would end in madness. What is new is that the effect the previous annual ceremonies had on the people fades so quickly. Within a few solstices, the huge festivities now take place every three moons—and completely burn him out from within. People are loudly questioning the old laws, work levels in the fields are suffering, irrigation systems are not well maintained and the competition between hunters and high priests is increasingly leading to frequent deadly clashes. For a long time now, he himself has not drunk or eaten anything, which has not been previously tested by a food taster. The gods have retreated and the enemies know that.

One generation later, the last farmer dies of injuries; he was the last to know how the irrigation systems had to be built. The people survived for 2 more periods of drought; those who are left are starving or enslaved. There are many more who are now waiting to be sacrificed to the gods—but these are now the gods of the enemy.

Many centuries before hand, the Roman poet Juvenal disappointingly and cynically accused his people of their own decline.[16] In the decline of societies, the members were apparently content in having enough to eat and being entertained. History shows us that under these conditions, a nation hardly ever turns against its leaders—but rarely any grand achievements are accomplished under these conditions. It would probably be most appropriate to refer to this as an *aesthetic strategy*. But do those numbed win in competitions? In any way, the Roman era ended like this.

Certainly, in highly competitive times, it has always been the case that leaders kept an eye on the community's ability and willingness to retain their energy. The attempts to increase both of these have changed over the millennia. Whilst today, for example, we define ambitious goals, encourage competition between employees, develop complex requirements specification and introduce performance management tools, our ancestors' choice relied on ceremonies to prepare for battle,

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[16] "panem et circenses" (bread and circuses).

testing the mature members of their community with violent initiation rituals, trained their skills by regularly conducting tournaments, etc.

> Agreeably intended statements such as "Our employees are our greatest assets!" or terms that appear technical such as "human resources" are absolutely absurd in this context! Leaders are much more successful if they act with the following attitude: Employees are not the *capital* or resources of an organisation! They are the organisation!

Ultimately, the question is simple: What needs to be done within a community to enable it to meet the challenges of life? Interestingly enough, this topic is put into the hands of human resources these days. Perfectly fine, as long as leaders do not overlook one crucial aspect: If the composition of their team affects its level of willingness to perform, degree of trust and confidence in each other's success, they are in full responsibility. Whilst our primal ancestors "only" had to ensure that the group was, on the one hand, able to master their tasks (e.g. providing food or making tools) and, on the other hand, not threatened by internal disorganisation and decay (e.g. by taking care of rules and rituals), a new task was added later on: first, in light of increasing competition amongst each other, the issues of performance and quality significantly gained in importance; much later, this was followed by the necessity to establish a community by bringing "strangers" together around a task, which needed to be completed.

5.5.1   Community: Developing Trust and Confidence

We began our journey through the ages of time with the acknowledgement that we have always been born into communities that existed and died. Only a certain type of person, so said by the impressive sociologist *Richard Sennet*,[17] can prosper in unstable, fragmented social conditions. At our core, we are doubtlessly social beings![18] We have already come to the conclusion that our relationships are defined by emotional- and action-oriented dimensions (what we describe as the "deal"):

- **Emotion** (degree of perceived closeness *sympathy*/*antipathy*)
- **Action** (degree of practical dependency: cooperation/competition)

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[17] Sennett (1998).

[18] Aristotle is famous for his statement that political state is natural for human beings. What he means is we do not come together in communities with our own advantages in mind, but we do so, because that is our nature. In addition, he subscribes an organic character to society, as opposed to the mechanical one in later economic theory.

These two aspects are superior to all other criteria of our togetherness and can in some ways vary independently. I can, for example, be in practical dependence of a relative and hate this member of my kin, because we had exceptionally stressful involvements with each other. On the other hand, a deep emotional friendship with others is only possible, when based on shared history and mutual support. Both dimensions also allow us to better understand the *phenomenon of conflict*. A potential for conflict arises when actions are mutually exclusive; our success, however, is determined by the extent of the collaboration with others. Our emotions—depending on the course and outcome of the encounter—can take on all possible shades and colours: anxiety and confusion, anger, disappointment, gratitude, revenge, helplessness, love, etc. It goes without saying that the ability to deal successfully with conflict has an immense significance for our relationships and communities (and thus for leaders). We will be coming back to this.

The most primal relations, we had with each other, were the famous blood ties (*family, clan*), which were formerly established, either by proximity and abduction of women or specifically arranged (e.g. for "political" purposes of brotherhood). Presumably there were also early other groupings, identifiable as *neighbours* (common boarders), *merchants* (common interests in trade) and *work groups* (joint projects). And then there were the *strangers*: alien, threatening and risky to deal with. As people discovered a *common history*, whilst carefully getting closer and assessing each other, they would at least no longer consider themselves as *enemies*. In all other relationship cases, a common history developed almost inevitably, simply due to the time spent together. We have therefore identified six different types of "ties" that do not necessarily exclude each other.

- **Family, clan** (shared genes)
- **Reproduction** (shared sex)
- **Neighbourhood** (shared borders)
- **Commerce** (shared interest in exchange)
- **Work groups** (division of labour)
- **History** (shared past)

From this perspective, it is not surprising that up to the present time, family members or people with a similar background are brought into organisations. In this sense, the preference for employee's own children in the allocation of apprentice positions is only a late form of nepotism from ancient kingdoms. However, evidence for the fact that this strategy is not sufficient for success is provided by the many tombs of rulers who were assassinated by family members and lost dynasties.

We are happy to thoroughly exploit those groups of people, who we do not consider as part of our community! For nomadic groups of hunters, it is perfectly accepted to steal from the surroundings, often also a method to gain social recognition in their own ranks. It's not a case of hate or malice; these aspects do not play a significant role here. However, stealing amongst members of a family was unthinkable. Cultures considering themselves part of the environment that they live in are—to describe it with a modern concept—more oriented to sustainability, compared to those who regard their surroundings like a self-service store. Is it a

coincidence that crime rates in companies are higher, the lower the general loyalty and team spirit? Let's not expect too much from any organisation, whose members do not perceive themselves as being part of a community. As far as I am concerned, it is not surprising that managers who are ousted from their organisations will take with them—without the slightest feeling of remorse or regret—anything they can get their hands on. Amazingly, we seem to believe that we can compensate these ancient patterns with compliance rules and team workshops.

The famous feeling of inclusion is established differently, from what the "psycho-technicians" of the training industry are trying to let us believe. But even if we are left feeling uncomfortable from their cynical promotion, because it strongly reminds us of manipulative behaviour, we have to accept that, on our topic, it does actually come down to the question of how to *produce* favourable conditions or at least promote them. From my point of view, the crucial difference between manipulation and of successful leadership is that the former is based on ambiguity and emotional insecurity, the latter on transparency and emotional stability.[19] Whereas manipulation loses its effectiveness during the period of time it is applied and creates mistrust, as soon as it is identified for what it is, collective success is established with a shared reality, confidence and trust. Instead of selfish attitude, it's about mutual support, shared joy and reciprocated inspiration. It's about positive competition with each other and loyalty.

We can now substantiate our concern: What actually needs to happen for this valuable energy to arise? What makes individuals a successful group? And how can this process be supported by effective leadership? We have—leaving sex and family aside, just in our effort here—four possible thematic approaches: neighbourhood, commerce, work groups and a common history. As far as the emotional- and action-oriented perspectives are concerned for our assessment, we will naturally take them along to further develop our thoughts.

> ► Colleagues from other consultancies sometimes speak about the "inhabitants" of an organisation, when they want to describe an attitude of employees that is not very much geared to performance. Others use the term "silo" to illustrate solid divisions within a company. I myself have recognised to once have disrespectfully spoken of "caging", to caricature a specific leadership style. All these wordings describe the core of the same thing: a group of people who are neighbours, instead of forming a community.

It is probably legitimate to consider the *deal component* of the relationship as a starting point in the management context: We are not usually in business enterprises together, just because we don't have any friends or are looking for distraction, but rather for getting something done together to earn a living. Possibly, this can be rephrased to describe the origin of the human deal: *We humans come together,*

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[19] In ancient times, our ancestors would have spoken of "black and white magic" in this context. And they knew that both would respectively change people in different ways.

because it increases the probability of our survival! We have always been in work groups—and should, therefore, be able to find evolutionary patterns that are useful for the purpose of answering our question. The basic willingness, from all members of a community, to collaborate, is the foundation for success.[20] Why and where should it come from?

The first task of effective management, so says a popular writer, is to establish objectives (Malik 2001, S. 174 ff). If there are experts around, who seriously doubt that objectives are an essential foundation for leadership success, at least to me they are unknown. Nevertheless, we are already moving a little step too far. I know lots of companies where managers set clear goals without a group willing to collaborate being formed. And this is not avoided by emphasising the agreement on objectives instead of (naughty, naughty. . .) specifying them. At this point, something essential is often simply confused: ***purpose*** and ***goals***!

First of all, it must be clarified why the particular group got together in the first place and what they need a specific member for. A community is not formed without reason! Our initial question is therefore: When and why do people come together?

With that said, it even appears somewhat amusing, when companies embark on establishing ***mission statements***, as is considered smart, by recommendation of modern consultants. Basically, it is about something absolutely archaic! Why should beings voluntarily do something completely nonsensical? If we understand the purpose of a company, we will also accept its goals and tasks, even if we do not find them immediately attractive. If, however, the purpose is to build pyramids for an oppressor or maximise dividends for a complete stranger, then things my start to look a little different. One and the same objective (e.g. cost reduction) can, therefore, depending on the ***context of purpose*** (e.g. equity value increase vs. shared survival), have an entirely different effect.

> ▶ ***Tip***: Ensure that mutual interests are emphasised and there is a consensus why the group has come. Rarely is a group motivated to generate profits or achieve abstract figures for outsiders (e.g. shareholders).
> ***Therefore: Make sure that all participants have the collective "mammoth"***[21]
> ***clearly in perspective. Don't define it purely by its weight in kilograms.***

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[20] *Berth*, a former Kienbaum consultant, sets out to measure leadership success and to identify possible causes, in spite of the immense principle difficulties (income, 1993 Dusseldorf: Econ). For four years, he searched for the indicators of business success and came to the conclusion that extremely successful companies can be characterised to a great extent by having complementary management. In respect of one's own shortcomings, the vicinity to others was looked for. From our perspective, this explanation fits perfectly to primal group: Teaming up to complete a collective task is a good idea if you are not capable of doing it on your own. This requires an element of trust in each other: the second most important factor in *Berth's* study.

[21] Metaphor for something that can only be "hunted", i.e. achieved, together with others.

Neighbourhood has—apart from minimising any potential conflicts—no specific concerns at first glance. It is simply defined by a common border. Things will change, however, as soon as you need someone else to complete your task, e.g. construction of a barn, defence against enemies, increasing the variety of your diet or taking care of an irrigation system. In these cases, the following have now become predominant:

- *Trading* products or services
- *Collectively manufactured goods*

Only on this basis can an agreement (deal) be draw up together: Who secures what contribution on the way to mutually securing collective success? What is the mutual purpose? What kinds of securities should be considered as appropriate for the *promise of performance reciprocation*? To what extent is supplementing each other sensible? The answers to these questions require either a lengthy period of becoming attuned to one another or an effective communication process, capable of releasing the tensions caused by expectations, action and feedback.

> ▶ *Tip*: Make sure to have transparent discussions in the company about who gives whom what type of promise and what rules have to be adhered to. Make sure that there are no promises being made without being kept. On the basis of this, install a systematic feedback process.
> ### *Therefore: Competence, support and predictability in collective actions to promote and trust.*

To stick with our vocabulary: within a work group amongst neighbours (you sit next to each other in the office) initiated a trade. "You make sure to reach the overall success of A and I will guarantee B". The recognition of interdependence, the incentive of your own social visibility as well as the shared anticipation of reaching mutual goals motivate each other to comply with their own part of the promise. When we demonstrate how reliable and competent we ourselves are, we not only allow the confidence placed in one another to grow, but we also increase our individual reputation. The result is recognition of each other. The same applies to the exchange within the community ("internal customers") as for the exchange outside ("external customers"), simple and transparent relationships. Manipulation, complicated gimmicks and leadership art are nowhere to be seen.

At this point, we already begin to build a shared history. Are we glad that the others are there? Do we look forward to working with each other the next time as well? Have we deepened the trust in one another? Are we starting to believe in this group? Needless to say, that will all depend on the extent of memories that we are gradually beginning to share.

▶ ***Tip***: Do not leave the impressions that people are having up to coinci-
  dence. Make sure to create small, tangible evidence of the successful
  collaboration. Celebrate mutual accomplishments together!
  Therefore: Consider the community a process, which takes place on a
  daily basis. Build something together!

It is becoming increasingly rare to not enter businesses that are not suffering
from the melancholy of tired employees, as they speak of the good old days. Cynics
regard them as die-hards and call for "modern" skills and settings: the ability to be
able to work over and over again in constantly reappointed project teams, high
mobility, versatility, etc. They demand getting rid of this need for inclusion, for
identification and group identity. You negate our desire for safety and security and
our willingness to stand up for each other and care—and at the same time they
complain about declining loyalty and commitment.

The perhaps most intriguing question is whether they are right—or maybe they
have just not found a way to consistently bring top performance in line with our
elementary needs and our universal desire to be included in groups. Are they even
still looking at all?

5.5.2 Performance: Aligning Yourself for Competition

Communities do not automatically produce performance orientation. This is simply
because performance consumes energy and this is not endlessly available. Most
creatures rarely invest energy beyond the *current feeling of well-being*. We human
beings are somewhat different in this aspect, because our awareness of time
changes with our process of personal development (this is not a must!).

▶ A manager who (in a non-European country) gave his employees a
  Christmas bonus, in appreciation and gratitude of their contributions,
  had to dispense on their work for a couple of weeks. The staff members
  no longer had to work to make living—and only returned back to work
  after having spent the money from their bonus.[22] No one felt guilty or
  ungrateful about this. In the meantime, however, the manager was
  struggling hard with the problem of maintaining the operation with
  essentially only his own input.

Nevertheless, our planet is not inhabited by weaklings just hanging around all
day. How can that be? To begin with, every living being has energy to invest in its
model of success (e.g. find food, escape, reproduce and nurture, swarm behaviour,

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[22] An experience recounted by a manager who is personally known to me.

etc.), essentially doing something, which is specific to its species. We are not born, lie lazily in the corner and then die again. We have to get certain things dome and avoid others to extend our lives (as far as nature is concerned, ideally until just after successful reproduction). Although the performance motivation researchers come from a different angle, they may still mean very much the same thing, when they speak of *the fear of failing and the hope of success*.[23] It appears that living things differ in whether they rather tend to be rather *avoiders* (take flight) or *success seekers* (designer). It does not seem to be all that easy to switch in and out of these categories arbitrarily.

What we singularly try to avoid or achieve is partly innate and partly learned. In these cases, we are talking about things that frighten us and things that motivate us. Interestingly, almost without direct impact on our survival, Mother Nature has also equipped us with the ***appreciation of our own efficacy***. We invest energy in art, crosswords, gardening, miniature railways, etc. Once we have started something and are interrupted in the process, we feel—often beyond any tangible use—the urge to bring to an end what we have started.

Furthermore, our commitment depends a great deal on whether we are fighting for something that is important for us, with which we ***identify*** ourselves (e.g. our native country), an issue that gives the continually regretted decline of loyalty and team spirit in our companies an additional facet. It's not always the better-equipped mercenaries that win the skirmishes against the highly motivated defenders of house and home.

Up to this point, we are moving on a level of the individual. Whenever something comes between our goals and us, a built-in mechanism pops up and increases our consumption of energy—until we recognise our actions as futile. Our level of performance increases in ***direct competition*** for the same goal, for as long as we believe to be in competitive position. World records are usually created in direct confrontation with others, worst performances, whenever there is no real chance whatsoever.

> ▶ Within these regularities lies the reason why for some members of an organisation in-house competitions can greatly increase their level of performance, and for others, it will be completely demotivating. The neglected—and often risky—side effects are often overshadowed by the top performances of individuals.
> The friendly competition amongst equals would normally be expected to raise the average level of performance significantly. Putting together homogeneous training teams makes a lot of sense.

The situation is completely different when numerous beings work together on a larger objective, well actually, cooperating. First of all, increased ***social attention***

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[23] Damit beschreiben sie zwei sehr unterschiedliche Arten von Leistungsmotivation.

raises our energy level. Sports teams can be "pushed" by their spectating fans to incredible levels of performance. Our enjoyment of efficacy can turn into ***enjoyment of contribution***. If we are then in a situation when we feel responsible for others, e.g. our offspring or the entrusted employees, it seems that even our own survival loses its significance. We are prepared to tap into the limits (energy). Many cases of burnout are not only the result of exaggerated ambition but also of remarkably strong sense of *responsibility*. However, collective action can also reduce the effort put in by everyone involved: In most cases, the sum of the individual forces in a game of tug of war is significantly higher than that of the entire team at one end of the rope. As we ourselves ***rely on others***, we automatically reduce our efforts. It is also known that less number of people feel responsible, as the total number of people involved increases. This is known as ***the diffusion of responsibility***; something that everyone is familiar with, when watching a cluster of spectators passively standing around an injured person.

We should also not believe that the amount of effort put already says something about success or failure as such. Physically formulated: energy needs ***direction***! And different energies must be bundled and coordinated. At this point, we have already highlighted around the topic *collective model of success*.

By now it is well clear why it requires a complex system of control and values, i.e. technical elements of cultural and leadership, in order for people to become a community of performers. It is, amongst others, a jointly supported ambition to performance, competence and motivation, to discipline and perseverance, to competitive spirit and smooth division of labour, to responsibility and to steering the existing energy onto the right tracks.

Very likely that fifth key task, competition and community will prove to be the ***largest force*** acting on our evolutionary leadership phenomenon! Those groups survived best in a competitive environment, which succeeded in translating the high complexity surrounding community, energy and direction into sufficient performance. Successful leadership makes the decisive difference!

Therefore, it is very likely that the 5 key tasks of leadership also have the biggest overlap with other key tasks. What borders are useful at this point will hopefully be clarified as we continue to gain further experience with the evolutionary model of leadership.

Performance orientation is not created through wild speeches and motivational tricks but *by focusing on the essential*. In joining an organisation, an employee allows himself to become a voluntarily "instrument" of a purpose-driven collaboration. He has the right to know what is expected of him, to be able to contribute to the collective success, and he has the obligation to comply with the agreed rules of the game.

We have called this the mutual promise of achievement. Let's try to compile a checklist within this framework.

- When putting together your team, make sure to not only emphasise skills, but pay attention that the person matches your model of success, whether he enjoys his own efficacy and responsibility and believes that it is possible to achieve more in a group than alone.

  There was not really much of a selection issue, of course, in the original settings of our ancestors. They lived in a given community and the composition of a team was only necessary for special projects (such as a hunting or a battle). It seems to me very obvious that in this case the participants' skills played a principal role and it rarely came to lasting misjudgements.[24] How would you ever have enough to eat if you put together a friendly and loyal but, essentially, unsuccessful team? And what would have happened to the dummy-warrior or hunter fare who hopelessly overestimated his abilities?

  Ideally, the leader will naturally select competent, loyal and usually like-minded followers. In those cases where he finds people that fit exactly to his model of success (in other words, they share the most essential aspects with him from the very beginning), it will no doubt have helped significantly with the 3rd key task (establishing a common reality). So maybe, the development from the original "forced communities of fate" (family, clan, etc.) to freelancers, mercenary troops and virtual teams made certain leadership tasks easier, whilst others became more difficult (e.g. building loyal communities).

- Invest time in answering the question, what behaviour you believe to be really useful in the respective area of responsibility. The clearer, more significant and unambiguous the *model of success* definition, the greater is, of course, the probability that all participants will behave appropriately. Tell everyone what kind of behaviour you expect from them and why. People want to, initially, hear clearly what contribution you actually expected from them to reach the "greater whole"! They ask: What is my involvement? They want information, *orientation* and possibly also *practical instructions*. Define and publish performance requirements and the scopes of tolerance.

- Make sure that the *flight characters*, those with a preference to flee, are put in position where the emphasis is on avoiding difficulties. *Designers* should be

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[24] The past experience and recommendations, however, from today's management practitioners, to declare all recruitment decisions of key positions to be a matter for the boss himself, is, in my opinion, primarily tactical. Of course, a leader will influence the loyalty of his environment this way and thereby secure his scope of influence.

installed in positions where the group requires power to move forward. Discuss with participants what they would determine to be *a barrier* in acquiring the preferred behaviour (e.g. lack of skills, certain habits, inappropriate processes or organisational structures). Make sure as many barriers as possible are *moved by side* (e.g. by adapting procedures, offering seminars, giving individual support, making resources and power available).

- Allow *personal responsibility* to be accepted and let people feel what their individual contribution is and what they have done to reach the greater whole. Do not cause unnecessary frustration by not allowing the participants to feel worthy of having accomplished something.
- Provide *visibility*—with that social control, feedback and recognition—of individual contributions. Departures from the mutually reciprocate promises need to be discussed amongst each other.

In what areas individuals choose to perform, they can only decide for themselves. It is a simple reality that people behave very differently in this aspect. No single leader in the world can make this fundamental decision for any employee without falling into coercion or manipulation! If someone, however, "all things considered", fails to perform on his tasks, then he has broken the mutually reciprocal promise. What value is left for someone like this to contribute to the group?

At this point, the question needs to be addressed whether somebody is benefiting at the expense of the group (*principle: parasite*), is legitimately limiting the scope of his performance (*principle: division of labour*) or is in need of help (*principle: care*). Dealing with these different situations may well have a significant impact on the group's level of performance. Allowing parasites to nestle in without appropriate consequences will reduce the competitive advantage, just as much as only vaguely defining areas of responsibilities. Supporting those in need can well contribute to the group's overall feeling of inclusion. From some point onwards, it may, however, also threaten the survival of everybody involved. Here some tough decisions may be necessary and it may require giving out some clear orders.

> ▶ *Tip*: Separation should be conducted consistently and according to the transparent rules of the game. Give team members a chance beforehand, by setting clear expectations and criteria, enabling them to successfully avoid a separation.
> *Therefore: Both for the community and for the person in question, separation should never come "out of the blue"!*

Many executives have chosen, to a large extent, in renouncing the use of power, because of the many side effects. Your self-image as a leader may be harmonious or cooperative; maybe you even consider yourself, which seems to be quite a modern

approach, primarily as a coach and sponsor of your staff. Mind you, there are rows of literature available and seminars on offer to confirm this self-understanding. It is particularly easy for authors, scientists and coaches to bring such ideas into distribution. Most of them have never experienced for themselves the amount of pressure that needs to be absorbed to *have to* reach ambitious targets together with people who you did not even have an opportunity to select. The basic idea is very often presented like this: If leaders are value-oriented people, establish a climate conducive to meet the basic human needs of their employees and even actually enjoy doing their own job, then, eventually, everything will fall into place, all by itself. That would be really nice! Unfortunately, this is much less frequently the case than we would like to admit. The explanation is actually quite simple. Has anyone noticed it? Leadership doesn't even exist in these philosophies.

Managers, who adopt a comparable attitude, often find it difficult to establish an **environment of performance** for the group. Their message (perhaps even communicated unconsciously) is contrary to the idea of performance! Too often it is: "We have all gathered here to mature and develop!" But have we really? Maybe that could work for a university campus but not for a commercial organisation. This is about the collective struggle for survival. It requires a completely different core message and a firm understanding of the roles involved. We are not in a leadership position, because we are primarily good promoters! We were given the legitimacy, because we represent success. The company and our employees have placed their confidence in us to make sure that it works! That's why they follow us.

At this point, it becomes clear that there are also conflicts and side effects involved with making necessary hard decisions that may jeopardise the performance of the group. In the most dramatic case, there will be breakups and revolutions.

5.5.3   Solidarity: Allowing Internal Conflicts to Come Alive

A quarrelling horde has little chance of survival in the wild. It would therefore make sense for Mother Nature to have installed effective methods of reducing conflicts to a minimum and for resolving them. She made sure that the members of a group could quickly agree on their roles and positions, generally accept these and then focus on the main task at hand (survival). It is most likely that the entire horde would influence rivals to resolve their dispute. This would have been totally forgotten, as soon as the community was threatened from the outside or faced a major challenge. The greater the importance of cohesion, the more conciliatory behaviour can be observed, even with animals in the wild. Of course, it is not necessary to explain to them that at the end of the day, it is their last resort. However, the more space is opened for conflict and energy available for internal disputes, the higher the likelihood that they will happen—until the distribution of power is balanced again.

A modern research study indicates that cooperation is far more effective for the promotion of performance and productivity than competition or lone wolf behaviour. In addition, evidence was provided that cooperation without internal competition leads to higher performance and greater, compared to cooperation with internal quarrels (Johnson et al. 1981). This fact fits without difficulty into our evolutionary psychological approach and much less to widely spread motivation techniques. As you can tell, our evolutionary roots are still functional.

> ▶ A classic short story: A village has a common pasture, where any farmer can send his cattle. We can already assume how quickly it will become overgrazed, because each farmer will try to optimise his yield from an individual perspective—and he is right to do that; otherwise he would be cut short. The ego is the starting point of all action!
> The situation offers three possible solutions: (a) model "**wild west**" (the strongest farmer prevails), (b) model "**capitalism**" (privatisation of pasture) and (c) model "**successful leadership**" (development of effective rules for all participants). Only the last approach can promote the survival of the community and support broad-based well-being. Model (a), however, leads to dictatorship, slavery, war and revolutions, and model (b) promotes the gap between rich and poor—and also brings with it potential for violent conflict.

In this little story, three alternative social systems are hidden. From my point of view, the capitalist system has become popular and dominates the "wild west", mainly because it is *socially accepted*—as long as the inequalities are not too noticeable (rich vs. poor). It raises less social resistance, because it suggests: Everyone can do it; chances are evenly distributed! First, this is demonstrably nonsense; secondly, an obvious question is raised: What exactly is it that is being offered here to every prospect? We now know, almost as common knowledge, that an increase in material affluence does not necessarily increase satisfaction. We cannot blame the system for that, as it never claimed to increase our happiness!

At its best, it merely promises that some of those in competition with each other will become wealthy. Taking care of well-being continues to remain an unsolved personal issue.

It goes without saying that even the "wild west" does not primarily have the welfare of the community in mind. Basically, this announcement is perhaps only made by the "successful leadership" system, in those cases where a community sets itself up around a common issue, i.e. it defines its purpose therein. That's one of the reasons why I believe the phenomenon of leadership has great importance for our future. In summary: companies that operate in wild west style, do not belong to the successful ones of this world, not providing widespread affluence, and neither in providing general well-being. They seem to be operate in transitional systems, which only pick up speed after establishing "law and order", initially by first establishing a monopoly on legitimate use of force.

We can use our energy and resources in conflicts or fighting amongst ourselves (better: waste them there). Alternatively, we could do something more useful with them. With a choice of alternative 2, naturally potential conflicts don't just disappear automatically: There are different interests, personalities and styles, models of success, positions, ideas on the situation, contributions to success, etc. Under no circumstances should we be in denial of this or push the issue by side. It is simply not about being free of conflict. What is absolutely necessary, however, on our path to collective success, is the ability to distinguish between unnecessary and ***necessary conflicts***. The latter are, for example, all those which violate the collective model of success or break predefined rules.

If a dispute is really important, it must be carried out so that, ideally, it does ***not permanently weaken the community***. We would say, "you should still be on speaking terms afterwards". The interdependency remains and the individual willingness to continue mutually supporting each other must be safeguarded. There should be a balance of interest; solutions building on mutual consensus are probably not even necessary.

As a leader, one has a distinct responsibility, on one hand, to ensure that rules for the continually potential conflicts have been set, so that no unnecessary energy is wasted (e.g. dealing with differences in interest or shifts in the balance of power, rules for distribution, penalties for violation of rules, dealing with the needy and freeloaders). On the other hand, the leader often assumes the function of a facilitator or referee (arbitrator). The community will not only accept this role, it actually demands it. Should the manager, however, infringe on the fundamental sense of fairness and his behaviour is perceived as arbitrary, then there will be unrest.

> ▶ What happens when the coach of a football team does take off a player who will insistently pick up the ball with his hands? Undoubtedly, the whole team will increasingly show its discontentment, the performance will decline, and the role of the coach is weakened. If the same coach takes off a player, who the other players currently consider an asset, without any apparent reason, it will also lead to unrest.
> Whilst the first player will perhaps be angry and disappointed (but with some distance knows exactly why he was substituted), a general sense of dissatisfaction will remain in the second case.

