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CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION



As leaders we have to become “gardeners”: we have to create (artistic) ENVIRONMENTS in which creativity and innovation can grow. WHAT does that mean? While steeped within globalisation, we notice increased individualisation process. Fewer and fewer people appreciate 9 to 5 work with “life” beginning only afterwards.....at stake is really how to bring life and work meaningfully together. Specialisation has driven many of us to the edge of “professional idiocy” and there is a deep longing for a wholeness. To be master in at least one discipline: YES! But then also: how does it all fit together, where is the BIG PICTURE ?

HOW do we get there? This is be the topic of this text. If we take the initiative to lead the process to such productive environment in a company, how do we overcome the resistance? Resistance will always be there, it may be even an indicator that we are on the right path. (Beware of early “success”!)

WHY is creativity and innovation not flowing freely all the life long as it is natural for early childhood (learning to walk, speak and think is monumental!)? Why do we see so often inspired, brilliant and motivated young people join the company and soon after having the contract in the pocket, they turn dull and regular? Why does the inner fire not last?

The bottom line really is the WHO. Only constant development and striving for individual self development keeps fountains of creativity and innovation open, REAL team is only possible among self-evolving individuals, or else let us call it by the true name: brainwash. In German language there is distinction between “gesamt” and “gemeinsam”. The first being composed of individuals, the latter simply “all together” for any price.

WHEN are we ready to take the visionary step and dare something what is not YET a common trend out there? But that is at the heart of true entrepreneurship to DARE new and barely emerging ! I am convinced and have enough evidence that interdisciplinary relationship of Art and Business will produce remarkable results for creativity and innovation to flourish in the future, and every great company will have two main spaces on the top floor: “board room” and “inspiration centre”: both very different but complimentary in their nature.

Let us briefly examine the relationship of Art and Business. Traditionally it has been sponsorship and philanthropy. This is certainly vital for sustaining the sphere of Arts but it is not the answer to the real needs of our time any more. The real question at stake is, how to create proper environments at work for overcoming the crisis of meaning and helping leadership attain certain competencies that are “daily bread” to the real artist: inspiration, motivation, mobility, improvisation, vision, commitment, excellence, team-spirit etc. It is

possible today to take Arts out of museum and concert hall and bring about interdisciplinary PARTNERSHIP.

Let us first look at the transfer of the process of a complex musical masterpiece to a particular need in a company. The main objective will be to experience through the music how to LEAD the CHANGE process towards desired goal and discover the right STRATEGY for overcoming resistance to this change. We could also identify several areas in the cycle where one can get stuck, especially if leaders are attempting to change the company without trying to change THEMSELVES in the first place!

At the beginning we will “tune up” together as it is done in the symphony orchestra before the performance. Only if tuned, it is possible to make great music together, and it is very similar with the “performance of the team” in a company. In this case the “tuning” would mean establishing of the open and sensitive communication attitude before embarking on the change process. The first act of any ancient Chinese emperor upon ascending to the throne was: all musical instruments of the entire empire had to be tuned to his own instrument! And during the war time siege of Sarajevo (Bosnia) hundreds of concerts were performed amidst of falling bombs. Why would anybody perform and attend, risking life at every step? What was at stake? May I remind you of the phenomena that occurred during the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City: while all emergency infrastructure proved useless, simple citizens emerged as heroes, and the whole mega-city was organized within minutes without a “boss”. Citizens obviously tapped into much deeper reality of personal and collective innovative creativity and this is the same domain that can be accessed by great and complex music. And here we find the reason why a genuine artist can become an integrated person, because his/her “work” and “reward” are not separate: he works out of love for his art. Although many people work for money, it is possible to UNITE work and deeper life-meaning ! It is “normal” for a true artists to engage, motivate, energize, commit, gain momentum and passion....because they are INSPIRED!

The most important thing for a musical masterpiece, for a company and for human individual is: IDENTITY. Therefore we will examine few themes (identity) of masterpieces. No matter how small and short, they have specific character. Remember Beethoven 5th: “it goes DOWN before it goes up...” and that is characteristic for every genuine change-transformation process, that we have to endure the hardship before there is “the light at the end of the tunnel” ! And we need inspiration to endure this hardship, therefore leadership MUST be inspirational if we want to get to our visionary goals. We left solid structures behind and must learn how to get orientation within the fluid element, like a conductor

dealing with evolving complex masterpiece. If we examine the role of the conductor in the orchestra: he/she is not “bossing musicians around”, but rather creates the right environment so every individual musician can bring out the best and profound to the team.

The theme (identity) of today’s chosen J. S. Bach fugue in G minor consists of 4 repeated tones as if gathering strength towards culmination on the last tone, followed by the movement and breakthrough (change process towards completion). You can see in the painting 5 distinct areas of the evolution accessible through 5 questions: WHAT, HOW, WHY, WHO and WHEN. We learn how to lead change if we go forward through these stages. It is essential to be keenly aware of TRANSITIONS ! If we learn to hear them in music, then we can notice and master them in the work-process around us.

****The WHAT section, in black color: This is the “command-control” attitude, followed by panic and chaos in turn followed by top down pressure and cascading down to the halt (death...imagine “Titanic syndrome”...music going on in the 1st class while the ship is already sinking.) You can not command creativity and innovation!

****The HOW section, in green, follows after learning how to “LET GO” and start afresh with new attitude of horizontal networking and conversation. This section is full of the spirit of exploration, curiosity and fun, experimentation and play. Attention: we emphasized the importance to notice when the process is evolving around the identity (theme) and when it goes on “DETOUR”. Detour being very important life experience because it brings us each time back to ourselves (identity) with new maturity! It is like breathing in and out, unfortunately managers are pushed to only breathing out all the time !

****The transition (detour) from HOW to WHY (red to blue) is of supreme importance: it opens our perception to the world of feelings, and to the test of fire. It can be seen in the cycle as midlife crisis. Crisis is always a sign of real growth and should not be avoided or feared. Crisis is the same as new opportunity. Fire burns away everything what is not essential for the leader of change. The WHY section resounds like deep , essential questions and ends up in what we called: “PRODUCTIVE RESIGNATION” (Goethe). This means to “let go” of the ego and “let in” of the world. After this long “detour” music returns to the identity (theme) and concludes on the new level.

****The WHO section (red and yellow, like a shining sun) is the result of this long process. Inside-out, bottom-up: The identity(theme) grows in positive major key upwards, in contrast to the very beginning of the masterpiece, where the theme “command-controls” top down in antipathy like minor key. For the leader this is almost a sacred experience: members of his/her team reflect to him his own ideas and intentions. This is the result of “productive

resignation”. We can hear the transformation going on in music, full of warmth, humanity and deep feeling. Now we are ready for the final integration !

****The last section, the WHEN, is the mastery of integration. We have now learned how to use any of these attitudes at the right moment. Power is not bad, but we might use it at the wrong moment. Chaos is necessary sometimes and we must give the space for it. Every real leader comes at some point to question the very foundations of BEING (identity), and we must know WHERE we are in our work process or in the life cycle, if we want to get THERE, to the goals we set for ourselves ! (Aikido master says: there is no THERE without HERE !)

Coming back to the first question: WHAT is the goal of this musical strategy ? Not primarily creating and innovating for something “out there”, for a “job”; rather it is the gift of BEING ABLE to create and innovate that gives us meaning and deep satisfaction. Human being is not here to serve this “monster” of world economy, economy is here to serve human being and Art is one of the key principles to make us more human.

