



ZOFIA DZIK:

DIRECTION – COHERENT
LEADERSHIP™

The changes will only be satisfied and successfully introduced by an efficient manager who is simultaneously a happy person.

The article is taken from THINKTANK Magazine No. 24, Spring 2015

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IDEA OF COHERENT LEADERSHIP™

Zofia Dzik

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**DIRECTION
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Companies have always been raising the qualifications of their employees. Training on soft and hard skills has also been conducted since the beginning of the existence of modern organizations. However, these are usually fragmentary, unidimensional activities focused around professional issues that are important at the given time.

This is the same with the development of leaders. Their education programmes that are available on the market mainly teach how a leader can transform an organization and manage others. Therefore, they generally apply to the professional area. Some of them already notice that the leader also has personality and character. However, none take into account the fact that leaders are primarily people – they operate in various, interrelated and mutually permeating social roles. Their effectiveness as leaders of others also depends on their personal area. This is directly related to the level of happiness felt, the feeling of meaning in life, the physical condition, the quality of the relationship with other people and the spiritual aspect of their development.

Working first as a president of companies and then as a supervisory board member of other companies, I discovered that the approach to the development of leaders (as well as employees) to date almost completely ignores roles in life other than work. That is how I developed the term of Tunnel Development – that focuses solely on one dimension – work and professional/mental development. Therefore, these programmes are usually doomed to fail in the long term. They do not result in a permanent transformation of the individual or a change in the organization. This is because it is difficult to comprehensively develop someone who is not primarily seen as a person, as a human being who is more than just a brain.

MAIN THOUGHT

- Employee and leader development programmes focus primarily on work-related skills.
- However, we appear in various roles in our lives which penetrate, weaken and strengthen each other.

To cope with the changes and to implement them effectively, we need coherent leadership which develops all the dimensions in which we operate as people.

NOT JUST MANAGERS, BUT PRIMARILY PEOPLE. It is difficult to deny that we operate in many dimensions. And yet it is the professional area that has become dominant in reflections about leadership. A quarter of a century of intensively building a free market in Poland has led to a type of “exaggeration”: excessive focus on the development of professional skills and insufficient focus on private issues. The generation that introduced the free market in Poland has achieved its status and position at the expense of their personal lives. This is the “mental programme” in which we live and work. We also “programme” our children and families. We think about what to teach our child, less frequently asking ourselves what sort of person we should be raising them to become.

We have forgotten that man is a complex, multidimensional being. Consequently, we have quite good managers and employees, who are often unhappy as people. Many of the problems we face in companies are the result of troubles in this area. Some employees have lost the important dimensions of their lives related to spirituality or physicality. They have had no chance to develop. By choice, we live in something that resembles “Flatland” (a concept introduced by the philosopher Ken Wilber) – a reality of limited dimensions in which life is not lived to the full.

Therefore, many years of working with leaders looking for a deeper meaning, as well as personal and managerial experiences, inspired me to look for a model of coherent leadership, taking into account all dimensions of life. Its foundation is the assumption that the basis of effective action is internal equilibrium, namely the integration of all roles in life in which we appear, as well as a sense of happiness and meaning in life. These elements, sought and well balanced, are the driving force behind our actions. It is precisely this internal coherence that is the key feature of many of the authorities that we admire, such as Mother Teresa or Nelson Mandela. Much of our daily energy escapes through the fact that we allow ourselves to use different canons of values in different areas of life.

We are currently propagating this model within the Humanites Foundation – The Art of Education. We advise leaders of companies and public institutions (such as headmasters of schools and healthcare units) on how to develop more comprehensively, as well as how to help others grow coherently. We want to reach as many such leaders as possible who repeat Steve Slape’s words: “They take the best that life gives them to work and, after leaving work, they have enough energy for the rest of the day not to resemble life on a prison pass”.

EIGHT DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT. The approach we have developed postulates the need to develop all four spheres in which we realize ourselves as people: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. The focus is on development in eight areas (Fig. 1):

1. SELF-AWARENESS

Developing a better knowledge of themselves helps leaders become aware of their own experiences, emotions and needs. As Steven Covey used to say, the challenge is not to manage time and efficiency, but to manage ourselves. Focusing on self-awareness enables leaders to deepen their knowledge about themselves and determine how much we are developing, caring about all areas of life: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

2. VALUES

Discovering and becoming aware of deep, personal values that we have sometimes buried deeply and which often do not coincide with those that we declare every day is a starting point to the achievement of internal coherence. Defining what we strive for and how is also key to achieving happiness. We work with leaders on their value system, because a sense of internal harmony between what we truly believe in and what we do is a source of every leader's strength. It is the key to building true authority that is not a result of the position held.