Even though I have titled this subchapter with *peace*, I do not want to leave the impression that leaders are particularly peaceful characters. Studies[25] have shown that they are no different in this point than the rest of ordinary people. Individuals, who have been accepted as leaders by others, actually avoid unnecessary conflicts not more often than the normal population does. However, amongst them are almost 40 % more people, who openly address conflicts. So fear of conflict may endanger

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[25] Data analysed from the CST management profiling database.

being accepted in a leadership role. Even 50 % more are capable of resolving conflicts in such a way that a continuing collaboration is possible.

Please note: The issue at hand is not actually about conflicts. The point is to avoid or correct *limitations to the group's level of performance*! Such limitations arise especially when a member of the group:

- Acts against the agreed model of success and breaks his promise to perform
- Causes the willingness for mutual support to decline and builds up resistance of other individuals or the whole group by his behaviour (e.g. selfishness, abuse of power, insults)
- Is working to break up the group (e.g. intrigue, incitement to mutiny, rat race)

> ▶ *Tip*: Don't only exercise your role as a referee (or arbitrator). Also, make sure that the endorsed rules are generally known and their meaning is understood. In this way, you will not make everyone happy, but you will accomplish your task and reduce the likelihood that your behaviour is perceived as arbitrary.

<div align="center">

Also: Define rules based on the collective model of success!
Making sure that they are enforced!

</div>

You will not find this fifth key task of natural leadership in the first edition of the evolutionary leadership approach.[26] I think that the many considerations have shown that it is more than worthwhile to have corrected this. It's difficult to ignore that many managers seem to deal a lot with this task, because they see it as a great potential to increase the competitive advantages of their companies. At the same time, I cannot help but feel that the current approaches and solution offered in the market (e.g. loyalty programmes, war for talent, reward systems, incentive events, increasing internal competition, etc.) are, at best, simply missing the core of the issue, at worst, actually counterproductive.

It appears that there is more proven and tested experience available for the next key task.

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[26] My thanks go to ***Roland Keppler*** (currently CEO, Europcar International, Paris) for encouraging the discussion and reflection on this topic. He is a member of the inner circle of the ***Open-Source: Management***—Initiative. An interview with him can be found in the appendix.

5.6   Habitat: Securing the Biosphere of the Community

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- Your environment has a strong interest in making sure your team is successful
- Your team gains supported from all important sides
- Reliable and sufficient resources are available to fulfil the collective purpose
- The image of the area you are responsible for is good
- You have a reputation for being an influential diplomat and networkers for your team

Survival, development and death have always taken place in specific environments, which we call biotopes. We humans are amongst the few beings which adapt to different conditions—and in this way have made sure that we can be found in almost every corner on this planet. An extension to this survival strategy for us was to start actively changing our environment, according to our own needs and desires! It is possible that the well-known bible quote (remember the bit about "subdue the earth") is reminiscent of the early stages of this development. Hominid communities have:

- *Proficiently arranged* their environment
- *Purposefully influenced* their biological and physical (later on social) environment increasingly

Competition between communities in nature ultimately takes place around these two strategies and their differentiated design. It goes without saying that this is an open box for leaders. At the same time, we are removing ourselves from established evolutionary patterns, to the extent of moving into areas of these strategic decisions. The fact that we do not totally desert them has to do with the fact that, of course, the cultural side of our togetherness is not subject to arbitrary and accidental regularities.

It goes without saying that the primal task of leadership is not to create satisfaction (ensuring the collective purpose) without taking the respective "biotope" into consideration. From clearing woodland in a jungle to politically arranged marriages to lobbying, there is an abundance of opportunities here, allowing us to construct our habitat to better suit the group.

Interestingly, we are wandering here on the territory between the borders of survival and ethics. When was deforestation first considered to be an environmental damage? Have not many people been killed in wars, just because two young heirs to a throne were forced to marry? Can we tell when lobbying has reached a level to be considered extortion and bribery? How many communities have collapsed because they neglected to represent their interests? Of course we cannot do fair justice to these questions in our context. At the same time, I do realise that my personal attitude makes it difficult for me to reflect without bias on this 6th key task of leadership. Therefore, from that perspective: I think it is in principle valuable to consider our physical, biological and social habitat as a *co-habitat* and not as a self-service shop or war zone. Cooperation and symbiosis are essential core elements for me. This complements the two basic strategies previously identified (adaptation and influence) with a third one:

- The collective *composition of a greater whole*!

When the first bacteria came together to form a composite and created a new form of life, they followed no plan. However, we are now not only able to anticipate developments of those sorts, thinking them through and testing them experimentally; we no longer need to leave the development of "prototypes" up to fate. We can also explore our habitat and establish a more effective picture of our world. We should not waste this talent! From my point of view, forward-looking leadership is the key role here!

The success of any community is defined by their behaviour (positioning, networking, influencing, etc.) within their own environment. Successful leadership does not leave this behaviour to chance!
The highest art of leadership, at this point, may consist in the capability to develop a common strategy of survival together with the other residents of our habitat, i.e. to create a larger whole.

▶ So, these strangers actually do really exist. The two scouts from *Smooth's* clan had once again reported of unknown tracks on the heights. Why had the *LittleOnes*, the neighbouring group living in the adjacent downs, not stopped them? Nowhere did they find any evidence of fighting.

The men were sitting together since the break of dawn, in heated discussions, conferring with another. The skills they had developed in cattle farming and the resulted affluence had already lured greedy strangers once before. At the time, the clan's survival was only secured by their sheer size in numbers. The attackers from the north had compensated for being outnumbered with terrifying combat strength and killed many. Since those days, *Smooth* was able to acquire considerable standing in the group, but he felt that this time, something was very much different. The silence, with which the strangers had appeared on the scene, was especially irritating to him. Only ghosts were invisible enough to pass through the ranks of the neighbours—or did they have the ability to kill ever so silently! They did not know enough. And negotiation seemed a better option than blood, hatred and grief. The disagreement in the group gave him the opportunity to throw his ideas into the ring, over and over again. Eight solar cycles later, *Smooth* and *SunnyHair's* children frolicked around the hills with their dark playfellows from the *LittleOnes*. The blonde woman with the watery blue eyes is still sometimes reminiscent of the view across the ocean from her native home. They are sitting around the campfire, as *Smooth* is once again telling the story of their first encounter, leaving him laughing the loudest, as he explains how the "ghost" later became his mate. Meanwhile, the clan's merchants are tying together the bundles and preparing the small herd of young animals for their second trip to the water people. All have become wealthy—and more courageous!

We do not exactly know what happened during those 8 years, after the first appearance of the strangers and the preparation of the second trading trip. However, it is likely that *Smooth's* horde did not move recklessly into battle against the aliens, which can in no way be taken for granted.

The renowned anthropologist *Jared Diamond* writes in his latest book: "Members of smaller companies rarely or never meet foreigners, for traveling in an unfamiliar area, whose residents you do not know or with whom one is not related, would be downright suicidal. If you meet a stranger at random on their own territory, one must assume that this person is dangerous. Given the dangers when traveling in unknown area, a stranger is in all probability a scout, who wants to prepare for an assault or murder, or he has entered the territory to hunt, to steal resources or kidnap a marriageable woman".

Think about how much caution and skill was needed in dealing with each other, to turn such dangerous and vulnerable strangers into good neighbours or even fellow traders. Keep in mind what an achievement it must have been for our ancestors to collaborate with people at some point, who did not belong to their tribe. And today? Today we travel to completely foreign cultures (occasionally into

the security of completely isolated resorts) and work with far-off suppliers, consultants and contractors, all randomly selected, just because they may made the cheapest offer and presented themselves well—and hope that, in the end, things will turn out for the better. Should we express our intuitive fear of strangers, we may even have to ethically answer to our concerns (keyword: racism).

It has probably always been a lot easier to come to terms with the (familiar!) physical and biological environment that has always been partly our habitat and partly a resource for us. Here the challenge is to (a) have everything available on a daily basis, allowing us to collectively operate, and (b) to think ahead and take precautions, so it does not change in the foreseeable future. The latter is not only a procurement issue but can also represent a recurring issue of protection. If successful, this creates room for further development. This is how human life reached a new dimension, by building high walls to protect their cities; ". . . all of a sudden, it makes sense to deal with issues that exceed beyond the lifespan of individuals. . . The price we pay for no longer being dependent on the whims of nature, is the dependency on our societies and civilizations".[27]

> ▶ *Tip*: Please take time in considering this key task to think strategically
>   about it, before applying "technical tools". It has a decisive overlap with
>   the second key task (model of success).
>   **Therefore: Include a questioning on the 6th key task into
>   your next strategic meeting!**

Our own studies[28] show that this key task of evolutionary leadership has been very much neglected, to be precise: almost infinitely cut off from the other key tasks. On the one hand, this may be because many executives do not consider themselves to be very diplomatic, representative, caring or influential. According to them, this task is not in their nature. On the other hand, it may be a simple question of completely underestimating the relevancy of this task to the success of their role. Whilst they may still consider securing the material and financial resources for their team, as part of their task, they quickly arrive to the end of their repertoire on issues of influence and involvement. A third aspect may play a role: many managers believe this task does not apply to the level of hierarchy they are operating in. Wrong!

> ▶ *Tip*: No matter what level of hierarchy you operate in, make sure to get
>   your team together for a strategic meeting at least once a year!
>   **Therefore: Every key task of leadership is relevant to every
>   level of hierarchy—the composition will indeed vary!**

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[27] Sedlacek (2012).

[28] For many years, we have been analysing the individual disposition of leaders, as part of the CST Management Profiling (see Part III: personality and leadership), to find out for which key tasks they seem to have a natural preference.

In the first years following the "birth" of the *evolutionary leadership* approach, we first talked about this topic as the key task of *foreign policy*—seen from today's perspective, this does seem somewhat limiting.

That having been said, it makes me happy to see that two economic psychologists *Ferris* and *Blickle* have recently published a book,[29] in which they cover the topic of leadership as politicians.

For several years, the authors have been investigating the *concept of political competence* and demonstrate its significance. In their view, this consists of four components:

- To **understand** each other better
- To better **influence and persuade** others
- To build, maintain and make use of **relationships to influential people** within and outside of the organisation
- To establish and maintain **confidence in yourself**

I would not know why these facets should not have been significant from the very beginning of cooperating with one another. However, our approach is—still—different to the competence-based research methodology. We assume existentially significant tasks that presented themselves to our primal ancestors. In relation to the habitat perspective that we are currently looking at, I would like to highlight three aspects in more detail.

5.6.1 Resources: Increasing the Scope of Behavioural Alternatives

Every living being has to secure its survival or rely on others to do this for them. We have to work, freeload or be taken care of and supported. No matter how we want to name these different circumstances of survival. If we do not have any resources available (e.g. oxygen, water and food), our existence ends very quickly. Paradise and the land of plenty, the tale of the Gold Ass, the myth of eternal cornucopia or, somewhat more clichéd, the dream of winning the lottery and the fortune to be inherited all testify that resources do not usually fall into our laps. We can limit the available behavioural scope of any individual quite dramatically, by reducing food or oxygen. At the same time, we are convinced that we could do amazing things if only, for example, we had enough money. Surely it needs no further explanation to introduce our topic here.

If a community does not have the necessary resources available to accomplish its purpose, it will fail. We could have confidently included such considerations in the chapter on the 4th key task of implementation: making sure the model of success is applied. We are doing this, however, at this point, because it is the intention of laying a slightly different emphasis on the matter. Our questions are: What can a

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[29] Blickle et al. (2011).

group do to stabilise the necessary availability of material resources? What is the function of leadership in the matter?

> Presently, the capability of being able to secure the availability of necessary resources seems to be declining to the same extent that the allocation of them is no longer related to communities (but uncomfortably more often with *speculation and gambling*).
>
> Interestingly enough, maybe certain new practices can be simply seen as the continuation of something long-standing tradition, for example, ***crowd funding***: People, who collectively support an idea, establish a community to provide necessary resources.

I am increasingly getting the impression that top managers are more and more concerned with the procurement of funds for their organisation.

Whether meeting with the search for investors or the preparation of the company for an IPO: should it be considered right and proper for the senior leadership of an organisation to devote most of their attention to this single aspect of the 6th core task? On the other hand, what would happen if they didn't? That this issue is, apparently, of so much importance these days should get us thinking. Hardly necessary to point out how far away we seem to be from securing the availability of necessary resources. However, I don't want to succumb to drifting into socio-critical thinking at this point. After all, we have set out to elaborate on the task of leadership prudently.

> ▶ *Tip*: Do not let yourself be "nailed down" in securing resources. Do not make the mistake of reducing the scope of leadership responsibilities to this extent.
>
> If you have been kept almost completely busy during the last couple of months with, e.g. financial topics, two things are essential: (1) you need others, in whom you have confidence, to temporarily relieve yourself from other leadership tasks and (2) a fundamental change in the overall strategy of your organisation!
>
> ***Therefore: Always keep the entire cockpit of your leaderships tasks in mind!***
>
> ***Sense danger, whenever you are getting involved in securing the resources!***

However, we should consider resources to only be corporate finance. Only a few managers are ever directly involved with this. Let's also think, for example, about procuring appropriate workspace for your employees, the introduction of relevant hard- and software or defending a project budget, when we consider the practice of the 6th key task.

Basically, I see the following options to secure the survival of the community, in terms of providing the necessary reliable means for them. They all have—just like any behaviour, of course—their own specific side effects.

- A ***concerned community*** will take care to *not be too dependent* on resources, which are only limitedly available, and to keep the sources *secret*. A larger family may choose this option, setting up a kitchen garden to produce own food, in times of distress, and start breeding small rabbits, keeping them safe (from hungry eyes) in the living room. Likewise, this applies, as materials are replaced by cheaper alternatives, emergency rations stored in a "secret cache" and tight cost-cutting programmes introduced in the organisation. *Side effects*: sense of emergency in the community, distrust in the immediate environment and certain degree of independence.
- A ***far-sighted community*** is sure to build up reserves during times of abundance. When did our ancestors begin, after a successful hunt, to not only fill their stomachs but also consider aspects of preservation and storage? We now know that a massive change in thinking on this issue was the result of the transition to an agrarian lifestyle. The mentality of the farmer and gardener differs from that of the hunter. The first major cities (some 6,000 years ago) were probably attractive, because they kept common supplies. What impact does it have today when corporate headquarters and financial holdings immediately require any excess funds to be directly transferred? Don't we feel reminiscent of times, when sovereigns collected extraordinary taxes? *Side effects*: fear and danger of attracting raiders, sense of affluence in the community, storage and security costs and mistrust of strangers.
- A ***strong, powerful community*** can simply *take* resources. You can imagine that it is precisely the reason why belonging to a company of thieves worked very well in "symbiotic" cohabitation with communities pursuing a stockholding strategy. It seems to be rare for strength not to be one-sidedly used or even abused in the pursuit of one's own interests. This may be the reason why we seem to have a natural desire to be able to limit the power of others. Particularly within communities, we have culturally developed a wide variety of options to do just that. *Side effects*: megalomania and arrogance, abuse of power, sense of security and peace of mind, suspicion towards the poor and potential revolutionaries and high "military expenditure".
- A ***smart community*** will pool their resources and maintain their sources. Not eating up all of the collected eggs, but leaving some to hatch, is about respect for other living creatures—and/or about the knowledge of biological reproduction. Companies could also be categorised into demonstrable "farmers" and "consumers". Besides, many employees can well assess the extent to which their leaders are truly committed in ensuring the necessary means of production. *Side effects*: permanent responsibility and continuous workload, feeling of inclusion and security and watchful for thieves.
- A ***social community*** will promote the sharing of resources amongst members. Since meat was not easily made preservable in earlier times, it absolutely made sense for a successful hunter to distribute his kill generously. In this way, he built on his reputation and protection—of being able to look forward to even more

food, as other members would be keen to reciprocate. A company, in which different departments cross-subsidise each other in difficult times, acts in a similar way. *Side effects*: feeling of security, vigilance and consistency in dealing with freeloaders and basic trust.

These different options (and possible combinations) can easily be imagined as strategies to choose from, when the communities consciously decided on certain side effects. It is precisely this "consciousness", which makes the difference between successful and failed leadership.

Ultimately, all these alternatives reflected an attempt in avoiding having to depend on coincidences and situational influences. For example, whilst small communities of hunters and gatherers would have been greatly dependent on what nature offered them, the first farmers created a greater scope of alternatives for themselves. However, the price was high: they had to work harder, increased catching diseases and became more attractive for thieves. Certainly, the shift towards agrarian lifestyle had diverse causes. Fun and enjoyment of everyday life associated with it was probably not one. Rather, it can be assumed that this procedure created more wealth, because it allowed our ancestors a higher degree of control over the environment.

5.6.2   Influence: Increasing Control of the Habitat

The fact that our plant-growing ancestors no longer left their fate of survival to coincidence, to such an enormous extent, they gradually grew stronger. They increased their power over natural changes (stability), on the one hand, and in comparison to other communities (attraction). And what have leaders not done throughout the ages in order to increase the control over their world: They fought and experimented, infiltrated and manipulated, formed alliances, played poker and bluffed. "The entire cultural history is defined by the effort to become as independent as possible from the whims of nature", says even a fascinating author.[30] We evidently take "subdue to the earth" very seriously and can make the general assertion that strength and size have not proven to be the best strategy of evolution.

> ▶ Nonetheless, dinosaurs are still far above us on the eternal list of the "league of legends". They dominated this planet for over 170 million years, and apparently, it was not earthlings who defeat them—but rather a fluke (at least from their perspective) of the meteorite type. We humans, when being extremely generous in our calculation, have so far mounted up 2.5 million years. Anyhow, the race is still on us! Also interesting: bacteria clearly lead the eternal list!

We humans, nonetheless, flatter ourselves in respect to our *knowledge* and *proficiencies*, defining these as a pretty effective survival strategy. As I said: The

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[30] Sedlacek (2012).

contest is still running! As you may have already realised by now, my assumption is that our proficiency in successfully completing the key evolutionary tasks of leadership will have a significant influence in determining the outcome of this competition. We can summarise as follows:

- A way of increasing the degree of control is to acquire **greater knowledge**. Once I have found out what elements will make a field more fertile, my wealth increases. Knowledge about what my enemies are up or what tomorrow will bring will give me a head start. Just look at multitude of names we have given to all the fortune-tellers, astrologers, spies, metaphysician, consultants, trend researcher and prophets during the course of our history. Their role has always been sought after—and mostly even more dangerous than that of their employers. When their recommendations and predictions failed, they were debunked, either charlatans or at least as popular scapegoats. Today, getting a head start on knowledge has become an ever greater challenge: Whilst the cost of available information has been almost decimated to nothing and can accessed almost instantaneously, the creation of new information often requires huge investments. Besides, even our modern "prophets" have become smarter: they supplement their predictions with wordings in the style of "under the assumption that the prevailing conditions remain stable". This is, of course, never the case!

  I think there is no need to provide recommendations to increase the level of knowledge about ones own habitat. The world is full of vendors here, and the problem is more likely to identify relevant knowledge and more importantly creating meaningful images from that *information*.
- Another form of increasing the ability to control option comes from having the power of **assertion**. For many centuries, the face of our world has been shaped by wars of conquest, the brutal collection of taxes, raids and power struggles. What company does not dream—more or less secretly—of an unassailable monopoly available to erase competitors and conquer new markets? On the other hand, we people have a fine sense of recognising when positions of power have become too strong and develop counterreactions. The strategy was never as successful as the temptation eluded it to be in the outset. "Even in the era of so-called American hegemony, attempts made by the Americans to bring about changes in other countries using their military strength or economic sanctions, was only successful in only a fifth of the cases . . . U.S. Army's planning staff . . . has pleaded to not set such great expectations in technology, linear planning and centralization".[31]

  I personally have no doubt that it is absolutely interesting for leaders to increase the power and assertiveness of their organisation. The term "influence" should, however, not be reduced to such!
- The strongest and most flexible way to increase influence in one's own community is to establish a **sense of purpose**. "In the conventional view, the greatest power lies with the countries that have the most powerful armed forces;

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[31] Nye (2011, p. 74, 229).

However, in the information age they could reside in those states (or non-state actors), which succeed in having the best self-presentation … A great strategy will start with the assurance of survival, but the focus should be shifted beyond this objective, to the provision of public goods … An empire is easier to govern, if it does not have to rely on the hard power of coercion, but when it can also benefit from the soft power of attraction".[32] Overall, you can probably find that the effect is greater, the more people (a) believe to benefit themselves (millions of Apple customers pay tribute to this) and (b) share the concerns of an organisation (donate to Greenpeace?).

We automatically allow those people, organisations and communities to have the largest amount of influence over us—and for obvious reasons—who claim to advance the interests of common good in a socially skilled manner. We then consider it absolutely acceptable, for them to also benefit themselves. Unfortunately, it has been demonstrated time and time again that the risk prevails in the temptation this power offers, in abusing it for purely egoistical goals. Something we react very sensitively to. If you have previously allowed us to hold a different belief, we now feel manipulated and exploited. We then give the maximum penalty: mistrust, alienation and revenge!

> ▶ Our ancestors probably did not even live in a "world of resources". They perceived their habitat to consist of living beings (which you had to treat accordingly) rather than a technical amassment of predominantly dead matter. Therefore, an attitude of cooperation and interaction was central to them. "Much of what can still be observed in so-called primitive people today, offerings to the spirits of nature, and even gratitude to wild game for allowing us to have its meat, is based on an understanding of living in a world in which exchange, give and take, is the real basis of existence".[33]

Even today, the richest countries in the world can only maintain their affluence, if they secure access to essential raw materials, i.e. maintain control over resources. You certainly cannot accuse the political leaders of these countries of neglecting this part of their leadership task. What is giving many of us a headache has more to do with the next facet of the 6th key task: Are we, who live in material affluence, the parasites of the world community? Are we abusing our power?

5.6.3 Inclusion: Turning Strangers into Allies

To the extent that one is conscious of the interdependencies, leaders must learn to not only exert power over others but also with others. *Nye* calls this "smart power" and emphasises that this requires coherent strategies and intelligence to work. He

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[32] Nye (2011, p. 14, 305, 317).

[33] Drennig (2008).

points out that we need to focus our attention more on context and strategy, because it is not just a question of resources but also on results.[34]

Basically, the aspect of "inclusion" is theoretically not all that complicated. There is no need to include anything fundamentally new into our considerations. Both as individuals and as a community, we are embedded in a social force field. We are never surrounded by supporters only and rarely only by opponents (keyword: *emotion*). Perhaps there are a few tasks that we can actually get done individually, without external, social influence. In all others cases, we need help or at least neutrality (keyword: *deal*). The role we have within the social field forces is determined by our actual behaviour and reputation (keyword: *image*).

The only thing that is new here is that we need to transfer the known principles of cooperation *within* the community to that *between* communities. This is complicated and costly, to a certain extent, because—in contrast to our group members—they are initially strangers. However, I am convinced that the same rules are relevant here and, after all, we have come a long way in this discipline. "In no other species can two individuals that have never encountered each other before, swap goods and services to the benefit of both".[35]

So we are suddenly treading into the realms diplomats, ambassadors, merchants and mediators. The balance between competition and cooperation does happen all of its own accord, i.e. without will and effort.[36]

> *Exchange* (e.g. help and presents) was already used to secure survival in our primal communities. Even when everyone already had the same things, people engaged in exchange.
>
> Division of labour and *specialisation* promotes the wealth of those involved. In contrast, the defining characteristic of poverty is the return to autarchy.

However, we shouldn't ignore that evolution has not produced any pure forms of altruists or freeloaders, instead, endowed us with a wide range of behavioural variability. We can be both! An essential function falls, once again, on the building of communities—and leadership. "It is surprising how little attention the management literature has paid to networking outward, despite one study after another emphasising that managers direct their influence externally, at least as much as internally".[37]

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[34] Nye (2011, p. 35).

[35] Ridley (2011, p. 123).

[36] Sennet (2012).

[37] Mintzberg (2010).

▶ How patterns of social interactions have been transferred from individuals to communities, from very early on, can be seen in other aspects as well: e.g. law in oldest forms is still family law. Even today, we may still be experiencing how our archaic patterns affect us, when we condemn an entire organisation, just because one individual member showed gross misconduct. The reputation of this community is damaged! What does it do? It sacrifices one of those concerned (or a "scapegoat") in order to rid itself of this disgrace. When this happens too often, the method is ineffective: The entire "corporate family" falls out of favour in their environment, the *image* irreparably damaged.

Our dominant economic systems define relationships through the ***deal component*** and evaluate us on the basis of our present utility. We are involved in society with a functional value, as individuals or organisation! That's perfectly fine—as long as we do not *reduce* our communities to this aspect alone! And it is not at all that unlikely for this to happen. Just as biological nature, after being a *partner for interaction*, eventually became, during the course of human history, *a material resource* (i.e. soulless), we are increasingly at risk to consider our fellow human beings as calculable human resource (keyword: human resources).

We also do not become more social by applying neurological or psychological insights, e.g. on employees and customers. Absurdly, we are trying to solve the problems that were caused by our views on life (e.g. declining employee, supplier and customer loyalty, social solidarity), with components from the same drawer (e.g. traditional performance and control systems, formal tender processes, loyalty bonuses, neuromarketing, neo-liberalism). With these procedures, we remain caught in the widely spread cynical manipulative ideas about human nature—and terrifically miss our 6th key task! To do a conspecific favour can be based purely on calculation, but it can also be a sincere desire.

Cynicism develops on the foundation of *failed* integration, i.e. from an attitude of being an outsider or superior. It cannot be fixed with know-how!
Just as there are cynical individuals (e.g. executives with a manipulative attitude), there are cynical communities (e.g. hard-selling organisations). For both, the *task of inclusion is*—without cultural change—principally impossible, as they try to accomplish it technically, without applying themselves.

The literary world is teeming with publications that have to be sorted into the category "cynical management books". Insofar, it is less of a strategy (technology) and more of a state of mind (culture) that should determine our behaviour in terms of how we turn strangers into allies. Fundamentally, we seem to understand more and more that inclusion (modern: networking) is relevant to success. Amazingly,

this fact is brought into causal relationship with modern developments in communication (e.g. the World Wide Web). It is exactly the opposite: first the age-old needs and then the success of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. With these modern online networks, we are not being at socially innovative whatsoever. We're going *backwards*! *Prof. Gerd-Christian Weniger*, Director at the Neanderthal Museum in Mettmann, pointed out to me that it was always those who were better connected with other communities who survived in times of crisis.

If we look at who makes up the social environment of an organisation, we can quickly identify at least four major groupings: (internal) customers, (internal) suppliers, competitors and the general public. We can live together with them parasitically or symbiotically, fighting each other, neighbourly or collaboratively. We can value a common history and mutual respect or strive to achieve absolute power. In general, the leader will determine the culture of the group with his attitude, in respect to the alternatives discussed here. We can build something magnificent together with others and consider them uncommitted neighbours—or fight them.

Remember: Beings, with whom we have no experience of community, can be unscrupulously exploited! Allow me to reapply at this point a tip.

> ▶ **Tip**: Work out a conscious strategy and align the behaviour of your own unit to each relevant group of your social environment!
> **Therefore: (Internal) Customer orientation is a management task that cannot**
> **be delegated to marketing, sales or service!**

The most essential stranger for most businesses is, of course, ***the customer***! At the core, it is always a question of a ***pleasing contact*** with him! We do not need customer retention programmes. After all, who wants to be retained? We must simply make our contribution to the community with the customer—and understand the conditions under which our customer will find this community attractive. Extensive studies by the Gallup Institute (Buckingham and Coffman 2001) have assumed four levels of expectations, remarkably stable across all industries and types of people:

1. At the lowest level, the customer expects ***accuracy***. Those things should happen, which were announced and can be expected.
2. The next step is ***availability***. Interaction should be simple and easy.
3. Then, at the next level, a ***relationship*** is now expected. What this basically means is that the customer wants to experience himself as part of the community, i.e. the feeling that we're in the same boat with him. And we are!
4. The highest expectation is described as ***advisory***. The client seems to feel most connected to the organisation that supports him in his learning process, thus allowing him to develop further.

