

WhitePaper: Appreciation

Learning from Icebergs: Solving Issues Where They Arise.



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OrgIQ Manifest: Passion for People builds Systems for Success

Welcome to OrgIQ, where we are pioneering the future of organizational development by aligning business practices with the core of human essence. At the heart of our approach lies a profound belief in the power of harmonizing organizational structures with the natural dynamics of human relationships, psychology, and social interactions. We champion an environment where acceptance, relationships, and purpose are valued above traditional metrics of attention, coercion, and management.

Our manifesto is not just a set of ideals but a reflection of our lived experiences and successes. We have witnessed the transformative impact of fostering genuine connections, embracing individuality, and leading with purpose. OrgIQ is committed to sharing these insights, offering strategies that promote a culture of inclusivity, respect, and mutual understanding.

OrgIQ is not a new methodology; it's a small shift in perspective, with a huge impact. It's a movement towards creating workplaces where people feel truly valued and organizations achieve sustainable success by being profoundly human.

Join us on this journey to redefine organizational excellence, where every individual is seen, heard, and appreciated, and where companies thrive by embracing the true potential of their people. Welcome to OrgIQ.

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Valuable Organizations

The Story

I come to you in the organization. You give me a badge and I can talk to anyone here. Regardless of role, position or rank. And every answer counts the same. And my question is very simple: “Do you love working here? When it's Sunday evening, do you look forward to Monday or do you remember that the rent and food have to be paid?”

So here we go. And it happens right at my first meeting. I only just get to the first part of the question “Do you love working here?”

And his face is already beaming. And it just bubbles out: “It's absolutely amazing. Great work and at the same time a place where we can be completely human. I have the greatest colleagues you can imagine. We help each other whenever necessary and we can do something. But I have a network of people that I can always ask, even across departmental boundaries. Because nobody can solve our issues here on their own. We always need a few clever minds. We also inspire and encourage each other. And then you should experience our management. I've been in many organizations, but the ones here manage to get the vision clearly into our heads. They live our values and give us the direction we need. And they help us to live them in every way. You know, in the pressure of everyday life, you can sometimes lose your direction in all the gray, and this clarity of direction that they give us is wonderful. We all need reminders that we are on the road together. I'm in the flow so much every week. Productive like never before and it's simply a joy. And it gets better every year.”

Okay, I admit I hadn't expected that. I'm a consultant and assessor, so first of all I think there was obviously a good memo with the “right answer”. A big compliment for that alone. Great internal communication and someone at least knows the right answer. Respect!

On the other hand, the eyes lit up and it didn't look memorized at all.

But after receiving the 80th such response, often with additional aspects, I know: this is real. A spirit of social professionalism. A genuine togetherness. This is startup-on-steroids with the resources of a corporation. Especially when it comes to changes and transformations. It's always clear how this serves our purpose. It's good for the system. That's how we learn, from top to bottom and from bottom to top. Everyone has their place and serves a common purpose.

I want to apply here immediately.

The Reality

Will this organization ever exist? Certainly not. We all carry far too much personal baggage around with us. We would also need therapy centers.

Is every step in this direction worthwhile? Absolutely. The closer we get to this vision, the less internal friction there will be, but above all the energy and desire to do something will increase. Humanity and trust blossom, and we create so much more from this energy.

Inspiration is much more than just an empty phrase, and there is also the social effect. With companies like this, society will thaw and become warmer again. With colleagues like this, there will be no more loneliness.

It is a vision of the company and society that will put us back in a leading position on the global market. A positive unique selling point that everyone is welcome to emulate.

Is OrgIQ the only way to get there? Certainly not. Whoever has this vision is our ally. Many charismatic people are naturals and do it from the gut. In small and large organizations. Even in politics.

But systematic support is helpful in many areas. Why not take care of these issues – the human core of our organizations and our society – in a professional manner?

Appreciative Organization

Let's Look Under the Hood of the Dream

The world view in which 97% of organizations were built in the past has a hard time dealing with people. We know that people work for us, but we prefer to talk about roles or "gears". The human element is not so tangible. How can I build trust into a process? How can I command openness?

This also includes agility. A lot is already assumed in theory, especially when it comes to mindset, but methodical (systematic) support is still thin on the ground. It is more of an expectation than a complete provision.