Coherent Leadership Model™

Four spheres of life in a model of coherent leadership and eight areas of development



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3. THE BODY

High and constant achievements at work and in private life are possible if we find ways of positively spending and renewing personal energy resources. Awareness of the body enables better communication and management of emotions. Therefore, we try to show coherent leaders how to manage their energy and expend it well, work efficiently and relax.

4. EMOTIONS

Recognizing your own emotions and the emotional states of other people allows you to build relationships more effectively. Therefore, together with the leaders, we think about how to use our own emotions and cope with other people's emotional states, as well as use emotional intelligence.

5. RELATIONS

A very important element in the development of a coherent leader is the ability to establish and build attentive, lasting relationships in one's professional and private life. We develop the ability to communicate well, understand others and be correctly received, as well as the ability to non-judgmentally and consciously direct attention to others in leaders.

We cannot disregard the effects of an insufficiently developed spiritual and emotional area. Their neglect is the reason for the existential emptiness and sense of meaninglessness in life that is so frequent today.



6. LIFE

The integration of work and private life is the biggest challenge for employees and companies today. Coherent leaders are able to balance these areas, they have a sense of meaning of life, they can build relationships with another person, they are aware of the importance of family and personal relationships, they are also able to set the boundaries and avoid compromises that lead to frustration.

7. TALENTS

Coherent leaders are able to develop their own capabilities and the talents of the people around them, not just employees, but also their partners and children. You can be a leader, develop yourself and others in every social role.

8. DEVELOPMENT

Balancing the four areas, namely physical, mental, spiritual and emotional, enables leaders to grow more harmoniously and live consciously. We show leaders how to integrate these areas and we help them define their first steps.

The model deliberately does not take into account areas related to pure management. It can be said that coherent leadership compensates for the dominance of development in the professional area and its significant shortage in the personal area. This is because, regardless of the roles we hold, we are still the same person. First, a person, then a manager, employee, parent, husband, wife, friend.

COHERENT LEADERS BETTER PREPARED FOR CHANGE. I expect a wave of criticism and opinions that the model described above is complete utopia which has nothing to do with “real” management, or that, in a world dominated by short-term objectives, it is unachievable. However, it is not only supported by my individual experience and conclusions from looking for my own leadership path, but also by the practice of leaders who are developing in this direction.

I know a leader from the telecommunications sector, who, for years, has had the courage to motivate his team not only professionally, but also in human terms, as a result of which he creates a strongly committed group. He treats his members not only as employees, but also as people, which creates a sense of mutual support, increases the level of creativity and openness to change. I also know a rapidly expanding company from the IT industry operating in Poland, where there are no plans, while the whole of the business is built on four values from as early as the moment of recruitment of the employee. Both of these examples show that an integrated approach to leadership is possible and brings quantifiable results, resulting in both better personal development, as well as better managed organizations.

We cannot disregard the effects of an insufficiently developed spiritual and emotional area. Their neglect is the reason for the existential emptiness and a sense of meaninglessness in life that is so frequent today in both leaders and employees. It impoverishes us as people and obstructs communication, relationship-building and management. Consequently, we do not achieve either good, long-term professional effects or personal satisfaction.

Observing the leaders who strive for coherence, I believe they cope better with the challenges of today. They have a better chance of building an atmosphere of commitment in the organization, the source of which is the sense of meaning in employees and care for the integration of all their roles in life. It is probable that the organization they manage will not be affected by a sense of meaninglessness and an imbalance between their professional life and their private life, which often results in escaping into depression, traditional drugs and designer drugs or occupational burnout. Leaders who develop in a spirit of coherent leadership mention several important benefits:

- 1 A better organized private life and good relations with the family – a better quality of work and life outside work

Coherence helps them manage themselves better in all their roles in life and achieve greater satisfaction from life. Striving for harmony also helps eliminate the risk of occupational burnout and other lifestyle diseases.

2 Better results in the organization, the ability to build an atmosphere of commitment

Coherent leaders look more broadly at employees as people who fulfil many roles. Therefore they can make them more committed people. Coherent leadership enables a management model to be built which extends beyond the “farm of a good heir” – management by a stick with elements of carrots or a “factory” of “workaholics”, where work becomes their whole life.

The ability to take a multidimensional look at an employee and support his development in various roles enables coherent leaders to build “companies of volunteers” with efficient and highly self-motivated employees who simultaneously have a fuller and happier life outside work. According to a survey by the Gallup Institute, which measures the commitment of employees of companies of this type at work, their efficiency is an average of 1/3 higher than in other enterprises, absenteeism is 40% lower and customer satisfaction is decidedly higher.