Are these any different from those points that our evolutionary psychological understanding would suggest? Don't we all expect reliability (accuracy), pleasant

encounters (availability), mutual practical support (partnership) and growth impulses (advice) from our communities?[38]

> ▶ What we must not lose sight of this point: Equally, the community with clients must also be attractive in order for both to prosper. And every one of us is a customer! Unfortunately, too often we understand ourselves to be *consumers*! We consume things, organisations and people. Do we sense at all, what fluctuation prevails in the stores downtown? Do we have any idea of the number of indebted existences this is composed of? We as customers have become just as unattached as societies and companies, who's lack of loyalty we complain about. It does not seem to bother us that the competition we kindle in business or by ordering on the Internet in the evenings appears murderous to us when we sit in our firms the next day.

A completely different aspect of this key task of evolutionary leadership relates to the *protection of the community*! When group members can focus on their contribution to the collective promise, the community is better off! Artisans, farmers and merchants, who had to constantly defend themselves against looters and foreign soldiers, of course, neglected their work. The prosperity of the country melted like snow in the sun. Today we would say: The leader must keep the back of those clear, who are entrusted to him. Building *alliances* plays an equally important role as the *defence* and *protection* from attacks or the *appeasement* of potential enemies. Interestingly enough, many managers react almost horrified when they're asked if they can navigate well or are skilful politicians or smart networkers. They are proud of what they call authenticity, honesty and candour.

Political practice between communities is something completely different from within a community. Scheming differs from diplomacy! It is interesting, in this context, that individual groups of a species with notably cooperative members behave even more aggressively as a group towards other communities. Therefore, it no doubt requires ongoing leadership effort to secure both strong internal cohesion and openness to the outside.

Another key aspect seems to be the *community image*! Just as every individual is working to develop recognition, trust and respect, it must of course also apply to an organisation. That would immediately indicate that our traditional marketing or PR is positioned quite differently. A brand, in our sense, is created by shared experience of concrete behaviour! This is also a reason why we should attach such a high value to *successful encounters*.

The manager is the interface to the outside world (careful: for you this can also mean within your company!), the *figurehead*, so to speak, the representative of his

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[38] During the last couple of years, we have been working on an evolutionary psychological approach to customer orientation. The first practical experiences we have had with this have been truly remarkable!

team. When *Mintzberg* writes, this role is all the more likely,[39] the higher up you are in the hierarchy, then this time, I do not share his point of view. Maybe he overlooks the fact that the *outside* is simply defined differently, depending on the hierarchy level you are in: for the directors, it may be the supervisory board, the shareholders and the public. For the team leader in administration, this *outside* is perhaps the colleague on the same level in the construction department, his own superior and the entire sales department. In both cases, it may come down to skilful negotiation, representation, establishing alliances and creative a positive image.

Our 6th key task of evolutionary leadership has thus made the survival of our community or organisations safer, by allowing us to effectively adjust to the world we live in. We have found here that we have different behavioural programmes and strategies available. That is one reason why I did not include this task in the 1st edition: The evolutionary psychology patterns are likely to be somewhat more difficult to identify here.

Thematically I have become a little bolder and perhaps also somewhat more experimental, because I now see the approach to leadership as a (learning) process. Let us look together, where this idea leads. Let's play around with it and put it to some serious testing!

One more key task remains: We had already talked about the relevancy of a changed perception of time for us human beings (see Sect. 2.1.1) What impact does this have on the leadership task?

5.7 Attraction: Supporting the Group into a Prosperous Future

This chapter has less "technical" relevancy for you if:

- Many interesting and competent people signal their interested to on your team
- The mission of your team has a high social value
- Future worries are unfounded in your community or at least hardly affect the team's behaviour
- Your organisation provides security to its members
- Your role is unquestioned and you are experienced by others as a visionary and inspirer

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[39] Mintzberg (2010).

The inspiring author *Marcus Buckingham* has been involved with the renowned Gallup Institute and the studies on the leadership phenomenon for over 17 years. When asked what differentiates good leaders from "normal" people with initiative, creativity, stamina and integrity, he sees only one answer: ***leading the group into prosperous future*** (Buckingham 2006). He even assumes that they are convinced, with every beat of their heart, to be the only person with the unique capabilities to reach this future.

Let's stop briefly, for a moment! We started our outline with the challenge to win the legitimacy of our leadership (1st key task). The *evolutionary leadership* approach now assumes that the likelihood of retaining this role is highest if we complete the 2nd to 6th key task successfully. Can't we end our journey right here? Will doing so not bring the group to prosperous future almost automatically? Very much possible! In the first edition, the seventh core task did not show up.

On the other hand, the current events of the last few years have just shown us that we humans seem to quickly deny our legitimacy to leaders, if their ***operative time horizon*** is short. Why is that? Maybe we are on the road to recognising another pattern? Especially since we are also able to observe regularities in the problem structure of management (e.g. lack of sustainability, diminishing loyalty, declining retention of managers in their position, increasing feelings of futility), it is in my opinion worthwhile to further pursue this question.

At this point, I would like to set up some theses that can direct our attention to the future work on our leadership approach:

- The phenomenon of the ***mutual promise of achievement*** requires predictability of the community. We invest emotional energy—e.g. affection, loyalty, zealous commitment, backing and support—in relationships, whose expiration date we don't expect to be short from the outset. Otherwise, we would rather prepare for disappointments in advance—and hold back.
- Members of a community tend to prefer a leader that is ***one of us***! You can easily trust this person for two reasons: First, you are *familiar* with him and can assess him; secondly you will unconsciously assume that he will be available for a *longer future period*. He is simply part of things, has the same interests and concerns regarding the greater whole!
- Being ***an integral part of a stable community*** reassures us and gives us courage for experimentation. Taking on adventures together that set off from a secure base is more likely to lead to success than an individual crashing into a crisis zone.
- We appreciate contributing to something greater, providing it delivers us with a benefit (e.g. in the form of fame, recognition, identity, security). We involuntarily take ***a glimpse into the future***: What advantages will I have from contributing to this community? Sometimes even beyond our own existence: Will my children be better off—or at least well off? Will I be remembered favourably?

As these thoughts fit quite nicely into the previously developed ideas, let us follow them a little further. Basically, it's about the question: What impact does the phenomenon of time have leaders' effectiveness and their concern to maintain the granted legitimacy?

For the larger part of time we humans have spent on earth—as with our animalistic relatives—we have focused our efforts on the current moment: e.g. nurture, security, pleasure and defence. Today we would say that we used to be (?) pretty action orientated! In Part I of our book, we have already discussed the fact that the extension of our time horizon modified our species' rules of the game (see Sect. 2.1.1). If you pragmatically started with Part II, concentrating immediately on the core tasks of leadership, a small look back would be pretty useful at this point.

The time horizon affects our leadership task in various ways:

- For one, the ***duration of the task*** plays a role, with the responsibility, of making sure it is successful, resting with the leader. Am I taking full personal responsibility of making sure that the quarterly targets are reached or that the members entrusted to me can look forward to surviving securely for the years to come? Is it about a *project* (e.g. hunting success), a *process* (e.g. safeguarding the supply of energy) or simply just *surviving for the time being* (e.g. restructuring)?
- Each task has, as I call it, its ***proper time***, i.e. a certain duration of time is required. When it can be assumed that the leader will not be there for the entire duration, I will take him seriously! What should we think of a coach who leaves the club to join another, after 27 minutes of playing time? It can be seen as equally critical if the leader has no sense of the proper time required for a task. How much trust would I put in a farmer who gets violently upset 5 days after sowing the seeds, because still there is nothing visible on the surface of the land?
- Furthermore, the topic of time relates to the ***perspective and orientation*** of the community. Can you sketch out the way, which you wish to go together? Can the leader give a viable answer to the question of where we will arrive if we choose to follow him? To what extent is he casting a shadow onto the future? What is it that you will be accomplishing together?
- In addition, the question can be raised of how long the leader and this community will be spoken about. What lasting trace will someone leave in, and with, his organisation? Can we even assume to become a ***legacy in the future***?

It can be assumed that the ***prolongation of the human time horizon*** has left traces in the primal purpose of leadership (ensuring that it works together!).

Maybe we do not just work together to create a greater whole but also something more sustainable. Are we only interested in our immediate survival or can we identify substantial motives that lie beyond our own existence?

▶ Sweaty and dusty, but with delighted fascination, Julius Jordan, the
architect from Germany, raises the small clay plate from out of the soil.
Nearly 5,000 years, it had waited here for him. And he holds in his
hands—without knowing it—the records of the young Ze-Elter. The
symbols tell the story of the incredible city with thousands of workers,
of the large market, to which the whole world came and of miracles by a
king, who is worshiped as "lord of the fields", no mentioning of Ze-Elter.
And so Jordan has no idea about the night in which the merchants of
primordial times arrived in Ze-Elter's camp. No inkling of the flames from
the fire, flickering across the emotional faces, as they all sat with their
mouths gapping, listening to the stories that Ze-Elter told. Drinks were
handed around and the fantastic images grew in their minds. The three
friends—inspired by the young Ze-Elter—were quick to agree: They had
to see for themselves the huge warehouse made of stone, which was the
centre of the story!
All pleading and begging turned out to be futile back then. Only the
promise to take on the responsibility for hunting during the trip had
turned the dealers and the three of them into companions. At that point,
none of the friends could have known that only one of them would
survive the trip to see the world of the 1,000 hordes, the stones with the
laws and the great rulers and testify the existence with his own eyes. No
one saw their clan, which they left behind at the break of dawn, ever
again.

We do not know when a leader first started thinking about the future of his group
and what the future event meant in those times. But certainly these aspects had an
impact on competition amongst groups. It can be shown that children who sacrifice
a reward today, to get a bigger one tomorrow, will be more successful, on average,
later on life than their contrast group. Considering only current pleasure and present
well-being will surely limit success. This is true not only on an individual level but
also on the level of the group. Leaders who were successful in sharing this insight
with the group together and transfer it into tangible achievements (e.g. constructing
a building to store grain) increased the likelihood of survival. Conversely, I cannot
imagine that it has ever been valuable for a leader for the community to be resting in
continuous fear of the future.

The extent to which our time horizon expanded and we were able to imagine a
vivid future significantly increased the need for security beyond the current
moment.

> So far, leaders only had to ensure that working together was successful at the moment; now, they increasingly had to make sure to successfully complete their task in the ***world of imagination***: How do I avoid damaging fear of the future in a community? How do I make sure there is hope of a successful future together?
>
> Leaders, who found answers to these questions, would have stabilised their role!

We can possibly identify 3 different ways to achieve this:

- The most traditional way of doing this would consist of having already secured the ***day-to-day*** survival of the community for a long period of time in the past. In this way, a type of basic trust is created: *What has already succeeded a thousand times in the past is due to be successful today!*
- With increasing prolongation of the time horizon, new issues would have surfaced: What are we going to do in winter when the great herds no longer take their route through our territory—and we have failed to invest in sufficient reserves? If leaders were able to provide the group with mental solutions and ***perspectives,*** the group would have remained in full confidence and fully operational: *This is a solution I can believe in. Let's do it!*
- A particular strength was created, by placing the community into the everlasting ***history of mankind***: *We are the people of the xy! We have always existed and will always exist!*

Although the seventh key function is of strategic nature, it does not necessarily belong into the next strategy meeting. This task is about emotions and existential orientation! What am I conveying when I announce: "I have no ideas at this point, so we are going to have a workshop together"? It's easy to imagine that an uncertain captain does not necessarily spread confidence on the ship. Mind you, I do not want to draw the picture of a lonesome hero. However, your followers have the right to demand that you reduce their anxiety. Sorry, but no one is really interested in how much solitude and fear you yourself have to endure!

> ▶ ***Tip***: Develop personal strategies to deal suitably with your own insecurity. Pick trustworthy people outside of your area of responsibility, should you want to talk about things. Only in carefully contemplated cases should you confront your team with your concerns and needs.
>
> ***Also: Learn to deal well with your own uncertainty and pressure!***

5.7.1   Security: Removing Current Fears

The unspoken evolutionary leadership promise that someone is taking care of ensuring future success—*taking care for us*—gives us a certain peace of mind. There is someone there, and there are still others. We are not on our own in the struggle for survival. We do not have to worry! There may be an existential core of the leadership phenomenon in this element of follower experience, yes, perhaps even in our general human psyche! We tend to be pussycats and cowards—and therefore need functioning methods to deal with insecurity: we are attracted to people who take away our fears. We suppress real issues and facts. We blame the cause of failure reasons that have nothing to do with ourselves, to protect our self-esteem, etc. "The generation that enjoys so much peace, freedom, leisure, education, medicine, travel, movies, mobile phones and massages than any generation before, senses the downfall at any given moment in time. . .".[40]

> ▶ Suppose you were in financial difficulties. What would it mean to you emotionally if your impoverished family would say: "You are not alone! We can do it together!"? Consider an alternatively response "You have to apply for unemployment benefits. . .". How would it change your emotional state now after having confirmed that any amount of money can be made available from the circle of your family?

We expect **welfare, solidarity and support** from the people who are close to us. If they deny us in these respects, our confidence and our sense of community are vanquished. Absurdly, many managers deprive their employees these feelings of security but wonder the same about the predictable side effects.

> ▶ This topic is also relevant on the scale of social issues: The assistance of insurance companies or government agency will not shift us into the same psychological world as they are represented by human communities. We do not experience any solidarity with the clerk, who transfers the money to us. So the renowned principle of subsidiarity has facets that go way beyond concepts of practical support.

Perhaps you feel inclined to draw my attention to the point that individuals are not able to feel secure in today's world of business organisations, because they are not safe themselves. Of course, you are right! Obviously I am aware that it (today?) is very hard to give people a sense of security. At the same time, I do not need to convince you that we are living in one of the safest eras mankind has ever witnessed.[41] I cannot imagine myself that our primal ancestors demanded higher levels of security and freedom from their leaders. However, they had the basic trust

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[40] Ridley (2011, p. 381, 385).

[41] If not, have a look at the impressively researched work from Steven Pinker (2011).

of living in a community of fate, being certain of permanent inclusion, as far as they did their fair share of the deal.

They experienced no stability and predictability from one day to the next. They did not know whether they had to starve, became injured or even died. However, what they did know was that their community—in the event that they were still alive—would take care of them!

> ▶ *Tip*: Demonstrate that you can be relied on, even in difficult times, as long as someone keeps up his part of the mutual promise of achievement. Make sure to care for—if necessary beyond the immediate membership of your organisation—the people who you have been entrusted with.
> *Therefore: Never carelessly terminate any part of the mutual promise for achievement that you have given!*

What our ancestors experienced as additional forms of security began, perhaps, with a resting place in a tree, moved on to a den and then to the palisades of irrigation systems, up to cities with their infrastructure and military armies. From my perspective, there have always only been three routes to more personal safety. So no other reliable promises could ever have been given. Do the "usual suspects" from evolutionary psychological differ from those that are still valid today?

- *Performance and contribution* (today we would say our *market value*)
- *Inclusion* into a high-performing community (today: *networking*)
- *Safety measures*, allowing us to sleep better (today: *state*, *insurances*, etc.)

So what's up, in this context, with the much-vaunted ability of *change and innovation* about? They should, according to the generally accepted knowledge—next to a comprehensive education—be the cure-all for us. We are being continually told that the quick will beat the slow (prudent?) and the innovative will beat the consistent (empirical?). But is that really so?

The management specialists Collins and Hansen have shown in sophisticated studies that "The notion that leadership in a 'fast world' always requires 'fast decisions' and 'fast actions'. . . is a safe method to go down" (Collins and Hansen 2012, S. 26).

> ▶ *Tip*: You can only promise three things: (1) that you contribute to the growth of performance and contribution of your team; (2) that someone can rely on you, if they keep their promise of achievement; and (3) that you share with the team any thoughts about measures appropriate and possible measures for security. Make sure that your employees understand this!
> *Therefore: Increase the market value of your staff, create a team that can rely on each other and make the rules clear.*

Informal trust requires a certain amount of *stability and predictability* within a community. Being erratic and nervous leads to alienation from one another. And

surely it is no coincidence that the most successful political campaigns have always been those that cater to the desire of matter of course and stability.[42] Trust is difficult in organisations where one change process is followed by the next, in which people only ever work together for a short time (keyword: *virtual organisation*) and stability has become almost a dirty word. How successful are people likely to be in a ragtag bunch of mercenaries, out together for a short time and immediately trusting each other? Can this situation ever be resolved?

The most durable economic organisations preserve their identity not in terms of, e.g., products, services or location. They preserve their identity as a performance community, one that is flexible in searching for solutions, ensuring their survival for tomorrow. Although their models of success are regularly put to the test, they are never changed multiple times during an ongoing match. When trying to keep institutions, cities and other "solidified structures" alive, a strategic mistake is basically made! I do not know if indigenous tribes in the rainforest feel sad when they have to give up their tree houses every 3–5 years, because they tend to rot during this period. But I do know that they can rely on their tribe to construct new ones. It's not necessarily about keeping what has been created! It is about the question of how to keep the community alive!

> ▶ **Tip**: Do not constantly change your collective model of success, especially not on behalf of any current trends, or just for public show (e.g. annual model of performance councils). Routinely build in the question, what should be given up before continuing the onward journey? Clearly show what will remain unchanged.
>
> **Therefore: Do not allow yourself to be intimidated by the prospect of managing**
> **change and stability simultaneously. It can be done!**

Performance, contribution and community are the primary things that can make survival more likely and provide security in the here and now: "We are good and can rely on each other!"

A social problem: Due to the increasing decline of the *community as a social model* and the continually beleaguered self-confidence of individuals, also of the society (is my *performance* good enough?), prime sources of guaranteeing safety are under attack.
What remains is option No. 3 (*protective measures*)— e.g. in the form of insurance policies, reserves and weapons—however, psychologically, they do not seem to work that well.

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[42] Steingart (2011).

If you have solved the 5th key task (*forming and sustaining a competitive team*), you have laid the foundation for safety. In addition, it also makes sense to establish protection and use it. However, leaders also need to make sure that no one stays for too long in rotting tree houses. In the rain forest, these are often built at a height of over 40 m!

So far, our leadership is comparable to flying an aeroplane in *visual flight mode*: you are continually in full concentration, looking out for the next mountain to appear, nervously holding the rudder in your hands, because immediate reactions may be necessary. This is not an agreeable steady state to be in! Successful pilots see to it that they are always "15 minutes ahead of their aeroplane".

5.7.2   Perspective: Reducing Anxieties About the Future

The members of the community seem to outright expect their leaders to have the ability of being able to predict the future and knowing what will happen when. Competence and legitimacy in this context mean to be successful in making predictions![43] This is quite understandable. After all, it is indeed always possible to have a couple of lucky hits, even without an understanding of the field or phenomenon at hand, but only true will consistently beat the odds!

> ▶ Excellent chess players think 5 moves ahead, i.e. within this scope, they play through their moves and possible responses of the opponent. Models to forecast the weather will prove to be quite accurate within the scope of 3–4 days. Good tutors are amazingly good at predicting the point in time when their students progress to certain stages of development—and how that changes when they do certain things differently.

Nonetheless, of course, there were never fortune-tellers capable of predicting the future in a truly mystical sense, and until today—in defiance of futurologists—they still fail to exist. "The best leaders . . . do not have visionary abilities, thanks to which they were able to foresee the future" (Collins and Hansen 2012, S. 25). Nevertheless, they fulfil the task of reducing the fear of the future for their organisation. They observe what works, find out *why* it works and reinforce themselves on the basis of proven principles. They are no more willing to take risks, no more courageous, no more visionary and no more creative than their less successful colleagues. They are more disciplined and go about their tasks more empirically and more prudently.

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[43] Entertaining in connection with this topic: Klingner (2012).

How can it then be that *Berth* (1993) has concluded after conducting a large-scale study on leadership success that companies with a visionary orientation are 200% more successful than those without? My assumption is that this is largely due to the impact that a *perspective* has.

> ▶ With a little courage, we could even dare to make the assumptions that
> we have primal images of attractive futures (archetypes); they would be,
> so to speak, the first entrepreneurial visions. A future with safety, security
> or pleasure will undoubtedly appeal to us stronger than loneliness,
> hunger and boredom.

Basically, I can try to predict the future—or create it. This is somewhat similar to the strategic question of either adapting myself to my habitat or modifying it to suit my needs (cf. 6th key task). If I want to feel safer, I will do the same for both options: I figure out to where I want to develop the present situation and list what adaptations and modifications make sense. If the community believes in the result—and the perspective associated with it—then the harmful anxiety is reduced. The power is released for the implementation of collective plans.

You have probably already noticed that I would prefer to give up the term vision and replace it with *promise for the future*. On the one hand, we do not need vision to ensure direction and energy. An effective, collective model of success can do this as well. On the other hand, it's not about science fiction and great utopias but rather about orientation. And this is not simply self-evident and to be taken for granted. Something or someone has to create it.

Eventually, it was possible to enter the competition for a leadership position over the alternative offers to the promise for the future. The aspiring leader must personalise a future possibility, so that group members can decide for or against him. The so-called opportunity orientation of a manager consists of his ability to offer as many attractive futures as possible. A leader, who leaves the kind of future he stands for unclear, is a risk for the followers.

> ▶ **Tip**: Do not let yourself become so "submerged" in day-to-day business
> that you leave the basic needs for safety and perspective up to coinci-
> dence. Don't reinforce fears just because you believe they motivate.
> ### *Therefore: Develop an offering for the future and*
> ### *a credible, confidence-giving perspective!*

How can we bring this tip in line with the observation that some people will ignore the need for change because they feel too safe? I see different possibilities for this, which should also be handled differently:

- There are actually members of the community who are safer than others (e.g. difficult to replace specialists within their own niche, well-connected people, legally protected people). *Tip: depending on these people, keep low!*
- But then, the past may have been seen as so stable that no one can imagine an upcoming threat (the famous "island of the blessed"). *Tip: a shake-up is allowed! Just make sure that you yourself don't become the threat!*
- Much more frequent these days: So much has been changed without any tangible improvement, so that it is no longer regarded as a perspective. The belief in leadership has been corrupted. People no longer feel safe, but lonely! *Tip: the models of success need working on! Reflect on own leadership behaviour!*
- Uncommon: We are dealing with completely ignorant, smug people. *Tip: very straight talk is required! Consider separation!*

Ultimately, all this does not change the fact that people expect their leader to act as kind of *buffer* between them and the threat. Perspective is about **experienced capacity to take action** on behalf of the parties involved. Apparently, in order to make that happen, we need, next to clarity, substance and an attractive future offering the credibility of the provider as well. This may, on the one hand, be based on the trust that we have in the leader ("he'll get things done") and, on the other hand, a mental image of how this future would be created ("we can do this"). Once a future offering appears attractive, the immediate question we ask ourselves is: How do we get there? We expect from the person, who we are about to grant the leadership legitimacy to, that he can provide us with a credible answer. Therefore, the perspective requires an interface to the shared model of success, for it to have an impact.

> ▶ **Tip**: Read through the chapter again "Model of Success: Knowing How to Ensure Collective Success".
> **Also: Connect your future offering with the collective model of success!**

Suppose that you have now done a good job in this key task of evolutionary leadership. Then your team will now know what the future they are most likely to face if one implements the collective model of success and follows you. The group members may not be looking forward to the arduous journey, they know of the dangers and uncertainties, but they have the capacity to take action.

This way, a level of confidence has been established that goes beyond short-term survival: *Together with this community, I will also make it into the next year.* An even larger sense of security is created when it is exactly this community that has gained *a reputation to be invincible*, when everyone somehow knows that it is simply impossible to lose as a member of this team.

5.7.3   Legend: Building the Community an Enduring Significance

Which football club leads the "all-time league table of the premier Bundesliga?"[44] Which nations of our ancient history—apart from the Greeks—come to your mind spontaneously? Which German global business enterprises are amongst the most popular employers? And which two companies are ranked highest worldwide?[45] I would not really expect any outlandish answers here. These organisations and groups have obtained a lasting significance. Because they and their achievements:

- Have a significant impact on our lives (*contribution*)
- Are talked about positively by many people (*image*)
- Are repeatedly in attractive contact with us (*encounter*)
- Have become part of our culture (*writing history*)

These principles apply to communities just in the same way they do to individuals: So the hero is the one who has gained "immortality" on the grounds of an individual achievement, one of the highest goals to reach for figures of antiquity. In situations where the community no longer knew what to do, he successfully took on the cause or even sacrificed his life for it and delivered himself to the memories of posterity. Even in the Epic of Gilgamesh,[46] the individual no longer attempts to get richer. Instead, it was important for to him to etch his name into the memory of mankind in the form of heroic tales. Gilgamesh was the first to succeed in reaching immortality with the form of written records. His name is still remembered today.

> ▶ I have no idea who in recent years made first or second place on some TV channels in one of those superstar talent competitions. Despite the undoubtedly existing visibility, it clearly lacked as a rule continuous success and above all *significance*.
> On the other hand, it probably will not surprise you that FC Bayern Munich has the most club members. It is simply *famous*! Who knows that the Sportpaß e.V. (Hamburg) is almost on par with Borussia Dortmund and HSV amongst the top 5 clubs in ranking of membership? This club offers something that is apparently of *significance* to many people.[47]

Nonetheless, you will not necessarily want to go down in history by heroically sacrificing yourself for an organisation. That is, however, not the point here. Our purpose is to help you cope successfully with the 7th key task of evolutionary

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[44] FC Bayern München.

[45] Germany: BMW, Siemens, DaimlerChrysler, Porsche, Audi, Bosch; global: Google, Apple.

[46] Is considered the world's first truly great work of literature, written over 4,000 years ago.

[47] The speciality of this sports club lies in overcoming the obstacles—especially in team sports—of the Germany sports club structure. Sportpaß offers its members the opportunity to play (team) sports without any pressure.

leadership. After all, you've come an extremely long way so far. Right now, it's about the three last points. It's about the pinnacle of your work!

- ***Significance:*** Create something with your organisation that is able to sustainably influence the lives of many! Align your services to *the eternal* (e.g. basic human concerns) or to *the great* (e.g. impressive community projects)!
- ***Encounters:*** create successful encounters between your organisation and other people! Live fascinating stories with your team, ones that people would just as much like to participate in, as to talk about!
- ***Immortality:*** Create something that lives on without you. Team members will come and go, even your organisation—it may currently be an empire—will eventually disappear in its present form. What happens next after you're gone? And what will be remembered?

Now then, even early rulers already took "making history" literally. Schoolbooks are filled with the names of rulers, who made enormous efforts to ensure that posterity hears about them. But there are also examples of virtually ***immortal communities*** (e.g. the Spartans, the Benedictines, the Swiss Guard, the Freemasons) or family clans (such as the Medici, the Fuggers, the Habsburgs). Some of them have made it to the present day, namely, when they have never lost their added value and relevance, perhaps even becoming a tradition. The membership to such a community may be a question of honour for some people.

Let's make no mistake about it! When I say that it is about ***the culmination of your work*** here, I meant *absolutely* seriously. At this point, we are not operating within the scope of value-based sustainability, brand management, excellent customer orientation or employer branding. Just as only some of the many really good craftsmen may become artisans, and from this small group only very few emerge to become one of the very few great artists, the road to winning the championship in leadership is very long!

You will never come to a finish line, tear the golden ribbon and realise: I've made it! Not because you are not good enough but because this finish line does not exist!

Have you ever had the good fortune to meet a leader who successfully changed your life in a best possible way? Do you know an organisation whose membership would be an honour to you? When looking at questions like this, will anyone ever think of you and your company?

> ▶ **Tip**: Work on your own personal answer to the question of what legacy
> you want to leave behind in your organisation. No later than having
> successfully accomplished all the key tasks leadership up to this last
> point: Think beyond yourself and your "legislation period"!
> **Therefore: Clarify for yourself, where you want your responsibility to
> end up!**

I can clearly hear the voices: *In what world does he live? I've got enough on my
hands trying to reach the targets for the next quarter*. Of course! And that's
perfectly fine. I'm just saying that you are more likely to reach those if you reflect
on each of the seven key tasks of natural leadership.

Let's take time for a short resume. We started with the simple distinction
between task, acting agent and behaviour. In the mean time, we have succeeded
in detailing the first one as *leadership task*. From now on, all behaviour is more or
less automatically *leadership behaviour* and anyone who takes on the task becomes
a so-called leadership personality (Fig 5.1).