Well, we don't want to moan here, but rather look at what we need to make the dream a reality. This includes a more useful image of human beings. Useful here means that it serves the vision. We need more human models. We want to harness the neural-social-psychological potential of the humanity of our organizations.

The image that is more helpful for organizations is – once again – the iceberg. We have the part of people that is directly visible and controllable. And then there is the "thoughts are free" part, which is beyond our control.

The hard skills are visible and controllable, which is why we have labeled them "hard", which here means "real". There is also the equally real part, which is hidden beneath the surface.

In order to fall back on the tried and tested, we divide it into the technical part and the emotional part. The technical part is visible, but is supported by the invisible part. And just as I have needs and skills on the technical level that need to be nurtured and developed, the same applies to the emotional side.

Here is a thought that we will need later: I can reach every color in communication only if I come from the same color. So with technical topics, I can come from the technical layer. From the visible to the visible, so to speak.

Emotionally, I have to make emotional contact. This can also be images and stories, but these are not for the neo-cortex, but for the limbic system.

I either have a relationship with them – genuine trust – or at least enough credibility that the story and images are authentic.

If we look in the literature (or ask ChatGPT etc.), we get a list of soft skills that we also know from human resource processes.

It's about communication, adaptability, problem-solving skills, collaboration skills, leadership, creativity, time management, conflict resolution and things like that.

The list varies by source, of course, and all of these things are valuable. Without question. But they are not really "soft skills". They are all topics that are directly useful. They are therefore directly needed in a technical environment. So they don't go so deep that we get to the human level. Because machines should be able to do that too. And we certainly see that with artificial intelligence.



Figure 1: The old picture: there are also soft skills, but they are only of secondary interest.

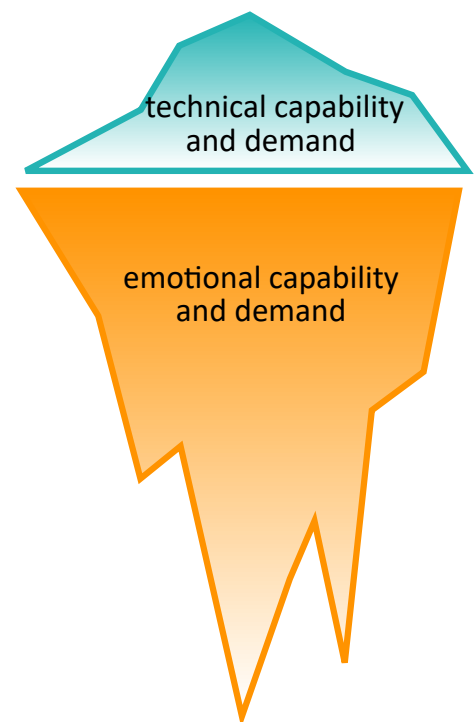


Figure 2: What we need and can do. We travel in two colors (worlds). But the lower one carries the upper one.

So what we are looking at is just the interface between the real soft skills and the hard skills. So we need to go one layer further down to make it really exciting. After all, we are on the way to our vision: how do we need to take care of the people in our organizations so that the vision becomes more real?

The basic idea is simple: we treat the underwater part just as explicitly as the above-water part. Both are part of the person. As humans, we can and should be weird (special), but we can still blossom and be orange. Toxic behavior only comes from fear and insecurity. A world view of pain. We can give that up.

Most people want that too. As soon as they know an alternative.

Everything that makes a workplace comfortable and cozy - nice offices, free coffee, great food, gym, table football, own hotel facilities for work-ation, company car/bicycle/train card 100, etc. are nice things, without question.

But they do not create appreciation, they are just a counterweight - a compensation - for everything that is wrong. Cognitively, we are then satisfied on average.

That's why the "Great Place to Work" ratings are often better than the emotional reality. Here, too, we try to respond to the teal world. Our neo-cortex responds. But our limbi (the limbic system in the brain; the emotional and decision-making center that knows no language) is whining all the time because there is no average for it. Behind the rational mask, I'm unhappy and whining, but on the outside everything is great. As a rational person, I don't understand myself. I have everything, but still feel dissatisfied?

The specialists¹ are also a mirror of the organization: If I only value the shiny surface and underneath it may well be musty without me caring, the professionals will be the same. They have a rotten core under a shiny surface.

