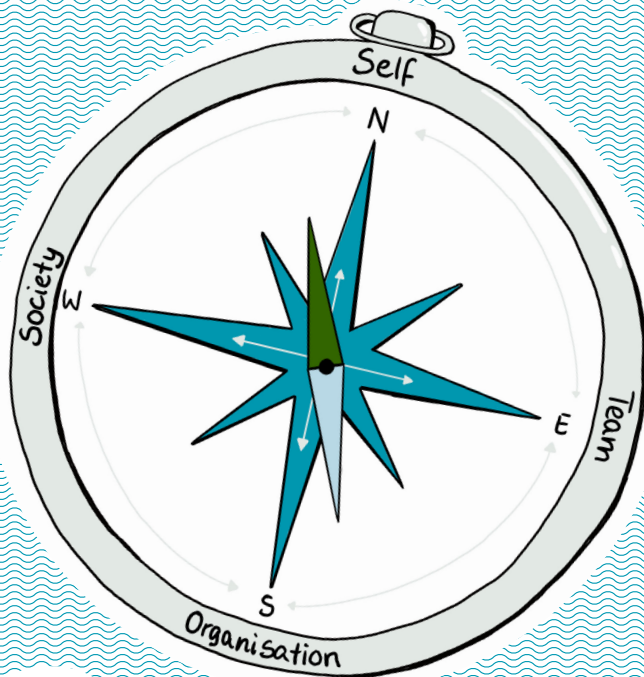




# BLUE LEADERSHIP LOGBOOK

Practical tools for sailing stormy seas and navigating uncharted waters



## BLUE SOLUTIONS

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
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Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**G.R.I.D.**  
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**UN**  
environment  
programme

On behalf of:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

of the Federal Republic of Germany

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### CHECK OUT:

Fare ye well, sailors!

### FINAL CARD:

Acknowledgements, sources and books and texts for further reading,  
Authors, Imprint



# CHECK IN: WELCOME ABOARD!

*“A calm sea does not make  
a skilled sailor.”*

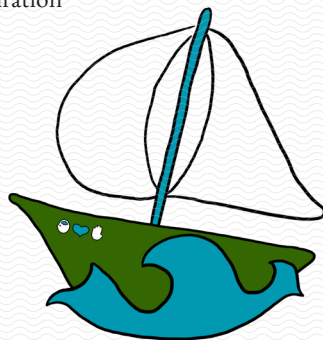
Traditional proverb

Life in our turbulent times often feels like being tossed about on stormy seas. To be a leader in our volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, we need to be able to navigate uncharted waters. It requires us to sail with **head, hand, and heart**, to involve all our senses. As *skilled sailors*, we know the obstacles on the sea and yet wisely manage to reach calm waters. We need to be such experienced sailors.

This logbook is designed for people who care about the ocean and want to do things differently in their organisation. It was developed as part of the **Blue Leadership Journey**, a leadership program meant to inspire and support change for the benefit of **healthy people, healthy teams, healthy organisations, and a healthy ocean**. **This logbook** can be used during the Blue Leadership Journey or as a stand-alone workbook. It can be browsed at any pace and in any order.

Like the Leadership Journey, we start this logbook with a **Check-in**. The Check-in helps us to delve into the topic of Blue Leadership. We invite readers to understand the motivation behind designing the Journey and logbook, and give some inspiration for reflection.

This is the reason behind our work: We care deeply about our planet and its ocean. We are concerned because today our ocean has been depleted, acidified, and polluted to an alarming degree. At the same time, we are joyfully excited because there are already **many good solutions**. We have a wealth of knowledge and skills. If we use this treasure wisely, we can initiate profound and positive social change for a healthy planet, ocean, and people.



Wise and collective leadership is a prerequisite for this change. We strongly believe that **there is a leader in every chair**. We are all capable of doing what we can, with what we have, and where we are to bring about the change we want to see in the world. That is why we are so happy to be on board this boat together!

Now, before reading on, we would like you to pause for a Check-in and **contemplate the following questions**:

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*When reflecting on your work, what question arises again and again? And what are your current answers to this question?*

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# INTRO: BLUE LEADERSHIP

*"We need many things to make the world a better place.  
But nothing else will matter if we fail to protect the ocean.  
Our fate and the ocean's are one."*

Sylvia Earl, American Marine Biologist (\*1935)

The multiple ecological, social, and economic crises we face today have common characteristics: They are complex. They are **highly dynamic** and involve **uncertainty**. They include **multiple perspectives**. They are **closely interconnected** and **interdependent**. And they are created by **underlying societal structures and paradigms**.

There are a couple of barriers that stand in the way of finding effective solutions to these challenges:

- 1. We only fix the symptoms:** We tend to solve problems issue by issue or fix symptoms instead of addressing root causes. For example, we often focus on gathering great expertise on specific detailed issues rather than deepening our understanding of the systemic connections between problems.
- 2. We suffer from the "eleventh hour syndrome":** We race against the clock while the work never gets done, or there seems to be no time to work at the root causes. As a result, we suffer from stress and burnout.
- 3. We "fight the enemy":** Often our work is driven by the idea of resisting and fighting against something, like environmental polluters, cruise ships, an oppressive government, or a wealthy elite. This personification of the enemy leads to reducing complexity, misunderstanding the problems, and, ultimately, fighting the wrong battle.
- 4. We unintentionally reproduce problematic values:**  
We are often unaware that we influence cultural values – including in ways that are not beneficial to our causes. Nothing is value-free; in everything we do as individuals or organisations, we embody a set of values.



For us, Blue Leadership is wise and effective engagement for a healthy ocean and people. It is adaptive and takes a holistic view on leading our self, team, organisation, and society. Blue Leaders overcome the above mentioned four barriers by:

- These four aspects are also the learning objectives of the Blue Leadership Journey.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Which values have become more important to you recently?  
How can you live up to them?*

**Source/Further reading:**

Michael Narberhaus, Aryne Sheppard (2015): *Re.imagining Activism: A practical guide for the Great Transition*.

# BLUE LEADERSHIP COMPASS: LEVELS OF TRANSITION

*“With one eye focused on your destination, there is only one eye left with which to find the way.”*

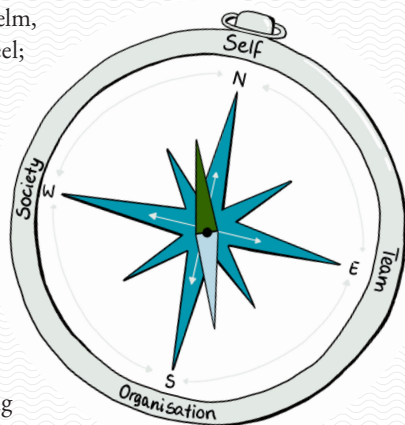
From an ancient Buddhist story

It is time to act to safeguard our ocean and, beyond that, our planet. We know that we need to seek new solutions; solutions that are **systemic, emergent, and participatory**. We know that we need a socio-ecological transformation but may not yet be sure of the concrete path.

Perhaps we feel like sailors Perhaps we feel like sailors lost at sea and need to find the way to a safe harbour. **There are many things that can help**: the stars; the currents; our experience, knowledge, skills, and intuition; our crew’s experience and knowledge; and, of course, a compass.

**The Blue Leadership Compass** is designed to help guide the way to wise and effective engagement for a healthy ocean and people. It distinguishes four quadrants that stand for the systemic levels of transitional change. These are also leverage points for Blue Leaders. The four quadrants structure the logbook:

- **Leading self – Finding safe harbour:** Taking the helm, hoisting the sails, and standing at the steering wheel; finding calmness in the storm and acting from an inner source of wisdom; making clear decisions and remaining steadfast despite uncertainty; pursuing values and knowing ourselves in order to respond better to external circumstances.
- **Leading teams – All hands on deck:** Cultivating healthy teams for healthy individuals; developing the potential of people working together; building an open, appreciative, and honest culture of work; collaborating, communicating and learning that enables growth and development.



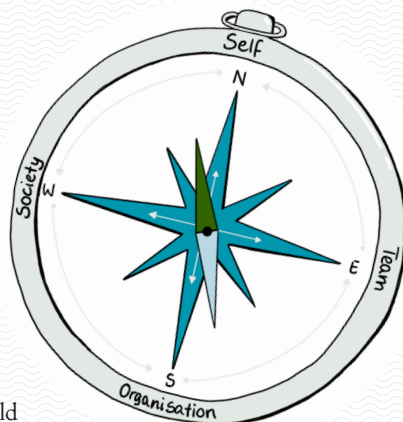


- **Leading in organisations – Managing the fleet:**

Achieving big goals jointly; working together with a common direction, structure, and strategy; adopting effective organisational practices; visioning the future; clarifying our common purpose and the steps that lead in its direction; involving and motivating everyone.

- **Leading social change – Sailing against the wind:**

Tacking a zigzag course to reach our harbour; having a positive vision of what is possible; manoeuvring to help to inspire, think systemically, build alliances, and act with transformative potential; supporting people to change behaviours and systems; making a shift by finding leverage for action.



The four quadrants are **interlinked, intertwined, and interdependent**. They shape one another. Social change for healthy oceans requires a healthy society, and a healthy society in turn requires healthy organisations, teams, and individuals - and the other way round.

This logbook contains **an introductory card** for each of the quadrants, providing some insight into the challenges we might face at that level, as well as **tool cards** that introduce five carefully selected practical tools for cultivating Blue Leadership skills.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Look at the four quadrants: Which one do you feel most drawn to?  
Why could that be? In this quadrant, which topics are most  
important for you to think about in each dimension?*

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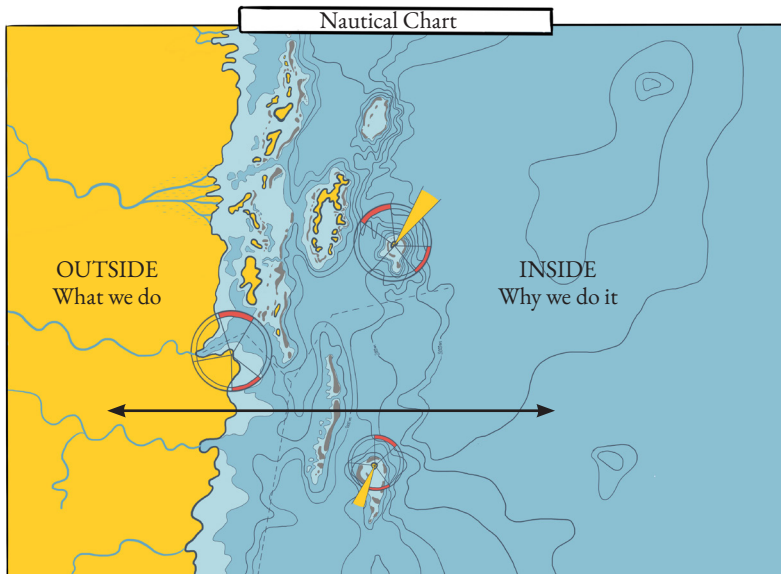
# NAUTICAL CHART: INNER AND OUTER DIMENSIONS OF BLUE LEADERSHIP

*“One doesn’t discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.”*

André Gide, French Writer & Nobel Peace Prize Winner (1869–1951)

If we want to change the system of which we are part, **we need to change ourselves and review the paradigms** of how we think, perceive, make sense of the world, and feel. We may need to re-evaluate some of our self-images or social identities. This can cause negative emotions, uncertainty, and tensions. It can lead to the most basic human reaction of fight, flight, or freeze. These reactions will not help. On the contrary, they could impede our progress.