Now that we have seen the spectrum of leadership tasks, let's take a look at the
world in which they occur. The key tasks are equally relevant at all times and in all
situations. Therefore, let us search for the priorities that you should set in your
work. Let's try to work on your very own personal action plan.
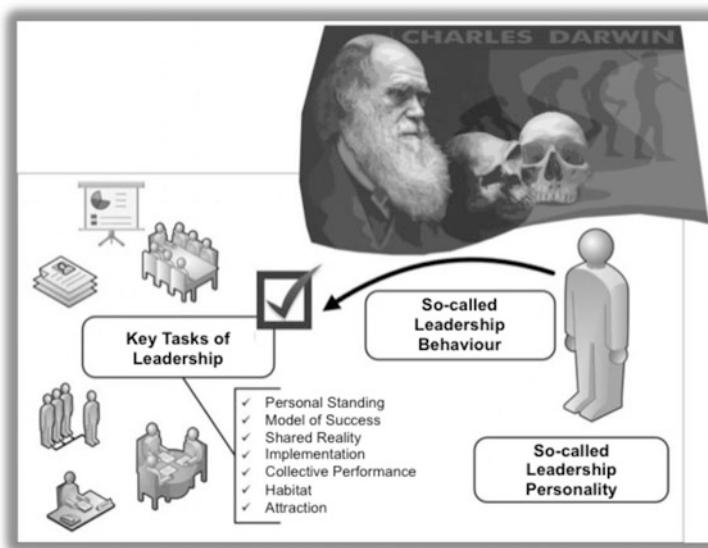
Fig. 5.1 Basic model "leadership activity"

The most gruesome alternatives to this systematic approach is selling the crown jewels of your organisation, vaporising performance reserves and tightening the thumbscrews on your team. That will always work!

And so the circle is complete: ***We can do leadership better!***

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Considering the Particularities of the Individual Situation

> *So while every manager has to make the job, he so she also has to do the job. That is why managerial style cannot be considered out of context, independent of where it is practiced—as does so much of the literature.*
>
> Henry Mintzberg, Management-Thinker

In this chapter, we embark into a territory that is amazingly unexplored. During the *1st Open-Source Management conference,*[1] the idea was initially raised that more light needs to be shed onto this topic. Let me tell you what actually happened and where we stand today.

Six years ago, we found ourselves at a very similar point with a different topic: the 1st edition was the conceptual delivery of a completely innovative approach to management diagnostics, established on the basic ideas of *evolutionary leadership*. Today—after 6 years of practical implementation and development—we can now look upon one of the most accurate instruments of the entire industry.[2] In Part III of the book, we will look at this in more detail. This experience definitely increases my confidence that, together, we will practically master the challenge of leadership's situational dependencies in the coming years.

The whole effort, however, is not worthwhile, if we only approach it in the usual form of *naturally-the-situation-factors-play-a-role*. Neither is the *in-depends-on-the-specific-case* variety helpful. As true as these two statements are, so much are they also trivial. No, if we want to draw a tangible benefit from considerations on the situation, we must penetrate deeper into the everyday world of the manager. And maybe we ask ourselves in the beginning, why has apparently hardly anyone done this before.

Well, at least we have such things as the situational leadership approach (Hersey and Blanchard 1982), which points out, for example, that the task-relevant maturity

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[1] cf. Appendix.

[2] On request we will gladly provide you with an article on the validity of *management profiling*.

of the employee has an influence on leadership. Nonetheless, on the one hand, this knowledge is not very impressive; on the other hand, the practical success of this model—despite thousands of management seminars—has barely been able to be demonstrated. And then we also have *sociology* and *psychology*, which deal with (experienced) situational impulses. But honestly: Do you know of a practical situational diagnostic procedure?

Whilst we have invested an incredible amount of research and effort into personality and management diagnostics, I can't find little on this question. This fact corresponds to the understanding that we often overlook situational factors when we deal with human behaviour. We almost automatically search for motives, personality traits or childhood experiences, to see them as a cause for the behaviour of a person. Yet there is also an undoubted *logic of the situation*, isn't there?

The role of the situation is so far not systematically considered in hardly any leadership approach.
There is a lack of instruments for **situational diagnostic**.

Any form of diagnostic reduces the complexity of the world. It does so with the intention of keeping us **operational**, which is a real challenge faced with an overwhelming abundance of factors. The criteria for the quality of diagnostic procedures are connected to two questions:

1. Does the result increase our *operational ability*?
2. Do our actions subsequently lead to increased *success*?

The first criterion is purely psychological; the second is relevant to the real tangible practice. So it may well be possible that some approaches give thousands of people the good feeling of self-confidence to operate, without being able to demonstrate any practical impact (e.g. the Grid model (Blake and Mouton 1964) or NLP techniques). *Henry Mintzberg* even goes so far as to even consider MBA education in a similar context.[3]

A substantiated approach would therefore have to consider the *acting agent*, his *concern* and the relevant *situational characteristics*—and then give specific *behavioural recommendations*, attestable to have had a positive influence on the course of history (success). I must admit that I dream about developing the findings about the leadership phenomenon to this point. This is one of the concerns of the *Open-Source-Circle: Management* (see Appendix).

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[3] In: Manager statt MBAs, 2005.
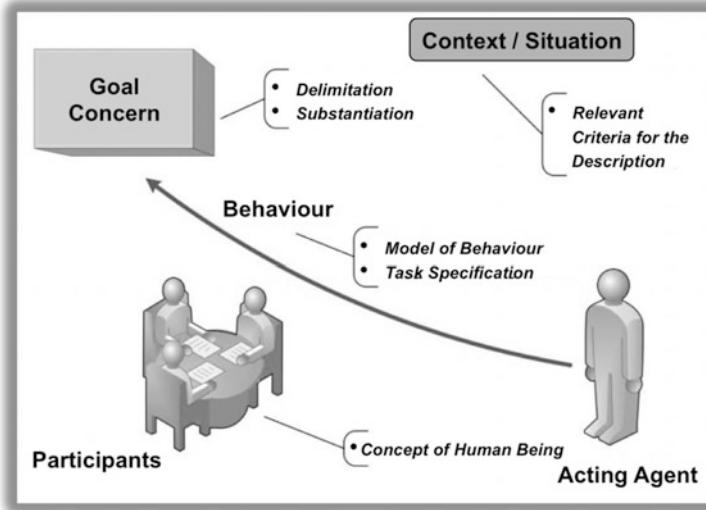
Fig. 6.1 The frame of operation

> As a foundation we need a transparent ***concept of human being*** (to describe the acting agent and the participants), ***defined concerns*** (goals) and, for this arrangement, the ***relevant criteria*** for the description of the situation.

Wow! No wonder no one wants to face the task; after all, an almost infinite number of combinations are given by potential goals and situational criteria alone (Fig. 6.1).

In business we find, in my opinion, three approaches that at least touch situational aspects:

- The concept of ***management roles*** (e.g. the integrator, the restructurer, the mentor): All of the colourfully assembled role concepts of leadership are based on the understandable basic idea that in specific situations (e.g. a case of restructuring), a specific behavioural bundle makes sense (in this case: the *restructurer*). In this way any role includes, in effect, a particular situation. That given, the described problem of the situational diagnostics could be defused, considering that we would be simultaneously provided with criteria for when the role is to be activated.

   We can almost indefinitely and arbitrarily invent new roles in this way. The manager is compared to a *broad-spectrum antibiotic* that has a right answer (i.e. role) available for every situation. "A good manager is someone, who

understands to fill, from a wide repertoire of roles, the relevant one,—and if necessary multiple ones for one situation!—together with appropriate measures, as it is conducive to success in a given situation" require *Voelpel* and *Lanwehr* in their tremendously entertaining and contextually stimulating book.[4] Is this not reminiscent to a new edition of the (almost) conquered endless list of competencies and properties, which a successful leader should possess? Now he must have thousands of roles in his repertoire instead.

- *Typologies* of employees and customers (e.g. the unmotivated, the deprived, the critical, the emotional): Of course, all participants are part of the situation. Therefore, many recommendations are based on the idea "If you have type A in front of you, you always need to do xy, whilst a type B approach promises z success". This approach actually has something helpful, especially when *the objective is clearly identified*, e.g. resolve customer complaints or motivate them to purchase.

    Regrettably, typologies unavoidably promote our stereotype thinking: "This is a typical K3er again". Personally, I believe that this approach can be accepted, when we encounter very large numbers of unknown people (e.g. in the mass market). For smaller and well-known groups (e.g. employees), we should not shy away from the effort to deal with each person individually, rather than reverting to stereotypes.

- *Categories of companies* (e.g. start-up, multinational group, family businesses or a restructuring case): This approach recognises that every company practically defines its own situation. The recommendations can then be written something like "If your company is coming out of the start-up phase, then you need to do xy as the next step". Out of all three, I like this approach the most, because it emphasises the task, which the manager faces. So it would be of great interest for me, to initiate a project in which we address the question of which category of companies need to attend to specific key tasks of *evolutionary leadership* more or less urgently. On the other hand, this is of course a macro perspective that disregards many relevant facets and details levels.

All three approaches reduce the complexity and leave us with a feeling of a greater capacity to act. We should not be content with them.

At first glance, my personal approach to our subject has perhaps nothing to do with situational diagnostics. The pragmatic starting point was the question that continuously crept up in our consulting practice: "If only I had more time for leadership …". Surely, I do not have to explain this issue to you. Most people, who have professionally significant responsibility these days, have to be ***extremely economical with their time***. The recommendation, which is certainly well meant, of only having to set priorities has such a limited potential to reduce the basic problem that it is mostly perceived to be cynical.

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[4] Management für die Champions League, 2009, S. 123.

> The ***problem of time*** is then most difficult to mitigate, when we are looking at the level of future activities. Our to-do list is infinitely filled; constantly someone is adding something new on to it.
> We lose sight of the fact, ***why*** we are doing something, as we are constantly dealing with *having to get it done*.

In order to offer our professional network something useful at this point, I wondered initially whether the sentence "... more time for leadership" in this form would possibly not even exacerbated the problem. Firstly, it suggests, leadership could be something that you do in addition to the "normal business" (according to the motto: *Not that as well!*). Secondly, it implies that leadership is something contained, for which you either time or not. Both are not true from the perspective of *evolutionary leadership*!

> In this respect, perhaps the more ***pragmatic question*** would be: What are the key tasks of leadership that I can neglect in my specific situation—and which not at all?

And already *situational diagnostics* had latched onto my thoughts: in order to answer this question, the manager's personal situation must be made tangible. In terms of our highly complex discussion, we can already provide some results with our *evolutionary leadership approach*.

First, we are fortunately dealing with a limited, clearly defined goal: to perform successfully (i.e. ensure that it works together). Our *situation* is defined as a leadership situation and can be described using our *7 key tasks*. Even the acting agents can be characterised. Let us follow up these ideas in the next part of our book (Part III, Personality and Leadership).

Only in terms of the *behaviour* does the present state of development not automatically allow making any derivations. Whereas that in itself should allow us to relax, after all, it does point out that our key tasks can be successfully achieved in different ways, and the notorious "bending of one's personality" is not necessarily required (Fig. 6.2).

To truly end up developing a diagnostic tool, we need criteria by which we want to distinguish situations. The following seem currently useful to me:

1. ***Degree of risk:*** The more risk a situation bears (e.g. because of low liquidity, each mistake can mean the end of the company), the more important to focus on the "here and now".
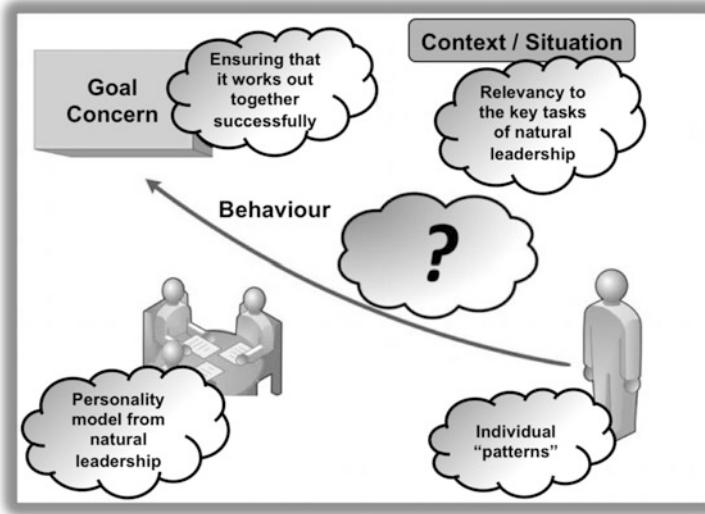
Fig. 6.2 Ascertainment of operational scope

2. ***Degree of relief:*** It makes a big difference, whether you can reach your objective with "tailwind" (e.g. good economic situation) or are operating "against the flow" (e.g. violent political resistance).
3. ***Degree of accomplishment*** of key tasks: Each situation can be characterised using our key tasks of natural leadership with a kind of "urgency ranking" (i.e. what tasks are current as significant for the overall success?).
4. ***Degree of strain:*** Evaluation of the resources that are required to deal with the current situation (e.g. How much time should currently be invested into the leadership role?).

In the meantime, we have developed a prototype for the situational diagnostic (*leadership cockpit*) on this basis, which proved to be useful very quickly. The combination of situational needs, framework conditions and leaders' personality allows us to deduce ***specific behavioural recommendations***. This can lead to compensational strategies, e.g. reducing the effort of the leader.

A situational diagnostic of the leadership task is possible, in the moment when a testable body of theory is available. This is given by the *evolutionary leadership* approach.
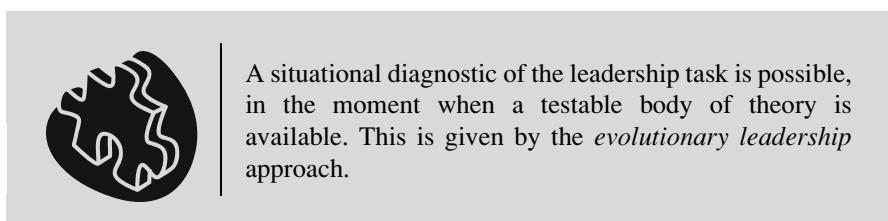
Fig. 6.3 Personality and leadership

So at this point we no longer ask "Where am I going to get more time for my leadership from?" but rather "What leadership task do I have to tackle first, to achieve the greatest progress—and which one can actually leave neglect 'with limited liability' for the moment?" The laconic recommendation, to set priorities, can suddenly be implemented objectively and quickly. *The **time problem has been resolved***.

The fact that we—as a side effect—have made the individual situation of the manager tangible has pleasingly ***grounded the evolutionary leadership*** approach in real life, which has brought the development of our approach far enough to be able to ask ourselves: Now what does this perspective of management diagnostics and development mean? Or more precisely: What is the so-called *leadership personality* all about? (Fig. 6.3).

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Part III

Personality and Leadership

Leadership Personality: Myth or Reality?

> *The tendency of nature to remain true to itself can teach us a lot. Under this aspect, current management methods can easily be judged, fads and superficial suggestions recognised as such, and we can focus instead on what has already proven itself in principle.*
>
> Margaret J. Wheatley, Management Professor

Do you know children puzzles of this kind? Have you already found him, our top manager? Personally, I can hardly often resist the charm when I see such pictures. At a certain age children find out the little trick that they have to start at the end, to avoid unsuccessful search attempts. These riddles always remind me a little—and the procedures—of us management diagnostic practitioners. That is to say, we believe there is a clear connection between success and a specific personality (Fig. 7.1).

Our immediate idea: let's start backwards from the end, follow the trail of success and then inevitably identify the personality required for success. If this procedure happens to fail, we need to concentrate, take a closer look and do it one more time.

As of today, the majority of leading management experts (see "The Despicable Problem of Leadership" in Front Matter of this book) have so far not even been able to scientifically verify the correlation between leadership behaviour and corporate success: What are we actually looking for when it is the personality of a *successful leader* that we are focusing on?
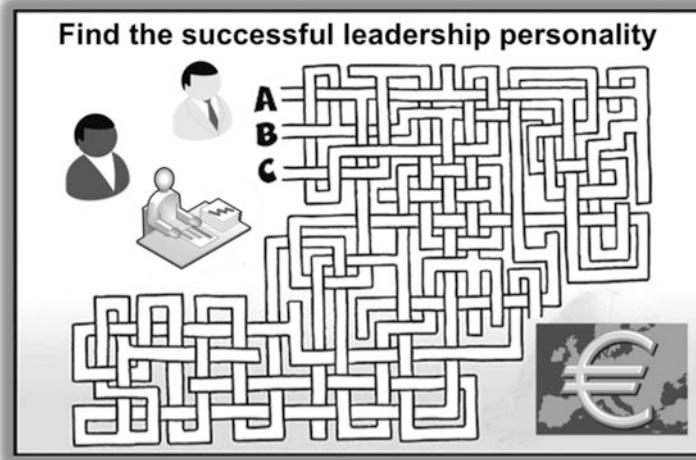
Fig. 7.1 The simplified management diagnostic puzzle

> Successful managers seem to obviously differ from one other *with just as much distinction* as other people do.[1]
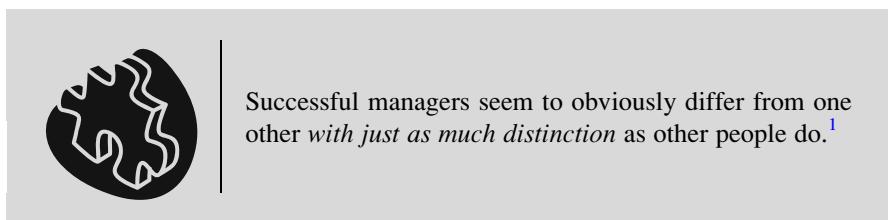
When some research study once again identifies intelligence, energy, determination, verbal skill, etc. as being significant for a successful leader,[2] then this has become almost somewhat boring. Let's be honest: Who can we imagine being successful in trying to accomplish anything at all, if he's stupid, lazy and hesitant? Even some of the basic assumptions underlying the research studies are somewhat problematic in my opinion:

- Does thinking in terms of *strengths and weaknesses* actually do justice to reality? Our own individual peculiarities are usually helpful in some situation and an obstruction in others.

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[1] The forefather of management consultants, *Peter Drucker,* points out that an ideal leader does not necessarily have to be a natural leader. The many successful executives, he has met in his life, "were very different personalities, they represented very distinct values and opinions and had very different strengths and weaknesses" [in Drucker and Paschek (2004)].

[2] vgl. Stogdill (1974) and Neuberger (2002).

- Does it really make sense to assess different people using the **same criteria**? After all, we all have our individual strategy and weaknesses, which can be mostly well compensated for and thereby rendered insignificant.
- Is it not simply unfair to establish a large-scale collection of **individual strengths from different people** and then put them together into a list of requirements for a single individual? We also don't go around taking the best properties of all mammals and then put them together to define an "ideal mammal".

When we humans can draw on traits that are capable of getting the primal task of leadership done successfully, then we will of course make sure to use them all. After all, whenever we are faced with the challenges our environment confronts us with, we put our entire personality to use. From the fundamental thesis underlying the evolutionary leadership approach, we can assume all attempts to find specific leadership properties to undoubtedly fail.

There are **different ways of being successful** in accomplishing complex tasks!
It can be expected that the attempt to identify specific leadership traits will ultimately just result mapping the **complete repertoire** of human skills, nothing else.

Our children's puzzles change significantly when there is no clear connection between personality and success. Of course, we could now take an average of the two "success personalities" or identify their lowest common denominator, but in doing so, we would render the result **obsolete**! (Fig. 7.2).

▶ In a study comprising of 80,000 (!) leaders (5 million pages of transcribed interviews were evaluated), the attempt was made to identify those characteristics of what the best and most successful had in common. Do you want to know what specific recommendation was ultimately given? "Good managers have realised that every human being has his own motivational structure, his own way of thinking and his own style of behaviour. They also know that people can only be changed conditionally. But they do not complain about this fact. They don't try to grind the differences away. Instead, they do everything possible to make use of these differences (Buckingham and Coffman 2001)". That's it! Is that not an incredible cost-benefit ratio?

Here we come to a point where the suspicion arises that perhaps it does not really make sense to continue looking for specific traits of leaders. Is what we are searching for a myth? I fear: Yes!
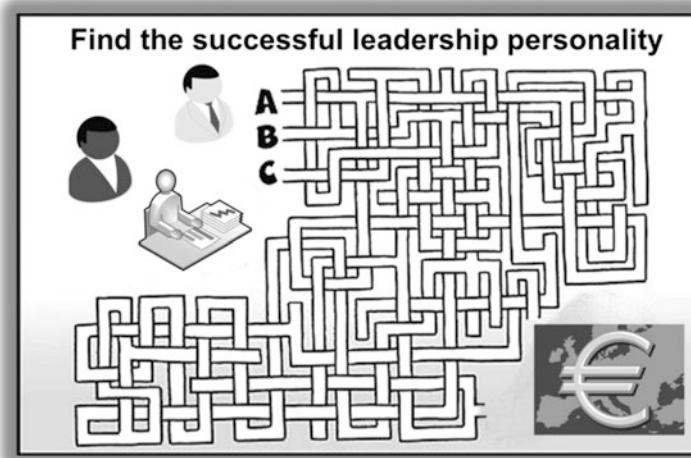
Fig. 7.2   The somewhat more realistic management diagnostic puzzle

Leaders, in the truest sense of the word, are *cut from the same cloth* as followers. They operate in the same way.
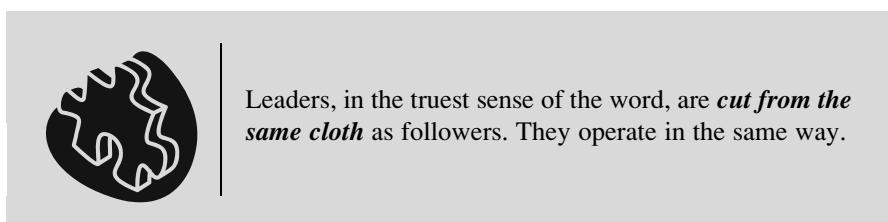
This change of perspective will lead to new research. We will have to start dealing distinctly with the *single case analysis* of individuals. We will have to ask ourselves whether there are patterns in the different paths to success.

▶ We are in search of knowledge, which will enable us to answer the following questions: "people with *pattern m* under the special *condition b* will demonstrate *behaviour of v* with *a probability of w*, when they are confronted with the *task of a*".

▶ I am convinced that we—mostly unconsciously—are constantly dwelling on such assumptions in dealing with each other as we consider our fellow human beings. When our predictions are met, we consider our counterpart to be predictable. However, our everyday assessments are usually limited by an emotional component, personal filters and non-representative data. We acknowledge: we are biased!

The use of *computers* does not automatically lead to a substantial improvement in the issue at hand. To put it in a nutshell: if a basic concept does not work, it will not be more successful by implementing electronic data processing. Unfortunately,
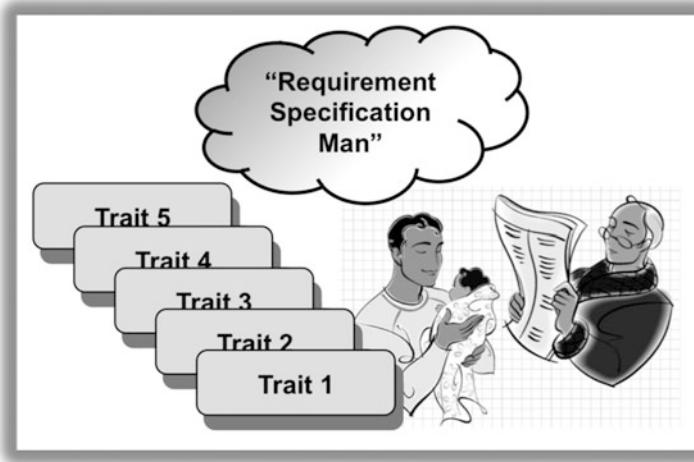
Fig. 7.3 The requirements specification man

many IT-supported diagnostic systems represent nothing more than the technically sophisticated processing of irrelevant data.

▶ The level of computer programming proficiency is utterly irrelevant, when managers are "measured" using completely meaningless instruments, going on to define a target profile as the result of the inquiry, with which entry-level managers are then to be assessed. Ask any number of executives the following question: "Were you happy on your last summer vacation?" Let them choose an answer on a scale of 1 through 10. Of course, you can then calculate the mean average and the standard deviation. But what do you actually have? A whole set of procedures now go out to present the question to others and compare the response with the "norm group". In the worst case, leadership potential will be assumed if the answer is a match. Does that not make your hair stand on end? Then have another good look around in the offerings available from the management diagnostics markets.

On the other hand, computers do offer options that can really be exciting. However, then you need, to start of with—in addition to a ***coherent theory*** and clever programming—a ***set of valuable data***. At this point, there is also a lot of nonsense being produced.

Frenzied data collection leads to little! After all, we are not a hodgepodge of different scores of required dimensions (Fig. 7.3).

For a long time we have followed the dream of providing everyone with a distinct requirement specification, with which the profile of potential candidates can be compared (Jüttemann 1995). This effort is based on the assumption that measurable achievements are produced in a clearly definable environment that corresponds accurately to a given task.

▶ The basic idea is similar to that of a technical specification that is created, for example, in issuing an order in the automotive industry. The better the definitions of requirements are defined, the better the clear distinction of expectation will be and the easier it becomes to detect defects in quality. There is a clear target profile and a quality testing process precisely aligned to it. An approach that has been thoroughly tested and proven.

The majority of all human resource staff spend almost all of their time defining requirement specifications. True to the motto: the more differentiated, the better. Heaps of these requirement specifications are piled up. If this does not bring about the intended major breakthrough, then the well-known problem-solving principle is implemented: more of the same! Now, even more differentiated, more comprehensive, more analytical . . . Of course, it's always easy to belittle attempted solutions, which are nevertheless courageous and dedicated. We should become more aware of how much time and often passion is invested by a multitude of people to solve our basic problem. Therefore: we apologise! But unfortunately, it is not going to work out with the methods just illustrated. That, what we refer to as personality, works in a different sort of way!

7.1   Getting to Grips with the Phenomena of Personality

In this context an important element of our psychological evolutionary considerations is the *concept of patterns* and *probabilities*. We have on the one hand assumed that there is (a) archaic pattern. At the same time, nature has, on the other hand, programmed us to establish (b) individual patterns. Together, these two mechanisms make up our autopilot. We will probably never be able to find out exactly what proportion of archaic aspects is represented in probabilities of behaviour. In practice, however, this is not even necessary (Fig. 7.4).

For us it would be a huge success if we could make truly useful predictions on the following questions: How can a particular person be expected to behave when confronted with the leadership task, and what would be the probability of his success?

On a most fundamental level, we need to be aware that personality traits should not be considered as single unconnected elements of personality standing next to each other.

What would be if our personality were considered a ***complex interconnected network***? Can carelessness in someway not also be related to self-confidence, curiosity and the capability to manage relationships? Can all the many criteria be unreservedly combined with one another?

Definitely not! Evolution never regarded only the single trait, but always the ***organism as a whole***, which had to prove its case in the struggle for survival.
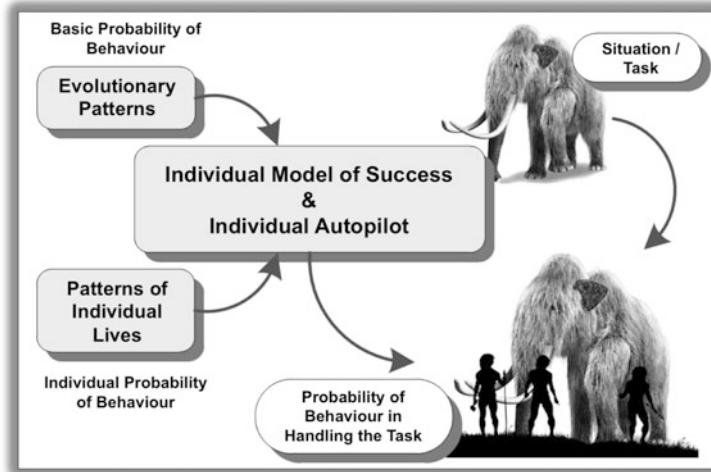
Fig. 7.4   Predicting behaviour

If personality is to be understood as a type of *mobile*,[3] we need to align our diagnostics to that as well. It is far more crucial to identify ***essential basic pattern***, compared to an infinite number of random details and their characteristic expression (Fig. 7.5).
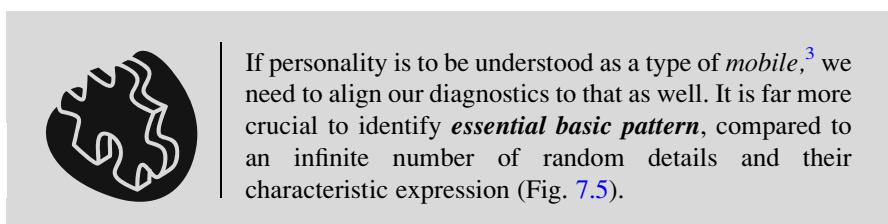
In the same way we can recognise a face in a photograph, even if it consists of only a few pixels, because the relationships of the pixels amongst each other are decisive, the *pattern*. To know that we are dealing with 1,673,445 red, 2,532,009 blue, etc. pixels is of no use to us whatsoever.

