

Cheat-Sheet: Deep Soft Skills

Limbi, Deep Soft Skills and External Emotional Regulation



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Status: released
Version: 1.1.0 (build 141)
Date: 2025-09-16
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OrgIQ Manifest: Passion for People builds Systems for Success

OrgIQ is a framework that changes how we see organizations. The core idea is to truly think from the perspective of the individual. Every person has their own reality, based on their *Network* of relationships. Each perception and perspective is unique. There is no right or wrong.

Any organization is simply the superposition of all these *Networks*. This is complexity. We can never fully model or understand it. But we can give direction and purpose to each individual element. Intelligent organizations embrace this complexity rather than simplify or ignore it.

When we focus on human complexity, the *Solution* space for common problems dramatically increases. We believe this harmonizes business practices and structures with the natural dynamics of human relationships, psychology, and social interactions.

Our manifesto reflects our lived experiences and successes. We've seen the transformative power of fostering genuine connections, embracing individuality, and leading with purpose. OrgIQ helps create smarter environments where empathy, understanding, and mutual respect thrive, allowing every individual to feel truly seen, heard, and appreciated. This creates a space of emotional safety, which is essential for individuals and groups to reach their full potential.

We believe in value over control. From OrgIQ's perspective, we understand that control limits the capability of the system by breaking the human perspective, creating overhead, and fostering mistrust. Relationships and trust unleash extraordinary *Productivity* and satisfaction. The achievement of the *Purpose* is measured by the *Results*.

Join us on this journey to redefine organizational excellence. Let's build intelligent systems, embrace complexity, and simplify happiness. Welcome to OrgIQ, where the true potential of your people thrives your organization.

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Limbi and Its 7 Subsystems

Since we talk a lot about the Limbi, it makes sense to go a little deeper. In 1998, Jaak Panksepp took a closer look at the limbi and called it *affective neuroscience*. He defined 7 independent systems, which we will look at in a moment.

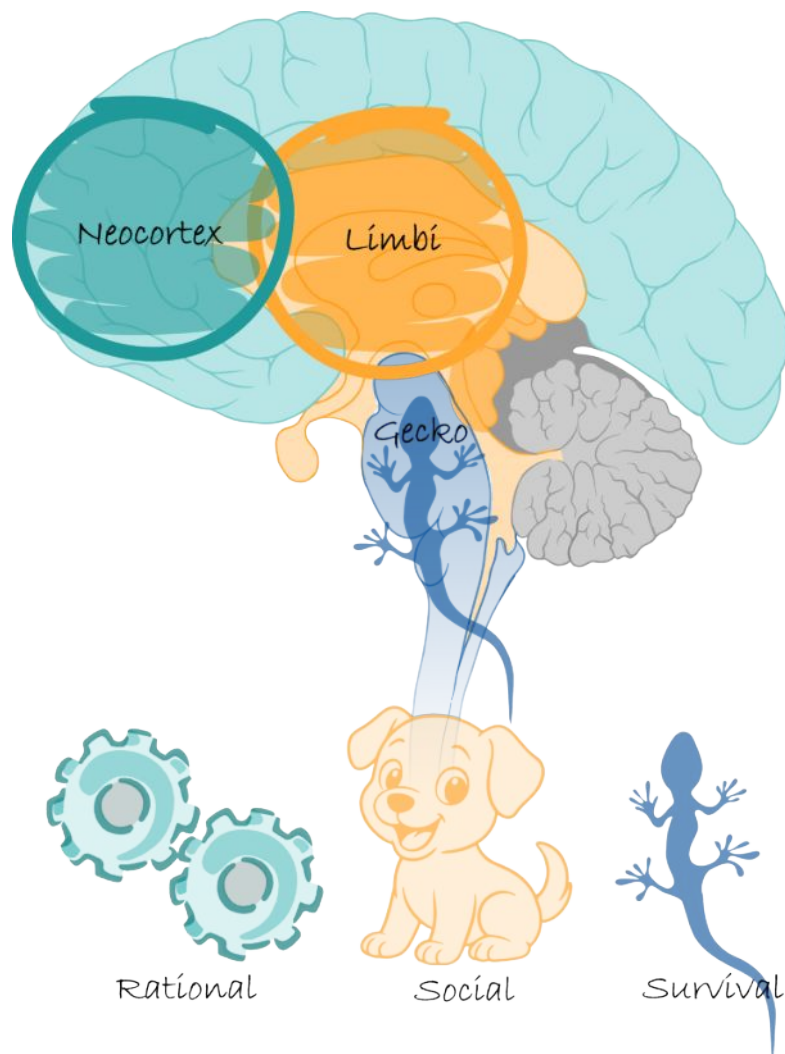


Figure 1: Gecko: Survival; Limbi: Social & Connectedness; Neocortex: Reason & Logic

This is about areas in the Limbi and their function. And that's why I'm mentioning it briefly here. We use Gecko, Limbi, Neocortex as if they were atomic systems. This is of course wrong and only serves the purpose of making it easy for us to remember and use.

So here is another visualization so that we can remember the system, color and function

- ▶ Gecko: Survival functions and thus the "fear system"
 - ▷ the Gecko, because it is simple, sleek and maneuverable
- ▶ Limbi: Emotions, social behavior and connectedness
 - ▷ a puppy, because the Limbi is playful, simple, childlike and vulnerable
- ▶ Neocortex: Our reasoning and logic
 - ▷ the gears, because this is the part that we like to see as a "machine"; this part of us can be directly controlled and monitored, even from the outside
 - ▷ the part of us that plans and is consciously used by us; nevertheless: all data that the neocortex receives is pre-treated and filtered

Because we realize that this “humanity” topic is only in addition to everything else. That’s why it has to remain simple and clear. We want to be able to understand and apply the principles, the rest is reserved for full-time psychologists.

Let’s take a look at the systems, what their actual goal (function) is, how they can be activated and blocked and how to recognize the blockage.