Therefore, to successfully initiate positive change it is good to consider not only outer changes, but also internal adjustments.



The nautical chart helps us navigate through the **inner and outer dimensions** of Blue Leadership which are important considerations in any transition process:

- The invisible depths of the ocean represent the underlying **inner** basis for Blue Leadership. We contain things we often cannot see but which shape our behaviour, such as our mindsets, values, assumptions, needs, beliefs, longings, and cultures. These fluctuate in our daily lives, for example, we shift between our need for connectedness and our need for autonomy.
- The land represents the visible **outer** dimension. As the waves of the ocean shape the land, so the “inside” shapes and manifests the “outside” of Blue Leadership. The outside is what we see of leadership, what we do in the world, our decisions, the ways we communicate, and the structures and institutions we build. This is where we drive change in consciousness and behaviour.

Like the ocean and the land, the inner and outer sides of Blue Leadership **are closely connected and mutually impact** each other. If one side is missing, the other is lost or falls short of its potential. If we only focus on our inner self, we do not act in the world; yet if we only look outside, our actions are not grounded and we might misuse power, lose our way, or become shipwrecked on a reef we did not notice. As Blue Leaders, we need to be able to travel on both the land and the ocean. When grounded in a process of inner transformation, Blue Leadership has more impact.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

*Which discoveries have you made on your inner path of leadership? What did you discover on the outer path? Who is a role model for you, both in terms of inner attitude and outer action?*

**Source/Further reading:**

Adam Kahane (2007): Solving tough problems: An open way of talking, listening, and creating new realities.



# BLUE LEADERSHIP BINOCULARS: UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMS

*“The only way to modify how a complex system will behave – after you modify it – is to modify it and see how it behaves.”*

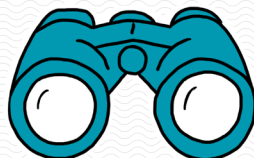
George E. P. Box, Statistician

The many ways in which individuals, society, and the ocean interact result in **complex dynamic systems**. Enhancing our understanding of these systems requires us to increase our knowledge of our own and others' places and roles in the web of interactions. The **Cynefin framework** developed by Dave Snowden is helpful for this. It distinguishes between five types of systems that exist in our lives. To know these kinds of systems and their features helps us to act within them.

**Clear systems** can be understood very easily. A clear system is, for example, the battery or petrol tank of a well-functioning motorboat. When it is empty, we fill it up and the boat starts again. The relationship between cause and effect is clear. Problems can be easily solved: If we do x, we can expect y. As a leader, our way of action in these systems is **Sense – Categorize – Respond**.

**Complicated systems** require expert knowledge for problem solving and development. For instance, the nautical instruments on our boat don't work but there is no clear reason why. In these sorts of systems, cause-effect relationships are recognisable but not immediately obvious, and are sometimes spread across time and space. There are a range of correct answers and “known unknowns”. As a leader in these systems, an appropriate action is **Sense – Analyse – Respond**.

**Complex systems** consist of many components that can interact with each other. Just like in the ocean, we cannot predict interactions of the system. There are clear patterns, but cause and effect are only coherent in retrospect. There is no guarantee of repeatable results. Analytical processes do not work to understand or describe these systems. In working life, for instance, a new salary structure is introduced for our organisation. It is not predictable how it will affect the individual and the team constellation. A suitable approach for us as leaders in complex systems is **Probe – Sense – Respond**.



In **chaotic systems**, things go a little crazy, like in a hurricane or typhoon, or a violent pirate attack on our boat. Perhaps in our organisation, a crisis is triggered by the sudden withdrawal of a major financier. In these situations, cause and effect are often unclear and messy. Chaotic systems are too confusing for knowledge-based solutions, yet require immediate action. As leaders, we should follow the motto **Act – Sense – Respond**.

**Disorder**, in the middle space, is not knowing what kind of system we are in. We must identify the problem and move it to one of four domains mentioned above.

The **social systems** in which we work are mostly **complex systems**. In the world of marine protection, there is no clear relationship between cause and effect. However, there are patterns – and if we know the patterns, we might have a good starting point for action. When we lead in complex systems, we must accept that master plans and blueprints do not work. As a leader **we can influence things**, but not determine or successfully prescribe them. One main way to impact a system is to help build a shared vision. In this sense, “good leadership” means **successful leadership interaction**. In complex systems, it helps if leaders focus on what the individuals and the system(s) need at any given time.



### REFLECTION QUESTION

*When have you recently had an experience where something completely different happened than you expected?  
What did you learn from this experience?*

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### Source/Further reading:

D. Snowden, M. Boone: A Leader's Framework for Decision Making. In: Harvard Business Review. November 2007.



# LEADING SELF: FINDING SAFE HARBOUR

*“True navigation begins in the human heart.  
It’s the most important map of all.”*

Elizabeth Kapu’uwailani Lindsey, Polynesian Explorer (\*1956)

Leading self is about hoisting the sails, taking the helm - and finding stillness in the storm. Self-reflection gives us the **capacity for choice**. We take stock of what we are doing and can change direction. We can dive deep below the troubled sea to find tranquillity beneath the surface. After we emerge, we can act from an inner source of wisdom to take clear decisions despite ambiguity. Above all, leading self is about **being a healthy individual and a model**. It is about taking a stand in times of uncertainty by developing our inner skills. Being kind to others starts with being kind to ourselves.

This process invites us to **critically examine our assumptions** shaping our visible behaviour; to expand our worldviews and let go of old ways of thinking and behaviour that no longer serve us. It starts with the **gratitude** for the gift of life. Gratitude helps to steady and ground us. It brings us into presence; our full presence is an offering we can make to others. Knowing that our world is in crisis in no way diminishes this, as gratitude is not dependent on our external circumstances. It does not rely on whether we like where we are or approve of what we are facing. On the contrary, we are granted the great privilege of letting the hardships of this time enlist all our strength, wisdom, and courage, so that life can continue.

This requires **mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom** as much as it does **technical expertise**. Leading self is personal work and might involve stretching far beyond our comfort zone. Many of us have invested less time in the cultivation of inner skills like engaging people and working with emotions than in developing our expertise and analytical prowess. So, we might not feel competent or comfortable working with emotions.



Being aware of some of the **challenges** we might face will help us avoid some of the pitfalls ahead. It is quite likely that we will fall back into old thinking and habits from time to time. Altering our behaviour requires persistence. Start experimenting with one small thing and do it regularly, rather than trying too much at once. We should find a mechanism to remind us of that small thing; for example, a regular date for self-reflection in the calendar. Our new habits will be noticed and maybe some of our behaviour changes will irritate others. Peers might feel confused by the new approaches we advocate. At times, we might be criticized, isolated, or openly opposed, even by colleagues. It is good to notice that and continue our efforts.

**The practical tools of this compass direction** guide us in reflecting on our own assumptions, increasing our awareness, cultivating equanimity and embracing uncertainty, identifying our own personal pathway, and being patient and compassionate with ourselves and others.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What helps you to find the courage and clarity for standing up and stepping forward?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Joana Macy & Molly Young Brown (2014): Coming back to life: The updated guide to the work that reconnects.



# DIVING DEEP: VALUE REFLECTION



## Purpose:

Get explicit about our values and find ways to act according to them.



## People:

1 or more



## Time:

30 minutes or more



## Material:

Paper, pen

## Why and what?

Working life can be quite overwhelming. Leaders need to make many decisions, and there are various meetings, distractions, and often confusing developments. In the process, it can be easy to forget our inner purpose, the values we want to live by and stand up for, and maybe even the reason we chose this profession. Being clear about our values is like finding a reliable guiding star: Wherever we are, wherever we find ourselves, we can look at our values for orientation.

Knowledge of our values is the basis for walking our talk. We can observe whether our thoughts, intentions, and action are in line with our values. Ultimately, there are no private or professional values. We are one person. Values are important, regardless of situation and context. Sometimes this puts us in challenging situations, such as when our personal values conflict with those of our organisation or of a friend.

## How does the tool work?

This three-step process helps us get clear about our values and what they mean to us.

### Step 1: Name our values

Write down the two or three values that are most important to you. Sticking to a maximum of three important values makes it easier to focus. Ideally, the values chosen should feel like a crystallization of who we are. It is good to feel a deep sense of identification with them. We can ask ourselves: Does this define us? Is this who we are at our best?





## Step 2: Putting them into real behaviour

It is a reality of life that it is often easier to talk about values than to actually live them, both for human beings and for organisations. In this second step, we operationalize our values by identifying three behaviours per value that support these values and three behaviours that undermine them. It greatly helps to remember moments when we felt we lived up to these values, or when we felt we did not. For each of our values, we should answer the following:

- What are three behaviours that support this value?
- What are three behaviours that do not fit this value?
- What is an example of a time when we lived this value fully?

## Step 3: Empathy and self-compassion

Empathy and self-compassion are the two most important factors in making our lives work according to our values. For empathy, we need one or two people who know our values and support us in putting them into action. We need to make these values a priority in our lives. So, in this step, ask:

- Who knows our values and can support us in living them? What kind of practical support could they give?
- What can we do in a self-compassionate way to support ourselves in living our values?
- What are the early warning signs that we are living outside of our values?
- What does it feel like when we are really living those values?