It is not sufficient to measure the dimensions of traits or competences. To make predictions on expected leadership behaviour, we need to create models and profiles.

> ▶ "Comparably, you can't understand the weather by only measuring ... temperature, humidity and air pressure: meteorologists need to have theories as to what is ... happening and how it is related to what is happening down here" (Caspar 1996). Are we expecting human beings to be less complicated than the weather?

So what do we need to do in order to solve our issue?

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[3] In addition to a comparable mobile, as type of sculpture consisting of carefully equilibrated parts that move, especially in response to air currents, ours is dynamic and alive, but more on that later.
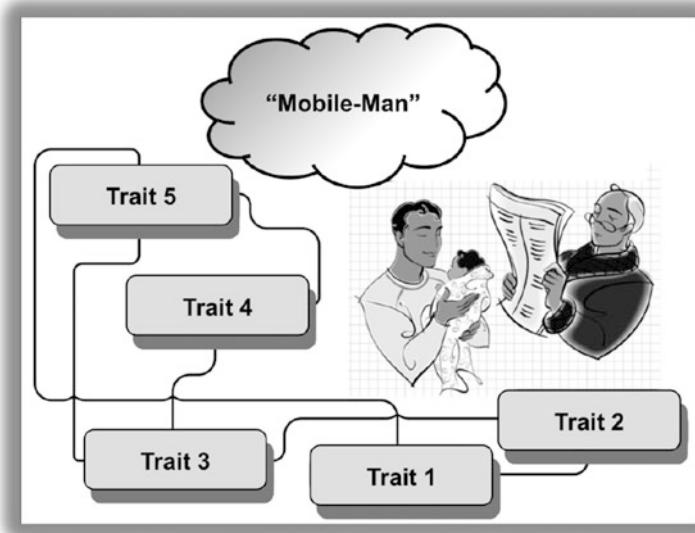
Fig. 7.5 The mobile man

1. First of all, we need a *model of personality*, which integrates the idea of behavioural probabilities and can therefore indicate what would be relevant for us.
2. On this basis, we build up a representative *database*, which allows the statistical analysis of patterns.
3. These patterns are then linked to the *key tasks of evolutionary leadership,* and we can then also examine the probability of correlations.
4. Now we can evaluate the *single case* on the basis of our findings and make individual probability statements for leadership success.

That's exactly what we did! *It works!*[4] And whilst doing so, we were able to benefit from the work of a "neighbouring" profession. It is criminal profilers that I am referencing here.

In the first edition,[5] I described in detail what management diagnostics can learn from our colleagues in the criminal field—and why it is important that they actually do this. During the last years, we have been able to provide evidence, from practical application, on the validity of this innovative method of management profiling. Let me summarise some thoughts.

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[4] Many thanks in this respect to the Change-Support-Team in Bonn.

[5] The issue of management diagnostics had much more space. If at this point you have a special interest, perhaps it is worth looking in "Evolutionary Leadership" (2006).

7.2   Learning from Criminal Profilers

Profiler goes along with us in assuming that human behaviour is both too complex to be catalogued, but on the other hand allows for predictions (Müller 2004). Profilers agree with us in assuming statements and limit the circle of possible offenders as a result. When I first started looking at these concepts back in 2005, the idea came to my mind that one day, I would be able to say the following: There is 30 % probability that you are the right person for this leadership position; however, your colleague has a probability of 83 %.

What a milestone in the selection of managers that would be! We would no longer compare individuals to a list of requirement specifications and could now live up to the *individual patterns of success*. In the mean time, we have come pleasingly close to this goal.

Let's look a little bit closer to what criminal profilers are actually doing: in their early days, they were subject—even from their own ranks—to a lot of criticism. The methods they used were nebulous and the procedure often quite unsystematic. Profiles were created with much secrecy and little empirical contribution. In this phase, the myth of the quirky, slightly crazy profiler emerged, someone who would follow the culprit into his world of horrors.

However, with increasing *professionalisation,* the acceptance has been dramatically improved to the positive in recent years. Repeated examinations in the U.S. FBI and the United Kingdom show that the *accuracy of the predictions* has in the meantime improved and now averages between 70 and 80 %. Also, the Federal Criminal Police Office in Germany has presented in its own studies that it has achieved a hit rate of 90.3–92.8 % in crime scene analysis and 81.0–88.1 % in criminal profiling (Musolff 2002). With increased research and the widespread use of computer-based programs, the effectiveness of the profiler continues to increase (Föhl 2001).

Fundamentally, it is no longer the psychic *seer* looking into the depth of the souls who defines the image of the profiler, but rather the *well-trained expert*. "Nonetheless, it is invariably the last step in defining the profile of a criminal that involves a difficult combination of knowledge, common sense, thorough case management, psychologically trained human knowledge and experience" (Reichertz 2002). An experience that I can very well acknowledge from my perspective of dealing with management.

The profiler distinguishes (a) individual analyses, (b) statistical approaches and (c) purely intuitive methods. The latter, which are based only on the personal experiences of the specialists, are largely criticised. Again, the similarity to the daily routine of the personnel manger can be recognised (Fig. 7.6).

In the practical application, it has been shown that the three profiling approaches (individual, statistical and intuitive) complement each other well and can lead to a vast increase in the operational quality and data collection (Musolff 2002). The basic problem with these methods is ultimately the facts that the *single case analysis* represents an enormous effort, the *intuitive approach* is hardly verifiable and the *naked figures from the world of statistics* don't explain very much on their own. Data is only of any use, if there is a *good theory* to go with it.

Fig. 7.6 The profiler approach

> ▶ What, for example, would be the use of discovering that 76.3 % of hit-and-
> run drivers were chewing their fingernails at the age of 10 and 82.7 % own
> a pair of brown shoes? We only have relationships here, with no one
> knowing what they mean—in the worst case, namely, nothing. We could
> find out that all other people in the country have values that are exactly
> the same, even amongst cyclists, stilt walkers and pedestrians.

In comparison to criminal profilers, we have a few advantages: first, luckily,
there are many more successful managers than serial killers. So we have *a larger
dataset*. Then we have the *evolutionary leadership* approach, providing us with an
applicable theory with which we can meaningfully interpret the data.

Our aim is to transfer the methodology of *computer-assisted probability
statements* and the comprehensive profiling of *specialists*. On these grounds, we
can set up hypotheses and even assign probabilities.

> ▶ An example? Suppose we knew of a man who finds *acceptance* in his
> leadership role and *adjusts well to others*. We could then present the
> hypothesis on the basis of our databases today that he also holds *high
> expectations to himself*. The probability is approximately 80 %.[6] Can you
> inverse that? Do we find leadership acceptance when we have high
> expectations of ourselves and adjust well to others? That would please
> many value-oriented management trainer—and our evolutionary leader-
> ship approach would have a problem, because it assumes much more
> complex relationships. What do our databases say?

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[6] Source: CST-Profiling database (more than 300.000 individual data records).
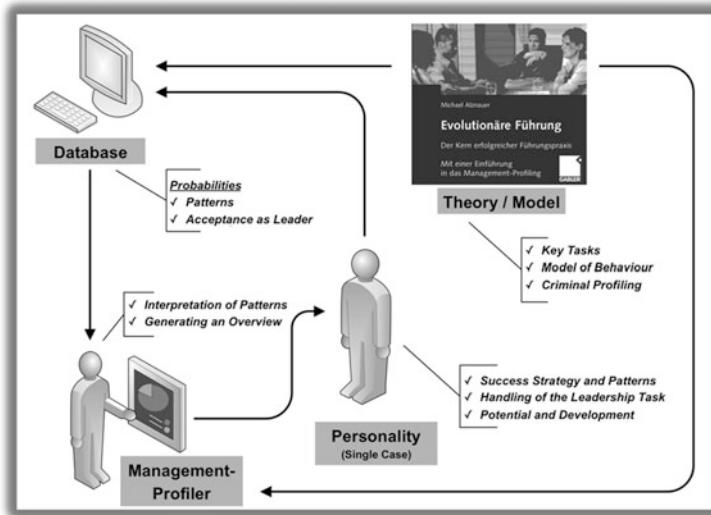
Fig. 7.7   Management-profiling approach

> ▶ Of the people who have high expectations on themselves and adapt well
> to others, 35 % are accepted as leaders. Sounds good, doesn't it? Unfor-
> tunately, there are 37 % in the total sample, i.e. ***those properties them-***
> ***selves are completely irrelevant***.

First of all, the statistical approaches (here we recommend the database methods of criminal profilers) should complement the theory-driven search for patterns. Together with diagnostic information about personality (patterns and strategies), we can then establish probability statements for dealing with the key tasks of leadership.

This way, a management diagnostic method is made possible, with hit rates verifiably higher than the typical processes used today (e.g. interview, assessment centre, test procedures) (Fig. 7.7).

All of that seems extremely elaborate? I'm not going to trouble the argument regarding the costs of recruiting failures. Neither do I want to dwell on the extent of resources being spent today in these endeavours on a daily by your human resource department. You may want to ask them yourself, as they can certainly tell you quite a bit about the topic.

I would only like to ask you two questions: Is there a better way? What is the significance for you to find the best possible placement for your leadership positions?

Ultimately, the same applies for our topic, as to many others decisions as well: What am I trying to achieve? What level of performance have I defined? Is the cost-benefit ratio significant? The most tragic version is always the one—you may know the old joke—search where there is a good light, instead of where something can actually be found. So the choice of an oversimplified diagnostic procedure is alarming in those cases, where it misses the topic.

Let us, in conclusion of this chapter, consider some ***practical recommendations*** from the preceding thoughts and come up with some ideas of what you can do with this knowledge in your organisation.

7.3   Practical Recommendations for Your Organisation

I. Validate the *Leadership Model* and the *Concept of Being Human* That Your Management Diagnostic Tools Are Based on

Do not let yourself be captivated by modern technology, stunning graphics and statistics, touching accounts of self-experiences or simply old habits. Produce transparency! How does the respective tool define leadership success? On what viewpoints of human nature are it based? Are they both feasible, in your opinion?

Situation: The company is presented with an online computer test for potential analysis. During the presentation, it is reported that this method has been performed thousands of times around the world so far and it contains empirical requirement specifications for different professional positions. After completing the self-test, the personnel manager is surprised how well his own personal characteristics show up. In response to having questioned the underlying model of leadership and the concept of being human, the vendor references the academic support from professors.

Commentary: There are numerous tools to support self-reflection, e.g. for use in coaching or in seminars, that provide useful results. The presented online test seems to be one of them. What it ultimately actually "measures"—and how this is related to leadership success—remains rather unclear. The approach seems somewhat dubious to us in terms of averaging the test results from successful and using them to specify ivy requirements. We would be careful in recommending this instrument as a tool recruiting or in analysing potential. This is the moment where we are sometimes told: "It is indeed only a single module amongst many others". All right—but do the others offer more transparency?

II. Assign *Diagnostically Experienced Leadership Specialists* with the Selection of (Junior) Executive Leaders

Only people with a deep understanding of leadership are capable of conceptually matching candidates to a respective management position. The widespread practice to delegate this job to specialist staff, who have no leadership experience, seems rather unfortunate to me, as they end up basing their selection on the basis of job descriptions and required specifications.

Situation: The recruiting department of PLC is highly experienced in dealing with job postings, analysing application documents and professionally implementing various selection tools. As the project of establishing a management development program was announced, the team leader was strongly committed to be appointed with the lead responsibility. The only alternative would be the staff development team, as all others were happy not to be assigned an additional burden.

Commentary: Many companies set up a separate unit, giving it full responsibility for management development. We also agree with this structure, because the phenomenon of leadership constitutes a proprietary field of expertise. In practice, however, this department is not consequently staffed appropriately—and thus, it is actually pointless to have separated it in the first place. The PLC should appoint a leadership specialist with the task of setting up and managing the new management development team, also giving him the opportunity of choosing the suitable employees from recruiting and staff development departments.

III. Cease Applying So-Called Profile Comparisons in the Diagnostics of Leadership Candidates

These are only useful for positions involving tasks for which sample solutions are formulated in principle. That is not the case for the complex challenges, of which leadership is one. Always keep in mind that target profiles are derived from averaging of individual "mobiles"—and thus completely and inevitable obliterate what is significant.

Situation: In publishing the new position for head of marketing, a lot of emphasis is put on elaborately formulating a job requirement profile. In multiple sessions, those responsible painstakingly work on creating a differentiated and weighted target profile. In the following application, it is discovered that the most interesting candidates differ significantly in their patterns and none of the "knitted target" corresponds to the defined requirements. The decision is finally to recruit the candidate is taken, who proved to be available the soonest.

Commentary: Of course you should get a clear picture of what tasks someone will be facing in a particular position. Many technical requirements can, no doubt, be immediately "translated" into necessary competences. In respect to jobs that go beyond the application of technical competences (e.g. leadership), however, the individual variety of effective solutions is multifold. It would make more sense here to establish what the candidate's personal solution patterns look like—and then decide which style fits closest to the company and the context.

IV. Don't Let Yourself Be Influenced by the Way a Candidate Presents Himself and His Skill Set; Rather, Make Sure to Identify *Patterns, Strategies and Habits*

Put together the individual characteristics of a candidate and establish a picture and detect the resulting general patterns. Within the purpose of practical reflection, do this in writing. Do not limit yourself to the terms and criteria that an evaluation instrument may have provided you with. You would lose the perspective for the individuality of the person in front of you.

Situation: The results of the assessment centre correspond to the impressive resume. The candidate "sold" himself remarkably, presented himself as goal and result oriented, won over the other participants for himself and did not even lose his authenticity in the process. For once, all observers are happy to finally be able to win such a "high potential" for the project management unit. During the trial period, the candidate quickly builds a network of sympathisers. When he applied for a new position in another firm some two years later, everyone is happy about him leaving; essentially, he never really got anything done.

Commentary: It seems as if the patterns of success for this candidate lie in his ability to captivate others for himself. He applies his abilities to anchor himself in a social environment and gains self-esteem in this way. Once his goal is reached, his main motivation seems satisfied. It would not surprise us if this pattern established significance in his family during childhood. This ability may be useful, but unfortunately, it is far from sufficient for successful project work.

V. Do Not only Pay Attention to Performance and Capabilities. Also Focus Your Attention on Possible *Failure Patterns*

Just a simple negative facet of personality (e.g. arrogance, cynicism or lack of awareness of injustice) can render a whole collection of strengths irrelevant. Requirement profiles and evaluation systems, however, are usually focused on the observation of competences. Only when these are missing or not clearly pronounced can they be determined to be negative. Correct this: create a list of reasons for individual failure that have so far been observed in your company.

Situation: The candidate provides all the necessary skills with a pleasing degree of accuracy and is equally happy about the confirmation to the position, as the company itself. Only after the trial period had passed did the discontent in the team grow—and ultimately a transfer was arranged. It was recognised too late that her sense of humour always had an offensive side. In her new environment, the candidate imperceptibly "poisoned" the mood, every day a little more. The team handles the situation in a way that is experienced by the candidate as bullying. The candidate complains to the workers council. The separation is "expensive".

Commentary: It is often only small linguistic habits, which are indicative of critical failure patterns, unnoticed or underestimated in their significance in the application and trial phase. If you're lucky, your subconscious mind reacts early enough and it gives you the feeling that something is wrong here. Our gut feeling is to be thoroughly trusted in terms of risks. Do you have the courage to make the right decisions: no recruitment—or at least consistent testing of hypotheses during the trial period.

VI. Derive *Written Hypothesis* from the Emergent Impression, Which You Can then Test Systematically (e.g. with Special Tests, Interview Questions or References)

You can trust your intuition and your gut feeling as long as you recognise their resulting impulses as hypotheses—rather than the truth. To objectify, you should formulate them in writing. Their findings should be comprehensible for third parties as to the content and thus in principle testable. This would correspond to an aspect of scientific research. Your review of the candidate should indicate those parts that are objectified results and what parts represent reasonable hypotheses.

Situation: An observer in the assessment centre has experienced that a combination of high commitment, results orientation and persuasion skills is often accompanied with a high disregard for others. Since the corresponding applicant received good reviews in the exercises testing for team ability and conflict resolution, her voice is lost in the observer conference. She is even accused of bringing

personal prejudices into the evaluation and to counteract the methodology by rejecting the candidate.

Commentary: Since mindfulness is one of the properties that are often important to not easy to learn, more attention should be paid to the impression of the observer. For as long as she is not talking only about "bad feeling", but also describes her observations of her assessment objectively within the context, her opinion has a higher chance of being acknowledged. Her statements should not go in the direction of "the candidate is subscriber is careless", but stress the issues that could occur in the case of her hypothesis being accurate. Then she should recommend a targeted testing for this assumption.

VII. Systematically Arrange the *Collection* of Your Impressions and Data

If you take it upon yourself to make this effort, you will steadily convert your subjective theories and hypotheses into statistically justifiable assumptions. Your collection could, for example, begin to connect frequently occurring characteristics together. This is how, back in the 1970s, the first profilers of the FBI began their work. Then continue to highlight the relation of specific strengths to corresponding failure patterns.

Situation: After the observer, from our previous example, realised that her intervention in the observer conference did not accomplish anything, she began to collect the results from the assessment centre and supplement them with following observations. A year later, in a similar situation, she argued as follows: "Of the 11 participants in the last 12 months, who had a similar strength pattern, almost 73 % failed later on the job, due to a lack of tact. We should not ignore this".

Commentary: I am impressed.

VIII. Predictions on the Likely Success of a Person Must Include the *Situational Context*

You can derive hypothesis of how a person is likely to behave under certain conditions, if you have managed to identify his patterns and habits, on the one hand. On the other hand, you can make statements about what specific conditions will be obstructive or conducive to the individual success. Now you are quite a step beyond the usual "To which seminar should we treat the candidate?"

Situation: In several cross-divisional projects, a junior employee took advantage of the situation to present himself and demonstrate his abilities. This is noted from the "very top" and they give instructions "to do something for him". In a management profiling, it was identified, amongst other aspects, that his motivation is largely nourished by appearing in public and, of all the key tasks, the "leadership task: model of success clarity" least matches his patterns. His mentor asks which seminar to recommend in order to be able to assign him his first leadership position.

Commentary: If you really want to do something for the employee, you should think carefully about currently assigning him a leadership position at all. There are not many positions that connect the initial leadership role with public virtue. There

are reasons to believe that his motivation would be markedly dampened should he be given the responsibility for routine tasks in a smaller unit. He is, however, lacking the experience required to individually handle a task requiring an entrepreneurial skill set. Ideal would be a situation in which he could develop in a context at the hands of an established senior manager, possibly in the function of assistance. He should be given responsibility and freedom and be challenged by the leader. We would integrate his mentor in pursuing his developmental goals. Accompanying this effort with leadership seminars, e.g. based on evolutionary leadership, would be useful.

IX. Distinguish the Performance of a Candidate from His *Potential* and the Probability of Actually Realising These

We often allow ourselves to be impressed by competences and assumed potential. Always keep in mind: performance is potential that has already been realised! In addition, it is not about what someone could possibly do—it's about what someone then actually gets done with his possibilities. Again, patterns and habits are important. A comparison to sport: someone who has always avoided muscle ache, irrespective of maximum potential, will often remain an "eternal talent".

Situation: In connection with the apprehension of losing one of her best people soon, the department head proposed one of her employees as a candidate with leadership potential in the survey conducted annually by the board. He had continually kept her free of onerous tasks for some years, goes far beyond the usual standards and shows no signs of any. She knows that he would like to earn more money. When she told him of the intended suggestion to the board in a conversation, he was proud and grateful for the opportunity.

Commentary: Practically a standard situation. Just on the grounds of someone doing his job with flying colours, leadership potential is presumed. Leadership and the rise in earnings generally associated with such a position is awarded as a "reward for services rendered". We would rather see the employee being told about being considered and systematically opening him up to new opportunities, allowing him to gain experience in taking on some key leadership tasks in his current position. In the case that he is successful, we would recommend considering him for the leadership programme in the year to come.

Let's finish our excursion into the world of management diagnostics with the conclusion that we will have a clear construction site from this point on, for as long as we do not have a maintainable leadership model. For this topic as well, I would want to bring the *evolutionary leadership* approach into the public discussion.

If we take a look at our overview, we can rest assured to have already come a long way. The penultimate spotlight will be directed onto what is commonly referred to as **leadership behaviour**. Here we can already see with somewhat more clarity: everything that accomplishes the defined key tasks can be determined to be leadership behaviour! Nothing is reserved *specifically* for this role.

Fig. 7.8 Growing into the leadership task

Precisely for this reason, we ask ourselves very pragmatically in the next chapter: How can we explicitly increase the probability of success in the leadership task? Can you learn to be a good leader? What answers can we deduced from the *evolutionary leadership* approach? (Fig. 7.8).

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Growing into the Leadership Task

<div style="text-align:right">8</div>

> *Managers around the world have spent the last decade squeezing the last bits of inefficiency out of their operations. Now they have to face the fact that management is a morass of inefficiency itself.*
>
> Gary Hamel, Management Expert

I would not just say that there is a map for the track to effective leadership. I'll even sketch it out, to help you make your own adventures into leadership somewhat easier. How do you improve after having been assigned your first leadership position? What needs to be done to develop into a leadership specialist or perhaps even advance to mastery in this field of activity? I'll be telling you about exactly that in this chapter.

By now, you are familiar enough with the *evolutionary leadership* approach to understand that it is not about unfolding charisma, filling a comprehensive tool box or learning to apply "secret" tricks in career—and assessment—centres. You must simply accept, understand and accomplish the leadership tasks! To do that, you neither need to know the latest leadership theories nor the current fashions from management consulting. The pertinent relevant publications are also only of very limited value. However, it is equally risky to walk onto the stage of leadership, as it would be to spontaneously enter into the professional boxing league.

> ▶ Of course, you can simply get started and gather *experience*. Similarly, managers, when asked in interviews, hardly ever mention leadership seminars as having been influential to their lives. Nevertheless, they were still not left all to their own. In this study, for example, almost all of them felt committed to a superior, who had taken the time to support them with genuine and pressing problems (McCall et al. 1995).

We develop best when dealing with ***real life***. For our ancestors, it was simply important to successfully handle the here and now. They learned in very turbulent

conditions, not in a seminar room, neither with a book in the hand nor in front of the computer. Everyone had his own problems, spent more time learning principally on his own and required a high degree of self-control. The learning process was more of an *adventurer*: discovery, inventive and without knowing where the journey would end. It happened as a matter of course in everyday life and needed no additional motivation.

That's why we have a fundamental preference for the world of experience (the so-called *practice*). Most people can only rest for a limited amount of time in the abstract world (*theory*), which demands quite some effort. So, if you have made it so far in this book, you have accomplished an **impressive cultural achievement**, which requires an amount of energy that not everyone can provide.

> However, the thing with the experience is there's a hook to it: Do not confuse it by simply *adding up* the number of years in a professional position. It is very possible to limit oneself in gaining just a little bit of experience and then putting that to use for the next 30 years.
> ***Many people's lives are characterised by repetition rather than growth.***

In order to make sure that this does not happen to you, I will explain some meaningful ways of building up experience in this current chapter. Another issue is, of course, that we do not want to have to listen to this forever: "Wait until you have gained enough experiences. You are still too *young*". Is there no shortcut for us? Probably not, but there is a **turbo mode** to shift into.

And finally, there is the additional aspect that most of us don't want to go through creative, exciting learning processes. We would rather take a **solid action plan** that removes any uncertainty we may have. Our own personal learning history (school, education, etc.) has put us on an unfortunate track: we want to know as soon as possible and with no personal involvement "how it is done". Show me the trick which I need to quickly come up with solutions! Now, immediately and without having to work on my own personal development! "It seems that we are trying to avoid exactly what children have a desire for, discrepancy, new experiences, loss of control and surprise" (Wheatley 1997).

But real learning requires the capacity to **endure uncertainty**! And at this point, I must pass. I can only barely take away your feelings of insecurity—by giving you some helpful orientation in the form of a map. Since the beginning of our times, these have been characterised by four essential dimensions.

- *Adventure*: development takes place in new territories and is geared to discovery. It comes with surprises and irritation and connects to intense experiences. The topics and tasks are meaningful and don't leave us "cold". If you never step out of your comfort zone, you'll never find out what you're actually made of.
- *Genuineness:* learning follows its own pace. For one, forcing ourselves to learn something is really difficult when *we're not ready for it yet*. Furthermore, we cannot arbitrarily abbreviate or accelerate the learning process. Accept the *proper time* that the processes of maturing and growth require.
- *Individuality*: Development is always something personal. It is based on existing patterns and happens in the area of tension, established by the conflicting priorities built up of experience and reflection. Any agenda, any coach and any trainer can only ever help you to not get lost on your journey.
- *Action-orientation*: Knowledge is not a skill! And ability is not mastery! The accumulation of knowledge may give you a feeling of satisfaction. Case studies may be stimulating and train the intellect. Real personal growth, however, takes place whilst attempting to get a grip on life (Fig. 8.1).

At this point, let's take a brief look at the usual methods that are applied in helping you on your journey to leadership personality: seminars, management schools and (young talent) programmes.

I dare say, with most current development methods—completely catered to market demands—the participants are offered exactly what they want: a reduction of their own insecurity. Quick answers are asked for,[1] if possible, in just a couple of hours or a few days, to the following key questions:

- How can I establish my *self-concept* as a leader? (Tags: self-confidence, orientation and role clarity)
- How do I gain *respect and acceptance* in my role? (Tags: conflict management, enforcement and implementation)
- How do I get people *to do what I want them to*? (Tags: goals, rhetoric, motivation and manipulation)
- How do I *avoid defeat* and embarrassing situations? (Tags: social skills, conversation and negotiation skills and presentations)

In my opinion, these concerns are completely understandable. And it is therefore correct for the majority of *training institutions* to design their offering around them. Customers define their needs and the market corresponds to them in their offer. Many seminars compile their content with an entertaining storyline. So

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[1] Whereas the idea in itself seems paradox that one could educate leaders by keeping participants in a passive, dependent state.
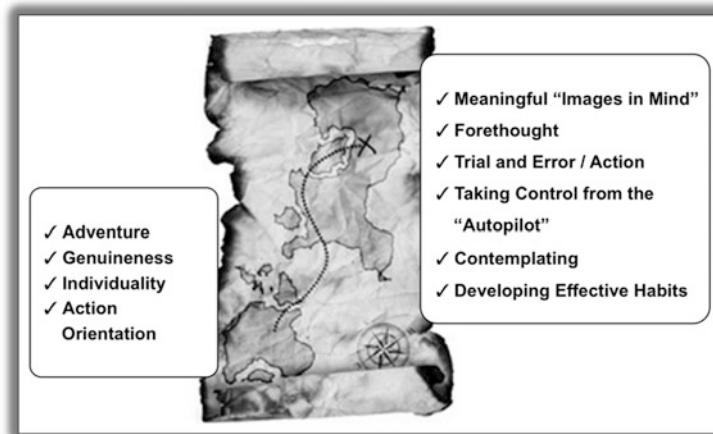
Fig. 8.1 Personal growth

what's the problem? Well, the supply and demand structures do not automatically have something to do with ***management quality***!

The offers are rarely catered to managers, who are at least not "suffering" just a little bit. Why should a tennis player continue to train hard when he is playing in an interesting team, earns a whole lot of money with his performances and is in no danger of losing his place in the team? Personal development in itself is a goal for only a few managers. The majority, in their own opinion, have no time for these luxuries.

Business schools are actually offering something completely different: they are selling a career promise! Most of the graduates leave with an idea of management and analysis being the same thing, especially in terms of developing systematic decisions and formulating well-thought strategies. From my perspective, we are not doing anyone a favour in letting people believe that managers solve problems rationally and apply leadership tools on people. *Mintzberg* believes that MBA programmes may actually attract the wrong people in the first place, because of their inherent characteristics: people who are too impatient, too analytic and too concerned on control. "In a world that thrives on experience and in which images, sounds and smells are important, business schools only make sure that students talk, analyse and take decisions. Where action, seeing, feeling and listening is called for, they develop our future leaders through pure thinking … Whilst 24 % of the incumbent top managers named the *ability to empathise* as the most important characteristic of future leaders, only 4 % of MBA students did so as well" (Fig. 8.2).

