

Giuseppe Pisi

CONVERSING ABOUT LEADERSHIP

on boat, with friends



Marisa Gramola, Interpretation

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To my collaborators

workers, employees, executives, managers

The north-east blows,
to me among the winds the dearest

Hölderlin

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Preface

Giuseppe Pisi is an anomalous industrialist. Have you ever seen an industrialist who reads Petrarch, and has a dreamy memory of him in the very moments he is thinking about the company and about its most complex and modern industrial figure: the *leader*. This is because the company -in the Petrarchan suggestion - seems, to him, similar to a literary undertaking. So much so, that he constantly writes about it, and deep down he has a literary memory of it, just as poets do- who think from afar and dream of forms and figures of sublimation. Well, so does he, when, for example, he speaks precisely of the figure of the leader. He talks about it while he is distant from the company, perhaps at sea, on trips he makes with friends, and perhaps conversing with them about how a leader must be, recalling and arousing the rare suggestion – in such topics - which brings to mind the literature of all those writers who, when speaking of something or someone, talk about it in convivial form and circumstance, among friends and associates of convivial flavour.

In fact the leader in the book, and in the Pisian conception, does not have corporate flavour. It lacks the typical acidity of industrial narratives, even of the hardness that, somehow, he always embodies and which transpires from characters of such narratives. There is no trade union obsession, which penetrates and pervades every time when we talk about work organization and, in this case, of that figure of the organization of work that is the entrepreneur, the leader.

It is no coincidence, nor is it a chic gimmick or the tic of a chic taste, that the book should start, as it does, with a joke that attacks the problem unexpectedly and by proposing the figure of Francesco Petrarch. Who would have ever thought, that an entrepreneur, or even a man of letters, would open the discussion on the figure of the leader, by quoting the figure and literary enterprise of Francis Petrarch. It is true that he was a

leader, even if, *mutatis mutandis*, he was so in the context of the European conditions of the XIII Century. And yet, he was an intellectual and author who had all the conscience, indeed, a modern conscience, of the cultural and literary enterprise, and of the charismatic figure of the poet.

Pisi remembers the answer that Petrarch himself supposedly gave his poet friend Giovanni Boccaccio, who, when worried about the cancer and heart attack that had hit him while he was travelling to Rome - being expected by Pope Urban VII and Catherine of Siena - urged Petrarch to take care of himself. He further reproached him for his incessant activism and begged him to take care of his health by taking more rest. Petrarch's answer to his caring friend, states that: "*I must always work, never be idle because if I stop even for a moment I will die ahead of time*", and peremptorily, ignoring his advice: "*Since real life is industrious, I will not listen to your advice*".

This answer, to be evaluated in its true nature of a charismatic leader's thought, must be understood not only within literary and artistic activism, but also in the international, political and diplomatic sphere in which Petrarch was an institutional figure of absolute historical importance. That is, as a matter of fact, what is written about him in a monograph: "Nor was it enough for him that the court of his friends were trembling with affection for him: he demanded that they should also be united among themselves, all, overcoming misunderstandings or coldness. And in addition to demanding this, he did everything he could which every possible means available to him, to dispel the reasons for dissent and bring harmony back to where the quarrel was looming. On his part, he tried with extreme subtlety not to hurt or offend the susceptibility of anyone, while maintaining full freedom of action and absolute spiritual independence"¹.

What does Giuseppe Pisi say which expands or differentiates, in a long and insistent portraiture, when talking about the figure of the leader? He constantly characterizes his figure according to the proactive availability towards the general company organization and other individual figures of that same organization, what the industrialist, entrepreneur and leader should be like and should do. He is concerned with internal unity and collaborative harmony among everyone, managers, collaborators and

1 see Library of giants of literature, Mondadori, Francesco Petrarch, edited by Marisa Paltrinieri

employees. “For his part”, says the rare quote, Petrarch was, and did, just what Pisi thought a true leader should be and do: “he tried with extreme finesse not to bump into nor to offend anyone’s susceptibility, while keeping his full freedom of action and absolute spiritual independence”.