The 7 Basic Systems with Function

System	Function (positive)	Activated by...	Blocked by...	Recognizable by... (diagnostic information)
SEEKING	Motivation, curiosity, flow	Autonomy, meaning, rediscovery	Control, boredom, pressure	Boredom, cynicism, loss of energy, no suggestions/ideas
RAGE	Enforcement, clarity	Justice, protection, self-defense	Powerlessness, injustice	Hostility, microaggressions, sudden outbursts of anger
FEAR	Protection, caution	Threat, uncertainty	Permanent uncertainty	Withdrawal, control, overcaution, "no" reflex, avoidance
LUST	Joie de vivre, intimacy	Closeness, self-determination, pleasure	Shaming, assault, taboos	Body devaluation, fear of contact, shame, over-control
CARE	Caring, empathy	Security, trust, connection	Distrust, excessive demands	Cynicism, indifference, withdrawal from relationships
PANIC / GRIEF	Bonding, belonging	Loss, isolation, rejection	Separation, exclusion	Overemotional reactions, exhaustion, neediness, mistrust
PLAY	Creativity, learning, flow	Safety, lightness, freedom	Seriousness, control, fear	Sarcasm, withdrawal, no experiments, "That's not possible here" sentences

If we look at the blockages, we see familiar patterns from the gecko. This is where the Limbi and Gecko work hand in hand. When the Limbi goes on the defensive, it is in fear and the Gecko is activated.

We can therefore distinguish between two triggers in the Gecko: Direct (simple) dangers that are recognized directly. And then dangers that come from the Limbi or Neocortex and tell the Gecko “we don’t know what to do, please take care—keep us alive”. This is the autopilot or survival mode.

The 7 Basic Systems and Their Neurotransmitters

Now let’s take a look at the basic systems and the neurotransmitters. So which systems run on which neurotransmitters.

When you use the table, make sure that the activation and blocking refer to the neurotransmitters and not to the systems. Otherwise it can be a bit confusing.

System	Neurotransmitter / Neuromodulator	Aktivierung (Förderung)	Deaktivierung (Hemmung)
SEEKING	Dopamin	Curiosity, autonomy, goals, learning, flow	Boredom, control, lack of sense
RAGE	Noradrenaline, Substance P, Testosterone	Injustice, frustration, obstacles	Clarity, empathy, conflict resolution
FEAR	Cortisol, Noradrenalin, GABA↓	Insecurity, threat, isolation	Security, reliability, trust
LUST	Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin	Closeness, tenderness, sensuality, voluntariness	Shame, coercion, assault, tabooing
CARE	Oxytocin, Prolactin	Attachment, compassion, care	Distrust, stress, pressure to perform
PANIC/GRIEF	Endorphins, Oxytocin (↓drop), CRH	Loss, rejection, loneliness	Belonging, empathy, comfort
PLAY	Dopamine, Endorphins, GABA	Safety, lightness, discovery	Seriousness, compulsion, evaluation, fear

Healthy Activation and Balance

When it comes to OrgIQ, we want the Limbi to be in the “green” (orange) range. Our inner “puppy” should be playful, happy, active and on the move. Then we are intelligent and also activate the other systems.

That’s why we need organizational structures and methods that naturally include precisely these activations. And avoid any blockages. However, it is usually the case that if we pay attention to activation during system design—or system renovation—we can already recognize the blockages and then adjust them.

System	Activation strategies
SEEKING	New challenges, self-chosen tasks, visions, spirit of research
RAGE	Setting fair boundaries, allowing emotional clarity, healthy assertiveness learning
FEAR	Mindfulness, clear structures, stable relationships, safe spaces
LUST	Self-determined closeness, trust in the body, sensual rituals
CARE	Mindful giving, helping, touchability, social cohesion
PANIC	Rituals of belonging, emotional honesty, offers of comfort
PLAY	Humor, informal experiments, playful processes, freedom of values

Many resilience programs and therapeutic methods implicitly work with precisely these states.

Incoherent States

When is our “puppy” out of balance? When he is stressed or tied down. In other words, overactivation or blockage. We want to recognize and avoid both.



Figure 2: Healthy area with deviations on both sides (blockage on the left and overactivation on the right, very similar to what we already know from the basic needs)

It is also worth taking a look at society and seeing which overactivations or blockages are known and often even normalized. Some are even considered desirable.

System	Overactivated (stress indicators)	Blocked (deficiency indicators)
SEEKING	Hyperactivism, <i>hustle culture</i> , burnout, <i>overconsumption</i>	Apathy, depression, <i>lack of drive</i> , mass exodus to social media
RAGE	<i>Polarization</i> , <i>shitstorms</i> , <i>protests</i> , <i>conspiracy ideologies</i>	<i>Suppressed anger</i> , <i>withdrawal</i> , <i>passivity</i> , <i>psychosomatic complaints</i>
FEAR	<i>Surveillance</i> , security discourse, <i>insurance mania</i>	<i>Repression of risks</i> , naivety, loss of control
LUST	<i>Hypersexualization</i> , <i>porn consumption</i> , dating overload	<i>Body alienation</i> , <i>shame</i> , <i>relationship problems</i>
CARE	Helper syndrome, burnout in the care & social sector	<i>Coldness</i> , isolation, “ <i>every one for themselves</i> ” mentality, decreasing willingness to donate
PANIC	Suicide rates, <i>psychosomatic illnesses</i> , <i>loneliness</i>	<i>Emotional coldness</i> , <i>disconnectedness</i> , <i>alienation</i>
PLAY	<i>Infantilism</i> , <i>escapism</i> , <i>party compulsion</i>	Lack of innovation, <i>humorlessness</i> , <i>fear of mistakes</i>

Analysis

This is our final view: How can we—with our current knowledge—design a simple tool? So how can we—integrated into a balance analysis—see our Limbi more clearly?