Mintzberg states very much entirely in our own opinion: "Leadership is an ancient phenomenon, while the management that is promoted by the MBA, has

Fig. 8.2 Analytical understanding of leadership

only been around for a relatively short period of time" (Mintzberg 2005a). He points out that the **great educational institutions** have always been comparable to a community of dedicated thinkers in a restricted environment, where students and lectures sat, as it were, on the same tree trunk. Apparently, the pedagogical style must be *sincere*, *personal* and, in particular, *tailored* to the respective individuals participating. Do the programmes, which the companies develop and apply by themselves, follow a more practical route?

It appears to me that the (talent/junior) *management development programmes* also bear a certain amount of risk. Essentially, they represent a type of shortcut to leadership responsibility. On the one hand it's really nice that companies invest money and attention to good leadership. And I know a number of professionals who really do an excellent job in providing the up-and-coming with the best possible options. On the other hand, these approaches convey—often indirectly and almost accidentally—an **unfortunate understanding of leadership**. Most of the participants of such programmes consider themselves *the chosen ones,* which is exactly true; that's what they are. They were selected by top decision-makers to participate. Tragically, they are never told that it is far more important to be chosen by the followers later on.

And once they suspect this themselves, there is nobody around to tell them what they need to do now. When someone does tell them, it is usually the wrong thing! So, ultimately, they end up having to gain practical experience by themselves after all.

In summary: If you have used one of the standard approaches, your biggest risk is to have developed an *incorrect understanding of leadership*.
Based on my experience, you now are left with only two options:

(a) You want to preserve this impression and get more and more tangled up with your behaviour in reality. Your effectiveness as a leader decreases day by day. You suffer!

(b) You understand on the basis of (small) failures that the impressions in your mind are not appropriate and find a viable way to sensibly correct them.

Fortunately, I need not prove that. You can feel it and will know that it's true.

You are currently holding, at this very moment, in your hands, one of the most elaborately developed notions on leadership. Put it to the test, wrestle with it, confront it with other leadership approaches and challenge it. In doing so, you will gain an effective understanding of leadership and provide yourself with a good, safe starting point for your leadership adventure. Let us summarise by putting a few key points together.

8.1   The Correct Understanding of Leadership as the Starting Point

It is not our competences that determine our behaviour! You and me, we are capable of many things, which we will never do. To the contrary, it is the *images in mind* that control our perception and action. If I believe the world to be flat, I will not venture far out to sea. If I believe in magic, I will protect myself from the "evil eye". If I consider leadership to be a competence, I will equip myself with an arsenal of behaviours to the maximum.

When the images in our heads are senseless, our actions will be absurd! Acting on the basis of a faulty attitude can only coincidently result in the proper actions.
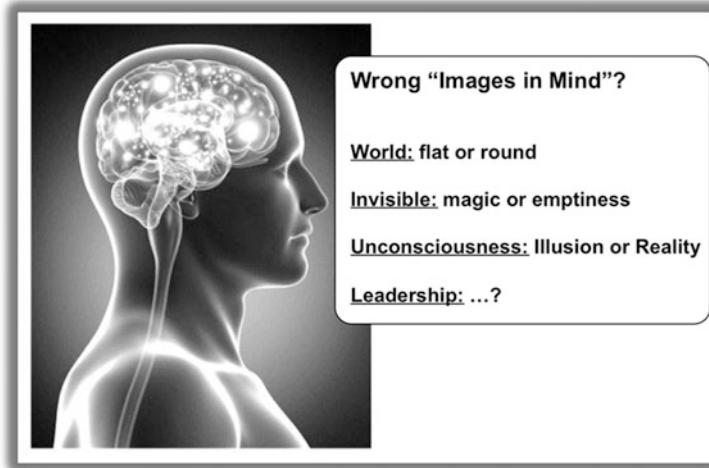
Fig. 8.3 Beliefs direct our behaviour

> ▶ If I am convinced of being a goalkeeper in a game of handball when I am
> actually participating in a game of basketball, I have a problem! Further-
> more, this problem has nothing whatsoever to do with the skills I have in
> playing either basketball or handball. In this situation, it would be really
> surprising for my teammates to be happy about my involvement.
> This fact is frighteningly neglected in the development and training of
> leaders (Fig. 8.3).

For as long as management development primarily emphasises behavioural
aspects of leadership, on techniques and tools, we are heading into an unfortunate
direction.

From my own experience, I realise that "the market" promotes this development:
participants in management trainings normally want to hurriedly learn just a few
tricks, how to get employees to do want they want them to do more effectively. But
dramatically enough, *all* programmes on leadership development simultaneously
establish an opinion about management—in this case: employees are people that
you have to trick into doing what the managers want. From my point of view,
especially traditional study programmes, "talent pool" concepts or MBA
programmes are dangerously wrong in these aspects. They convey an understand-
ing of leadership that directs the participant into a dead-end street.

Effectively, we are planting something into the unconscious mind of the
participants, who are influenced from that moment onwards in their thinking and
behaviour in respect to the leadership task. What should we make of that?

> From our perspective, it is crucial for both managers and their staff to have *the right "pictures in mind"* concerning leadership.
> A manager who does not sufficiently understand his role and how we humans "function" in respect to leadership will have just as much of a serious problem as the employee who has a wrong impression of the function that leadership partakes!

Challenge your opinions on leadership (and perhaps also that of your staff) by answering the following four questions:

- What is the purpose of leadership?
- Who should take on the leadership role?
- What represents good leadership behaviour?
- Who is actually responsible for what?

I will gladly go ahead at this point and do this briefly from the perspective of *evolutionary leadership* approach.

8.1.1 What Is the Purpose of Leadership?

The *evolutionary purpose* of leadership is for the group to solve their problem better than without it. This in turn implies that the task itself is beyond the possibilities of an individual and that it requires cooperation. Whoever can very well solve their problems on their own does not have a requirement for leadership.

> ▶ Animals that can secure their survival successfully all by themselves mostly come together only to mate and then disappear back into their individual worlds. For them the phenomenon of leadership does not exist. Can you imagine the irritation you would cause if you were to take your water colour pad, an easel and your paints to a beautiful square in Paris and mingle there with the artists already absorbed in their work and then suddenly one of them shouts out: "I'm the boss here!"? That would probably rather remind you of the well-known idea of true genius being close to madness without wanting you to finally become an eager participant in a lead watercolour painting team.

The *specialised task of leadership* is derived from the balancing act of needing others to complete larger tasks and simultaneously being subjected to all the

organisational, social and emotional problems that are caused, that is to say: making sure "it" gets done together. From our perspective the phenomenon of leadership is perceived by participants to be valuable when:

1. A problem requires solving, which no one could cope with entirely on their own and can be better done together with others.
2. Someone can make sure that with him, *on the whole* things will work out better than without him.
3. All participants experience a greater benefit that outweighs the additional burdens and restrictions.

Management is one of the most important ***differentiating factors*** that nature has provided us with in competition between human groups! Only because groups with good leaders have proven to be more likely to survive has the leadership persevered and developed further.

8.1.2   Who Should Take on the Leadership Role?

The allocation of a leadership position is inherently based on permanent comparisons; it is a ***competitive situation***. Whoever is capable of making a valuable contribution for the community in one situation can possibly not offer a fraction of the benefits in a different situation. Consequently, the leadership role should be taken by the person, who:

1. Can use their competences and knowledge best to *take care* that the group accomplishes its collective task
2. Can gain and maintain the legitimacy for the leadership role

In the first case is a question of the leader's relevance for the group and in the second, his acceptance! It is not enough to have gained the position.

> ▶ Ask yourself: ***Why should someone follow me?*** Do you consider your own answer to this question convincing and motivating?

The group's survival capability will benefit, because the leaders—definitely in competition—are continuously on the search for better solutions. If they don't do that and if they, for example, get caught up in the so-called grind of day-to-day business, they can easily lose their legitimacy. It should never be forgotten that it makes sense for nature to test the ***models of success in competition*** to each other.

8.1.3   What Represents Good Leadership Behaviour?

Specific behaviour only for leaders does not exist! Leadership behaviour is simply the behaviour of a leader—nothing more! Leadership tasks are accomplished just as little by completing one individual action (e.g. conducting a staff appraisal interview really well), as you can create a working relationship by bringing along a bouquet of flowers. Good leadership behaviour is behaviour that

1. Accomplishes the primal task of leadership (or the key tasks, respectively)
2. Does not endanger loosing the legitimacy from the group

The practice shows that successful leaders hardly ever do what management literature has defined to be their main tasks: planning, organising, coordinating and controlling. It was *Henry Mintzberg* (2005b) who quite systematically documented this. He collected and analysed research material about the everyday lives of leaders and points out that, in his view, there are no fundamental differences between the top managers he observed and their predecessors from over 1,000 years ago.

Can a manager then operate completely arbitrary now to accomplish his task? Certainly not! We have already worked out that ***expectations*** regarding leadership were established throughout the duration of our evolutionary journey. These appear to be so well anchored in us that they restrict the scope of acceptable behaviour.

Our behaviour is comparable to medicine: if it has an effect, it also has ***side effects***. Things start getting dangerous when the side effects are not considered and prove to be harmful to the overall goal. This principle is just as unavoidable in regard to leadership. ***Not everything is similarly reasonable and valuable in accomplishing the primal task of leadership.***

> ▶ Anyone who is convinced that **the end justifies the means** just doesn't know of any better means. He simply gives evidence of his personal limitations, his own ignorance and helplessness. He will undoubtedly learn the effects of this misjudgement.

If we cannot clarify leadership by defining specific behaviours, but rather define it as a task, we must further clarify who is responsible for what. What tasks within the team are collective tasks and which ones belong to the leader?

8.1.4   Who Is Actually Responsible for What?

Thousands of years ago, our species gave one another a ***mutual promise of achievement***, in order to better survive. If we don't keep it, we put ourselves in danger and die (out). Our ancestors did not have to laboriously work out this rationale in philosophical discussions and contract negotiations, as it established

their origin: Without parents' mutual promise of achievement to their newborn, no humanity. Without the mutual promise of achievement amongst members of a primal horde, no survival. End of that story!

Our ancestors would have never been able to successfully get together without the capacity to provide each other with mutual *confidence* (we can work it out together) and *trust* (everyone does what is necessary and nothing harmful).

> *A sense of responsibility* is not a requirement that distinctly distinguishes leadership. Everybody, who takes on a specific task in a community, has to answer for that task. This is just as true for leaders as for any other member in the group.
> *The difference between leaders and followers is a result of what they have to answer for respectively.*

Leaders have taken on the task of making sure the *whole thing* ends up being a success. It would be a serious mistake to assume that they should, therefore, focus exclusively on the *big issues*. Many people want to take on a leadership role because they find dealing with details boring. Whenever they are not successful, you can hear these: "It's not my job to bother about every muck around here". It's not about big or small. It's about what is necessary for collective success!

At this point I would like to introduce you to an author, whose provocative statements are probably made from an inner dissatisfaction with the popular understanding of leadership. To publish a book that contradicts the trend of the times is courageous and—if the reader has luck—also stimulating. *Judith Mair* has succeeded in publishing one of these. She writes: "It is absurd to admire work as a substitute for home and a status symbol that promises self-fulfilment and fun. Work is, first and foremost, just work" (Mair 2002).

She defines the newly acclaimed flexibility and freedom of followers (e.g. the so-called trust-based working time or target agreements) as unfair "hopping off" from the leadership task and frustration on acceptable expectations from the part of the followers. The completely relaxed state of the leader stands against the excessive demands put on followers as the result of a leadership vacuum: leaders can now morally hide behind terms such as trust, responsibility and self-determination.

Mair demands, amongst others, a clearly defined job description, well-portioned tasks and clear responsibilities for the followers. Especially as the content of activities is becoming more complex, it is important to structure the work process clearer in itself. The aim and duty of the leader should be to protect his staff as much as possible from stress and unnecessary hardships, rather than drilling them to cope with these. The leader should understand himself to be *a kind of interpreter*, who translates the uncertainty and complexity of the market for the employee into procedures and instructions.

Fig. 8.4 Mutual promise of achievement

In this context *she criticises the modern demand for constant change*, as most companies have lost what might be called *substance* or focus point. She even indicates in her own words that highly flexible organisations do not live up to *our primal needs* for security and safety. She assumes that this type of work will "not suit" many of us. Her attitude culminates in the old-fashioned statement: "leading employees without laying down binding agreements, rules and requirements will not work, because leading also always means limiting, controlling and setting goals" (Mair 2002, S. 68) (Fig. 8.4).

From our perspective, the author proves to have a good (intuitive?) sense for both the primal task of leadership, as well as for the characteristics of our *archetype: company*. When managers cope with their own senselessness and insecurity by no longer keeping their part of the mutual promise of achievement, then what do we need them for?

Therefore, we can note that even some unpopular views on the leadership phenomenon can be well subjected to evolutionary psychological interpretations. In regard to our topic, popularity is not the prime criteria; it's about a real, existential phenomenon with an eternal core!

The factual situation is however somewhat more complicated! The precise clarification of responsibilities does not only have its advantages. At the same time, for example, it also can promote a *work to rule* attitude, reduce flexibility, weaken creativity and decrease autonomy. However, building on an individual's sense of responsibility, self-directed and independence can simultaneously also foster fear, chaos, proliferation and sources of error.

A "team under evolutionary leadership" has a basic and collectively supported *appreciation of responsibilities*.

Can our evolutionary understanding of leadership provide a strong orientation for this difficult situation? I guess so!

- The *overall objectives* are defined by the organisation in itself! These are the goals, around which the participants meet. They can only be revised by top management. Whoever cannot accept these goals will leave the group sooner or later—at least mentally ("inner resignation"). Members of a professional hunting group should consist of those who can and want to hunt! Tourists should not be amongst them.
- The *procedure for reaching the goals* derived from the *leader's* understanding of how to be successful. I call this his *model of success*. This makes him the personalised promise of success for the group. It is in his own interest to make sure that all essential experience and knowledge (including that from the group members) has been included into his model. Ultimately, it is left up to the experienced leader of the hunt to make the last call in terms of what needs to be done. If his actions do not lead to success, then the group withdraws "legitimacy points".
- The *pursuit of opportunities to improve* is—again, in their own interests—the responsibility of *all participants involved*. In terms of reaching the collective goals, it makes no sense whatsoever to withhold information from the group, and power struggles within the group have a high price. When someone losses focus on the collective goal during a hunt, because he wants to "win" against another group member, the game is also scared away quickly—and everyone goes home hungry.
- The concluding evaluation of existing alternatives needs to be done by the *leader*. In this way, he makes *decisions* that are not necessarily evident and in turn allows his model of success to be recognised. From which angle the game is approached is decided by the leader of the hunt. If his decision turns out to be ineffective, then the group withdraws additional "legitimacy points".
- The responsibility for *executing the decisions* and *chosen activities to reach the goals* lies in the hands of the group's specialist, who is respectively the most skilled. The fastest runners chase the game and the most accurate throwers hurl their spears.
- The leader has no chance in avoiding the *overall responsibility*! He has to make sure that it works out and can have the possibility to get involved anywhere and anytime. Every involvement leads to a withdrawal from the "legitimacy account" (for failure) or a deposit (for success). If the hunt is repeatedly

unsuccessful, the reasons are of little importance: the disappointment of the group grows and alternative "hunt leader contenders" start showing up.

The answers to the questions I defined in respect to questioning any leadership approach should be discussed with all participants and be the foundation for collaboration in the organisation. If at this point no shared reality can be established, problems will start to pile up.

It seems completely incomprehensible to put such an emphasis on technical skills, resumes and job titles, whilst the ***attitudes of the participants*** are considered an insignificant side issue. Similarly, it is just as strange that companies recurrently develop ***leadership principles*** often in elaborate and complicated procedures. Even if you are willing to ignore that they ultimately end up producing very similar sounding content, they disregarded, at the same time, the *existence* of natural and indisputable leadership principles!

> ▶ I would like to recommend a detailed discussion on the principles of *evolutionary leadership* in companies with all those involved (not just the leaders), instead of reinventing the wheel over and over again. Instead of spending money on the ***development of leadership principles***, the investment should go into establishing a shared reality about all the facets of the leadership phenomenon described here.

In doing so, does an organisation give away an opportunity to develop a unique identity? Nonsense! An athlete, who sticks to the biophysical principles of human biology, does not restrict himself but will become more successful. The character, the style and the uniqueness of an organisation need not be compromised in this way. The following should therefore be distinguished:

- ***Basic principles of leadership*** (stable regulations)
- ***Value orientation*** of the company ("rules of the game" and identity)

All right! At this point you should now have a clear picture of leadership in your mind, which provides a basic orientation for your sensible and effective activities. In an ideal situation, you also have by now a shared understanding of leadership in your group and organisation.

To continue our development of the leadership role, we must now go to "real life"!

8.2   Experience: Successfully Becoming a Leader

Let us consider two alternative "standard" executives' curricula vitae in order to specify our "development map" in some more detail.

   The person entrusted with a leadership position will typically have neither a striking self-concept, in terms of his new role, nor the relevant required skills. In addition, the group members often don't know each other that well either. The novice starts to doubt whether the task is achievable for him at all and will initially have to pass through a painful learning process. The staff will hold back and wait at first to "suss out" their new boss. They will test what **benefits** he provides, what his **understanding of leadership** is and what **promises for the future** he offers and then watch how he puts these into practice. Each group member will habitually check out the **competitive edge** that he has (does not have). The new leadership task will get on his nerves. Incessantly he is exposed to comments, criticism and (mis-) interpretations.

   As far as the new leader can provide evidence of his competitive edge and successfully fulfil his primal task for the group, he will be granted more and more **legitimacy** for his role. The new boss will now be overwhelmed with tasks and problems, many of which he invariably inherited from his predecessor. Plenty of work to do! The challenge is now to focus on the **really significant tasks**. Whilst wandering on unknown territory, awareness and a **prudent behaviour** are definite requirements. The entire group will then experience an increasing union of the group and an ever more effective focus on the success of the community. Experienced staff will start to cover the new leader's back.

   In those cases, in which the initiation does not work out so well, a power struggle will begin to emerge, more or less subtlety. Often the new leader will try to convince employees in their very own personal way: he is, for example, very kind or uses his power, establishes networks, manipulates, controls and tries everything to get a grip on things. He gradually feels a gap widening between himself and the group. The pressure "from above" also rises; by now, tangible results are also increasingly called for. From now on, the new boss has to deal more and more frequently with the self-produced side effects of his behaviour. Recognisable sympathies and antipathies, fraternisation, conflicts, etc. start showing up. Instead of enjoyment and positive feeling of inclusion, there is growing frustration and a loss of energy amongst all participants. The ultimate goals of the group are ultimately lost from sight and failures start to mount up. Fluctuation spreads—if the employment market allows it to—as well. The boss also starts considering his motivation to change into a new position. Maybe, he can get the most out of the group for a brief moment in time and then changes (usually after about 2 years, because that is the typical duration of the process described here) to another position.

   Nevertheless, the result is ultimately a very **individual leader-follower system** that automatically creates his own rules, taboos and constraints. Over time, all those remaining get accustomed to the situation and the boss gets used to his role. Since he is now more experienced and has often established enough strength in network, he can retain his position. The overall situation is quite stable. It works out as long as the leader succeeds in keeping his legitimacy account balance. It often takes between 2 and 3 years to complete this process of stabilisation.

Incidentally, how long does it take to become truly proficient in other areas? In a study entitled "Development of Talent Project", the developments of exceptional, amongst others, artists, chess players, athletes and neurologists were researched. The result was that it can take from 10 up to 18 years, irrespective of the industry, to reach a level of top performance in a field and to be regarded a champion (Buckingham and Coffman 2001). Sources claim that in the field of management, 10–20 years are required before it can be maintained to have "nurtured" a leader (McCall et al. 1995). For ambitious people, who already demonstrated their willingness to reach their goals by investing many additional years in training, this must be a frightening message!

> ▶ I can imagine for myself how I chose to participate in a trainee programme, after having graduated—in Germany, I would now be in my early or mid-twenties—from business school (of course with a couple of semesters abroad) or follow up with a Ph.D. or an MBA and finally take on my first functional task in a company. I'm starting to actually contribute to the solution of real problems in the real world. I have an impressive toolbox, but I know very little of this concrete world, understandably.
>
> Fortunately enough, I'm still here after 5 years, and I have just celebrated my 33rd birthday and attended some seminars and participated in an assessment centre. I was certified to have leadership potential, because I took things on confidently and am a pretty smooth-talker. The recommendation was given to me to further develop my social skills. A corresponding seminar was suggested. My pleasure, after all, my career is sure to finally take off. I read that it takes 10–20 years to become really good. If the research results are valid, that would put me in my end forties, before becoming a real champion in a leadership position. Based on the assumption that I make use of my time effectively. Seriously?! That can't be true! There must be a way to speed things up?

8.3   Systematics: Shortcut to Becoming an "Old Hand"

Even though it may be common sense that learning by experience can be a very tedious task, the most crucial steps in personal development are made in practise, i.e. when dealing with real problems and consequences. The difference between a relentless "survival-of-the-fittest" ideology (being thrown into the deep end) and ***an appreciative approach*** to development lies in the amount of support offered and the type of response to inevitable mistakes. At this point, having experts at hand is valuable, someone who knows which development potentials can be associated with respective tasks, who promotes self-reflection and who is a companion on such

unknown terrain. At the same time, it is important to make use of opportunities and be willing to improvise.

An interesting research study (McCall et al. 1995) systematically identified those experiences that can be considered valuable on the road to leadership success. I would like to elaborate in a little more detail:

- Having to deal with unknown people is supposedly considered an advantage when reaching for success. I suspect that the emphasis must lie in "*for success*". If our considerations apply, dealing with strangers does not define the core of leadership. We all have to deal with a wide variety of personalities these days. It probably comes down to the ability to successfully accomplish tasks without being able to rely on your own technical skills. Against this background, it may be useful for people, to be required from early on, **to work things out successfully together with others**.
- It is apparently also useful to be exposed to numerous different superiors. Obviously, it is important to consciously experience ourselves in the role of the follower and to become aware of our own responses. **Diverse supervisors** are therefore important to make sure we don't just follow the impulse and end up wanting to do things in the same way ourselves later on or, conversely, to want to do things in precisely another way.
- It is also recommended to have **help with critical transitions**. Especially in extremely difficult times, you should not let anybody go on his way alone and without a safety mechanism. Personal development does not only require an intellectual sparring partner but at times also someone who knows how to deflect a falling boulder. Think about how cautiously we deal with promising athletes—without sparing them of any hardship.
- The recommendation that having employees is a good thing may seem almost obvious. However, I can very well imagine that it does not necessarily require a professional leadership role to gather leadership experience. It is far more important **to take on the primal task of leadership**! It is—as Paul Watzlawick put it—about "making a difference that makes a difference". This is also possible in leisure activities.
- **Responsibility should grow**, but not be simply equated with a larger number of employees. Mature leadership does not only have to do with answering to a larger set of results. It is essentially about, on one hand, understanding your own impact on functional results and, on the other hand, being able to appreciate the needs of others. This process is exaggerated when you start to feel responsible for almost everything. Here we would be referring to "megalomania" and not of a sense of responsibility.
- **Difficult situations with a high degree of risk** seem to offer particular good opportunities for development. Leading a well-established, experienced and harmonious group in a stable environment may nevertheless be considered a relatively easy task. However, to avoid losing legitimacy in times of crises, it is unquestionably valuable to have survived a comparable moment before. Now, for ethical reasons alone, it would understandably not be a good idea to create

such moments, but let's be realistic: life invariably tends to offer us, sooner or later, sufficient occasions to learn from

- It can't possibly be done without *(self-)reflection and modification*. For us humans, valuable experiences do not come automatically. There is no guarantee that one person actually learns from certain experiences what they could have potentially learned. If we do not reflect on the activity, it simply becomes part of our autopilot, which operates with different criteria than those governing professionalism. This is one of the significant reasons why it is not just enough to put different people on the track through similar tasks and situations. What is a traumatic experience for one person, from which he may never distance himself ever again, can be a valuable experience for another. The inability to relate experiences to your inner self drastically reduces the ability to learn.

Based on my experience, this last point, especially, has quite significant implications. So let's look at this a little bit closer.

## 8.3.1 Self-Reflection: The First Step to Freedom

Old habits die hard. Our autopilot is powerful! We are not that vastly superior, free or even mature as we like to think of ourselves. This means there are detectable limits to our development, change and personal growth.

> ▶ Since our primal times, one of our brain structures has had the task of making emotional evaluation that ensures our survival. It judges immediately the extent to which a situation or event could be dangerous or attractive to us. From this evaluation actions are immediately triggered on impulse that are much faster than our cerebral brain can ever achieve with its analytical capacity. On this basis, 99.9 % of all animals go about their existence; they live in the here and now, their life is essentially centred on eating, sleeping, propagating, fighting. The remaining 0.1 % probably consists only of apes and humans, who have sufficient spare brain capacity to look at the past and think about the future (Weber 2005).

Only when we find a way not to directly react can we test our autopilot on its quality. For this we need a "gap" between action and impulse response. We need to create space to think. What can be done in this regard? (Fig. 8.5):

- For one, we can *ignore or repress* our impulses to act. This roughly corresponds to the strategy of small children who cover their eyes as an attempt to hide and not be seen. Psychologically this approach is helpful, not in reality. You are now all the more a victim of your impulses and confuse freedom and spontaneity with
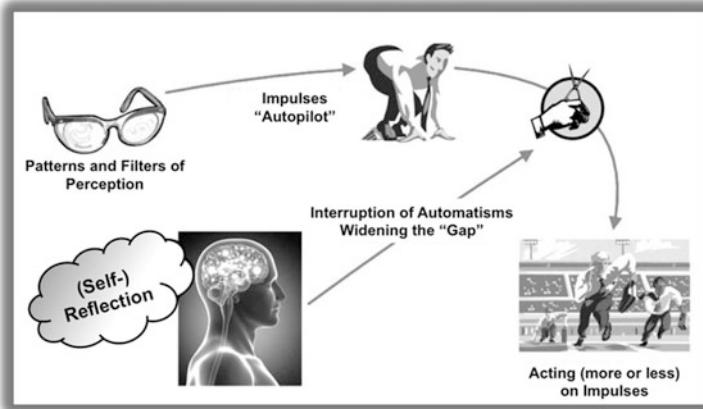
Fig. 8.5 (Self-)reflection as the basis for growth

thoughtlessness, (bad) habits and arbitrariness. You remain stuck in your development.[2]

- Then you can *prohibit the observable acting out of your impulses*. This strategy requires strength, discipline and self-control—sometimes to the point of self-denial. In my experience, this is the favourite approach of many successful people. Depending on the degree of fatigue and level of energy to resist, conditional to training of discipline, they tend to be more or less successful in fighting their impulses. At the same time, the frustration to potential grows, which can result in short-circuit reactions and illnesses.
- You can, however, also simply appreciate your impulses, watch them and *let them pass by*. This strategy is sustained, for example, in meditation practice and is based on smoothly and steadily distancing the emotional impulse from the action. Here again, practice and discipline are needed, but it builds up a lot less frustration. This strategy somewhat irritated management at the time of the 1st edition. Now I read that during the World Economic Forum in Davos, meditation was offered on Thursday and Saturday mornings.[3]

The path to becoming a successful leader requires *self-reflection*: what are my personal impulses, which is my own contribution, and what does the situation require? And self-reflection needs (inner) peace, truth and the knowledge of own *patterns of perception*.

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[2] By the way, it's not the particularly unsuccessful managers or the unsuccessful ones who tend avoid management training or coaching. It is those who want to avoid self-reflection.

[3] *Jörg Eigendorf*, Wie Manager Abschalten lernen, WELT, 26. January 2013.

I'm pretty sure you can assess your ability to long jump and play tennis or golf more accurately than your leadership competence. We are more realistic in those areas, where things are directly observable in their outcome. It is easier for a leader to cope with the challenging development process more successfully with support from *good teachers* and *appreciative feedback*.

To summarise: when embarking on your personal leadership development, you need to have at least a realistic idea of leadership and the tasks involved. The practical events, which are absolutely essential, must be reflected on and converted into experience. You can benefit from good teachers. Do you want to further promote your own growth beyond that? Then you need the courage to go out and repeatedly step outside of your comfort zone. This is so difficult, because you are probably very happy to have finally just overcome the uncertainties that the initial phase confronted you with.