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Which values have become more important to you recently?  
How can you live up to them?*

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### Source/Further reading:

Brené Brown (2018): Dare to lead – Brave work. Tough conversations. Whole hearts.

# HOLDING STILLNESS IN THE STORM: MINDFUL LEADERSHIP



## Purpose:

Increase our awareness  
and learn to embrace uncertainty.



## People:

Ourselves



## Time:

About 5 minutes



## Material:

Ourselves

## Why and what?

Mindfulness is an awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, without judgment. Mindfulness is used in the service of self-understanding and wisdom.

Neuroscience has shown that practicing mindfulness is very helpful in mitigating the negative effects of our stress response. When we put ourselves in the present, we are more likely to gain perspective and see that we have the power to regulate our response to pressure. Yet, as with any other muscle training, mindfulness needs regular practice and just a few minutes a day can have an impact.

It is helpful to be patient and compassionate with ourselves. We will probably not experience stillness immediately, but myriads of thoughts, feelings, or sensations. Mindfulness is about becoming aware of them without getting attached; letting them pass by like clouds in the sky.

## How does the tool work?

Here is a selection of practises that we find helpful in the workspace:

**Clarify your intention:** Before a meeting, take a moment to connect with yourself, for instance by taking three deep breaths. Reflect: What is your intention for the meeting?





Ask participants about their intention for the meeting and check if the meeting is useful for everyone.

**Take a “minute of arrival”:** If going somewhere in a hurry, ask for a moment of silence upon arrival. This minute will be sufficient to arrive fully in the present moment.

**Pause when noticing emotions:** Try to understand the emotions and let them pass, which can sometimes take some days. Nevertheless, try not to react until the emotions are fully understood and no longer felt, for instance when receiving communications that are irritating.

**Mindful Time-out:** A back-up for difficult situations. If you find yourself in a seemingly messy situation with a group, take a mindful time-out and describe the situation as you perceive it. Invite others to do the same. Take a deep breath and a minute of silence to allow new perspectives to emerge. Then ask: How do you feel now?

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Imagine that there were no unimportant moments today.  
What would have been different? What would that have been like?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2018): *Falling Awake: How to Practice Mindfulness in Everyday Life*.



# SENSING THE WIND: ACTION INQUIRY



## Purpose:

Learning from experience with complex systems,  
developing ourselves as leaders.



## People:

Ourselves



## Time:

10 minutes or less  
per day



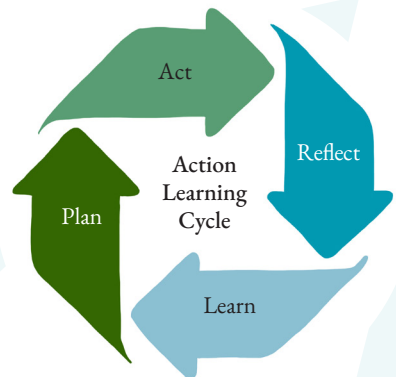
## Material:

Ourselves, eventually pen,  
paper, sticky notes or journal

## Why and what?

Action Learning means learning from experience. It involves looking at the results of our actions to see what we can learn and apply to the next similar action. Action learning is the opposite of learning from the expert. When we learn something through our own experience, it tends to stick better in our memory and have greater benefit. The graph shows how Action Learning works.

A particularly valuable type of Action Learning for leaders is Action Inquiry. It is a way of constantly inquiring and developing as a leader.



## How does the tool work?

Action Inquiry involves asking good questions and developing a keen sense of responses and reactions. These are the concrete steps of Action Inquiry:

- 1. Formulate a powerful question for our (leadership) life.** This should be a tricky question that we would really like to seek answers for; that we can dive into in the coming weeks. For instance, questions we have worked with are: What gives me the strength to do what is important? How can I be there for others while at the same time protecting my boundaries?





2. **Find multiple ways to remind yourself of the questions** every day. For instance, write them on a sticky note and put it on your desk.
3. **Note down inspirations, answers, and pieces of information** regarding the question in a journal, preferably once a day. Almost imperceptibly, you will notice that the question dissolves into a knowing. Sit down from time to time and look at the answers you have received. You may also want to make little changes to the wording of our question.
4. **Take some time to formulate next steps for action** and decide how to proceed, if you feel that you have received a lot of answers. After some weeks or months, you might stop and choose the next question to work with.

We strongly recommend to find a buddy for the Action Inquiry process with whom to regularly share questions, answers, and inspirations.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Which question is currently crucial for you  
and your leadership development?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Bill Torbert and Associates (2004): Action Inquiry – The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership.

# KINDLY DRIFTING OFF COURSE: SELF-COMPASSION BREAK



## Purpose:

Learn to care about ourselves and be kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings. Realize that suffering, failure and imperfection is part of the shared human experience.



## People:

Ourselves



## Time:

5–20 minutes



## Material:

Ourselves

## Why and what?

People cannot always be or get exactly what they want. Denying this reality increases suffering in the form of stress, frustration, and self-criticism. When this truth is accepted with sympathy and kindness, greater emotional equanimity is experienced. Self-compassion can also help us to acknowledge what we feel for the planet. Self-compassion consists of three elements:

- 1. Self-compassion instead of self-judgement:** Being warm and understanding towards ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, instead of ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism.
- 2. Shared humanity instead of Isolation:** Frustration is often accompanied by an irrational but pervasive sense of isolation – as if we are the only person suffering or making mistakes. Yet all humans suffer. The very definition of being human means being mortal, vulnerable, and imperfect.
- 3. Mindfulness instead of over-identification:** Don't think that our thoughts and feelings are actually ourselves. Observe negative thoughts and feelings with openness and clarity so that they are held in mindful awareness.





## How does the tool work?

Find a quiet place where there will be no disturbances. Think of a difficult situation that is causing stress. Recall the situation and see if you can feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Think:

*This is a moment of suffering.*

Or: *This is stress.*

*Suffering is a part of life. That's common humanity.*

Or: *I am not alone.*

Place your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest. Or adopt the soothing touch to where it feels good and helpful to you.

Think:

*May I be kind to myself.*

Or: *May I learn to accept myself as I am.*

This practice can be used any time and helps us remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when we need it most. It is best to start by reflecting on recent situations and do this regularly. Once we have internalised the three aspects, we will be able to use them in difficult situations and enjoy the stress-releasing effects.

## REFLECTION QUESTION

*How can you bring more ease and self-compassion into your daily life?*

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## Source/Further reading:

Kristin Neff, Chris Germer (2018): *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A proven way to accept yourself, build inner strength, and thrive.*

# ADJUSTING YOUR INNER COMPASS: JOURNALING



## Purpose:

Reflect upon our current situation in life and increase our awareness of future possibilities.



## People:

Ourselves



## Time:

15–30 minutes



## Material:

Pen, paper or journal

## Why and what?

Journaling enhances self-directed learning. Through actual handwriting with a pen we can access deeper levels of self-knowledge and self-awareness.

## How does the tool work?

Find a quiet place where there are no disturbances. Take a few minutes to reflect on each of the following questions and write down any thoughts on your piece of paper or journal. Let your hand flow freely, writing whatever comes to mind. There is no need for perfect printable sentences as this is just for yourself. Feel free and be messy!

1. Looking at yourself from outside, as if at another person: What are the three or four most important current challenges or tasks in your life (work and non-work)?
2. What is your deepest and most profound gift?
3. What is your deepest and most profound longing?
4. What is your deepest and most profound responsibility?
5. What are the values that guide your inner compass?





6. Think about your role in this world: Who do you choose to be in this world?
7. What seed would you like to nurture into growth and what does it need from you to flourish?
8. What are you currently spending your time, attention, and energy on? Is there something you need to let go of in order to grow the seeds you most want to nurture?
9. What is the next small thing you can do to nurture the seeds to grow right now?
10. Who can help you nurture those seeds and make them blossom? Who might be your most important helpers and partners?

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*How can we make self-reflection a regular routine in our (work)life?  
What is one small thing we can do right now?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Otto Scharmer (2018): The Essentials of Theory U: Core principles and applications.





# LEADING TEAMS: ALL HANDS ON DECK

*“If you want to go fast, travel alone.  
If you want to go far, travel together.”*

African proverb

On a ship, the success of the journey depends on the **entire crew**: their ability to read the sea and navigational equipment, to steer the ship in a good direction, face wind and weather, and - come what may - stick together as a team. Above all, the role of the captain is to foster cooperation, communication, and strong relationships among the others. In a team, different people with different personalities, skills, and experiences work together for a joint purpose.

In this context, it is good to reflect on two basic impulses that human beings have and that also come into play in teams. **Humans want to individualise, and they want to come together.** We seek relationships and feel physical pain when excluded from a group. At the same time, we also want to go our own way. When it comes to working in a team, every member wants to belong, be seen and be heard. This can create a lot of positive energy and it can also create tension. Therefore, team development is focused on the question of how we can be healthy individuals in a healthy team.

Another dynamic we face in groups, especially in the environmental sector, is **getting things done while meeting our ideals**. For example, we want to involve people in decision-making and at the same time we need quick decisions. Or, outside of formal hierarchies, we unwittingly reproduce the hierarchies that we don't want. Teams must consciously decide how to work together in order to be both collaborative and effective.

There is an inner and an outer side to being in groups, bridging the gap between “Leading self” to “Leading teams”. On the **inner side**, people come with hopes, fears, anger, joy, playfulness, projections (what other people remind us of), experiences, and shadow (things that we have inside ourselves that we are not so much aware of). On the **outer side**, there are the dynamics of power and social standing, the search for effectiveness, leadership arrangement, the need for structure, and strategy.

In its Project Aristotle, Google analysed the factors that led a team to success throughout the organisation, in order to replicate these in other teams. They found out that the single most important success factor was **psychological safety**, i.e., the confidence that people can speak out and show up freely, contributing ideas and thoughts without personal judgement. This psychological safety translates to a threat-minimized environment.

Before we put our hands on deck it can be helpful to remember some fundamental principles to avoid being frustrated, overwhelmed, or disoriented when working as part of a team:

- **Control what we can:** We can, for instance, largely control our own behaviour, planning, and structures.
- **Let go what we can't:** We cannot control, for instance, other people's motivation and commitment and results.
- **Focus on the future:** Designing an ideal future generates far more positive energy than attempting to solve old problems.
- **Get the whole system in the room:** It is easier and quicker to find solutions if all relevant people are involved in the process.
- **Every opinion is important:** People have different opinions and perspectives; only considering all of them provides a true holistic view.
- **Change requires flexibility and emotional involvement:** Nobody can motivate another person or force them to make a commitment. Motivation and commitment always come from within the individual. But we can create the circumstances for emotional engagement.