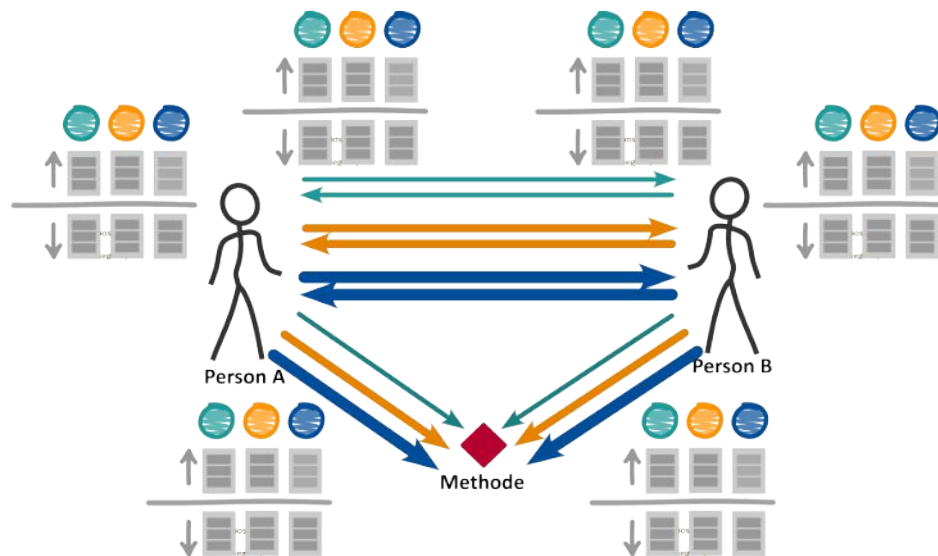


Figure 3: Extension of the balance theory so that we can evaluate the inner states on the levels (Gecko, Limbi, Neocortex), the relationships and the influence of the method/elements. Gecko > Limbi >> Neocortex also applies there.

To do this, we look at the 7 systems in context and consider which ones are particularly strong or affected. To keep the number of dimensions manageable, we will stick to “destructive” and “constructive”. We have just seen that we tend to have a healthy (balanced) range between two deviations, but this is not relevant for the analysis.

We now have the basic understanding that we need to look at different aspects. And when analyzing inner states, relationships or the effects of actions and methods, it is enough that we can now look at the Limbi in more detail.

If necessary, we can go into an analysis of the 7 dimensions or systems. And then assign a value from -10 to +10.

System	Destructive (-10 to -1)	Constructive (+1 to +10)
SEEKING	Addiction, restlessness, greed, ideology, avoidance	Neugier, Sinnsuche, Flow, Interesse
RAGE	Anger, violence, control, hatred, destruction	Courage, clear boundaries, moral indignation
FEAR	Panic, withdrawal, paralysis, avoidance behavior	Vigilance, risk assessment, protection
LUST	Objectification, manipulation, power over others	Closeness, devotion, authentic sexuality
CARE	Dependence, co-dependence, self-sacrifice	Empathy, care, compassion
PANIC/GRIEF	Depression, isolation, victimization	Grief work, bonding, social resonance
PLAY	Cynicism, avoidance of seriousness, distraction	Creativity, co-creation, social ease

DSS (Deep Soft Skills)

When we look at the “inside” of people, we also want to understand the skills. Not just the somewhat softened “soft skills” that we know from management literature, which are listed primarily according to their immediate usefulness. But real soft skills, *Deep Soft Skills* that run in the Limbi and that the Neocortex should not replicate. Otherwise everything just gets worse.

List of Traditional Soft Skills

The list is of course neither complete nor unique. It was created by searching the usual places (articles, job advertisements, training courses, websites, ...) to find out what was repeatedly mentioned as soft skills.

- ▶ Communication
 - ▷ Limbi & Neocortex
 - ▷ Neocortex and Limbi should work hand in hand, but this is often only done/trained in the neocortex, which is problematic
 - ▷ The afterbirth then creates mistrust, although it is meant nicely
- ▶ Adaptability
 - ▷ Limbi & Neocortex; more Limbi
 - ▷ Ability to learn and let go of what we love; Limbi because when we focus on relationships, things (and successes) can go more easily
 - ▷ Status and clinging to old successes are the main obstacles
 - ▷ Part of Intelligence, result of *Safety*
- ▶ Problem-Solving
 - ▷ Stronger Neocortex
 - ▷ Rather an aspect of reason and logic
- ▶ Collaboration
 - ▷ Limbi
 - ▷ Result of many other skills (see OrgIQ assessment model)
 - ▷ But is often sold in the neocortex or even via tools; assumption: if you are sitting at a table and are in a project, then it will come automatically (no, it doesn't; it's more of an elevator effect—the closer you are forced, the bigger the inner distance)
- ▶ Leadership
 - ▷ Limbi
 - ▷ True leadership = inner coherence + direction
 - ▷ Management is located entirely in the neocortex; and the two are still often confused; this is about direction (having and giving); see also [Overview of External Emotional Regulation](#)
- ▶ Creativity
 - ▷ More Limbi; can also be modeled (emulated) in the Neocortex
 - ▷ Important: Measure the quality of creativity/innovation (then I can see where we are working)
- ▶ Time-Mgmt
 - ▷ Neocortex
- ▶ Conflict Resolution
 - ▷ Neocortex (Limbi)
 - ▷ Most strategies/trainings are based on the ratio

- ▷ Of course, we automatically try to solve it via Limbi (connection, forgiveness, acceptance)
- ▷ Also rather a theme that comes from an injured/suppressed Limbi and is the result of the emulation of Limbi things in the Neocortex
- ▶ Critical Thinking
 - ▷ Limbi with Neocortex
 - ▷ Result of psychological safety (if Gecko and Limbi block, nothing happens)

What's new?

After a thorough review of the literature in the fields of psychology, neurology, sociology and management, some important skills and concepts emerge that are essential for a comprehensive understanding of personal and organizational development. These skills complement the existing categories and provide a deeper level of insight.