And a rotting organization can be recognized by the fact that it does not live its values consistently, but only where it is convenient.

This will also be the case for specialists.

We set the culture and the tone. If it is full of contradictions and embellishment, then everyone has the right to do the same.

We find patterns in companies that we know from the last 100 years of parenting: I expect an emotional regulation from my children that I have never achieved myself. That is training and not parenting. We expect so much from our children and at precisely those moments when we ourselves do the opposite. That doesn't work with children. And even less so in our organizations.

Note: No matter where I have worked or looked in as a consultant: There were always wonderful role models! But the problem is the bad apples. Because if I leave an apple box to its own devices, one rotten apple is enough to spoil all the others. Except for a few very robust ones. An organization that does not look at the lower part of the iceberg and actively shapes it, but lives according to the principle of hope, will turn into a box of rotten apples. Except for a small remnant, which is the Gallic village.

In small organizations, there is more courage and closeness to address such issues. When there are more hierarchical levels and distance, it becomes difficult. Then the crowing issue starts, this "one crow doesn't pick on others". The thought is then "My career is more important to me than his/her values ... so I won't interfere. They are big themselves."

That is the end of accountability. The more I have to lose and there is no relationship, the more indifferent I become. The start of the downward spiral.

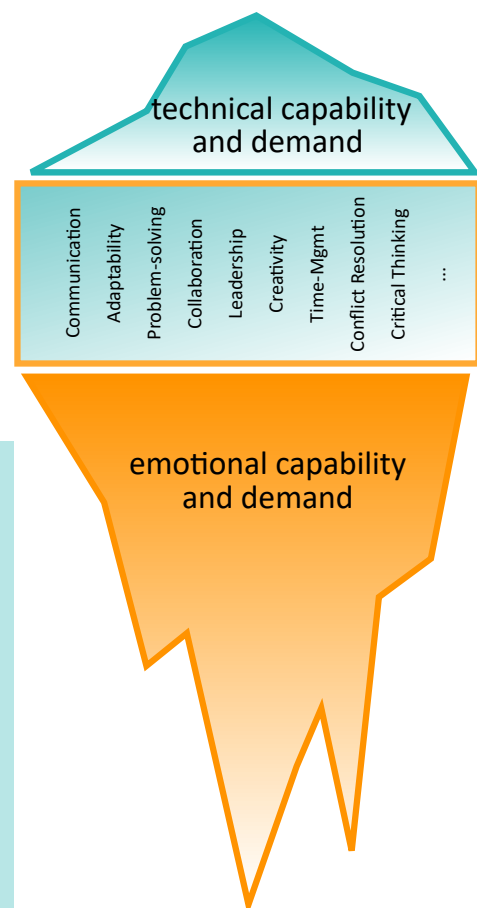


Figure 3: What we often call soft skills are useful carriers of technology. It is more the interface between technology and the emotional world.

¹ We use the term specialists to make a systematic distinction between employees in the structure (management) and employees in productivity (specialists).

So what are "real soft skills"?

The list is certainly longer, but it includes integrity, trust, empathy, authenticity, accountability and more. These things can often be found in the list of cultural values. That's why it's a good idea to have these elements on your radar. Because we want these values, but I first have to develop the ability to live them. This applies to every person in the organization, but also to the organization as a whole. This requires a shared understanding of what these things mean and what it looks like when they are lived.