The practical tools of this compass direction will aid in building strong teams with effective individuals. Therefore, we present different methods to strengthen the interaction within a team through genuine communication, co-creation, and building trustful relationships.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What makes you curious about your team and each individual member?*

*What potentials might still be undiscovered?*

*What can you do to make them visible and let them flourish?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Sandra Jannof and Marvin Weisbord (2007): Don't Just Do Something, Stand There: Ten Principles for Leading Meetings That Matter.



# COMMUNICATING ON BOARD: 3-STEP FEEDBACK



## Purpose:

Supporting learning processes, improving cooperation, clearing the air, and expressing appreciation.



## People:

2



## Time:

Depends on the context;  
set a clear timeframe



## Material:

Pen, paper,  
timer

## Why and what?

Feedback is crucial for a continuous learning process, improving cooperation, and expressing appreciation in any team, especially in self-organised teams.

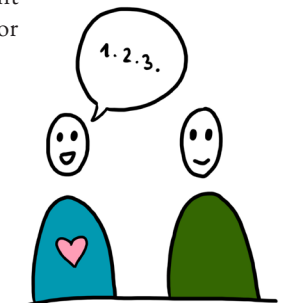
Feedback can encourage and motivate. When feedback is associated with criticism and perceived as a threat, it can lead to withdrawal. Many of us have had mixed experiences with feedback, and some get an immediate physical reaction just hearing the word “feedback”.

## How does the tool work?

The 3-Step Feedback process is a proven and effective sequence of steps for providing important, critical, and challenging feedback, based on the Nonviolent Communication approach of the American psychologist and mediator Marshall B. Rosenberg.

### 1. Describe your observation: I have observed...

Try to be as objective as possible. Distinguish between observation and interpretation. Describe only the specific action, event, or observed behaviour. For example, “I have perceived that as abusive” instead of “You became abusive.”



## 2. Describe feelings and needs: It makes me happy / annoys me / irritates me...

This is the impact of the observed behaviour on us. Beware of the difference between emotions like happiness, anger, or sadness and pseudo-feelings that are actually assessments (e.g., I feel neglected by you).

## 3. Formulate a request for what the person could do differently next time: I therefore ask you ...

A genuine request is open to a “No” as an answer, there is room for negotiation, and it should always retain the autonomy of the other person.

If we follow the steps described with the attitude, “I am okay, you are okay and I want to support you to live your full potential”, it is possible to give both very positive and critical feedback.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Remember helpful feedback that you have really taken on board:  
When, by whom and how was it given and what can you learn from  
it? How can you as a team give each other helpful feedback on a  
regular basis to improve our work and relationships?*

#### Source/Further reading:

Marshall B. Rosenberg (2015): Nonviolent Communication – A Language of Life.

# LISTENING TO IGNITE: THINKING PAIR



## Purpose:

Providing genuine attention and appreciation to enhance another person's free thinking.



## People:

2



## Time:

Minimum 10 minutes



## Material:

Timer

## Why and what?

We live in a world of interruption, where we usually listen only to respond with our own ideas and thoughts. Imagine how different the world could be if we would **listen to ignite** and promise each other one thing: **We won't interrupt each other.** Promise. We won't interrupt our words – or our thoughts.

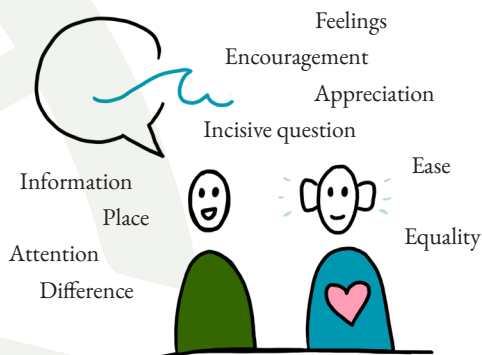
Imagine it. Imagine the relief, the possibilities, the dignity. We each have ground that is ours. Time to think and figure out what we really want to say. To say it, to consider it. To change it.

And because we know that we will not interrupt each other, we will want to know what the other one thinks too, even if we disagree a lot. We each open our hearts.

## To stop interrupting means:

- to start giving attention.
- to sustain interest in where the person will go next.
- to share the stage.

Nancy Kline and her colleagues have identified ten behaviours that generate the finest independent thinking; the so-called **Thinking Environment®** (see graph).



### How does the tool work?

Find a **Thinking Partner** and a quiet place and make sure there are no disturbances. Each Partner has 5 minutes (or more, depending on the time available) of **uninterrupted thinking time** during which s/he speaks his/her thoughts aloud. During this time, the Thinking Partner does nothing but listen with full presence and appreciation. Set the stopwatch accordingly. Silence and emotions are welcome!

As a listener, we can ask our Thinking Partner the following question or an adapted version that relates to a topic relevant to both of us: **What do you want to think about and what are your thoughts?**

**When the thinking stops** and the Thinker needs a new question, s/he will say this. Then, and only then, the Thinking Partner asks: What else are you thinking, what are you feeling, what do you want to say? The thinking will probably start up again.

After both Partners have had time to think and be listened to, express gratitude to each other and appreciate a quality noticed in the other person, for instance: I appreciate your positive spirit – thank you.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*In which situation did you feel that another person listened really well. What was a quality of the listener in that situation? If you could grant yourself three wishes to enhance the ability of people in your team to listen and really understand, what would they be?*

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### Source/Further reading:

Nancy Kline (2020): The Promise That Changes Everything: I Won't Interrupt You.

# GATHERING THE CREW: THE CIRCLE WAY



## Purpose:

Facilitate meaningful dialogue and participation.



## People:

3 to 50



## Time:

Depends on  
the context



## Material:

Talking stick or stone  
(something of meaning to  
the group), flipchart paper,  
markers if taking notes

## Why and what?

For thousands of years, people have formed circles around fires to share knowledge, experiences, and stories, and to nurture and organise. It is a method of listening to all perspectives in a spirit of equality and togetherness. More recently, the circle setting has also been used in the work context. To grasp its transformational power, it is best to experience it first-hand.

## How does the tool work?

Sit in a circle of chairs. Use a talking stick (other object) to ensure that only one person speaks at a time. Alternatively, for example, we can agree not to interrupt each other and say “over” when finished; this is useful in online meetings. We can also use a timer to give everyone an equal amount of speaking time (e.g., 2 or 3 minutes). Open the circle by clearly stating the intention of the circle.

The following elements are important to the circle setting and allow for deep explorations of a certain topic:

**The centre:** this can be a candle, a bouquet of flowers, or pictures on the topic placed in the centre of the circle of chairs.



### Three principles:

- **Rotating leadership:** There is a leader in every chair who helps the circle function by taking the lead at some point as host, scribe, or guardian.
- **Sharing responsibilities:** Every person is responsible for the process, purpose, and outcomes.
- **Relying on wholeness:** Calling on our collective intelligence enables wisdom, creativity, and new opportunities that are not accessible to the individuals.

### Three practices keep the circle alive:

- **Attentive listening:** Including thinking and feeling, trying to understand, and creating a relationship.
- **Intentional speaking:** Sharing stories and information that have heart and meaning. Talking about own experiences.
- **Support the well-being of the group:** Consider the effects of words and actions.

### Three roles:

- **A host** prepares the atmosphere of the circle. He or she sets up the centre and holds the space for conversation and then participates in the conversation as it happens.
- **A guardian** helps to keep social contracts, timeliness, and focus. He or she mindfully observes the energy and gives signals to pause when necessary.
- Depending on the intention and setting of the circle, **a scribe** may need to take notes to capture the essential thoughts of a conversation or note a decision that has been made. The scribe usually does not take part in the discussion.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*How could you facilitate more meaningful dialogues within your team?*

### Source/Further reading:

Christina Baldwin & Ann Linnea (2010): The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair.

# LIFTING THE FOG: ASKING POWERFUL QUESTIONS



## **Purpose:**

Leading our team and developing our team's abilities.



## **People:**

Our team



## **Time:**

Whenever, wherever



## **Material:**

Ourselves

## **Why and what?**

The questions we ask shape our view on the world. They focus our discoveries and are pathways to the future. They are doorways which open smaller or bigger doors. These questions, by nature, often lead us down the path we feel most comfortable with rather than to new discoveries. We must make an intentional move to ask other questions. Our focus follows our attention; our attention follows our intention. Questions are a way to focus on what is needed to find solutions.

Usually, leaders are meant to have answers, but the most important thing is that they ask questions – not questions to which they already have the answers. Asking good questions is crucial to understanding how the system works and finding suitable ways forward. In our culture, the right answer is often valued more highly than discovering the right question. In complex systems, however, there is no right answer. There is just an array of answers.

## **How does the tool work?**

In a nutshell, powerful questions are:

- Simple and clear
- Open (what, why, how, when ...)
- Thought-provoking (a moment of silence can be an indicator that a nerve has been hit)
- Bring out assumptions
- Generate energy
- Open new possibilities
- Evoke more questions





**Examples of great questions leading into the future:**

- What opportunities can you see?
- What kind of stories do people tell about this issue? What are people not talking about?
- What is the important question we should be asking ourselves right now? What is stopping someone from asking it?
- What is possible here and who cares?
- What would it take to bring change on this issue?
- What would happen if ...?
- When do things go well?
- If we had one wish, what would happen?
- If the project were a ship, what would our position/X look like? What would the weather be like?

**Here are some questions we can ask ourselves** in order to work with more meaningful questions, based on the work of the Public Conversations Project:

- Is this question relevant to the real lives and real work of the people who will be exploring it?
- Is this a genuine question — a question to which we really do not know the answer?
- What “work” do we want this question to do? That is, what kind of conversation, meanings and feelings do we want it to evoke in those who engage with the question?
- Is this question likely to invite fresh thinking/ feeling?
- What assumptions or beliefs are embedded in the way this question is constructed?
- Is this question likely to generate hope, imagination, engagement, creative action, and new possibilities?

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

*Which questions would you like to ask more often when working with your team?*

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**Source/Further reading:**

Eric E. Vogt, Juanita Brown, David Isaacs (2003): The Art of powerful questions: Catalyzing insight, innovation, and action (<https://anyflip.com/smmd/kask/basic>).



# LOOKING BACKWARDS: AFTER ACTION REVIEW



## Purpose:

Evaluation and comparison of actual outcomes or results with expected results, learning about the system.