125%	This is how much more resistant to occupational burnout happy employees are (taking into account the impact on their immediate environment). They are also 32% more devoted to the company's affairs. <i>Source: Gretchen Spreitzer, Christine Porath, Creating Sustainable Performance, "Harvard Business Review", January 2012</i>
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3 More efficient introduction of and adaptation to changes

Development of not only the professional area, but also emotional and spiritual areas helps coherent leaders have greater self-reflection that enables them to make changes. This is because it is difficult to modify something that they do not notice. Multidimensionality enables them to look systemically and notice connections which “unidimensional” leaders do not see. The biggest limitation of the development of organizations is the level of development of their leaders, because – as is confirmed by many leadership researchers – they will not grow more than the leader himself.

4 Greater creativity and innovativeness

Creativity appears not in stress or fatigue, but when we feel relaxed and fully accepted – we can safely say the “stupidest” ideas out loud. The development of people based on the model of coherent leadership gives a foundation to build a team of people with healthy self-esteem, distance to themselves, a higher level of energy and openness to good dialogue with others.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE “DEVELOPMENT LOOP”. The leadership models that are popular among leaders have their roots outside Poland, mainly in Anglo-Saxon culture. They are a result of the personal thoughts and experiences of their creators, as well as social, religious, economic and political conditions of the places where they lived and worked.

Coherent leadership arises from the needs of Polish leaders and native conditions, primarily from the experience of Poland's transformation. It is also a response to the diagnosis of problems faced by companies and institutions related to the development of social capital. I believe that Polish leaders have an additional, special challenge – care for the quality of social capital. Our generation has built an economic foundation. The question of importance now is about the quality of the young generation. Our task is to develop it and prepare it for the “rapidly changing unknown”.

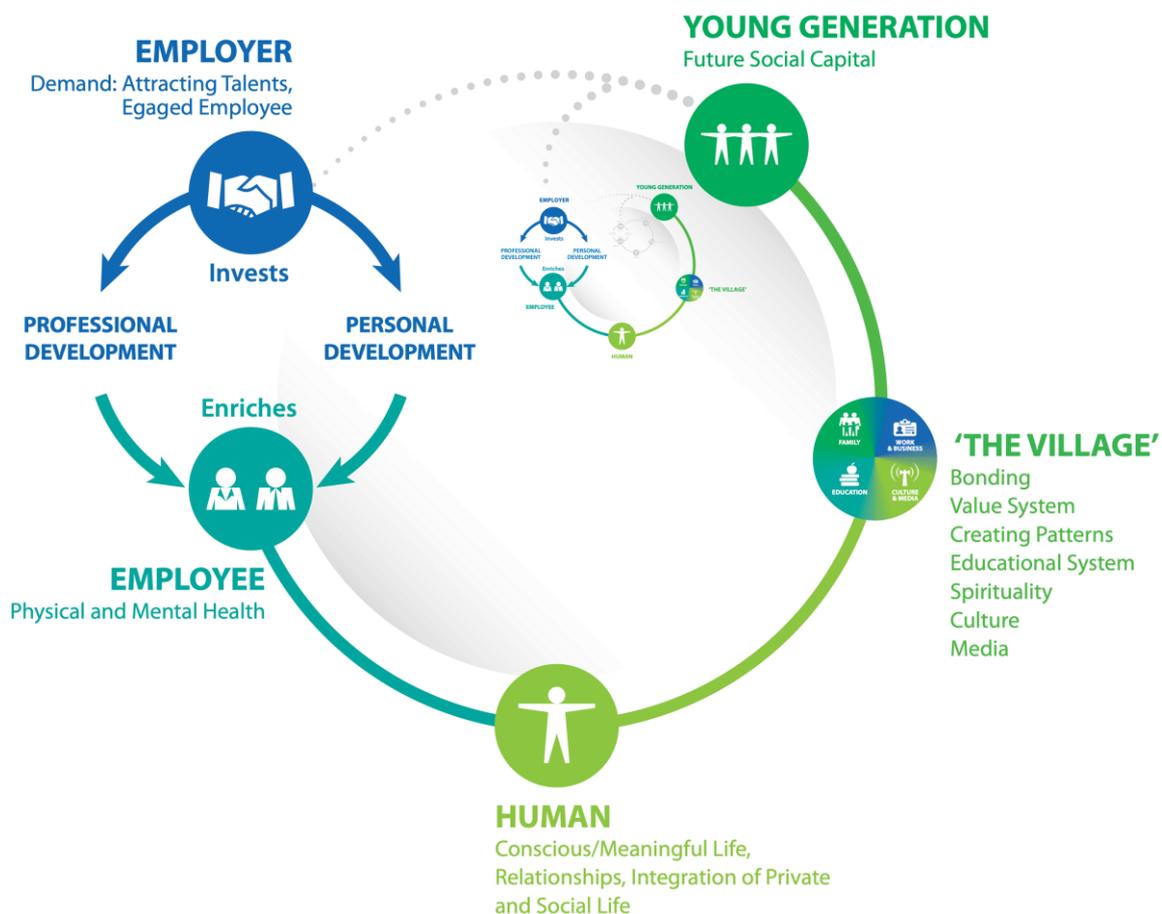
This challenge arises from the specificity of the social “development loop”, the pattern of interdependence between the company and the employees, as well as adults and the younger generation (Fig. 2). The quality of life and the shape of the future depend on the simultaneous influence on all the elements making up this “loop”. Taking care of the high level of current and future employees, companies should care for their sustainable development. It consists of professional and personal development, as well as physical and mental health. This is our task as leaders in companies and institutions. However, a much larger “loop” applies to the transfer of the patterns to the younger generation. Both employers and parents are its “eyes”. **The quality of social capital depends on the values we transfer to the juniors as company leaders and family leaders.**