Let's try a fairly complete overview of which skills we are talking about and which should be developed. We will also take a look at the respective opposite.

Emotional and Interpersonal Qualities

- ▶ **Resilience:** The ability to recover quickly from difficulties.
 - ▷ Inversion: Vulnerability to stress and prolonged setbacks.
- ▶ **Forgiveness:** The action of forgiving or being forgiven.
 - ▷ Inversion: Holding grudges and fostering resentment
- ▶ **Generosity:** The quality of being kind and generous. Generosity of actions and assumptions about people.
 - ▷ Inversion: Selfishness and lack of support for others
- ▶ **Respect:** To truly see someone. As a whole person. Can include a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.
 - ▷ Inversion: Disrespect and devaluation of others
- ▶ **Non-judgment:** Avoiding judgments of others. Sounds easy, but is one of the most challenging mindset changes. We need to learn to see and characterize. Stop judging and comparing. It's the first step to create the 4 levels of emotional/psychological safety
 - ▷ Inversion: Criticism and unfair judgment
- ▶ **Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
 - ▷ Inversion: Insensitivity and lack of understanding
- ▶ **Support:** Providing assistance or backing to others.
 - ▷ Inversion: Isolation and lack of assistance
- ▶ **Compassion:** Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.
 - ▷ Inversion: Indifference and lack of concern
- ▶ **Gratitude:** The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.
 - ▷ Inversion: Entitlement and lack of appreciation
- ▶ **Kindness:** The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.
 - ▷ Inversion: Hostility and inconsideration
- ▶ **Emotional Regulation:** The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a healthy and constructive manner.
 - ▷ Inversion: Emotional instability and impulsiveness
- ▶ **Self-Awareness:** The conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires.
 - ▷ Inversion: Lack of self-awareness and unrecognized personal flaws

- ▶ **Mindfulness:** The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something, particularly the present moment.
 - ▷ Inversion: Distractedness and lack of presence

Ethical and Moral Values

- ▶ **Honesty:** The quality of being honest.
 - ▷ Inversion: Dishonesty and deceit
- ▶ **Transparency:** The quality of being transparent; openness and accountability.
 - ▷ Inversion: Opacity and lack of accountability
- ▶ **Reliability:** The quality of being trustworthy or performing consistently well.
 - ▷ Inversion: Unreliability and inconsistency
- ▶ **Boundaries:** Limits that a person sets on what they will accept from others.
 - ▷ Inversion: Overstepping and lack of respect for limits
- ▶ **Confidentiality:** The state of keeping or being kept secret or private.
 - ▷ Inversion: Breach of trust and exposure of private information
- ▶ **Accountability:** The fact or condition of being accountable; responsibility.
 - ▷ Inversion: Blame-shifting and evasion of responsibility
- ▶ **Integrity:** The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.
 - ▷ Inversion: Corruption and moral compromise
- ▶ **Fairness:** Impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination.
 - ▷ Inversion: Bias and discrimination
- ▶ **Ethical Decision-Making:** The process of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles.
 - ▷ Inversion: Unethical choices and moral ambiguity

Functional and Operational Aspects

- ▶ **Repair:** The action of fixing or mending something.
 - ▷ Inversion: Neglect and persistent dysfunction
- ▶ **Efficiency:** Achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense. (This is now critical: if it happens playfully, then it comes from the Limbi; otherwise it is Neocortex and does not belong here).
 - ▷ Inversion: Inefficiency and wastefulness
- ▶ **Effectiveness:** The degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result.
 - ▷ Inversion: Ineffectiveness and failure to achieve goals
- ▶ **Adaptability:** The quality of being able to adjust to new conditions.
 - ▷ Inversion: Rigidity and resistance to change
- ▶ **Collaboration:** The action of working with someone to produce or create something.
 - ▷ Inversion: Isolation and lack of teamwork
- ▶ **Innovation:** The process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value.
 - ▷ Inversion: Stagnation and lack of creativity
- ▶ **Time Management:** The ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work. (This is more in the Neocortex, so not so deep.)
 - ▷ Inversion: Poor time management and procrastination (However, this part comes more from the depths, which is why it belongs here.)

Relational Dynamics

- ▶ **Trust:** Firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.
 - ▷ Inversion: Distrust and suspicion
- ▶ **Inclusivity:** The practice or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.
 - ▷ Inversion: Exclusivity and marginalization
- ▶ **Communication:** The imparting or exchanging of information or news.
 - ▷ Inversion: Miscommunication and lack of information flow
- ▶ **Cooperation:** The process of working together to the same end.
 - ▷ Inversion: Conflict and lack of cooperation
- ▶ **Conflict Resolution:** A way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them.
 - ▷ Inversion: Unresolved conflicts and ongoing disputes
- ▶ **Cohesion:** The action or fact of forming a united whole.
 - ▷ Inversion: Fragmentation and disunity
- ▶ **Negotiation:** The process by which two or more parties reach a mutually agreeable solution.
 - ▷ Inversion: Stalemates and unresolved negotiations

Psychological Safety

- ▶ **Openness:** Willingness to consider new ideas and suggestions.
 - ▷ Inversion: Closed-mindedness and resistance to new ideas
- ▶ **Belonging:** The feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity.
 - ▷ Inversion: Alienation and exclusion
- ▶ **Autonomy:** The right or condition of self-government; in a workplace, it means the ability to make one's own decisions.
 - ▷ Inversion: Micromanagement and lack of independence
- ▶ **Engagement:** The emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.
 - ▷ Inversion: Disengagement and lack of motivation
- ▶ **Well-being:** The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.
 - ▷ Inversion: Poor health and dissatisfaction
- ▶ **Motivation:** The reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way.
 - ▷ Inversion: Lack of motivation and apathy
- ▶ **Growth Mindset:** The belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work.
 - ▷ Inversion: Fixed mindset and fear of failure
- ▶ **Psychological Flexibility:** The ability to adapt to changing situational demands, to shift mental states, and to balance competing desires, needs, and life domains.
 - ▷ Inversion: Psychological rigidity and inability to adapt

By considering these inversions, we can better understand the critical importance of each skill and the potential negative effects if they are lacking. This comprehensive framework highlights the multifaceted nature of personal and organizational development, ensuring a balanced and holistic approach.