## People:

1 or more (everyone who was involved in the issue at stake)



## Time:

Varies from 15 minutes to 2 hours



## Material:

Flip chart, marker

## Why and what?

Organisational learning requires teams to continuously assess their work and results to identify and learn from successes and failures. Every situation or joint experience is an exceptional opportunity for learning, not only in terms of the situation, but also in terms of the culture of the organisation. How well did we communicate? The After-Action Review (AAR) is a simple but powerful tool to help us do this.

## How does the tool work?

There are many ways to conduct an AAR. A great version is to work with the following four questions. In this process, the four questions are asked by a facilitator one after another. Each question is subsequently answered by each team member:

1. **What just happened?**  
Everyone offers a personal description.
2. **Why do you think it happened?**  
People offer their interpretations.
3. **What can we learn from this?**  
Shaping learning outcomes together.
4. **How will we apply these learnings?**  
Specific actions, defined outcomes, specified work, and a motivated team.



The process is based on a set of principles that ensure its functioning:

- This process is given priority. No matter what happens, time is provided to learn from the situation or crisis.
- Everyone who was involved in the action or crisis is present and expected to contribute.
- Rank and hierarchy do not matter. It is recognised that everyone has something of potential value to contribute.
- The process is disciplined. Specific questions are asked in order. Facilitation is needed to ensure that only one question is answered at a time and that each person speaks without being contradicted or challenged.
- The insights gained are recorded in some form. They are available as “lessons learned” and can be used by others.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What could be an effective way to try and anchor AAR in your team?  
When will you start doing it?*

#### Source/Further reading:

Margaret Wheatley (2017): Who do we choose to be? Facing Reality. Claiming Leadership. Restoring Sanity.



# LEADING IN ORGANISATIONS: MANAGING YOUR FLEET

*“If you do not change direction, you may  
end up where you are heading.”*

Lao Tzu, Ancient Chinese Philosopher

Navigating a single boat is different from being part of a fleet. If we want to go far, explore a lot, and do many things, one boat is not enough. As with a fleet, an organisation consists of **various teams, each with their own dynamic, their own personalities, and, partly, their own purpose.**

There is also a **universe of institutions**: large and small, for profit and non-profit, and many in between. Different topics create different ways of organising. Today, many organisations are quite open, similar to networks.

Organisations are complex social systems. When dealing with organisations, it is important to keep in mind that the only thing we can rely on in a system is the **feedback received** for our actions. We cannot know the outcome of our actions in advance. By acting in the system, we recognise patterns and develop an intuitive understanding. We cannot analyse a complex system and completely understand it, cognitively. Accordingly, there are **various appropriate ways** to approach a situation, each triggering different consequences. There is not one right way.

Changing one part of the system changes the whole system. In this way, there are no fast solutions or quick fixes. The more we deal with some aspects of the system, the more others change. In this kind of complex system, leaders cannot “engineer” the system, i.e. dictate the system to function in a certain way. Even at the top management level, control over a complex system is an illusion.

However, we can, for example, do **these five things**:

- Get out on the “balcony”, tell others what we see, invite others to reflect together on organisational patterns and what could help.
- Link action to purpose – ask: Why? How does this structure/strategy/culture help us to achieve our purpose?
- Influence the system by acting or not acting in a certain way.
- Do things well in our own space of influence, e.g., in our own team or unit.
- Pioneer change and learning in our organisation or team, e.g., through experimentation.

**The practical tools of this compass direction will help to** steer organisations towards a common direction, structure, and strategy, to adopt effective organisational practices and clarify the purpose and steps that lead in its direction.

#### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What is, in your own words,  
the purpose of your organisation?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Frederic Laloux (2014): Reinventing organisations.

# KEEPING CLEAR PERSPECTIVE: LAYERS OF AN ORGANISATION



## Purpose:

Understanding interdependences and areas of development in our organisation.



## People:

1 to 20



## Time:

90 minutes



## Material:

Printout of the diagram below, markers

## Why and what?

We can imagine an organisation as a little bit like the layers of an onion or our planet Earth. The core of an organisation is its purpose, the reason why an organisation exists. Organizations that are not clear about their purpose have difficulty finding their way in the world. It might be worth asking team members and members of different organisational units about their understanding of the purpose of the organisation. Three sectors are crucial to the life of an organisation.

- 1. Culture** is the way people relate to each other in an organisation. It is the informal web of unwritten rules and assumptions, the way one deals with power, visibility, and vulnerability. It is difficult to measure and hard to describe. At the same time, we notice it immediately when we enter an organisation. Sometimes it is formalised in value statements or leadership guidelines, which often say more about how an organisation would like to be than about how it actually is. Many organisational development experts say that culture is the foundation of an organisation's success; as Peter Drucker said: Culture eats strategy for breakfast.
- 2. Structure** is about how things are organised. It determines who does what, who decides what, which departments and teams there are, and how processes are organised. It deals with job titles, reporting lines, rules, and responsibilities. It is formalised by an organisational chart, a role diagram, and a process description. However, in many organisations, there is a parallel world of informal processes that are often very efficient and lead to faster solutions than the formal processes.

3. **Strategy** is about our organisation's goals and how they will be achieved. It is the domain of strategic plans, milestones, missions, and annual plans. As in the other two domains, what is done in an organisation is often not purely based on these strategies. Sometimes organisations do the opposite in reality to what they do on paper.

In each of the three domains there is a level of codex and a level of behaviour. The codex contains everything that is written down in the three sectors. The behaviour is the reality, which in all three sectors can be very different from what is written down. The actual behaviour depends on the core and the codex, but also on the environment outside the organisation. Culture, structure, and strategy are meant to support the organisation in achieving its purpose. Leaders must constantly check where to invest resources and where to focus attention for the development of the team.

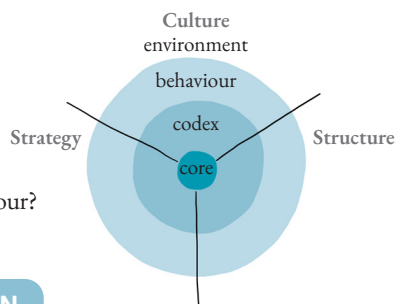
### How does it work?

If we want to develop our organisation, we can start on the core, the codex, and the actual behaviours. Working on the core requires diving into the underlying currents and maybe less discussed topics, which can be difficult. Amending the codex is the classic work of organisational development. If this is done in a top-down way, implantation is often much more difficult than expected. If we want to work with the inherent dynamics and features of a system, it is worth starting with the actual behaviour and trying to understand why it has developed in a certain way, rather than simply change it. In diagnosing our organisation, we can ask ourselves the following questions for each of the three sectors (structure, strategy, culture):

- What have we fixed in writing (codex)?
- What is the actual behaviour? What do I see?
- Which signals do I receive from the environment?

And, in general,

- How would I describe our core? When do I notice it?
- Where do I see dissonances between core, codex, and behaviour?
- Where do I see potential for development?



### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Where do you see starting points for change in your organisation in order to be more orientated towards the purpose?*

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### Source/Further reading:

Andreas Knoth (2019): The lost navigator (Blog: [lost-navigator.net](https://lost-navigator.net))



# SETTING SAIL: PURPOSE TO PRACTICE



## Purpose:

Generating a shared purpose and setting the right intention to be on the same track.



## People:

1 or more



## Time:

Minimum 2 hours



## Material:

Poster paper,  
worksheets, markers

## Why and what?

Purpose, as the vision, is like a guiding start that leads the organisation. The purpose is the “why” guiding the “how” and the “what” when creating the structures, strategy, next steps, and even the culture of a team or organisation. Everybody in an organisation can help to clarify, further develop, and, from time to time, refresh the purpose.

## How does the tool work?

It is helpful for shaping the purpose if people in an organisation regularly go through the following five steps together. By defining these, participants clarify how they can organise themselves to increase success.

- 1. Introduction:** Invite all people involved in the initiative to this process. Introduce the idea of the method and the five elements together with the questions.
- 2. Self-reflection:** Ask the 5 questions and give everyone 1 minute for silent self-reflection on each question:

**Purpose:** Why is the work important to us and the larger community?

**Principles:** What rules must we follow in pursuit of our purpose?

**Participants:** Who needs to be involved to achieve our purpose?

**Structure:** How will we organise (both macro- and microstructures) and distribute control to achieve our purpose?

**Practices:** What are we going to deliver? What will we offer to our users/clients and how will we do it?



3. **Group process:** Bring all ideas together in pairs, building on those from the self-reflection. Afterwards share and develop the ideas in groups of 3 to 5 and compare, shift, and expand the best ones. As a whole group, integrate the responses, finalise the ideas, and record the results on poster paper on a large wall. After completing each element, ask: Did this element shed new light that suggests revising the previous elements?

Move through the elements and questions. Be prepared to go back and revise previous elements as needed (expect some messy non-linearity).

When all the elements are filled in, ask the participants to take a step back and look at their draft of the five elements together. Ask them to think through all possible next steps in small groups using “What, So What, Now What?” and prioritise as a whole group.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What are your personal responses  
to the questions above?*

#### Source/Further reading:

Keith McCandless, Henri Lipmanowicz (2013): The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures. Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation. - Also available online under the creative commons license:

# BREAKING NEW GROUND: SAFE-TO-FAIL EXPERIMENTS



## Purpose:

Enabling a safe-to-fail culture, feedback loops, willingness to take risks, and innovation.



## People:

2 to 20



## Time:

90 minutes



## Material:

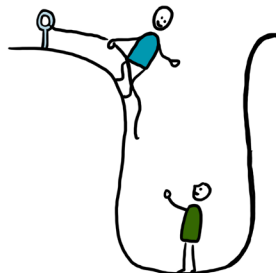
Printout of the worksheet, markers

## Why and what?

We can nudge the system through safe-to-fail experiments. These are lots of small, fine-grained, low-cost nudges to try to change the system while learning about the system at the same time. The idea is to follow up with another nudge and then yet another. This pattern of experimenting and learning – rather than planning and executing – will help us to move step by step towards the future.

Conducting safe-to-fail experiments is based on the fact that we can only learn something about a system by doing something. These are some **principles** for helpful experiments:

- They are safe-to-fail - a failure of the experiment would not put the organisation at serious risk.
- They involve entertaining risk, as without risk there are few new findings.
- They address multiple problems and challenges at the same time.
- They try out different ways to find solutions, e.g., in the form of experimental clusters.
- They start quickly.
- Everybody should know exactly what we are trying to find out.
- It is clear who is observing what and how, and how perspectives are exchanged.