8.3.2 Change: Stepping Beyond Ourselves

The patterns, strategies and principles acquired on our learning paths can suddenly turn out to become barriers to further development. Just exactly those things, which you owe your current outstanding position to, suddenly block your next move. Systematic *reflection of your model of success* is critical to your growth. For this purpose it is extremely important to know the reasons and patterns responsible for your own previous successes.

It is not us that shape our model of success. It shapes us! It influences the way we perceive our reality, the way we think and feel, our impulses to act and our decision-making.

We are usually only partially aware of our own model of success, because we tend to take it *totally for granted*—like no fish knows that it swims in water. Only when something does not work out as intended, when we reach our limits, it occurs to us. In such situations, you have three options:

1. You *block out the problems* by denying the difficulties and compensating for your own limitations and avoid similar situations from now on. However, this approach devours more and more of your energy and strength. You may believe more often that your external environment is draining you. But in essence you are paying the price for simply not getting rid of your old model of success.
2. You may possibly have a preference for *more-of-the-same method*: this corresponds to the approach of simply taking a longer run after having jumped into an existing obstacle. Our model of success has become such an immense

truth to us that we are convinced not to be able to achieve success in any other way. You may possibly come to the conclusion, in this context, that life is simply getting tougher these days.

3. My recommendation is the following alternative: ***make use of the opportunities*** and become conscious of your model of success (in the same way as you become more aware that there is oxygen in the air when it is reduced): stepping beyond your model of success does not mean giving it up. That's not even possible. But it may be an option to develop a more open relationship to it. Fair enough: the moment you first acknowledge that something is fundamentally getting out of hand is quite distressing. You might lose your belief of having your life under control and compromise your identity. But didn't you want to step beyond yourself? Risking your self-concept is important, because you cannot afford to be stuck to your old identity if you want to continue on the path of your own development.

> ▶ We can, for example, compare this situation to our puberty. The change from child to adult occurs full of drama and uncertainty. We say goodbye to something that we no longer are and find ourselves back in an unknown, fascinating and startling world. Clinging on to the past is definitely not a realistic option.

It does require a change in the self-concept of a person to successfully take on a leadership role. Nevertheless, only a process of constant change deserves to be referred to as maturing. Here we find the manner of true mastery.

8.4   Mastery: Maturing into a Leadership Personality

Leadership maturity does not come either automatically with a defined number of years in management positions or at a certain hierarchy within an organisation, just as little as it comes from simply growing of age. Finally at this point, it becomes clear whether leadership is to be considered a career path, a personal responsibility or an obligation to continuous personal development. If the appeal of a leadership task has already caught you up seriously, you will sooner or later find yourself facing the question: how can I increase the value of my personality for the benefit the community?

Personal growth has something to do with grasping the potentials and possibilities of our evolutionary nature and turning them into reality. As experience with so-called "wild children" shows, this is clearly not genetically automated for our individual development (Newton 2004). Some aspects of the human condition seem to unfold as a matter of course; others don't. Wisdom, curiosity, compassion, kindness, humour and love seem to be acquired in a cultural process.

▶ By the way, it seems to me in this regard presumptuous to assume that so-called *higher states of civilisation* inevitably need to lead the "lower beings". Personally, I'd rather familiarise myself in the wild to the behaviour and the model of success of a feral child than to try and get it under my leadership. If you now argue that precisely this is a sign of wisdom and unfolded humanity, it would get me thinking. Wisdom would apparently then also be of valuable service to followers.

Our nature has given us the possibility to bring different things to the championship. As there are authors who compare management to a form of art (Schircks 1994), I would like to end this chapter by sketching a little caricature of the path to *leadership mastery*. Indulge in the fun and "transfer" it, if you like, to your own personal development process:

1. The naive beginner starts from a position of ***ignorance and arbitrariness*** and is confident of being able to accomplish the task better than most—or at least as well. ("Anyone can do this childish painting. Who's this Picasso, anyway?") We feel authentic and effective in this situation. From our point of view, we do not need a teacher, not really. If we are in touch with one, we want to prove to him that he has a lot more mistakes than he thinks and the differences between us are not that big.

2. We soon learn ***elementary standards*** (basic techniques), apply these and gradually understand the connections between actions and goals. Our activities feel strange and unfamiliar to us. We believe many of the things that the teacher assigns us with to be superfluous. ("We've gone through this silly little exercise many times before. It's of no use in real life anyway".) In the execution of our tasks, we frequently have a feeling of not being ourselves. Looked at externally, our approach seems conditioned, contradictory and "performed". We consider our teachers, on one hand, to be the greatest and, on the other hand, far too obsessive and not dedicated to real life. In our view, he does not consider our individuality enough and bullies and oppresses us. ("I'm not putting up with this for much longer".)

3. ***Practice and professionalising*** in application of the standards puts us on the path to perfection. Gradually we start to feel that we are beginning to master the standards and not the other way around. We feel increasingly authentic and begin to handle our approach with more skill and allow more emphasis on the situational conditions. It works; we are no longer "acting". We consider our teachers continuously more redundant. In our view, he is "old school" and does not understand that everything has changed by now. In some respects we are obviously more successful. ("It is time to get out of here. There's nothing more to learn".)

4. Either we become increasingly rigid and inflexible at this point, ***perfecting*** the standards even further, in isolation from the situational contingencies, or we fill

them with our personality and develop our *own style*. In the first case we will be an "epitome of solid work". ("I'm just doing my job. And I'm damn good at that".) In the second case, we move on to the artistry. In the meantime, we are perceived to be exceptional and attest ourselves to have talent and aptitude, maybe even a charisma and a leadership personality. In the mean time, we now understand our teacher a lot better again. Our respect has grown and we meet him with attentive awareness, always ready to pick up some more details. The question "Is it better or worse than me?" is no longer an issue. ("It's difficult to explain; however, he is really something special".)

5. Our performance is way above average by now, and we are once again standing at a junction: do we now develop *artistry and mastery* or *arrogance and pride*? If we are to succeed to really develop leadership into an art form, we need discipline, attentiveness and the willingness to live the task almost detached from our personality. The "*leadership prima donna*" increasingly overrates himself as the reason for success. He begins to neglect the really crucial things. Pride comes before a fall. The "leadership master" does not forget what is essential and never ceases to develop further in relation to these points. He has turned himself into a leadership instrument. ("I realise now just how much more there is still infinitely left for me to learn".)

6. At this point, we are moving along the borders of what is known. We start exploring new territories and gain an *innocence and freedom* in our art, which is often not understood and is not suitable for most people to follow. If now we do not remain *in touch with real life*, we become eccentric. ("Believe me, leadership is a world that no one will ever understand".) There is always still the danger of losing the primal task out of sight—and to lose what has already been developed. If we are no longer challenged by the real world, when there is no one left anymore to give us feedback (e.g. because no one dares to touch our monument or we are living in the proverbial protection of the ivory tower), we become weak and begin to misunderstand the nature of things. We become comparable to a top athlete without (championship) practice.

7. We have by now probably become a *role model and teacher* ourselves. It is now decisive whether we have figured out our path and have a map to guide us through the terrain of growth—or not. In the first case, we can become comprehensive trail guide; we can teach. ("Look, in your development stage, the following is valuable ...".). In the second, one can best learn by observing us. ("What can I say? It's not really that difficult. Just watch me a little bit more carefully".) The true artist begins to lay down his work and a legacy.

Whether we look at the paths of painters (such as Picasso, Dali), athletes (e.g. McEnroe) or Asian martial arts masters, we often come across these patterns in their biography. And there is no finish line, no end, and no "wrap-up"!

Admittedly, I hardly know of any manager who compares his own development with that of a martial arts master or artist—let alone operate in this way. However, I am convinced that they exist. And I would like get to know them! Maybe you would

even consider this comparison to be cynical when you think of the one or other leader who you've come across yourself (from the media). Yes, the primal purpose of leadership can be accomplished by unpleasant or even criminal personalities. Yes, the leadership role can be occupied, just as you can illegally occupy a house. But what does this mean?

> In addition to the functional aspect of accomplishing the task, there is also the aspect of *values*. Let us not forget the "deal dimension" and the "emotional dimension" in every relationship—including the one between leaders and followers.
>
> When, in the development of our managers, do we touch on the topic of *attitude*, with which the leadership task is to be performed?

Have you ever considered what attitudes our business schools convey to their students? Go ahead and visit the website of the renowned St. Gallen Business School[4] and enter *values* in the search field. I did this spontaneously when writing this book and was just as shocked, as I was confirmed in my fears.

The first to be mentioned was within the description of an event for general managers (value optimisation: how monetary values arise); only in the result ranked in 4th place did values appear in connection to behaviour. An event is displayed, which is targeted to senior executives. Concept: "*In discourse with the participants, experienced faculty members bring established and new management knowledge to the point and show you, from your perspective, where the real levers are, with which you can increase your personal management strength*". The objective is defined as follows: "*Values and behaviours, which support my claim of leadership*".

Are we actually systematically producing the managers whom we complain about later on? Here, we have almost come full circle:

We can do leadership better—and we have to, as well!

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[4] Currently (Feb. 2013) the situation is not much different at any other business school.

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Part IV

The Future of Leadership

Leadership Beyond the Enterprise

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9

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> *If the genome is the code to human life, good management is*
> *the code to man's ability to master life. It determines both the*
> *ability of the individual to survive in society and the ability of*
> *the society and its institutions to function and perform.*
>
> Fredmund Malik, Management Expert (Malik 2005)

Have you ever heard of Rosi Gollmann? For me, she was unknown until a few weeks ago, even though she comes from my hometown. Apparently, the emphasis here is on *for me unknown* because *Käthe Rosalie Gollmann* (born 1927) belongs, with her *Andheri-Hilfe Bonn, a free and independent organisation of development cooperation*, to the greatest women of Germany. Her book *Simply Human—Risking the Impossible for Our World* touched me. In her book she reports, amongst other things, about the hopeless situation in an Indian village (Santipura), which she herself commented on with the words "There is nothing left to be saved here": drought, devastated fields, washed away soil, massive social divide amongst residents.

It became immediately apparent to her that—if at all—the only way of breaking through the vicious circle of drought and monsoon disaster would lie in an extremely close cooperation between the poor farmers of the hillsides and the rich inhabitants of the valleys. Those who are familiar with Indian circumstances know how unlikely such a closing of ranks would be. Let me jump straight to the happy ending: not only did the illiterate in Santipura become water managers within a couple of years. Because the benefits of cooperation emerged so evidently, collective purchasing and marketing cooperatives were established, and rich landowners paid their workers better wages and even surrendered plots of land to them. "The people experienced first hand the damage that occurs when everyone is exclusively looking after his own interests..." (Gollmann and Rygiert 2012). In talking together, the oldest villagers all of a sudden remembered long forgotten, presumed lost, knowledge of how the water draining slowly down the hills could be

stored in the valley. This was only possible because caste distinctions were overcome and the necessary activities were collectively organised. All right, I hear you saying, but what does that have to do with developed countries?

Well, they just have different problems. Change of scene: structural change, superannuation, migration to the cities, nothing of postcard idyll. That is today's reality of most German villages and small communities, not so in award-winning Wiesenburg[1] (approx. 1,300 inhabitants, about 100 km south-west of Berlin). In a close community—interestingly enough, cooperatives are again involved—was preserved and the infrastructure developed, the village square really remained the midpoint, about 500 jobs (!) are now available in the village, around 25 % of the inhabitants moved here only recently, the relationships to former youths of the village are systematically maintained, etc.

> ▶ Hopefully, you do not consider these reports to more of an example of good community building and cooperation, rather than that of our leadership phenomenon. If this is the case, then I have really not succeeded, after more than 200 pages, in showing you how closely these aspects are linked to human survival.

Do you remember one of my first sentences in this book? I pointed out that evolution is not finished yet and that the evidence still remains to be seen, whether we hominids are really more successful than other forms of life. I have argued over pages and pages that our existence is based very much on successful leadership. Now I want to expand on this idea: *Our future—as in Santipura and Wiesenburg—depends on it as well!*

To me it seems hardly exaggerated to reduce many of the social problems that concern us globally most urgently to two key challenges—and thus two key tasks:

- We need *models of success* that are clearly geared towards a successful life together
- We need more effective, that is to say, *natural leadership*!

I am convinced that the *evolutionary* approach currently constitutes the most solid foundation to expand our knowledge and skills around the phenomenon of leadership. Furthermore, our examples from Santipura and Wiesenburg have underlined the potential that, in particular, the 7th key task ("Attraction: supporting the group into a prosperous future") has for our further development. Our society and the future of leadership continue to go hand in hand!

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[1] http://www.wiesenburgmark.de

Success in business and the development of human communities ***do not contradict*** each other and benefit greatly from effective leadership!

At the same time we'll have to accept that the ***reputation of our leaders*** is "chipped"! In a survey conducted by *forsa,* regarding the image of a wide variety of professional groups, manager slumped into rank 25th as of October 2011, politicians can be found even 2 ranks further down.

▶ Here are some rating anchors for you: Food inspectors find themselves in 15th place, and tax consultants and entrepreneurs rank 24th and 16th respectively. The list is headed by firemen and medical or geriatric nurses.

Other surveys[2] confirm these findings. The *GfK Trust Report*[3] shows that in Western Europe only 15 % of respondents trust our corporate leaders. Politicians are the taillight in the GfK survey (only 14 % thought they were trustworthy).

Furthermore, the reputation is going from bad to worse (Fig. 9.1).

It is to be feared that—in spite of all our praise for the phenomenon—leadership will not without difficulty be able to exercise its role in the context of social development.
**The legitimacy of our top leaders seems very limited; the public confidence in them is significantly disturbed.**

Now you might say sarcastically that our society has indeed currently filled all its positions, just not with leaders. Another thought, which is—admittedly somewhat hypocritical—thrown into the discussion, is: "Our managers and politicians are not acting value-oriented enough". Yes, we *could* argue this way! However, we *shouldn't*!

Let us—for the purpose of our model—ask ourselves who granted these people legitimacy for which task. Which communities do they lead and for what purpose have they come together?

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[2] z.B. Allensbacher Berufsprestige-Skala (2011).

[3] Source: Press release GfK Custom Research 8. August 2008.

Manager Forfeit Their Reputation

Winners and losers of different professions since 2007 in percentage points

Garbage Collector	
Postman	
Civil Servant	
Policeman	
Teacher	
Pilot	
Lawyer	
Tax Accountant	
Advertiser	
Manager	

-7   -5   -3   -1   1   3   5   7   9   11   13

Source: Forsa
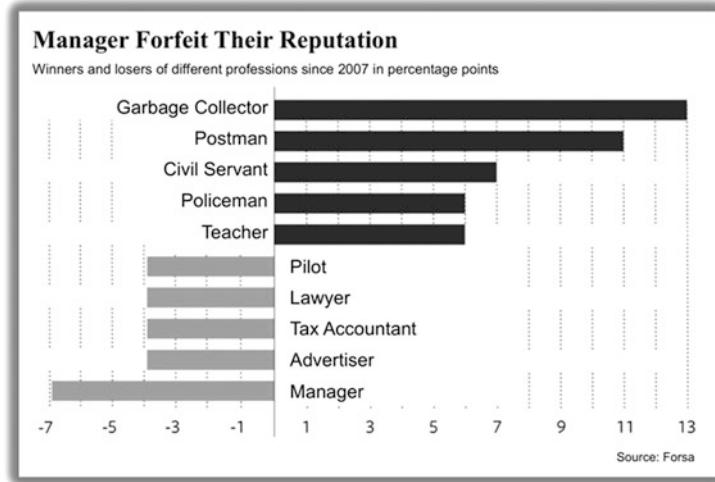
Fig. 9.1   Reputation of managers (in DIE WELT, 20.10.2011)

During the last two decades, I had the honour of meeting very many executive leaders. They are, almost exclusively, all highly responsible, competent, hardworking and friendly people. I am on friendly terms with some of them up to these days. What are we actually accusing these personalities of?

> Essentially, leaders can always only be judged *by the members of their own community* (organisation) or to the extent they reached the *goals defined by those there*: Are they making sure that things are working out better together?
>
> The judgement of others (e.g. the citizens, the press or their families) is understandably a private matter and, if appropriate, of secondary concern.

Business communities have clearly defined their function publicly and hence the leadership task! Both are measured, as a matter of fact, on the financial success and—depending on the type of company—have additional objectives attached: e.g. in family companies it is the demand for security of future generations, in stock companies it is the expectation of short-term success and a high share price valuation, in the cooperative it is the need for equality, etc. Social issues and perspectives only play a role insofar that they are beneficial or harmful in this context.

Even in the **political landscape** we are looking rather in vain for an attractive future promise. Basically, one can hardly avoid the impression that perspectives are increasingly conveying something threatening instead of joy and confidence.

The last straw is grasped by consistently speaking of a *crisis* instead of *transformation* and therefore implying that we're dealing with something rather temporary. Unhappily, this leads to making the unfortunate error in taking up the wrong tasks. Strikingly said: "***In times of crisis you try to restore the old balance; in transformations you search for new models of success!***"

With that having been said, our ***social concerns*** seem to have been increasingly broken down and transferred to many smaller organisations. Many things are taken care of privately in circle of family and friends; quite a few others are governed by the state. For the rest we engage in a diverse set of organisations, to the likes of Amnesty International, child protection agencies and Greenpeace. Fruitful discussions and reflections on how we want ***to lead our lives together in the future*** are basically missing.

There are currently no communities that are dedicated to an all-embracing development task of society.
With this, the task falls back to all of us!
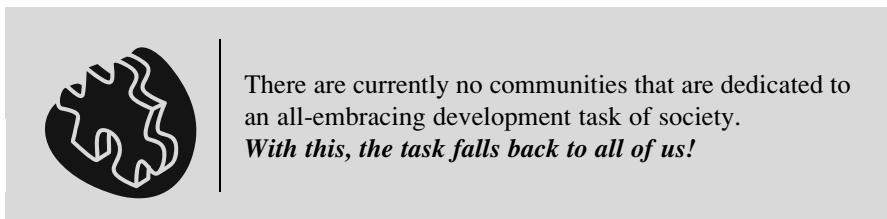
We could now be appalled, ignore it or continue to expect our politicians to do something they (currently?) are currently not affording. In doing so, we leave the development to more or less random power constellations, dynamics and side effects.

It would, however, also be possible to derive a new task from this condition, to be accomplished collectively. As we have meanwhile come to know, such a *mammoth* offers the great advantage of being capable of combining a great variety of forces.

In a perhaps sentimental moment, even Darwin had hoped that mankind would one day grow together. "As man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races" (Darwin 1966). Interestingly, the famous scientist is merely suggesting to extend "social instincts" to "simplest reason".

This path seems to me—based on the gigantic number of different people— unfortunately unrealistic. From our previous considerations of *natural leadership*, we can however derive three strategic alternatives:

1. ***Mammoth***: Is there an objective in which so many people have an interest in that they come together to share their concerns? (attraction)
2. ***Community***: Are there groups that have a desire to accomplish something together and therefore choose this concern? (strengthened relationships)

3. **Shared pain**: How do people disapprove of the circumstances and developments to such an extent that they join forces against them? (communities of fate)

> We people will probably **not be so far, for some time,** as to agree on a collective approach.
> In our wordings, it is much easier to agree on a *mammoth*, than on a *collective model of success*!

Let us savour this fact for a brief moment: It is easier to agree on the general goal, than on a collective activity! Our evolutionary leadership approach suggests, for situations comparable to these, to focus on taking care of the second and third key tasks. What do we do instead? We go to work on task 4 (*Implementation: Making sure the model of success is applied*). Do I need to point out what a waste of resources, collaborative work and existing motivation this involves?

▶ "The future we want" was the slogan of the 2012 2nd UN Climate Conference in Rio de Janeiro. For the 20th time, the so-called World Summit met. The state and government leaders of the world wanted to raise the sustainable development to a new level of momentum. For this purpose, around 15,000 politicians, climate experts and diplomats were also flown in (average air miles covered per participant, 15,000; CO_2 emissions per participant, 7.6 tonnes). In the end, there was neither a treaty nor specific resolutions on any activities for more climate protection (Fig. 9.2).

Economic organisations, associations and federations have customary clearly defined their objectives and management structures. With social issues, this seems—as we have seen—to be different! Here, we need to establish, first of all, (a) a unification process on the issues to be pursued and, secondly, (b) a collective model of success. The whole process would undoubtedly benefit from an effective, legitimated leadership.

Since we cannot currently account for this, we must **take care collectively of the tasks at hand**. Let's go through this again on the basis of our findings so far:

1. **Prudence:** Let's not waste either resources or motivational efforts in action plans that we cannot mutually agree on.
2. **Attractiveness:** Let's define a goal, around which people like to meet and get together about.
3. **Empiricism:** Let's concentrate then on objectifying the emotionally charged debate about the most reasonable approach. Let's initiate a variety of different experiments in "real life", which we can then evaluate systematically.

Fig. 9.2 Working without a collective model of success

4. *Analysis:* Let's be guided by the most convincing results that are put forward. Let's then take the results and develop a viable collective model of success.
5. *Communication and implementation:* Can we come to a shared reality (3rd key task) and then we get going with the action (4th key task)?

Our "mammoth". We are collectively facing the challenge of first conducting a variety of targeted "model of success experiments" and then to investigate their different effectiveness systematically!
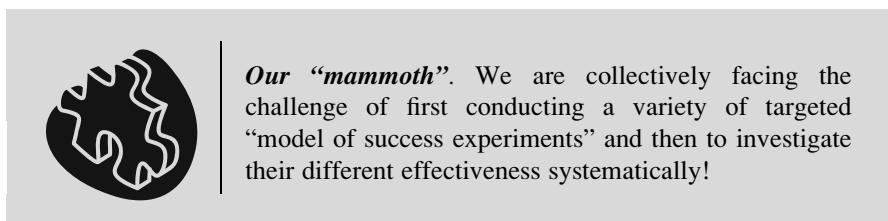
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Competing Models of Success 10

> *According to Karl Popper ". . . a theory is scientific only in so far as it is falsifiable, and should be given up as soon as it is falsified. By applying Popper's account of scientific method, would have killed the theories of Darwin and Einstein at birth".*
>
> John Gray, Political Philosopher

Our ***basic model of success*** has been verified for a long time: collaboration is the starting point of our existence and has quintessentially been tried and tested until today! However, we do not seem to have found a systematic way to take control of our progress in its entirety. In some areas of life (e.g. competitive sports, medicine, engineering), we act very professionally and were able to forge ahead with impressive advancements.

In other areas (e.g. in the development of successful collaboration or effective leadership) we are lacking a comparably systematic approach. We never established a guild or craft, no profession or global structure for these *interpersonal force fields* that can even remotely be compared to those of, e.g. the technical parallel world. In light of the significance, isn't that amazing?

Evolution itself is not interested in our development. It waits and sorts out, sends new models of success randomly into the competition and has no experience of a problem! It has nothing particular in mind for us!

We have our destiny in our hands more noticeably than any other creature. Why do we not make use of this possibility systematically, where it would be useful for our mutual future?

What is *our special opportunity*? We can design models of success and discuss, test, revise or discard them.
To a great extent, this is even largely possible, without seriously endangering our existence.

We are sort of doing this in the economic environment. Basically, any company (not just start-ups) represents a model of success experiment. However, *not even here* are we as professional as it would be valuable. *Collins and Hansen*[1] were very successful in showing us what potential for this strategy is still available for us managers. Since our company is now controlled, lean, certified, focused on its core business, process oriented and quality and customer oriented, they must . . ..

Yes, well what exactly? Build and expand your brand? Win the war for talent? Develop more innovative products and services? Offer more effective methods of remuneration? You already know my answer: the ***future winner companies*** have to offer an *innovative model of success* that is clearly geared towards a more successful life together. On the other hand, it is exactly these that must *then be led better*!

If in fact, both come together at once, a special organisation would have been created! Does this remind you of very many companies you know of? We rarely hear about employees, who spread enthusiastic stories about their management culture, not even from the large and well-known enterprises. Why is that? Have we already succumbed to believing that economic success and good human interaction (and I include leaders here) cannot be matched with each other?

The *economic performance* of organisations is influenced by leadership behaviour.
Because even that, however, can only be established under certain conditions,[2] employees generally collect around famous companies, rather than around famous leaders.

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[1] cf. Collins and Hansen (2012).

[2] We can already provide evidence of the correlation of distinct leadership behaviour and economic success in a separate study (Michael Alznauer, Roland Keppler, The GreenStar success formula: leading to economic success, publication in preparation).

We've seen this: a manager switches his employer—and a short time later, his former employees follow him, one after another, into the new organisation. It is also known as a fact that in competitive sports, it is often the new star coach who attracts more of the top players. This too is not new: the graduates of the world-famous management schools do not have to worry about their future career.

How come we rarely hear about companies that it is a clear indication of quality to have grown into a leadership role there? When will banks begin to systematically examine the leadership qualities of their management, before making credit decisions? Will the moment come, for a company to be acquired, not because of its R&D department or its distribution channels but because of the opportunity to win 107 fascinating leaders in one fell swoop? When will we read in forums for the first time that you should change the company xy because the top management keeps his promises of success to the workforce?

> ► As a next step, you can announce to the marketplace that you will offer
>   clients a discounted hotline. What effect would it have when your com-
>   petitor then reacts with a public announcement of launching a broad
>   social experiment: **Leading naturally**?[3]
>   Who do you think will get more attention?

In the last 20 years that I have worked with leaders and followers, I have seen many models of success compete with each other, many of which never convinced me. Most of them have failed. Some persevere. What can ultimately be considered as success is always decided by life itself. It sorts out the useless. With this attitude and the *evolutionary leadership* approach, I would now like to send an alternative model for success into the competition (Fig. 10.1).

Let's definitely not, *under any circumstances*, stop looking for better solutions for the collective survival.

At this point, I would like to end our trip. I thoroughly enjoyed to have been travelling with you. If you plan or implement your own practical experiences around *evolutionary leadership*, would you please keep me up to date? Maybe we will get to know each other on the large collective journey. I would be delighted!

Until then take care!

Yours

Michael Alznauer

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[3] The wording is not copyrighted—and cannot even be protected.

Fig. 10.1   The leadership puzzle has been solved

Reference

Collins, J., & Hansen, M. T. (2012). *Oben bleiben Immer*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag GmbH.

Open-Source-Circle: Management

Instead of accepting or rejecting an idea, you look at the idea in order to "see where you can move to". This puts a very different sort of usefulness on ideas. We need much more emphasis on design...

Edward de Bono, leading authority in the field of creative thinking

The renowned management thinker *Gary Hamel* criticised us leaders very provocatively in his latest book.[1] In this context, he also points out that the current management attitude emerged during the same period as the light bulb, the telephone and the automobile. His judgment, marked by little grace, can—as I was able to experience myself—trigger legitimate resistance with one or another manager.

Presumably we can, however, interpret his comments primarily as an expression of a personal passion for our subject, because at the same time, he denotes management as one of the most important ***"social technologies of mankind"***. I was happy that, amongst others, he recommends having a look at anthropology and biology for future development.

Another famous name in the scene (*Henry Mintzberg*) is sceptical with respect to the systematic development of our leadership phenomenon, because there are, in his view, hardly areas of managing "... for which there are reliable established procedures that have been reviewed for their effectiveness ... the engineer and the medical profession are based on codified knowledge that can be learned by established rules. Therefore, the experienced engineer or doctor can almost always outdo the layman".[2] With the evolutionary leadership approach, however, we

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[1] "How would you feel about a physician who killed more patients than he helped? What about a police detective who committed more murders than he solved? Or a teacher whose students were more likely to get dumber than smarter as the school year progressed? And what if you discovered that these perverse outcomes were more the rule than the exception—that they were characteristic of most doctors, policemen and professors? You'd be more than perplexed. You'd be incensed, outraged. You'd demand that something must be done! Given this, why are we complacent when confronted with data that suggest most managers are more likely to douse the flames of employee enthusiasm than fan them, and are more likely to frustrate extraordinary accomplishment than to foster it?" (*Gary Hamel*, Worauf es jetzt ankommt, 2013, S. 153).