Model for Emotional Regulation

We use emotional maturity and the world view for this. The basic idea is inspired by Virginia Satir.

This model describes the development of emotional regulation in different stages. The further a person is in their development, the less they “have to” regulate emotions because their world view processes stimuli early on in such a way that there are no destructive emotions.

Also as a **parenting guide**: By the age of 7, children should have reached stage 5-6. This is the main educational goal. By 10-12 then stage 7.

Whether in a team, school or family, it is a good exercise to explain the stages and then print a simple checklist. In a class, students can then go and rate any 5 people (including the teacher).

This is about the moments that matter. This is an important exercise to raise awareness: How do people behave in a storm? Because everyone is nice in the sunshine.

Then you start at stage 7 and ask: "Do you have someone at stage 7?". You can then repeat this down to stage 4. It's all about sharing perception. If no one is mentioned until stage 4 (which is completely normal), this is also important information for everyone.

For yourself: It's not about the action. Nor is it about perfection. It's just about learning what our inner natural state is. In other words, how do I behave without making any great effort on the outside. With a relaxed and unemployed neocortex.

Parents must also be ready for this beforehand. So that is the priority 1 criterion for parenthood (and partnership). Because I can see and read a lot about world view and other abilities from this.

7-Stage Model of Emotional Maturity & Regulation

Stage 1 – Reflex Reaction (Instinctive Emotional Outbursts)

- ▶ Characteristics: Emotions are expressed unfiltered.
 - ▷ Reflex reactions (e.g. anger, fear, panic).
 - ▷ Hardly any awareness of the origin of emotions.
 - ▷ Feelings are not helpful. They are like external control.
- ▶ Typical thoughts:
 - ▷ “I just react like that, I can’t help it!”
 - ▷ “Others are to blame for my feelings.”
- ▶ Example: A child doesn’t get what it wants → it screams & cries.
- ▶ World view: The world is hostile.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Gecko starts and Limbi possibly joins in. Completely bypasses Neocortex. Gecko is hypersensitive, poorly adjusted and constantly panics. Limbi ensures that there is always enough drama in life. A kind of emotional allergy. Strictly speaking, I can be "blind" or hypersensitive. Two sides of the same cause. One easy to recognize, the other easy to confuse with stage 2.

Stage 2 – Suppression of Feelings (Machine Mode)

- ▶ Characteristics: No emotional reaction (either really none or none visible)
 - ▷ Little understanding of the importance of feelings (in others)
 - ▷ People can seem cold; like machines
 - ▷ Feelings are not helpful or do not exist consciously. I don’t want to feel.

- ▶ Typical thoughts
 - ▷ “You don’t need feelings”
 - ▷ “Feelings only get in the way; I can solve and explain everything rationally”
- ▶ Example: When a partnership breaks up, I don’t feel anything. Life just goes on and I look for someone new.
- ▶ World view: The world is hostile, but I’m not looking. “I am a machine and have no feelings.” (Which is of course not true, often manifests itself in health, but remains under the conscious radar).
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Complete decoupling of Gecko/Limbi from Neocortex. Control of actions only via Neocortex (except during meltdown, when these people fall back to 1 and are then often dangerous). A lot of important information is missed.

Stage 3 – External Emotional Regulation (Outsourcing to People or Aids)

- ▶ Characteristics: I resort to external means to regulate or create my emotional state.
 - ▷ Sometimes parents, children, friends and partners can do this for me. But I need something to take over the regulation for me.
 - ▷ I often don’t even notice the feelings, but think directly about compensation
 - ▷ Feelings are not helpful, I don’t want to feel.
- ▶ Typical thoughts
 - ▷ “I need a quick smoke”
 - ▷ “Red wine in the evening helps me relax”
- ▶ Example: When I’m stressed, I reach for a cigarette/vaper. For energy, I drink coffee/energy drink. Then alcohol to relax. When I’m overwhelmed, I need someone to do it for me.
- ▶ World view: The world is hostile, I can’t cope with it.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Limbi has developed addictive patterns. Gecko triggers and Limbi takes care of it. In principle, these are compensations that remain below the perception of Neocortex. Trauma loops. Gecko/Limbi often has a false alarm, i.e. overstimulation. (It is usually the case that regulation [addiction] sets up and then triggers other triggers. Withdrawal, for example).

Stage 4 – Conscious Regulation (Cognitive Control)

- ▶ Characteristics: First ability to suppress or redirect emotions.
 - ▷ Conscious use of self-regulation techniques (e.g. breathing techniques).
 - ▷ Often inner resistance (“I’d rather snap, but I’m holding back”).
 - ▷ Feelings are not helpful, but they are no longer such a burden either.
- ▶ Typical thoughts:
 - ▷ “I can’t be angry, otherwise there’ll be trouble/I’m weak.”
 - ▷ “I shouldn’t feel this.”
- ▶ Example: An adult in an argument feels anger, takes a deep breath and responds calmly.
- ▶ World view: The world is hostile, but I can control it.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Gecko starts and Limbi and Neocortex talk to each other. Neocortex leads. Can involve the body to reduce tension or suppress feelings. Gecko is better adjusted, but can still trigger false alarms.