To make this happen, we need to create a culture of trying and failing and learning, rather than a culture of avoiding risk, with everything controlled and adhering to a plan. The challenge is to set a direction that goes far enough and then create boundaries within which it is safe for the team to try things out and learn.

### How does the tool work?

This is a process for planning safe-to-fail experiments in our team:

1. **Focussing:** What is an issue we are really struggling with in our organisation?
2. **Diving deeper:** What are the hypotheses about why this is happening? Please name three or more, even wild and dangerous ones.
3. **Looking ahead:** Building on these hypotheses and the patterns we see in our organisation, what could help us to develop a positive way of dealing with this situation? Please list five or more ideas.
4. **Sorting:** Intuitively, which ideas attract our attention most?
5. **Designing experiments:** Which experiments could we do to see how these ideas work out in reality? In the experiment, who would do what and how? What would we observe and learn from it?

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Which safe-to-fail experiments could help us to find a good way forward on a challenge we see? What are our next steps to start the experiment?*

### Source/Further reading:

Jennifer Garvey Berger and Keith Johnston (2015): Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders. Leadership for change (no date): Safe-fail-experiments (download from: [leadershipforchange.org](http://leadershipforchange.org)).

# ADJUSTING YOUR COURSE: ECOCYCLE PLANNING



## Purpose:

Collaborative planning tool to eliminate or mitigate common bottlenecks that stifle performance.



## People:

1 or more



## Time:

Minimum 90 minutes  
in groups, shorter if  
reflecting alone



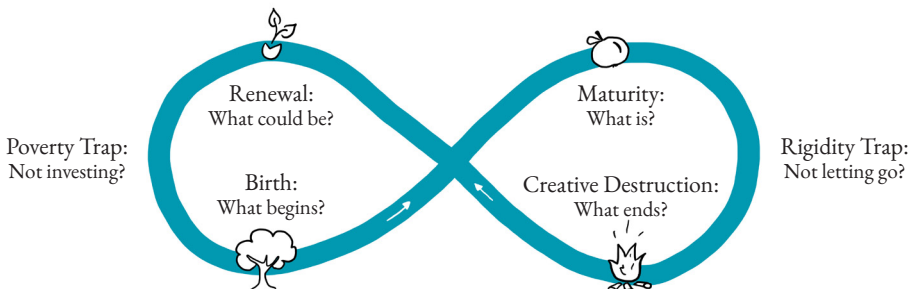
## Material:

Large wall space, printout of  
the Ecocycle (small for each  
participant and large for the  
wall), sticky notes, markers

## Why and what?

Ecocycle Planning is a collaborative tool that helps us to (re)focus by providing an overview of all activities a team or organisation is involved in, and identifying which issues are hungry for attention and which are better to let go. It is adapted from the biological Ecocycle of renewal (or gestation), birth, maturity, and death (creative destruction). There are two traps to be aware of:

- **Poverty trap:** Sometimes our ambitions are simply too big in relation to our staying power, and it helps to gain clarity on what is most important and doable.
- **Rigidity Trap:** Sometimes we get stuck in or obsessed with our achievements. We lose sight of what else needs to be done - unless we let it go.



Whether alone or in a team, the Ecocycle tool helps create an overview of all activities, enabling identification of elements starving for resources and those that are rigid and hinder progress. It helps everyone see the forest and the trees — we can see where our activities fit into the larger picture with others.

### How does the tool work?

Gather with our work unit (e.g. team, department, or whole organisation):

- Start with individual reflection. Each participant is asked to make a list of all activities that take up their time.
- Continue working in pairs to determine the placement of each activity in the Ecocycle (10 min.). Depending on the size of the work unit, we could add a step with a group of four to finalize the placement of activities. Each group is tasked with writing their activities on sticky notes and creating a whole room map; the groups are invited one by one to place their sticky notes on the larger map.
- Ask each group to step back and digest the pattern of placements, focusing on any activities where there is consensus about their placement. Ask: What activities do we need to creatively destroy or stop in order to move forward? What activities do we need to expand or start in order to move forward?
- In small groups, work out a first action step for each activity that needs to be stopped (activities that are in the Rigidity Trap).
- In small groups, create an initial action step for each activity that needs to be started or given more resources (activities in the Poverty Trap) and assign responsibilities.
- In addition, we can ask all groups to focus on any activities for which there is no consensus. Conduct a short round of conversation to clarify the differences in placement. If possible, create initial action steps for each activity.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*In your personal, professional (and/or private) life: What activities are in the place of birth, maturity, constructive destruction and renewal? Which things need more attention?*

### Source/Further reading:

Keith McCandless, Henri Lipmanowicz (2013): The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures. Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation. Also available online under the creative commons license: [www.liberatingstructures.com/lis/](http://www.liberatingstructures.com/lis/)



# BUILDING COURAGE: LEADING WITH SCARF



## Purpose:

Create a context in which everyone can bring in his/her potential for the purpose of the organisation.



## People:

1 or more



## Time:

5 minutes to 1 hour



## Material:

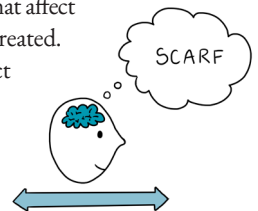
No materials needed

## Why and what?

To work well together, people need to be in a position that brings out their best skills and ideas. Neuroscience has shown that in a state of threat, the brain triggers a stress response cycle. In this reaction cycle, the brain increases stress-related substances in the body such as adrenaline and cortisol, blood pressure and blood sugar rise, and rational and cognitive parts of the brain are deactivated. This is also true at the workplace and in organisations. If we feel threatened or afraid, we cannot solve problems. In contrast, when we are in a reward mode, we are much more efficient and successful in solving problems.

The SCARF Model, first developed by David Rock in 2008 and based on a neuroscientific meta-study, summarises five domains that our brain constantly scans for threat and reward signals. If leaders keep these five domains in mind and try to minimise the threat they pose, they create a potential-orientated workspace. These five domains are:

- **Status** refers to how we perceive our position in relation to others such as our boss, peers, team members, friends, and family. This may include job titles, public and private forms of recognition or criticism, salary, and other aspects associated with status.
- **Certainty** refers to how sure we feel about an event, people, or situations that affect us. The higher the level of uncertainty, the more likely a state of threat is created.
- **Autonomy** refers to the level of control we have about decisions that affect us. The more autonomous we feel, the more engaged, confident, and satisfied we tend to be.
- **Relatedness** refers to the quality of our relationships with others and our sense of belonging. Generally, people want to be part of a group.



- **Fairness** refers to our sense of justice and right and wrong. Our perception of whether we have been treated fairly can motivate us and keep us engaged, or it can put us in a threatening state where we tend to react defensively.

### How does the tool work?

We can use the SCARF Model as a tool to think through **key actions** of leadership. For instance, we can ask ourselves how to optimise the way we do feedback conversations, change communication, or onboarding. When we feel that there is a tense situation within our team, we can go through the SCARF domains and look for possible reasons and options for action. This can be an important base for the 3-step feedback.

If we want to **initiate and support change in our organisation**, we can take SCARF needs into account in order to create conditions for success. If we are aware of our own (and others') basic needs, we can communicate this clarity. We have a differentiated view on the world and can acknowledge contradictions, tensions, and ambiguity. This way we can also model behaviour in our organisation.

A concrete way we could use the SCARF model to reflect in **difficult situations**, is in the context of an organisational change process. Find a quiet place where there will be no disturbances. Think about an upsetting situation and write down the answers to the following questions:

- What were your thoughts in that situation?
- How did your body feel in that situation?
- How did you feel emotionally?
- Think about what really mattered to you in that situation?
- Describe what basic need (in terms of SCARF or other) was important to you in that situation and was possibly not satisfied.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*What can I do to build status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness in my organisation? What can I do to support brain-friendly change processes?*

### Source/Further reading:

David Rock (2020): Brain at work – Strategies for overcoming distractions, regaining focus and working smarter all day long  
Breidenbach, Joana & Bettina Rollow (2019): New Work needs Inner Work (German)



# LEADING SOCIAL CHANGE: SAILING AGAINST THE WIND

*“We cannot change the wind, but we can  
set the sails differently.”*

Aristotle, Greek Philosopher (384–322 BC)

Engaging for a healthy ocean sometimes feels like **sailing against the wind**. We cannot sail straight ahead, but progress towards our destination by tacking, i.e. navigating a zigzag course, and thus eventually reach our goal. This requires knowledge, skill, and experience.

Above all, leading social change is about **becoming a healthier society**. To drive this change, it is important for Blue Leaders to be aware of three key systemic levers for change.

First, social change occurs at multiple, interconnected levels as **networks** of relationships form among people who discover that they share a **common cause**, a **positive vision** of what is possible, and an urge to **take action**.

Second, social change takes place at **three main levels**:

- **The Culture or macro level** is the level at which prevailing social values and worldviews are located and eventually change.
- **The Regime or meso level** is the level at which prevailing political, economic, and social institutions are located and where new or transformed institutions emerge.
- **The Niches or micro level** is where pioneers experiment with new, sustainable forms of working, doing business, and living. These change makers are the nuclei of social innovations.

And thirdly, the world does not change one person at a time, but via so-called **emergence**. In order to grow out of their niche and enter the social system as a whole, pioneering projects must first be discovered, network with each other to learn and develop together, and finally

become known to more and more people as good, inspiring examples before becoming accepted by the general public as a desirable way of life. At some point during the process - which cannot be planned in advance - a new system emerges at a large scale. This system possesses qualities and capacities that were unknown to the individuals. It is not that they were hidden, they are simply not present until the system emerges.

We can derive some core messages:

- If we want to change the system, trying to convince the incumbent system actors (Regimes) to fundamentally change is often futile.
- For system change, we need to work at multiple levels simultaneously (Culture, Regimes and Niches) and create positive feedback loops between them.
- We need to learn to identify and use meaningful windows of opportunity for change.
- To strengthen new values such as sustainability or fairness, we must “walk the talk” and exemplify these values within our organisational structures and the way we interact with each other.
- Pioneers build the new system; they need our support by naming, connecting, nourishing, and illuminating their initiatives.

Leading social change for a **healthy ocean** requires inspiring a positive vision of the possibilities, system thinking, pursuing values, building alliances, and acting with transformative potential.