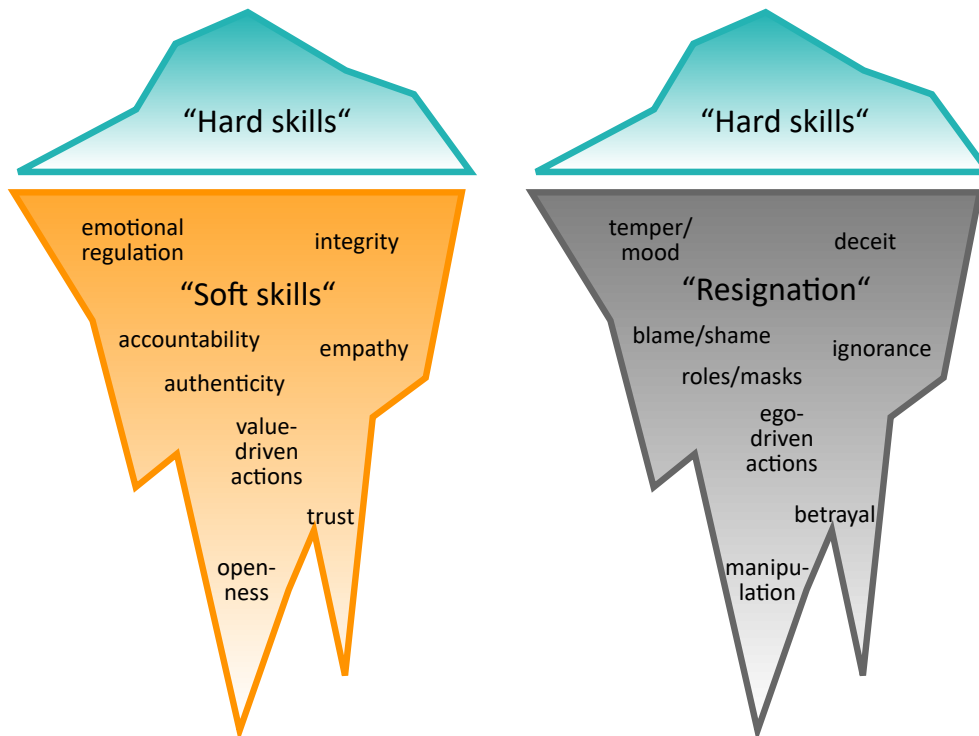


Figure 4: Both are possible. If I am open, then I have the emotional ability and it will also show up. There is a counterpart for everything in the world of pain. And that's the tragic thing: in teal, both can look very much the same. I only realize late on what the driver is. Are we going in the same direction, or is everyone doing their own thing and playing nice? (We also notice from the idioms that this is not a new topic).

And after understanding comes practicing and learning together. We need each other to say "hey, that's not going so well for you yet". And it takes a lot of trust to be able to say – and hear – that.

What this would ideally look like is shown in the illustration at the top left. The problem in practice is that I can have this expectation for every person in my organization, but that doesn't mean it's a reality.

To put it bluntly: there are very few people in orange. Very few and they are becoming fewer. That's why we have the coldness and loneliness in society. This is also one of the reasons why we as organizations have to take care of it. More so than 70 years ago. The challenges shift and change with the generations and social movements. We as organizations suffer from this. But also as an economy. International competition is an important reason to do everything we can to increase our competitiveness.

Without going into detail here, it is important to understand that all these "skills" can be available in two variants. In orange or gray. Which means either from a perspective of ability, creation and hope (orange) or from a perspective of hopelessness, fear and resignation (gray).

To bring our vision to life, we need a clear understanding of how I can see which person is where. Who is orange and who is gray?

I also need language and even metrics for these topics. And as with values, it's worth focusing on a manageable number. We can't change everything immediately. In reality, it is a color gradient. But one world view will prevail.

And if we know the world view, then it does not serve to condemn these people, but to support them in developing their skills.

How can I show Appreciation?

New Instruments

Let's go back to our vision. If a person came into this organization who was completely grey on the inside, it wouldn't be long before we would see radical change.

Why are people gray? Because they want to be? Because they are stupid? Because they are evil?

Mostly not. They are disappointed. They have resigned. It was probably the idealists, with the greatest hope and perspective, who were disappointed time and time again. They wanted to believe, but there was no credibility.

And therein lies the solution. If I want to live appreciation, then I have to be credible. I have to actually see the other person as valuable.

To do this, I have to see the person. Or better still, see, hear, understand and touch them. And since relationships are always reciprocal, I also have to let myself be seen, heard, understood and touched.

That is the basis for every contact. I leave the roles behind me. I also no longer slip into a role in crisis situations. Especially when it comes to accountability, I have to meet the other person as an authentic human being. It can only be a mutual reminder.

So if I want to reach the orange, then I have to come out of the orange.

This applies to all the examples shown in the illustration. Emotional regulation is certainly one of the most important, but it is also not easy. Because it's about learning to recognize feelings. Because suppressing or superimposing feelings is not regulation.