Stage 5 – Cognitive Reassessment (Reframing & Change of Perspective)

- ▶ Characteristics: Emotions are regulated through conscious reinterpretation.
 - ▷ People actively look for a different perspective (“Maybe she didn’t mean it that way…”).
 - ▷ Less automatic judgment of situations or people.
 - ▷ Feelings can help me.
- ▶ Typical thoughts:
 - ▷ “What can I learn from this situation?”
 - ▷ “Everyone acts to the best of their ability.”
- ▶ Example: Someone is criticized → instead of being offended, they think: “Interesting, what can I take away from this?” (This doesn’t have to happen immediately, but we don’t have to react immediately either. We can delay the emotional reaction).
- ▶ World view: The world is dangerous, but I can cope.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Gecko and Limbi are a little more relaxed. A little trained, but the main burden of regulation takes place in Neocortex. The reflux into the Limbi is low. False alarm rate significantly reduced!

Stage 6 – Flow & Natural Integration

- ▶ Characteristics: Emotions are regulated automatically because the world view is already more relaxed.
 - ▷ Instead of suppressing emotions, they flow through the person and dissolve.
 - ▷ Self-image is no longer strongly linked to external events.
 - ▷ Feelings are an important part of my inner world and very useful. (Because they are well adjusted.)
- ▶ Typical thoughts:
 - ▷ “Everything is as it should be.”
 - ▷ “Emotions are signals, not threats.”
- ▶ Example: A person in a stressful situation remains calm and thinks: “What is the best thing I can do here?”
- ▶ World view: The world is friendly.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Limbi and Neocortex are both trained and can work together. All are well adjusted. So neither blind areas nor false alarms.

Stufe 7 – Emotion Creation & Systemic Serenity

- ▶ Characteristics: Emotions are not only regulated—they are deliberately generated.
 - ▷ The person can consciously choose joy, love or peace.
 - ▷ The world view is so stable that external events do not trigger any unwanted emotions.
 - ▷ Feelings are an important part of my inner world. They are useful when they are triggered by external emotions (stimuli), but they can also enrich my life when I invoke them myself.
- ▶ Typical thoughts:
 - ▷ “I decide how I feel.”
 - ▷ “Emotions are like colors—I can choose which ones I paint.”
- ▶ Example: Someone loses their job, but remains calm & uses the opportunity for a new career path.
- ▶ World view: The world is friendly and full of possibilities.
- ▶ Gecko/Limbi/Neocortex: Limbi is well trained. Neocortex and Limbi are in collaboration mode. Of course, Gecko remains active when necessary, but there are almost no false alarms.

Important: I don't want to offer any methods here, because there is already enough material on this, which is also very good. The OrgIQ approach is different because it is aimed at a changed world view. If I have the right world view, i.e. one that is big enough, see above, then I can choose suitable methods, or I don't need any more because I react in an authentically helpful way.

Many methods are a cognitive substitute for real social competence. So they are fake.

Exercise: We see it particularly with children or close relationships, but in general, "I want you to feel how I feel" applies to every interaction.

The unconscious goal (of the Limbi) behind this is that we want to be seen, heard, understood and touched. So if I have the feeling of rejection (the biggest and deepest fear), then I will use your triggers to make you feel rejected.

At a high level of emotional regulation, I will feel and understand that this is about you. That you are making a self-disclosure and then I will respond to that and try to regulate you. Even more, I will help you (if you are older than 7) to learn how to regulate yourself.

At lower levels, I can't regulate myself, so I get into the mode of thinking it's about me and will reject you. Which, from a trauma infinite loop perspective, was also your goal: you wanted confirmation of your world view.

Overview of External Emotional Regulation

Where Does It Come From—and Why Is It Problematic?

Let's start again in childhood. We should have had our basic needs met—and *felt* that they were met. Picture a warm blanket that gives us safety and comfort.

This feeling should come from **experienced connection**, a sense of **self-worth**, **self-determination** (being able to shape our world), and **safety** (through belonging). When those needs are in balance, we feel grounded.

But if we *don't* get that early on, we try to create the feeling ourselves. We *need* it—and if we can't trust others to provide it, then we'll just have to do it on our own. To do that, we start using people and tools as substitutes. Once we've entered that worldview—"I have to take care of myself and create these feelings on my own"—it's hard to go back.

We'd have to **trust a system** that already let us down the first time. And this "I'll do it myself" approach, using people and tools, gives us a sense of **power and control**. So we end up strong on the **shaping side**, but with less and less real connection.

In return, we become independent (since we don't trust others anyway), and we carry the belief that we have everything under control.

All of these strategies, all these attempts to cover up the inner emptiness and coldness caused by unmet core needs – this is what we call **external emotional regulation**. They're well-known and widely accepted **compensation mechanisms**. That's why the following is such a useful tool: It gives us an overview of the many ways we might use external emotional regulation (addiction/dependence).

The list is extensive, but certainly not complete.








In some cases, the underlying mechanisms are described. They tend to repeat, so the examples are just illustrative – you'll be able to fill in the rest yourself.

One tip for exploring on your own: **Regulation can go in both directions—plus and minus**. Sometimes we want to amplify feelings, balance something out, or in other cases, numb or dampen them.









The deeper issue is that we're not unbiased when it comes to our feelings. We judge anything that doesn't seem "smart" to us.

External emotion regulation through consumption & stimulants






Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
🍬 Food (sweets, fast food, snacks)	Stress, boredom, loneliness, frustration, excessive demands (first and strongest trained reassurance; basic needs violated, then I eat something; "dummy theory")
☕ Kaffee & Energy-Drinks	Tiredness, listlessness, insecurity (my energy comes from outside)
🍷 Alcohol	Inhibitions, social insecurity, boredom, self-doubt, sadness (I need a reason to show suppressed parts of myself)
🚬 Smoking	Stress, inner restlessness, frustration, social pressure
🎮 Drugs (e.g. cannabis, MDMA, cocaine)	Emptiness, senselessness, emotional distance, self-esteem problems
🎮 Video games & online series (binge-watching)	Avoid reality, frustration, loneliness, excessive demands (distraction or substitute world; series as a substitute for friends/relationships)







Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Shopping / Online purchases	Self-esteem, recognition, insecurity, inner emptiness (short reward)
 Collect social media & likes	Loneliness, self-doubt, boredom, insecurity (attention, appreciation, <i>validation</i>)
 Music (extreme use)	Emotional emptiness, mood swings, sensory overload
 Gambling & speculation (e.g. crypto, shares)	Thrills, loss of control, lack of excitement in life
 Fashion & Cosmetic	Loneliness, insecurity (fitting in and adapting)
 Sexualization	Loneliness, insecurity, self-worth (I have learned that I get attention through a polished surface)
 Porno, Sex	Emotional emptiness, loneliness, insecurity, search for reliability and devotion

External regulation through work, success & performance






Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Workaholism / Overtime	Insignificance, insecurity, loss of control (constructed importance, “nothing works without me”)
 Career or status chasing	Self-worth, recognition, inner emptiness (proof of one’s own value)
 Collect achievements (trophies, medals, certificates)	Self-doubt, lack of self-esteem
 Self-exploitation (“I have to work hard”)	Feelings of guilt, inner restlessness, fear of worthlessness
 Money & wealth as a measure of happiness	Loss of control, fear of insignificance
 Power & hierarchical control over others	Insecurity, disrespect, fear of powerlessness
 Perfectionism & excessive self-optimization	Self-doubt, fear of making mistakes, insecurity
 Continuous analysis & intellectualization	Emotional distance, fear of chaos & unpredictability

External regulation through relationships & people





Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Use children (e.g. to feel needed)	Loneliness, senselessness, lack of self-worth
 Use romantic partners (“I am nothing without you”)	Anxiety, emotional emptiness, self-doubt
 Co-dependency (“I save others to feel valuable”)	Self-doubt, insecurity, lack of self-love
 Dramatic relationships (toxic patterns as emotional stimuli)	Boredom, lack of liveliness, fear of closeness
 Expecting children to regulate their own emotions	Loneliness, self-doubt, fear of insignificance

Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Social masks & roles (e.g. “always be the strong one”)	Insecurity, fear of rejection, control
 Permanent distraction through communication (constant texting, phone calls)	Loneliness, fear of silence, fear of self-confrontation
 Excessive blasphemy & judgment of others	Self-doubt, feelings of inferiority, insecurity
 Pity/self-pity, emotional vampire	Lack of self-esteem, insecurity
 Victim/perpetrator thinking	Excessive demands (responsibility), lack of self-determination, insecurity
 Pets	Loneliness, senselessness, lack of self-worth



External regulation through physical activities & rituals

Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Extreme sports or excessive training	Stress, self-doubt, loss of control, feelings of inferiority
 Lasting wellness & relaxation rituals	Fear of emotional depth, insecurity, inner emptiness
 Excessive traveling (“I can only be happy when I’m somewhere else”)	Restlessness, boredom, fear of commitment
 Nature as an escape (“I can only be calm in nature”)	Overstimulation, inner restlessness, identity problems
 Sleeping as an escape from emotions	Depression, excessive demands, anxiety

External regulation through spirituality & faith

Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Spirituality as an escape (“Everything happens for a reason”)	Loss of control, fear, self-doubt
 Religious rules as an emotional protection strategy	Insecurity, fear of making mistakes, self-responsibility
 Meditation to escape emotions (e.g. “I am enlightened and no longer feel anything”)	Emotional avoidance, fear of vulnerability
 Hope for karma or “the universe regulates everything”	Fear of personal responsibility, lack of clarity

External regulation through social structures & group affiliation

Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
 Extreme activism & political radicalization	Self-doubt, search for meaning, feelings of powerlessness
 National pride & group affiliation as a source of self-esteem	Identity insecurity, fear of insignificance

Tool	Regulated emotion(s)
🚨 Conspiracy theories ("It's the fault of those up there")	Anxiety, insecurity, loss of control
⚖️ Hyper-moralism ("I am better than others because I am more ethical")	Self-doubt, insecurity, loss of control

Next-Level Fitness

Imagine a doctor reassuring his patient: “You’re still breathing—so everything is fine.” We would immediately recognize how absurd and dangerous this approach is.

For companies, on the other hand, this is surprisingly normal. “But the figures are right,” I often hear—and that is then considered sufficient proof of health. But figures are the last symptom. When they go bad, it’s usually already too late.

The real problem is that systems are robust. They can be ill for a long time without dying immediately. A body can also function with years of vitamin deficiency, too little sleep or poor nutrition. But it becomes sluggish, tired, susceptible to illness—and at some point it collapses.

The same applies to organizations: They can languish in infirmity for years without the balance sheets immediately sounding the alarm. What suffers is inner energy, vitality, creativity—in short: fitness.

Think Illness is Normal

The worst thing is not to be ill. The worst thing is to be ill—and to think it’s normal. Many organizations are living in survival mode, in a kind of functional depression: things are somehow continuing, the structures are holding up, but the glow is gone. Employees withdraw inwardly, innovation dries up, the culture becomes tough.

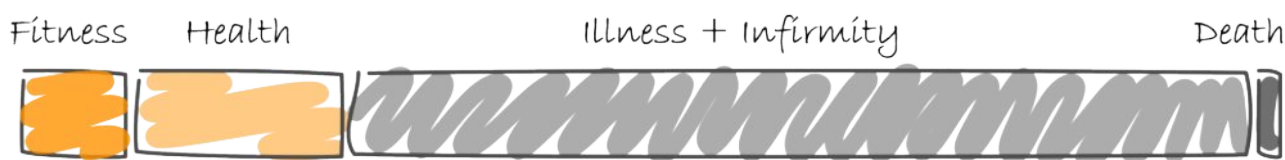


Figure 4: Size ratios of states that a system can have. If we only test for “alive”, we lose sight of the essentials.

Gallup speaks of “inner resignation”. I call it emotional debt. Just like “technical debt” in software, it is an invisible mountain of debt that builds up when we neglect necessary care, healing and development. And as with software, the costs explode at some point—often unexpectedly, but never without a long warning period.

Management or Leadership?

Many management systems are designed to manage symptoms. They function like coping strategies: We come to terms with the pain, we compensate, we control. But coping keeps us trapped in the problem—and permanently drains our energy.

