

**Another blog about leadership... I keep thinking *hasn't everything been written already*, even up until this evening, while writing this piece. The reason I'm still writing is that in my experience, articles on leadership only cover a small piece of the subject... most of the time even just the executive part. Look up the definition of leadership, if you will. Apparently, it's difficult to describe and it invites people to make 'leadership' very instrumental.**

With this piece of writing, I would like to literally start at the beginning.

As children, we go through our upbringing and education. These are the main things that are supposed to *socialise* us. We learn to behave ourselves within social settings. And, if we're lucky, all of this happens in a very loving environment. It's important to know that a child develops his or her basic feeling of safety during the first seven years of their lives, provided that they're brought up in a stable and loving environment without an undercurrent of stress. These days, that is a special and rare thing. Children have infallible observational skills. Even if things aren't spoken out loud, children distinctly feel whether they're in a safe environment or not.

When children start going to school, the following challenges arise: group formation, adjustment, structure and restriction. Sir Ken Robinson has given a shocking presentation on this subject: "[changing education paradigms.](#)"

We mould our children towards the average. This is an immensely outdated system stemming from the time after World War II, when The Netherlands needed extra hands as quickly as possible to rebuild the country. If it were up to me, I would advise people to have a serious look at the current education system, and find out how it can be rearranged... And if I'm allowed to give some directions; I'm very charmed by the Finnish model.

The study centre for business and government even published this article: "Finnish School System: Seven Valuable Lessons for The Netherlands." It seems like policy makers don't realise that education has a direct impact on the future society... both socially and economically. Politicians are hypocritical and corrupt in this case (and probably also in many others). They talk about decency, norms and values. In my experience it's them who violate this extremely often. Whenever personal gain is on the table it seems integrity is nowhere to be found.

And now we've arrived at 'leadership.' 'Leadership' in the way I mean it. A child growing up is a researcher. It's honest, uncomplicated. It loves sincere attention, wants to be friends with everyone, is direct and unambiguous. It doesn't take the feelings of others -the receivers of the message- into account, doesn't discriminate, doesn't intimidate, doesn't consciously act at the expense of others, and is very self-centred.

And like I said, we continue to raise it and educate it. It only gets more difficult.

Salient detail: when we ask an average employee "what does your favourite employer look like, what kind of person should he/she be?", they reply that it should be someone with an uncanny resemblance to an uneducated child that has been raised with loads of love... And there are barely any of those... Because leaders are supposed to be developed people... Do you get the irony?

Leadership takes courage, the courage needed to realise that your identity is different from your body. The knowledge that your actions stem from your mind. That you want to do justice to your unicity.

It also asks for deepening... a search for your true motives, your 'why,' and that takes effort and space, because they have been immensely developed throughout the years.

But what it gives you is valuable, and the results of your effort will always bring you success! That is what true development is all about.

The result is authenticity, you've been separated from pretence and are able to act from the true spirit of a worthy human being and leader. You, as a leader who's there to help all of his people to achieve the same things with respect to his or her development.

Can you imagine what it would mean to you, your employees and your goals, if you give your development some real, focussed attention? Even apart from all the energy that will be unleashed if you do...think about it...

Sincerely, Xavier Y. Zeilinga  
(Februari 28, 2018)