And only when I can deal with my feelings well and sensibly can I act as a complete person. And that is the prerequisite for me to be able to work on my emotional competence.

Back to appreciation: appreciation is a basic attitude and is aimed at people. A role can never be appreciated because it is - by definition - interchangeable.

Appreciation is the desire for meaning. I as a person make a difference. That is why appreciation can only be personal. That's why it's about the day-to-day experience. I am appreciated when I am gratefully (!) seen every day. By people who I can also see. Who show themselves and don't just revolve around themselves. Because if someone has no meaning and looks for it on the outside, then that person can't give meaning either.

The image of the goose with the golden eggs fits well here: the focus must seriously be on the well-being of the goose. So credible that I would take care of the goose even if it didn't lay any golden eggs for a day.

And only relationships can achieve this. As soon as the focus is on a person's benefit, appreciation no longer works.

This also applies to all instruments that are broad in scope. All watering can instruments are beautiful, but do not reach us at the point where we seek appreciation.

The best place to receive and give appreciation is through personal networks. And we need to promote and empower these networks.

Existing instruments

With this understanding, we look at previous practice. So we know that everything that comes from teal will remain in teal and will not reach orange.

What comes out of the gray makes gray. And what goes into gray - so the receiver also plays a role - will remain gray. If orange sends to gray with patience, it will change something. We've already seen that above. But it does take patience.

As a reminder: gray is gray because it was immediately disappointed. Gray is not angry, but resigned. Gray has lost hope (orange). Gray is cynical, sarcastic and distant because it doesn't want to be hurt again. That's basically it. If gray experiences trust, this can lead to new hope. In combination with power, however, it can also lead to great betrayal.

That's why power is generally a bad idea for our vision, because it strengthens the gray world. And bad examples radiate far and wide. In the invisible part of the iceberg, other laws apply. Above all, there is no average. Only the worst-case scenario counts.

And that brings us to a practical problem: even the greatest tools are really "toxic" if they are used for the wrong reason. The problem with being human is that it's not about what you do, but why you do it.

The instruments themselves are neither good nor bad. I just have to use them with the right attitude. And they have to address the right level. Otherwise I will do more harm than good. And I have to look and learn who is made for it. And which other structures collide with it and lead it ad absurdum.

Let's go through a common catalog of tools that we find in a large number of organizations. We have used literature, internal processes and job advertisements as sources.

The direction of the measures is top-down. This is how they are set up in order to systematize them. However, this direction also entails limitations and challenges.

In the assessment, we therefore look at the different levels (teal and orange/grey), as well as the world views (orange/grey). I have not yet seen either dimension in internal human resources processes. We don't work on this level because we are unsure about it. And that's why so many well-intentioned approaches backfire. It is also the reason that Human Resources tends to be ridiculed. Specialists mistrust them and managers are also alienated. It is usually a world of its own, which is what marketing does in the war for talent, but has little meaning in the reality of everyday life. The fact that the term Human Resources is still predominantly used creates mistrust among specialists because it means that only the teal part of my iceberg is seen and served. Changing the name to Employee Relation or People & Culture can be a first step. But the renaming must be followed by a radical change. If this does not happen, the trust of specialists will be lost.

This consideration alone shows that it is a very sensitive topic. It feels like a minefield. I can't replace social structures. Wanting to replace relationships with structural mechanisms is a form of compensation. Prostitution, to be precise. And that's funny for us inside, even if we're used to it from an early age.

Now to the instruments and what they achieve.

Financial incentives

These include salary increases, bonuses, profit-sharing and other financial benefits that directly recognize the material value of work.

Rating: These incentives are good and important. But they work at the level of results. They are teal and only affect the teal in the recipient. It is important that I only reward things that are also compatible with values. This is not always easy. Important tools for managing and strengthening values and purpose.

If we see it as a measure of appreciation, we have a material mindset. We are appealing to the convenience of skilled workers. I don't give appreciation directly, but I increase the opportunity costs for the professionals to leave the organization.

Recognition programs

Many companies have established formal recognition programs that honor professionals for outstanding performance, innovation or years of service. These can include certificates, awards or public recognition at meetings or company events. They also include rewards for length of service.