**The practical tools of this compass direction will help us to lead social change.** They help us clarify our own circle of influence and possible role(s) therein. They also help us to support individual change processes, and identify concrete pathway and values-based prototypes of a positive future.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Thinking about the Culture, Regimes and Niches levels, on which level do you (or would you like to) initiate social change? What are your next steps?*

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#### Source/Further reading:

Michael Narberhaus & Aryne Sheppard (2015): Re.imaging Activism: A practical guide for the Great Transition



# FOCUSING YOUR ATTENTION: CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE



## **Purpose:**

Considering where to focus energy, identifying opportunities for effective action, breaking problems down into manageable issues, and building resilience.



## **People:**

Individually or  
with a team



## **Time:**

Minimum 15 minutes of  
regular reflection or from time  
to time within a team

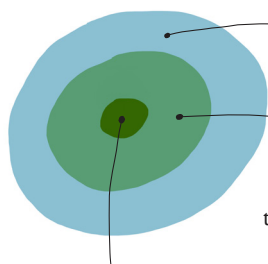


## **Material:**

Journal or flipchart  
with circle of concern  
and influence

## **Why and what?**

Caring for the ocean means noticing disturbing issues that we wish were different, while we ourselves have no or only limited possibilities to influence these things. We can, however, create conditions for change. We can choose where to focus our energy and attention by distinguishing three spheres:



**The Circle of Concern:** the wide range of worries or issues we might have about a topic and that we have no influence on.

**The Circle of Influence:** a smaller circle within the first circle contains those things we can directly or indirectly influence, though we are not the only ones who have and can influence here. We are in the role of co-creators.

**The Circle of Control:** an even smaller circle that represents the things we can directly control, at least to a high degree.

When we focus on concerns outside our circle of influence, we risk increasing our stress and falling into the space of accusing, blaming and victimising. Our circle of influence can shrink because of our attention on and energy spent needlessly worrying, which disempowers us.



By choosing to focus on our circle of influence, we move into a more proactive space. Rather than spending energy on things we cannot do anything about, we can take steps that make a positive difference: calling on our strengths and connections. We can also choose to let go of concerns that do not serve us well.

### How does the tool work?

We can use the circle of influence to overcome a challenge we face individually or as a team:

1. Draw a circle and brainstorm all the areas of concern for the current issue.
2. On another page, draw two circles – this time with the circle of influence in the middle. Identify the issues that are in our sphere of influence (that we can either control or influence) and clearly identify the things that are not. Jot them down.
3. If we or our team doubt that we can do something about an issue, see if there is any room to expand the sphere of influence and ask ourselves: What would need to happen for this to change? What is one small thing that could help here?
4. Once it is clear what is out of our sphere of influence and control, remind ourself (or our team) that there is no point in spending any more time dealing with these issues. It is time to put them to one side and let them go.

As a last step, we can commit to an action plan by focusing on those actions within our sphere of influence that are most do-able and likely to have the greatest effects.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Where in your personal or working life do you have control or influence?  
Where not? What issues would you be better off letting go of?*

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### Source/Further reading:

Stephen Covey (1994): The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.



# SAILING THE WAVES OF TRANSITION: FOUR ROOMS OF CHANGE



## Purpose:

Supporting individual change processes as part of social change.



## People:

1 or in a team



## Time:

Short reflection or longer process



## Material:

None

## Why and what?

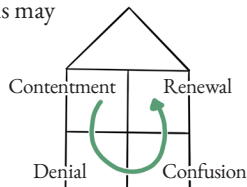
Several researchers have described the emotional roller coaster a person goes through in connection with crises or major changes. If we want society to change, we need to be able to support each individual in their change processes in order to create a wave of changes. One of the most widespread tools used to understand the dynamic of change processes is Claes Janssen's Four Rooms of Change, further developed by Erik Kirkbride. People move from one room to another according to perceptions, feelings, or aspirations triggered by external events. The four rooms through which people move are Contentment, Denial, Confusion, and Renewal.

## How does the tool work?

1. In the **Contentment** room, people enjoy the status quo. They are not interested in attempting improvement or major changes. Through a movie, conversation, or personal event they are faced with new and often very challenging knowledge. This may make them move from the room of Contentment to the Denial room.

### *What we can do for people in this room to support change:*

- *Provide easily accessible information through different media channels.*
- *Describe stories of a positive future.*
- *Invite people to small and easy conversations.*



2. In the **Denial** room, people are aware that they should change something, but they deny it. For example, we fly to the Caribbean for a week-long holiday, even though we know that emissions from air travel lead to climate change. People in this room are not yet ready to deal with the facts. From the outside, they are perceived as unaware or afraid of change.

***What we can do for people in this room to support change:***

- Give information about problems/topics: films, talks, discussions.
- Listen to what is important to people.
- Connect large scale problems to people's lives.
- Describe a positive future: Together we can make a difference.

3. People move into the **Confusion** room when they acknowledge that they need to change and develop the determination to do it. This insight can be triggered by seeing others who have changed and taking them as role models, or by new acceptable courses of action emerging. In the Confusion room, we do not yet know what the new action and response will be. But we know the previous ways of doing things is no longer working. People might feel out of touch, scattered and unsure, but there is an increasing readiness to learn and change things.

***What we can do for people in this room to support change:***

- Create spaces to discuss as well as spaces to share feelings (fear, anger, confusion, despair, commitment, hope, inspiration).
- Show examples of new ways of doing things through films, projects, visits, storytelling, meeting others who have done it.
- Opportunities for discussion with experts or more experienced people.
- Celebrate those who have already made progress.

4. People enter the **Renewal** room as soon as they start with the new actions. Now they feel sincere, open, and willing to take risks. People in Renewal try out new practices and ideas. The Renewal room feels like a place full of like-minded peers who are willing to try new ways of doing things.

***What we can do for people in this room to support change:***

- Create places to meet others who are doing the same things.
- Acknowledging difficulties and share stories of overcoming them.
- Publicising achievements, stories in news bulletins or local paper.
- Joint celebrations, award ceremonies.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

*What are your good practices and recommendations for supporting individual change in the “blue” context, for instance in communities?*

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**Source/Further reading:**

Claes Janssen: [www.fourroomsofchange.com](http://www.fourroomsofchange.com)


# DEVELOPING STEPS INTO THE FUTURE: THREE HORIZONS



**Purpose:**  
Gain clarity on the desired future developments and find practical ways to support these developments.



**People:**  
5 to 500



**Time:**  
3 hours

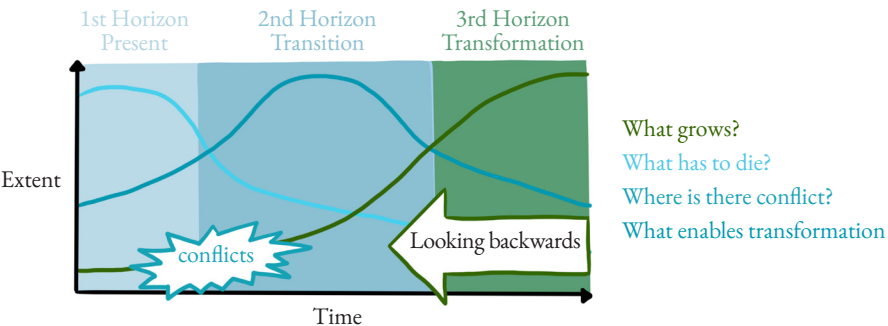


**Material:**  
Rooms, pens, sticky notes, flipcharts

## Why and what?

As a leader, it is important to be aware of future possibilities. With our team, we should discuss those conditions that might lead to certain developments along with steps to take or avoid. Thinking about leverage that can influence future developments is rewarding and motivating as it allows us to see our own action in a new light and helps us get on the same page as a team.

A great way to approach scenario work is to think about the desired futures and the possible actions to make it happen. The Three Horizons Approach, further developed by South African researcher Laura Pereira, is a graphical process that can be used to forecast scenarios of change in the meaning of issues at different points in time; it links the future to the present. This method helps to find those transition spaces and pathways where systemic changes could be prepared and rolled out.



## How does the tool work?

To use this approach in practice: Using sticky notes, each team of participants in a workshop or conference fills in the Three Horizons Framework in the following order:

- Starting with **Horizon Three – Transformation**: Participants envision how a positive future might look, as well as their underlying ethics, relationships, and principles. They try to be as broad and specific as possible and collect characteristics and descriptions of a positive future development.
- Then participants work on **Horizon One – The current reality**: They give their opinions on how the current system looks and what the dominant patterns are. They highlight the different aspects of the dominant system as broadly as possible and with details.
- Then participants work on **Horizon Two - Transition**: They collect the practical steps that need to be taken to avoid the associated negative consequences of the past (Horizon One) and build bridges to the desired future (Horizon Three). They are as specific as possible and try to add actions they can take themselves.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Please pick a concrete topic on which you work: Which desired future would you like to build regarding this topic? What are features of current realities? Which next steps do you want to take to build the future from the reality?*

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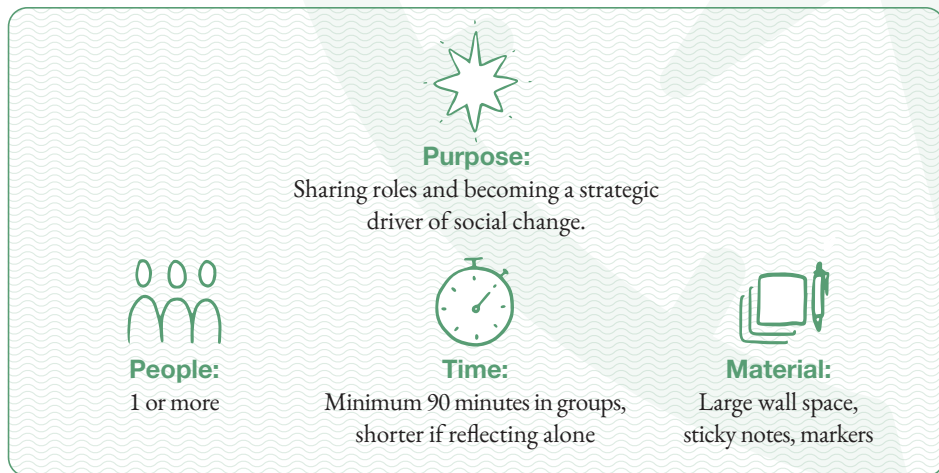
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### Source/Further reading:

Methodology developed by Laura Pereira. For a practical example of how this methodology works, see Second African Dialogue on the World in 2050 (download from: [researchgate.net](https://researchgate.net))

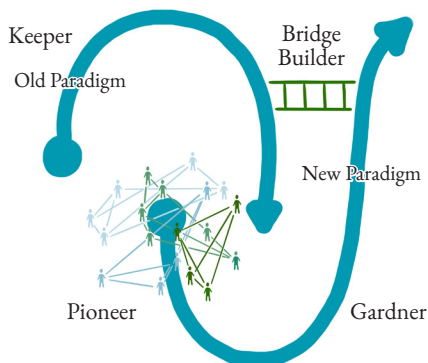
# ROLES ON BOARD: ROLES IN EMERGENCE



## Why and what?

It is helpful for Blue Leaders to be aware of the different but equally important roles that drive a transition process. Ensuring that all these roles are taken care of enhances social change. Being aware of the different roles and linking them to our own strengths can help to (re)focus on aspects that are important for social change:

- **Pioneer:** Experimenting with ideas, social innovation, and planting seeds for change.
- **Gardener:** Naming, connecting, nurturing, and illuminating the pioneers to increase the potential for influence.
- **Bridge Builder:** Enabling dialogue with people who are afraid of the change and supporting them in letting go of the old. The Bridge Builder shows how they can retain positive aspects of the old and illustrates how they can be happy - and maybe even better meet their needs - in a new system.
- **Keeper:** Taking care of the parts that cannot be transferred to a new system and honouring those services that were useful in the past but are no longer needed.