Leadership, on the other hand, is healing. Healing means returning to a natural state in which a system is healthy, vital and capable of developing its full potential. No longer “surviving despite pain”, but really living.

The Image of the Body

Back to the body: breathing, water and food are immediately vital. If they are lacking, it quickly comes to an end. But long-term health requires more—vitamins, minerals, exercise, sleep, social connection. Without them, we don’t die immediately, but we gradually lose our ability to perform.

It’s the same in organizations: some factors are critical and immediately visible (e.g. cash flow, production, infrastructure). Others work quietly, indirectly and with a delay: trust, culture, purpose, inner motivation. It is precisely these that are often cut first—“but it still works”. But what we overlook: We are weakening the organization’s immune system.

The Blind Spots

Risk management has many categories: operational, strategic, external, financial risks. But the soft factors? Trust, co-operation, emotional security? They hardly appear there. And so we see entire organizations in zombie mode: stable on the outside, hollow on the inside.

The problem is not that these factors are unimportant—but that our models are blind to them. We don’t measure what really counts.

From Wheelchair to Dance

A strong image for this is the wheelchair: many people—and organizations—sit in them even though they could actually walk. Often even out of love and care: “It’s safer that way.” But at some point we forget how to walk. We think the restriction is normal. Some even build entire industries around wheelchairs—and have no interest in us dancing again.

Leadership means recognizing this wheelchair and leaving it behind. It means returning people and organizations to their natural mobility.

Diagnosis before Therapy

Before healing can begin, a diagnosis is needed. In humans we do a blood count, in organizations we need a fitness check. The central question is: Where are we today? Are we already living at Olympic level—or are we vegetating in survival mode?

It is not enough to look at the average. A body is sick even if “only” the liver or heart fails. An organization is also sick if entire teams are dead inside—even if the balance sheet is still shiny. The truth lies not in the average, but in the minimum.

The 7 Levels of Fitness

Organizations—like people—do not simply move between “sick” and “healthy”. There is a continuum of states: from collective struggle for survival to genuine vitality and creative flourishing.

This is exactly what the **7 levels of organizational fitness** are designed for:

- ▶ They reveal differences between “survival”, “robustness” and “excellent fitness”.
- ▶ They identify symptoms, causes and hidden deficits.
- ▶ And they show a way for organizations to get out of their wheelchairs—and walk again, maybe even dance.

Because in the end, it’s not just about whether an organization is “still breathing”. It is about whether it is alive. Whether it is living up to its potential, has energy, inspires people—and therefore not only survives, but really shapes the future.

The following overview shows the 7 levels of fitness with their symptoms, typical patterns and central causes. The percentages are of course only estimates based on available research.

Level	Share	Symptoms	Typical Patterns	Top 5 Causes	Belief
1 – Collective in survival mode / traumatized	2–7 %	Addiction, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, social disintegration	Consumer & substance addiction, hopelessness, fragmentation	Early traumatization, existential insecurity, loss of meaning, fragmented identity, dysfunctional environment	<i>“I am totally too much”</i>
2 – Dysfunctional / chronic sufferer	10–15 %	Burnout, cynicism, isolation, psychosomatic complaints	Irritability, social withdrawal, chronification of suffering	Constant stress, isolation, lack of emotional resonance, micro-traumatization, withdrawal from relationship systems	<i>“I am a mistake”</i>
3 – Burdened with clear symptoms	15–20 %	Depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, alienation	Lack of drive, withdrawal, avoidance of fear, loneliness	Lack of self-efficacy, attachment insecurity, unprocessed stress, value conflicts, cognitive overload	<i>“I am a burden”</i>
4 – Subclinically tense / compensating	25–30 %	Performance-driven, consumption-oriented, exhausted, compensating	Perfectionism, procrastination, dopamine compensation, overadaptation	External emotional regulation, pressure to perform, consumption as compensation, unclear role expectations, lack of time	<i>“I’m not enough, but I’ll prove you wrong”</i>
5 – Functionally balanced	20–25 %	Alternation between extension and regeneration, pragmatic balance	Functioning, but exhaustible, latent stress patterns	Stable routines, culture of responsibility, work-life balance, resilient identity, clarity of purpose	<i>“I am not enough”</i>

Level	Share	Symptoms	Typical Patterns	Top 5 Causes	Belief
6 – Inwardly healthy & resilient	10–15 %	Satisfaction, calmness, self-regulation, social integration	Inner peace, stable relationships, positive self-perception	Healthy attachment, experience of autonomy, self-regulation, social integration, coherent world view	<i>“I am enough”</i>
7 – Collective vitality / emotional fitness	2–7 %	Self-efficacy, meaning, deep relationship, creative design	Flow, co-creativity, inspiration, compassion, vision	Deep self-acceptance, secure relationships, creative freedom, a sense of purpose, stability & freedom of action	<i>“I am wonderful”</i>

Comment on the Scale

- ▶ **Level 1–2** mark the acute crisis zones: Here it is a matter of bare survival. Systems are fragmented, destructive, often toxic—healing is urgently needed.
- ▶ **Level 3–4** are the “gray areas” of everyday life: you function, but at the expense of energy, health and relationships. This is exactly where many organizations get stuck—in permanent compensation.
- ▶ **Level 5** is “sufficiently healthy”: You function stably, your balance is just about there—but vitality and lightness are missing.
- ▶ **Level 6–7** are the actual target zones: This is where we find inner health, resilience and ultimately collective vitality. Organizations in these states are creative, adaptive and have an inspiring effect on their environment.

The **decisive threshold** is between level 5 and level 6:

- ▶ Below this line, there is a latent feeling of *“I’m not enough”*—in various forms. Systems compensate, work against internal deficits and need external confirmation.
- ▶ Above this line is the basic attitude: *“I am enough”*. This is where true inner stability begins, from which vitality and inspiration are possible in the first place.