[2] *Henry Mintzberg*, Managen, S. 25/26.

change this situation. **We can lay down procedures that can be verified for their effectiveness!**

Hamel currently has the idea of further developing management in an international collaborative effort.[3] Due to the absence of a leadership model, he had 36 management professionals develop a foundation in the form of 25 management rules (he calls them "Moon Shots") in 2008.[4] A great idea! The fact that we are still going our own way with our **Open-Source-Initiative: Management** has three reasons:

1. We are not moving in a concept-free zone! **Evolutionary leadership** provides a concrete theoretical foundation on which a targeted development is faster, more effective and more systematic is more likely. We are working in parallel on theory (*"Source Code"*) and in practice (*"Application"*)!
2. In order not to get stuck on the level of placing different experiences side by side, the "**source code of leadership**" needs to be developed further. This requires intensive exchange, reflected practice and conscious quality control of the results. The open-source approach, originally from the world of IT, provides us with methodological know-how from which we can benefit.
3. It is, as we have seen, important for the leaders of our society to restore confidence—at least if they want to take on more **social responsibility**. The Open-Source-Circle: Management is also committed in this respect.

The initiative does not see itself as a "meeting place of the Manager of the Year". Rather, it is about (a) the personal courage to innovative activities and to open encounters; (b) truthfulness, in terms of self-reflection and analysis; and (c) the willingness to take on responsibilities beyond own organisational objectives.


It's about systematically deepening our collective *understanding of the leadership phenomenon*, increasing the own *effectiveness as a leader* and passing on the knowledge to promote *social progress*.

The particular challenge lies in not doing all of this in the famous ivory tower, but in the busy, hectic and always also somewhat merciless management and working life. It greatly helps to be able to indulge in this task within a community of motivated and amicable people!

Our initiative relies neither on as many people as possible clicking the "like me" button on Facebook nor follow our "tweets" or leave visitors comments on our website. You will currently find none of this with us—at least we presently believe it is not particularly valuable!

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[3] vgl. www.managementexchange.com

[4] *Gary Hamel*, Worauf es jetzt ankommt, 2013, S. 261 ff.
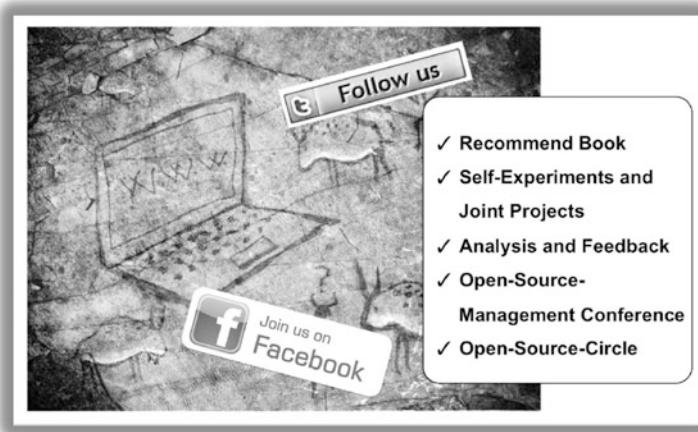
Fig. A.1 Open-Source-Circle: Management

Should you, however, be asking yourself what contribution you can afford in this context, let us stick for one moment with the open-source philosophy. This requires, first, that *the source code (of leadership)* is disclosed. In the 2nd edition, this has happened to an extent, which I, as a consultant, would have described 6 years ago as a threat to trade secrets. It goes without saying that our approach will benefit from *you recommending the book*! It would be very kind of you to do this.

Furthermore, you can—just as we do—base your leadership practice on this approach or systematically *initiate projects and evaluations*. We would be very grateful, if you shared your experiences in *joint discussion*, e.g. in a personal conversation or during the annual *Open-Source Management Conference*. This also serves the purpose of exchanging current questions, topics and projects.

On this foundation, the integration of new experiences into the source code is made possible and published *"Leading naturally 2.0"*.

Are you in?

Interview: Martina Baier, Personnel Manager[5]

M. A.   *Mrs. Baier, please share with us the idea to consider leadership as a task, instead of, for example, a personality trait or competency? What practical implication does this have with Robinson?*

M. B.   *Well, in the real business world that has always been a bit clearer than with the theorists, because what ultimately counts, of course, are the concrete results a manager achieves with his team. Some companies seem to be completely indifferent, in terms of how this happens. However, we at Robinson do actually also ask the question, whether the manner is with our special culture or not.*

   Since we know that not every manager is equally successful in every situation, we have developed a system to match the respective environmental requirements with the respective individual scope of experience. This then makes it even easier to define development goals and to derive means that are suitable to the individual. In addition, effective teams can be put together that complement each other.

M. A.   *Have you actually come across anything really modern or current to take into consideration for this task?*

M. B.   *I have not identified anything for us. Perhaps it will be more and more difficult in our times of social media to permanently keep your ground as a leader without providing a real benefit. Everyone has access to lots of information these days, is used to being involved and constantly in exchange with one another. So as a manager, you can simply not legitimise yourself by being the bottleneck or having the monopoly on information. However, we have already been acquainted with this phenomenon in our clubs, because we live together so closely and have become accustomed to the loads of daily challenges for quite some time already, makes it difficult to consider this as new or modern.*

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[5] Currently head of HR, Robinson Club GmbH, Hannover.

M. A. *In response to the following question from a research study "What do you have to do to be successful in your company?", very few managers replied with "effective leadership". Do you have an explanation for that?*

M. B. *This is really quite interesting, Mr. Alznauer. I must almost fear that would also be the case with us. Presumably, we would indeed hear such things as "motivate employees and build emotional ties", but certainly not the full range of leadership tasks. Basically, this is simply not addressed adequately in the company. Most managers do not know what is actually included in this role.*

Since we have been addressing the specific tasks much stronger than before, when in working with the leaders, it has become somewhat better. Nevertheless, there is still much to do.

M. A. *Many thanks, Mrs. Baier! Can you tell us in closing what are the most urgent issues that you are dealing with for the years to come?*

M. B. *When I consider the German employment market, there are six aspects that immediately come mind. First, I see the integration of a new generation of employees as a challenge. We have a really well-trained, small and very demanding group on one extreme. The other end, I see represented by a quite well-trained group, who seem to me even somewhat less mature than before and which must be familiarised with more effort and patience. Then we already have point two: to be considered an attractive employer for the qualified group, the development of a corporate culture plays a big role. It must radiate outward and leave you wanting to be a part of it. That also includes living up to the expectation of being able to balance work and personal lives.*

Thirdly, we will have to deal with the development, motivation and health of the matured workforce. We certainly need new deals here. Then you take a good look at the fine line we are walking on, between burnout and maintaining an advance in knowledge, then you can perhaps see the competent use of new media as the fourth point. This includes almost seamlessly, fifthly, the appropriate use of various networks.

Last but not least, we need a more differentiated understanding of leadership. It is not simply a role a perpetual task! On the one hand, we need to take a much more accurate at the details, which arise from the current situation. On the other hand, it must become normal that the leadership task is sometimes only valid for a certain phase or a particular topic.

Interview: Roland Keppler, CEO[6]

M. A. *The topic "performance community" seems to be also a very personal one for you, Mr. Keppler. What experiences have made you sensitive for this?*

R. K. When I entered the working world in 1992, I came into a structure that was designed and built up over many years. It was clear, who has which task, where responsibilities begin and especially where they end. Sharing work results with other departments was not provided for. It was less about the collective success and more about individual positioning. A second example, many years later: we were about to launch a new product. A small team was working on it. We were all strongly drawn to topics such as marketing or sales. Until we finally realised that too many customers were simply not paying their bills. We then decided to include the finance team very closely into the marketing discussions and that saved a lot of (learning) money. This showed me that performance relies on everyone's contribution.

Also from personal experience: especially in companies that have grown over a period of many decades, there are many people with a long association and an enormous knowledge. Often, these employees have seen many general managers come and go. They decided for themselves that a "let's-first-wait-and-see" attitude does no do any harm. The inclusion of these employees into discussions with recent newcomers—and thus the merger of demonstrated experience and new impulses—influences the success and prevents mistakes.

M. A. *Now the term "performance community"—despite of its self-explanatory nature—is not very common, not even easily translated into other languages. In what conditions does the phenomenon occur, which we refer to in this way?*

R. K. We all know about these most powerful communities of fate that arise from situation of intense pressure, such as an impending bankruptcy or the

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threat of a collective job loss. Here, however, a relaxed state is back quickly, as soon as the situation is no longer severe. Conflicts that possibly led to this crisis are, however, still not resolved and re-emerge at other occasion again.

An attractive goal can get even more momentum going than pressure and distress. But, from my experience, even that reaches limits quickly. Only the enthusiasm of wanting to reach a goal with others and join forces together creates something special. Of course, identification with the common goal is already a requirement. It is hard for a non-smoker to get involved to create a successful campaign for a cigarette brand.

M. A.   **Are there also things that can get seriously in the way of developing performance communities?**

R. K.   *A successful performance community builds very strongly on mutual respect and esteem. When individuals or departments are not appreciated, this quickly leads to frustration and resentment—in other words it gets "political". It begins, for example, with the employee, who attempts to place a personal opinion with the boss in advance and tries to manipulate the decision-making process and extends to the unfair rewarding of an individual of the collective success—whether through recognition or money.*

In one of my professional positions, the production of a product was split between in-house and external manufactures. Our own team complained continuously about difficult working conditions and lack of support. Conversely, management continually referenced the external provider as better, more flexible and more effective. The motivation of the employees to improve was low. Until we provided evidence in a staff meeting, based on statistics, that the service provider needed 4 min less production time for the same product. At that time we refrained threatening job cuts or anything similar. It was enough to appeal to the honour to make up the difference. A year later, the production times were the same and we were able to raise production capacity again.

M. A.   **That's an interesting example, Mr. Keppler. Would you accredit the leader with a specific role in this context?**

R. K.   *The manager is captain and coaches alike. Of course he represents the team to the outside. But the leader has a very strong communicative and facilitating role. To pay attention in the development of strategies or the preparation of decisions that, on the one hand, not only the lowest common denominator is found ("we will then simply not jump far enough"), on the other hand, avoiding wishful thinking ("we can't do that anyway") is also crucial. Everyone must understand the context in which and with which the decisions were made—even those who were not there.*

Besides, the leader must lead visibly: praise, where performance was demonstrated; reprimands, where the contribution was not sufficient; help, where support is needed.

To be fair in judgment is another important element. People have a keen sense of fairness. Reliability of managers seems also very important to me. I had a situation where we were losing money. We could not afford to raise wages. The surprise was great, when we paid a small bonus for all employees at years end, as the loss ultimately turned out lower than expected. He, who sets demands, must also be able to share, that's my experience here.

M. A. **Thank you for sharing some of your experiences with us, Mr. Keppler. Let's take a quick look forward: What will be the most urgent topics for managers to have to take care of in the years to come?**

R. K. *Adaptation to the ever faster changing environment is a major challenge. This requires a lot of communication and transparency in all areas. Everyone must go along with the same pace. The reasons for, and the impact of, setbacks and failures must be explained and clarified, time and again, and the objectives and resources need to be aligned accordingly.*

Leaders often work closely together with employees, who can easily come up with alternative job offers at anytime, relocation (even international) is easy to organise and they are very much aware of their values. For these employees, it is not just about the salary, but also about the experience of being part of the community. To succeed together, to learn from our defeats together and to discovering new things together.

Interview: Dr. med. Peter May[7]

M. A.   *Dr. May, you have been advising high performers from sport and business in health and fitness issues for many years. Are there similarities and differences between these two groups?*

P. M.   *Well yes, but that does of course depend on the perspective. Undoubtedly, these two groups are similar, on the one hand, in relation to their extreme disposition to performance and the potential harms related with that. On the other hand, one must keep in mind that competitive athletes optimise their performance to a specific point in time. Whilst they focus on the next up-coming top event, the situation of managers is entirely different. Maybe not 365 days a year, but often not far from that, they tend to be highly engaged and under a lot of pressure.*

M. A.   *Handling these pressures plays a major role, especially in management. Are top managers, from your experience, taking these issues seriously enough?*

P. M.   *Let me pick up again on your comparison from before, Mr. Alznauer. Basically, we can distinguish here—simplifying a little bit—between two groups. The first actually considered their profession comparable to competitive sports. Members of this group see their own body as a kind of tool for success. They make a dedicated effort to maintain their health in line with their professional requirements. They often transfer their personal ambition systematically to these goals.*

   Admittedly, this is clearly the smaller group, perhaps 20–25 % of the executive leaders we accompany our centre.

   We have to appreciate that the vast majority rather comes to us with the concern that, maybe this time, they will not be receiving the "absolution" for having treated their body in the right way. Relieved, they then determine, at best, that now everything has, once again, gone well, they can continue as before. I think there is no need to point out which of these two groups is the more vulnerable.

M. A.   *You have been close to the topic for many years now. Have you recognised, in your experience, any trends?*

P. M.   On the side of the high performers, interestingly, we find that the "bad conscience" is increasing. Basically, today everyone knows what to do and not to do. The challenge lies more in developing positive habits. You may already have in mind, which argument, for not doing that, we hear most often? Of course, "No time!"

However, there is also another significant trend: the companies themselves are increasingly taking on the subject of health as well.

M. A.   *What does that mean in practical terms?*

P. M.   More and more often we are being approach by large companies, who want us to ensure the regular checkups with their executive leaders. This has almost an incentive character for those it concerns, because now the employer gets far more than the minimalistic "top show" he is accustomed to from health insurance coverage and he can even continue to claim his reimbursements.

M. A.   *Checkups are one thing, Dr. May. The so-called healthy lifestyle is something completely different. Your argument from just a moment ago, not having enough time, does not affect all of the elements involved. Whether, for example, I choose to eat a healthy diet or not, the time remains the same.*

P. M.   A clever thought, Mr. Alznauer. However, one must already see that a regular physical activity—if we refrain from taking really threatening things into consideration, such as alcohol abuse or chain smoking—is the most important thing we can do for our health. That will require you to come up with 3–4 half-hour sessions per week. So time is not that insignificant.

Let me introduce another argument: it's not just about your body. The constant demand to be accessible and ubiquity of work issues these days also creates a massive mental stress. You yourself will not be a stranger to this. Now this is exactly where these little sporty-outs can also create some distance. It is increasingly important to be able to escape from the grasp your professional work has on your life, once in a while.

The decisive point in all of all this is to take the first hurdle. Just getting started. Then build small tricks into it, so you do not stop again and step by step you will develop useful habits.

M. A.   *Thank you, Dr. May! At least now I'm beginning to understand the aspect of increasingly guilty conscience* . . .

Interview: Günter Reichart, Board Member[8]

M. A.	**Mr. Reichart, based on your experience, do self-management requirements of leaders differ to those of other professionals?**
G. R.	*First of all, I would basically see no differentiation, because self-management appears to be a key success factor in all aspects of life, due solely to the increasing complexity of the requirements. Differences in dealing with self-management, in line with these requirements, I would tend to see them rather in terms of individual characteristics ("patterns"). Concretely, this means, in my view, that there is no universally valid list of requirement specifications in terms of self-management competences or models of success based on these.*
M. A.	**So there are no specific requirements which play a special role?**
G. R.	*More likely certain properties, traits, if you wish. We all have our strengths and weaknesses and it is therefore obvious that it is easier for some and more difficult for others to effectively and efficiently handle self-management and provide relief.*
M. A.	**To the former athlete Günter Reichart: Is there a "self-discipline muscle" that can be trained?**
G. R.	*As a matter of fact, yes! If we are speaking about training, always something that involves regularity and perseverance. What I mean is: it will not be of lasting success to train several times a week for a period of a few weeks, pause for a while and then start all over from the beginning again. It is recommendable to go for smaller doses, but then to continue regularly with training sessions. Applied to self-management, this means avoiding a schedule that risks becoming a "burden", just to determine after a short while that it's too much and then rather leaving it all together.*
	Chose just a couple of smaller projects and carry them out consistently for success. One example: self-management is frequently connected, at first analysis, with a lack of time for yourself. Set up a time management

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system (Outlook Calendar?). Block time periods, which may not be used for any other appointments. For managers, this also means setting up clear rules with personal assistance's offices in full understanding that these blocked zones are not to be disturbed (only exception: "fire"). During these sessions, you will be able to work more freely on things that may have been taken home before and potentially caused additional stress again. Try it and you will see that it works. The practical experience shows, however, that it is also important to immediately intervene and demand an uninterrupted time zone again, if things have been "broken up", either by the personal assistance or—which in turn can be equated with training effect—by yourself.

M. A.   **Should managers just simply compensate for their own shortcomings in this matter (e.g. assistant, supporting software)? At which point— and where preferably not?**

G. R.   *Such findings again depend, in my opinion, on personal experience, of course, and on personal traits. It is always good when there is a possibility to compensate for your own weaknesses by delegating. Delegation is difficult for many managers, especially those who tend to be perfectionists. Here sentences to the likes of the following are often heard "before taking the time to explain this to someone, it's easier to do it myself". The result is, firstly, that they will continue to have these task permanently and, therefore, it will not lead to any relief. On the other hand, does not lead to any further development. In other words, delegation, whenever necessary and wherever possible. When better not? Wherever special knowledge and experience are necessary and indispensable or it would provide false or inaccurate results.*

M. A.   **Thank you, Mr. Reichart! Finally: What topics do you expect to the major concern of managers in the coming years?**

G. R.   *Regardless of industry and hierarchy, it will be the same in all areas that concentrating on the operational success is one of most the significant issues. This may have always been true, nevertheless, this means that it is even more important today and in the future, to select priorities and "drive" them through. And with increasing complexity, this is getting more difficult. With increasing complexity, this is becoming more demanding. It also involves identifying what can be postponed or may not be necessary at all.*

Interview: Peter van Eyk, Head of HR[9]

M.A.   **Mr. van Eyk, how do you make the distinction between management fads, consultant marketing and detached management research, on one side, and useful management know-how, on the other?**

P.v.E.   *Professionalism invariably implies knowing the historical development of your profession. What helps tremendously is being able to distinguish "new wine in old skins"—but caution: originally, this was only done with the finest of wines!—from truly new approaches. Currently we can witness a renaissance, e.g. especially in Germany, of the person-oriented leadership theories (Great Man theory, trait theory), which were actually presumed obsolete, but have been revived in context of the gender discussion.*

Not as blatantly as I am expressing here, rather obscured, the "Great-Woman-Theory" is in fact currently being represented: female leaders are deemed to be the better leaders for the future, based on the stereotypically traits that are ascribed to them, in areas such as intuition, social competences, cooperation abilities, etc. Ultimately, this is a disservice to their concern for equal participation, also in this realm, perfectly justified in its core, without needing justifications of these sorts. However, despite of interesting, entirely new approaches having been developed, e.g. the idea of the "learning organisation", the search for successful practical implementations ends in vain, even after so many years. This, in spite of having established the approach with references to numerous successful examples of single cases from the field.

The question regarding the usefulness of new leadership know-how can, therefore, undoubtedly not be answered from behind the desk, but only in intensive dialog and processing with the operative leaders explicitly in question. An orderly answer cannot be expected either in this matter.

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[9] Currently divisional head of human resources development & management, Vivento-Group, Deutsche Telekom AG, Bonn; president EMCC Germany, Member of the *Open-Source-Initiative: Management* (Inner-Circle).

In contradiction to the many proposals from numerous management competence models and the "assessments" or "appraisals" that are based on these, we must not forget what Prof. Stiefel rightly referred to in his books a short while ago:

at least from a certain management level above that of a department head or group organiser, leadership tasks are not available in the form of pre-structured job descriptions. The definition and delineation of the management task is much more of a creative act. Only at a sufficiently abstract level are leadership competences generally valid. However, there is no guarantee that the acquisition of these competences will allow the specific and tangible leadership tasks to be mastered.

At the same time it should be noted that there are usually several different ways of "real" leadership in any specific situation and leadership in companies is no longer perceived as an individual competence, but is successful above all as team and group competence. This is then where the "usefulness" of new leadership know-how should be discussed and evaluated.

M.A.   **All of that sound very demanding at first. Does a leader have a fighting chance at all of finding his way around in this jungle of management offerings?**

P.v.E.   *Only a "Yes, but answer" can be given to that. Executive leaders read, on the one hand, an enormous amount, namely, driven by necessity and particular: starting with their emails, to presentations and reports, up to feasibility studies. Most of those that I know of, read very little—not only for reasons of time—conceptual work covering current leadership discussions. Whereas the one or other classic, such as "The Leadership Challenge", "Execution" or, particularly popular, "Winning" by Jack Welch are sitting on the office shelf. And yet, it's not that difficult to grasp at least a "big picture" covering the "jungle" of leadership and its structure as well. An independent and current recommendation is the merely 100 page compendium published by the Bertelsmann Foundation titled "Leadership—overview of approaches, developments, trends", which was published as part of the "leadership series" 2011. I could name more. If in doubt, that would mean asking a trustworthy leadership expert.*

M.A.   **From your point of view, in what direction is the management market heading?**

P.v.E.   *There will continue to be numerous offers in the future of books, seminars and initiatives to the age-old phenomenon of leadership. In the best case, it is entertaining. As a rule, you will not find much more beyond Machiavelli. Books titled "Lead like a Rabbi", "Lead like a Samurai", "Lead like Old Fritz" will continue to fill the bookshops in train station and airports and find their readers just as the many trainers, who can be better categorised as entertainers, especially within the sales category ("Selling is like making love" and the likes).*

The same is true in the field of management education for the various business schools that have remained largely stuck in their orientation and didactics in the mid-70s. At least, after the initial orientation on teaching and learning in the 50s and 60s, the emphasis has been put on transfer orientation. Since the mid-90s, the recognisable trend is to expose the manager in his role for value development of the organisational and human resources. What a horrible word.

Trainings will be increasingly reviewed in terms of their actually measurable value contribution. Management development "using the shot gun" approach will therefore, amongst other reasons, be replaced more and more by "action learning" at the desk. Management andragogy is learning from the neuro-scientifically enlightened pedagogy that the silver bullet of learning is doing, followed by subsequent reflection. "Understanding" is not a purely cognitive act, but you have to, as the expression "getting a grip of something" suggests, take things into your hands (which automatically stimulates more grey matter for learning).

The "reflective practitioner", alone and increasingly in the management team, is becoming the role model. As accompanying training campaigns—also for cost reasons—more and more specific forms of coaching and mentoring will be used. People management is clearly the top leadership task and not a "service" of the personnel department. The mandate of the new head of personnel from Continental to her executive leaders brings it exaggeratedly to the point, she requires in tantamount: "Figures & Talents".

M.A. **If you had 3 wishes, what needs to be done to effectively prepare leaders for their tasks?**

P.v.E. *In leadership development, we encounter a strange paradox: the lower the level of management, the more is done training technically. On the last and highest level up to division manager or general manager and board member, you are then suddenly left completely alone, although the risk of damage is enormous, not only for the person concerned but also for the company. Therefore, first and foremost, I hope that with the internal and even more so the external appointments of top management positions, the existing systematic concepts for on-boarding-coaching, which integrate all stakeholders, are used.*

Secondly, with the enormous "external" burden the leader are exposed to today, I would like to see, within the scope management development, a greater emphasis put on personality development and self-management again.

Thirdly, we need now more than ever the reinforcement of the competencies of managers beyond business management. Systemic understanding, organisational psychology and cultural awareness are exemplary important building blocks here.

M.A.   **I can only agree with you on these wishes, Mr. van Eyk. What is your opinion, what topics are most urgent for managers in the next few years to come?**

P.v.E.   *In addition to the classic triad of leadership: self-leadership, leading the team and organisation, a 4th dimension is increasingly gaining in importance. Specifically, the context, the environment or as some say the "Globe". Based on the mantra "change is a constant" and reinforced by systemic considerations, the managers of the new millennium are called upon, more so than ever, to observe the environment in which the game of business is played, to look out for changes and trends and to relate it to their business. For this, a professional management needs to build up, a seismograph.*

   Wherever possible, the attempt, to help shape these external changes or even lead them, needs to be made, that is, for example, to get significantly involved in social debates. To look ahead through global lenses, no longer applies only to large corporates but also and especially to SMEs.

   The main clusters of these changes are already known for some time, but their actual impact is still not perceptible at every point for everybody. In this context, only briefly sketched:

   1. The world is a village

   Especially after the downfall of many communist and totalitarian regimes, we find all global labour markets open. Positive: the jobs come to the people. In manufacturing, leaders must learn to manage their direct reports across the whole. Product development takes place in virtual teams in 24/7 mode. Time differences are used purposefully ("follow the sun") by the American engineer, his work is handed over at the end of the day to the Indian engineer and he in turn to the Israeli. The team as such "never sleeps". This requires bringing cross-cultural together, differences in language (English is not the same as English!), culture and also very concrete administrative environments (holiday periods, payment, etc.) as well as traditional business processes.

   2. Demographics & Diversity

   In addition to the ethnic diversity today, the aging of the workforce, in terms of a new conflict of generations, plays an overarching role in almost every nation. Add to that the gender discussion. In case of doubt, the "future leader" will be a woman and/or of minority ethnic origin. To successfully establish teams in these circumstances requires significantly improved conflict management skills in future. The organisation of life-long learning, a long-term and qualitative personnel planning, new forms of work organisation and development-oriented leadership are in demand here.

   3. WWW, Technology, Super-Highways, E-Commerce

   The proportion of well-educated knowledge workers, who have access to all information in a 24/7 mode, who are constantly—at the expense of regeneration and reflection—in touch with their activities—in

full view of their bosses—exchanging external job positions frankly using Facebook, is growing rapidly. Leadership with advanced knowledge no longer works here. Every internal communication is also an external communication. The occasionally encountered attempts from larger corporations, to influence the formation of opinion with their own intranet propaganda, are in vain. In terms of information, we are all at eye level.

4. The new psychological and social contract

On the one hand, lifetime employment with one company and job security only appears as historical relics. Self-growing companies simultaneously reduce their permanent workforce.

On the other hand, the demand for specialists, who are up to date, increases further ("war for talent"). Herein lies the challenge of leaders for the future, as they tie their top talent and motivate them beyond the hygiene factor of money.

5. Business consolidation, M & A, cooperation

We observe greater consolidation in many industries, in which only 2–3 major competitor remain in the end. Start-ups and niche entrepreneurs are constantly in danger of being "swallowed", but also the "merger of equals" is often attempted. The challenge for leadership: integrating different organisational cultures and business systems into a coherent whole, with a new vision and sense of purpose, without losing the energy and enterprise spirit of a start-up. Making sense is foremost task of the top leaders in this environment, which employees perceive as an extremely uncertain phase of convergence. The largest desk in the top corner office is no longer the best place to do this. What is needed is a physical presence amongst the employees in production, with customers at the counter and all other stakeholders. Getting the intelligently concerned involved in these the process, is top priority. "I currently still do not know myself, exactly how, but together we will surely get things to work out" is the new attitude. As the famous Chinese writer Lu Xun wrote: "Only trust the one who doubts, especially his own opinion". This is truly a huge mental transformation.

All these issues, only barely touched upon here, constitute distinctive challenges for all top leaders in their search and development of young talent.

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References

The following authors have encouraged me with their experiences, their imagination and their knowledge. Should I have contrasted them in my work, in some respects that does in now way constitute a lesser respect for their competence in any way. For any possibly inadequate understanding, I apologise at this point, coupled with the kind request, to please explain my misunderstanding to me.

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The Author

Michael Alznauer, born 1962, studied Clinical Psychology and Diagnostics in Bonn before he started his investigations into the phenomena of leadership, during the last 20 years. During this time, he has supported and accompanied a couple of thousand executives in completing their leadership tasks.

He is married, father of two adult children and member of an innovative residential project, which is located in a former monastery in Bonn. This is also where the Change Support Team resides, which he established, having first published the leadership approach *evolutionary leadership and management profiling* in 2006, as the basic foundation for the consulting practise.

You can contact Michael Alznauer here:
www.change-support-team.de

Thank you

Only a few people have worked explicitly writing this book—nevertheless, it is ultimately the result of a large community of leaders and followers. At this point I thank all of you, in sincere appreciation and respect!
My work is supported with compassionate support—that's not to be taken for granted!

The Partner

Peter Rost, born 1963, was raised in England and the USA and graduated from Cologne University with a degree in Business Administration in 1996, with over 20 years of experience, leading in companies as general manager, European group manager and principle founder of a start-up. He joined CST in 2007 after having spent a year in the Middle East, setting up a partnership and successfully exiting the venture. His focus is on internationalisation, making the *evolutionary leadership* approach and *management profiling* available to clients operating globally and in intercultural environments.

Peter is father of two daughters and committed to supporting younger generations in their development as mentor for start-ups and university lecturer.

You can contact Peter Rost here:
www.change-support-team.de

Thank you

Unthinkable for me to allow someone else to translate Michael's book. I took it upon myself, knowing that doing it justice would be a challenge. The days spent immersing myself even further into the nature of leaders and followers made it well worthwhile!

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