Rating: The generation certainly still plays a role here. For baby boomers, this can actually be appreciation. For the following generations, it tends to be the opposite. If the recognition comes through a personal channel with a high level of trust, then it has value. For everyone. However, if it takes on a form letter character, which is almost inevitably the case once a company reaches a certain size, then it is sent with good intentions but arrives "gray". Even worse if it comes via a direct channel where the relationship is strained.

We must understand that no manager can have the same open and credible relationship with everyone in the team. And only where this relationship exists can appreciation be conveyed. At least in the post-human resources era. And that ended with the baby boomers.

Flexible working hours and home office options

Flexibility at work shows professionals that their time and well-being are valued. It allows them to achieve a better work-life balance.

Rating: An important tool for everyone from Generation X onward. This is perceived freedom and life design. This can express trust if it is also lived through personal relationships with management. Otherwise it is an escape from micro-management. It is often less gray at first. Making things less bad is an important step towards recovery.

As a counter-effect, this can lead to a weakening of personal networks. Above all, it is much more difficult to build up these personal networks.

Training and development opportunities

Investing in the professional development of specialists through training courses, workshops, conferences or further training shows that the company is interested in their career and growth.

Rating: This is predominantly teal. Most training courses focus on hard skills. If soft skills are addressed, then the immediately useful ones. Something is rarely done for the deeper layers.

However, if these are addressed and developed, then this has a strong orange effect. Emotional skills can grow, and topics such as emotional regulation are game changers. But only if they change at all levels of the organization. As long as we have traditional hierarchies, we cannot overestimate the role model function. We will find in the professionals what is lived in the hierarchy, not what is said.

Feedback and communication

Regular, constructive feedback as well as open and honest communication channels signal appreciation for the opinions and contributions of the specialists.

Rating: This can (could) be a powerful tool if it is honest. This tool is an amplifier. If both are orange, it will be good. If one side is gray, it does the opposite of what was desired.

To do this, however, we need to understand that openness is probably one of the most difficult values of all. Openness is a relationship builder, but much more than honesty and transparency. And openness is bidirectional. I can only demand openness if I live it. And openness is the end of politics, hidden agendas, ego and talking about others. Openness brings accountability, based on relationship.

However, as these are very high standards and we all struggle to meet them, these discussions quickly become a farce. A political discussion behind masks and walls. Yes, it's always been like that, but in the search for genuine appreciation, it's a big risk. If I have an orange-orange relationship, then it's great. Otherwise it gets very gray.

Health and wellness programs

Offers such as company fitness, health checks, psychological counseling or even relaxation rooms in the office demonstrate care for the physical and mental well-being of the workforce.

Rating: First and foremost, it is an increase in the opportunity cost of switching. I don't want to miss out on all these amenities. So I'm staying for the wrong reason.

Taking care of physical health is super valuable. If we also support mental and emotional health, then it is an orange part. However, this exists outside of the work situation. So it's not directly relevant to work. The worst-case scenario is that I do my meditation with the in-house psychologist and then go back to a toxic team.

Additional company benefits

Additional benefits such as company pension schemes, accident insurance or subsidies for childcare costs increase the financial and emotional security of skilled workers.

Rating: The issue of security is definitely relevant, but at the same time it increases the opportunity costs of switching. However, it is not appreciation, but rather "venality".

Team building and corporate events

Events such as company parties, team outings or joint leisure activities promote cohesion and the feeling of being part of a community.

Rating: All these instruments are an amplifier of the basic situation. If I am orange, these instruments can strengthen my world view and promote appreciation and connectedness. If I am gray, this is reinforced.

Working environment and equipment

A modern, ergonomic and pleasant working environment and the provision of high-quality work equipment show that the company invests in the well-being and productivity of its specialists.

Rating: This is something that makes the work more beautiful. But it's teal in nature and will work there too. It's still good, but not an appreciation.

Personal Recognition

Simple gestures of recognition, such as a personal thank you from superiors, individual notes or celebrating personal milestones, can have a huge impact on employee motivation

Rating: Here, too, it depends on the relationship. It's another one of those amplifiers: if both are orange, we achieve the desired effect, if one side is gray, we achieve the opposite. It only works if it is absolutely genuine and credible. In an open and honest relationship it's great, otherwise it's an aggravation. That's why it's so important to know what the "inner color" is. From the professionals and the management. Without that, we can't predict the effect. And leaving it to chance is very expensive.