## How does the tool work?

Gather the work unit (e.g., team, department or whole organisation):

- Start with an individual reflection and ask each participant to make a list of the strengths of the work unit.
- Continue working in pairs to reflect on these strengths and identify suitable roles that the work unit could take on to fulfil our mission. Identify concrete activities for these roles. Depending on the size of the work unit, a group of four can take things a step further and finalize these reflections. Then ask each group to write their roles, including strengths and corresponding activities, on sticky notes and create a large map by inviting the groups one by one to place their sticky notes on it.
- Ask each group to step back and digest the outcomes. Discuss the different roles and generate consensus on the specific roles the work unit should take on.
- In small groups, create an initial action step for each agreed role and assign responsibilities.
- Agree on these steps and responsibilities with the whole group.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*Use the tool to reflect on your personal strength:  
What role could you best fill?*

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### Source/Further reading:

Michael Narberhaus, Aryne Sheppard (2015): Re.imagining Activism: A practical guide for the Great Transition.



# SAILING TOWARDS A POSITIVE FUTURE: UTOPIAN PROTOTYPING



## **Purpose:**

Developing small value-based prototypes for positive change.



## **People:**

1 to unlimited



## **Time:**

Minimum of  
45 minutes



## **Material:**

Pen, paper or journal, sticky  
notes or cards and wall space  
if done with a group

## **Why and what?**

If we want to initiate change, we need a positive vision of what is possible. Yet, the global challenges we face are worrying and overwhelming. They seem too big to be solvable by us in small ways because they are beyond our sphere of influence. Moreover, many people fear that mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, for example, will involve great personal sacrifice. This does not invite action. What does invite action, however, is a positive vision of what is possible: A vision that is attractive to us and makes us long for a better future. What is our utopian future? This tool builds on these assumptions. It is a visioning exercise that starts with values and developing a utopian vision, then designing practical, small prototypes or experiments. This tool encourages action for a better world by narrowing problems down to something small and tangible. It can be done alone or in a group. If done in a group, include time for joint reflections, for example to agree on the values most important to our organisation.

## **How does the tool work?**

Everybody finds a quiet place where they will not be disturbed. We may first start with an embodiment or breathing practice to calm down. Then, take a few minutes to reflect on each of the following questions:

1. Reflect upon the context for your prototype: In which context do you want to initiate change (your team, organisation, family, neighbourhood, yourself, etc.)?



2. What values or terms are key elements of your mission? What does your organisation stand for, what is your purpose?
3. Choose the three most important values or terms for you: If you were to draft guiding principles defining your organisations' actions, what would they be? Try to draft sentences with verbs.
4. Imagine an island in a place far away. On that island there is a city where people have been living and organising their lives based on your principles for some time already. How would this city look? Consider numerous facets: How would people engage with one another in their everyday lives? How would the education system be organised? How would people live? How would people deal with commodities and consumer goods and their distribution? What would architecture look like? How would mobility be organised? How would people organise themselves socially and politically?
5. Imagine you would move into the city: What and how would you like to contribute to life in the city?
6. Imagine your organisation is opening a branch in the city and you are a part of it: What role would your organisation play in this city?
7. Now take some time to reflect on this utopian city and think about how you can manifest this vision in a smaller form in your life. Come up with a very tiny project that can bring your organisation closer to this utopian city. What are some ideas? What is something small that you can start doing next week?
8. Find a friend or colleague to reflect on your prototype and strengthen your own commitment to actually making it happen. In a group we can then present the prototypes to each other and plan next steps in putting them into practice.

### REFLECTION QUESTION

*How does the most beautiful and attractive city  
on your island look?*

#### Source/Further reading:

Rutger Bregman (2018): Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal World. Personal notes from a workshop with Reinventing Society: [realutopien.de](http://realutopien.de)

# CHECK OUT: FARE YE WELL, SAILORS!

*“The path is the goal!”*

Confucius, ancient Chinese Philosopher (551-479 BCE)

How was the journey? Which harbours have we reached? It may have been a long journey or a short one, we may have sailed these seas for the first time or already felt familiar on this ocean, we may have taken this journey lightly or encountered quite a storm and high waves. Every personal journey is different. Together we have navigated through the **four quadrants** of the leadership compass:

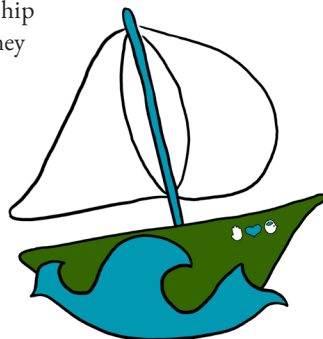
- Leading self: Finding safe harbour
- Leading teams: All hands on deck
- Leading organisations: Managing your fleet
- Leading societal transition: Navigating winds of change

We hope that along the way, **some treasures** were found that can be shared with those around you. We would love to hear what was valuable, how it was used and what we should recommend to fellow navigators.

**The journey will go on.** For our next trips, we wish for lots of energy, cheerful and committed company, perseverance, equanimity, and kindness towards ourselves and others. We trust that we are not alone on this ocean, but surrounded by many who also seek change and are waiting to work together with us.

If this logbook was read without taking part in the Blue Leadership Journey, we invite readers to get in touch and organise a group journey with us. The live Blue Leadership Journey can run online and face-to-face and **supports change agents to develop individual and collective leadership skills, facilitate and encourage meaningful change** in systems, and make a difference for sustainable marine and coastal ecosystem management.

More material and contacts can be found online at the Blue Capacity Development Hub. The material is open source and can be adapted to other thematic fields.



## FINAL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

*What did I notice about myself in this journey? How? And why?*

*Which aba-moment(s) do I want to share – and with whom?*

*Which changes have I already started because of this journey?*

*Which concrete steps could I take?*

*What do I want to have more of in the future? What less?*

*What do I want to tell others about this journey?*

# LITERATURE

In addition to the sources and further readings mentioned on the cards, the following are important sources and inspirations for this handbook.

Adam Kahane (2007): Solving tough problems: An open way of talking, listening, and creating new realities.

Amy C. Edmondson (2018): The fearless organisation – creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth

Brené Brown (2018): Dare to lead – Brave work. Tough conversations. Whole hearts

Charles Eisenstein (2020): Extinction and the Revolution of Love

Daniel Kahnemann (2012): Thinking fast and slow

Jennifer Garvey Berger (2019): Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps – How to thrive in complexity

John P. Kotter (2012): Leading change

Joseph Jaworski (2011): Synchronicity. The Inner Path of Leadership

Margret Wheatley (2007): Finding our way – Leadership for an uncertain time

Marvin Weisbord/ Sandra Janoff (2007): Don't just do something, stand there – Ten principles for leading meetings that matter

Marvin Weisbord, Sandra Janoff (2015): Lead more, control less – 8 advanced leadership skills that overturn convention

Mary Alice Arthur (2021): 365 Alive – Find your voice, claim your story, live your brilliant life

Otto Scharmer, Katrin Kaeufer (2013): Leading from the emerging future – From ego-systems to eco-systems

Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, Marty Linsky (2009): The practice of adaptive leadership - tools and tactics for changing your organisation and the world

Roswitha Vesper, Holger Scholz (2018): Lernlandkarte Circle Way

Rutger Bregman (2020): Humankind. A Hopeful History

Sebastian Klein, Ben Huges (2019): The Loop Approach

Tim MacCartney (2007): Finding earth, finding soul – The invisible path to authentic leadership

## Websites:

[www.kommunikationslotsen.de](http://www.kommunikationslotsen.de)

<https://www.presencing.org/resource/tools>

<http://www.consciouscollaboration.co.uk>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It was a great honour and joyful endeavour to develop the Blue Leadership Journey. Special thanks go to the logbook authors, inspirators, and leadership trainers Alexander Fröde and Britta Heine. They developed and shaped this leadership journey with their rich experience, deep knowledge, fresh thoughts, and sharp analysis. Thanks go also to all the Blue Solutions Team for the trust, their energy and enthusiasm, and all the great ideas. Our big thanks go to the participants of the two pilot courses of the Blue Leadership Journey, who also sparked our enthusiasm to go even deeper into the details of what it means to be a leader in marine management.

We would like to especially thank Alifereti Tawaka (LMMA Network International Trust), David Obura (CORDIO), Juan Posada (MARVIVA), Minna Epps (IUCN), Tundy Agardi (Sound Seas), and Vera Scholz (GIZ) for their continuous support. The interviews with them at the beginning of developing the journey greatly inspired and helped to develop the concept. Their continuous guidance added precision and nuance to the journey and this material.

Katrin Münch, Theresa Hirn, Michael Hoppe, Barbara Fröde-Thierfelder, and Hinrich Mercker greatly supported this process by commenting on the draft and adding many ideas, and Erica Falkenstein did add fantastic editing.

We would also like to thank all thinkers and explorers of the world of leadership, organisational, and personal development who inspired us and whose work we were able to build upon.

*The Blue Solutions Team*