Therefore, coherent leadership is not only an idea for me, which helps leaders make changes in companies. It is also a path to change the world around us and a way to build the social capital of the future. As leaders, we are not only responsible for the economic results and for the economic transformation, of which we are undoubtedly the beneficiaries. We should also take responsibility for the social transformation.

The key ability that is the foundation of a successful life is the ability to build relationships. It is a result of communication skills and elements that affect the quality and durability of relationships: internalized values, emotional intelligence and self-awareness.

“The Loop”

Non-Linear Model of Long-Term Return on Investment in Human Capital



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IN SEARCH OF FULL PERSONALITY

In this context, it is particularly important to support the modern, busy family in building healthy bonds. There are many “hard” skills that we teach our children: languages, various sports, digital skills, the ability to think critically and team-working skills. **However, the key ability that is the foundation of a successful life is the building of relationships.**

This is something more than just good communication skills. It is a result of communication skills and elements that affect the quality and durability of relationships: internalized values, emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Last year, Harvard University published the results of years of research into the definition of the factor determining a successful life. It transpired that this is the ability to give and receive love. It is precisely these good bonds that should be developed by coherent leaders in the social area. Research also shows that a person who feels happy is substantially more likely to achieve success. It also refutes the myth that success leads to happiness: this is most often a short-lived feeling that turns into emptiness.

In practice, development towards coherence can result in encountering various difficulties. The most important is the reluctance to start to change ourselves and leave our comfort zone (professional skills), where we feel that we are masters. It is natural that such a “journey into the unknown” gives rise to a fear of losing authority or ridicule. Another obstacle is the time required for coherent development. “Maturing to coherence” can last and usually takes years. This was also the situation in my case. My process of change began a dozen or so years ago when I faced a serious family crisis threatening to break up my relationship. It was then that I noticed that I was developing extremely rapidly professionally, but I completely stopped developing as a person, a mother or a wife. I also noticed then that the balance between work and private life does not depend entirely on the requirements of the work environment, but largely on my own coherence.

Since then, every year, I have been able to better manage and direct my life, making choices related to my values. The result was professional development (I was promoted and started to manage companies and, later, I joined the supervisory boards of companies listed on the WSE), and personal happiness. Soon I will be celebrating my 20th wedding anniversary, feeling as if I am a fulfilled person: a happy wife, mother and manager. The road to consistency is a path that brings a great deal of satisfaction professionally and privately. It gives a sense of strength, uplifting and “becoming” a fuller self.

As the Rev. Józef Tischner put it: “It cannot be said about a person that he is, because a person is at a stage of constantly becoming. The sense of this becoming lies in the fact that a person has transformed from a person – who is, as a result of his nature – into a personality, or in other words, that he comes to full bloom in his spiritual and bodily powers. This is because the more a person is a personality, the more he is a person.”

46%

This is how much more happy people are satisfied with their professional lives. Research also shows that happier people are absent from work for fewer hours, are more satisfied with their salaries and become sick less, giving their companies much greater savings.

Source: Gretchen Spreitzer, Christine Porath, Creating Sustainable Performance, “Harvard Business Review”, January 2012

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»Article no. R1524S10

THINKTANK RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THE SOURCE OF INEFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERS IS OFTEN THE LACK OF BALANCE BETWEEN FOUR AREAS IN WHICH WE OPERATE AS PEOPLE. Coherent leadership, emphasizing comprehensive, integrated development, not only in the professional area but also in the personal area, shows leaders the path to how to develop more fully.
2. THIS CONCEPT ALSO MAKES LEADERS AWARE OF HOW IMPORTANT THE MATTER OF PERSONAL HAPPINESS AND THE SENSE OF MEANING FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES IS. It is worth developing these areas in yourself not only as a leader, but also in your team.