Summary

In fact, it is not easy to dissolve. Nevertheless, we should completely remove appreciation from the hierarchy and place it entirely in the personal network. There are already a number of tools for this from Management 3.0 and other sources. It is important to have a common understanding within the organization as to why I need to do things differently. Then I start to see more consciously the difference between what I want to achieve and what I actually achieve.

We also need to look at the orange/gray parts: If we ignore 95% of our humanity, then we all feel unseen, unheard and un-understood.

Every single fear, story and insecurity has its reason. If we don't take the time to analyze these reasons and see the real opportunity for development and improvement, then everything will change. But that also applies to everyone. Do we have the courage to do so?

If we don't do it, every new sow will be driven through the organization with power and credibility will dwindle more and more.

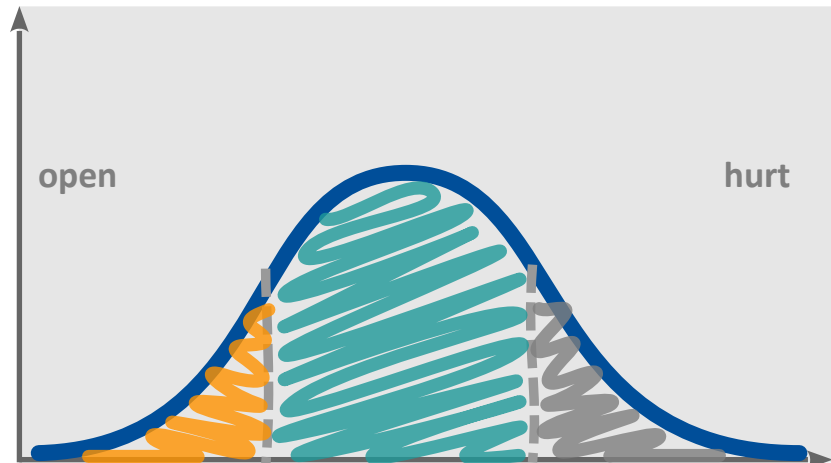


Figure 5: It is important to understand who is where. Only then can we use the classic top-down instruments. Or rather, we know when we are not allowed to use them. Which is again problematic if not everyone is treated equally. A dilemma.

In modern organizations, it is not necessary to put ourselves under this kind of stress. The first thing is that, as part of the hierarchy, we stop breaking things out of insecurity. Perhaps some of these emotional issues are simply not our thing. Then we hand it over to people who like it and can do it. If we have bridge builders in our teams, they'll do it anyway. And now quite officially and with our support. These incredibly inflated expectations of management must stop. They are people too and should be treated and deployed as such.

We have many truths side by side. That is the nature of complexity. There is no one right or wrong. It's not that easy in complex systems. There are countless ways to live our purpose. We just have to help ourselves not to make life difficult for each other. In the past, a lack of purpose (the why and what for) was compensated for by more how and what. This is also the background to micromanagement. This works on the visible level, but in the invisible iceberg part it increases the inconsistency and emptiness.

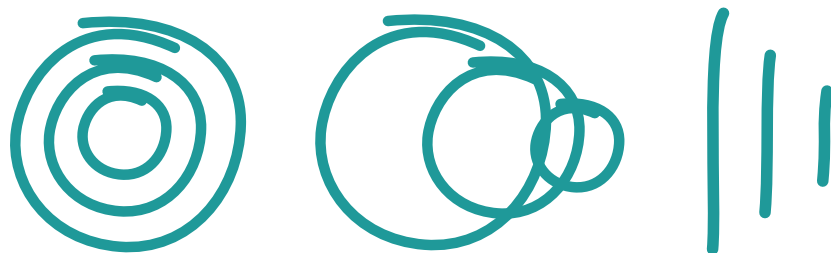


Figure 6: Every system has different truths. Perspective and world view determine what we see.

The Law of Peter Pater: "As the number of people increases, the number of opinions increases exponentially. As the opinions grow, so does the loss of friction until it comes to a complete standstill."

With the division of labor, we lose sight of our common purpose. And without that, it becomes more politics. That is why it is so often easier for smaller organizations to have a clear purpose. That is why the central task of leadership and management is to provide this central purpose and all derived purposes and stories.