Of course, the discussion is then complicated by all the implications that the modern figure of the leader and his activity of leadership imply. Therefore, argumentation and discussion respond to all the rich and complex case studies. Note that at some point the conversation - as it is in dialogues of the noblest tradition - happens with a friend, an entrepreneur himself and a generous guest emblazoned with the same literary aura - with which Giuseppe Pisi often surrounds himself - being owner, this friend, of *The Cason*, where part of the conversation takes place and which is found in the Lagoon between Caorle and Bibione, much loved also by Ernest Hemingway, where he was frequently hosted and to which he dedicated some beautiful pages in his book “*Across the river and among the trees*”, published in America in 1950, in Italy in 1965 by Arnoldo Mondadori Editore.

In short, this book, which, like all the other previous ones, experiences the discussion of the case in both a non-fictional and literary atmosphere, as shown by the treatises of corporate connotation of the figure and professional virtue of the protagonist, and yet it is always made lively by real literary walks, as the recurring references demonstrate, in which the book transfigures the assumption of conviviality and literature and the whole speech.

Salvatore Fazio

INTRODUCTION

There is a clear link between this leadership work and the abundant literature that precedes it, and there are many quotations that I propose to the reader, recalling the aphorism of the publisher of *Corriere Della Sera* in 1950, Missiroli: “*Nothing is more unpublished of what has already been published*”.

One of my mythical leaders actually lived and possesses a name and surname. He lays on my desk in the office. I keep him within easy reach, especially *present à l’esprit*: his *Trionfi*, an authentic copy of the original now preserved in the Laurentian Library. He is, Francesco Petrararch. I owe a lot of my spiritual training to him and I consider him the first modern leader. Not a condottiere, not a commander, but a true leader.

What does this word, which is frequently abused, mean: head, leader, leadership? If you follow me in the reading we will have fun discovering it together.

Francis Petrarch (1304-1374), our beloved poet with a complex and fascinating personality, rests in the Veneto region - my land - in Arquà Petrarca, in the province of Padua, a small village among the most beautiful in Italy. The poet had his house built in Arquà Petrarca on a plot of land on the Euganean Hills, which he received as a gift from Francis of Carrara. Fascinated by the beauty of the place, he lived there from 1370 although he was frequently absent for his many trips. Petrarch was the first modern man of Italian literature, because he perceived the birth of a new civilization that was no longer bound to traditional dogmatic provincialism, revealing all the heartbeats of life, its perception. Dante had certainties, Petrarch outlines his doubts. He revealed himself to be an open-minded intellectual, interested in approaching the brink of chaos, to which we are all called to by modernity, willingly oscillating between places with reference to the culture and politics of his time.

While Beatrice was the stairway leading to God, Laura was already seen as a woman, in her corporeality: “... *grass and flower*’ which the graceful skirt covers with the angelic breast; sacred, serene air ...” and again, in the Triumphs: “Then from that blonde head Death plucked with its hand a golden thread: so, it chose the most beautiful flower in the world”.

Very strong personality: armies bowed to him as he passed. Gifted with extraordinary intellectual ability, he was always ready to play the game of his continuous cultural and political appointments, knowing how to overcome all the accidents of the case: in Bolsena his horse throws a hard kick to his knee, but he proceeds anyway to Rome: “*serve necesse est...*”.

Or, like when surprised by a violent storm, he protects himself for a whole night, squatting next to the belly of his horse. He lived a life that everyone considered enviable, everyone except him. Always travelling to satisfy his curiosity, he wanted to see with his own eyes, to experience different people, customs and countries. This desire accompanied him throughout his life.

Indomitable, with his horse sliding on the ice, he went to meet Emperor Francis II, who was returning to Prague, to beg him to bring peace to the Peninsula: “*garden of vipers, bring peace to the garden of Italy to quell the struggles between the nobles*”.

He replies to Boccaccio, who begged him to take care of his gangrenous wound and of his health: “*we must always work, never be idle, because if I stop for a moment I would die prematurely*”. A heart attack struck him in Ferrara while he was travelling to Rome invited by Pope Urban VII who was waiting for him, with Catherine of Siena. On that occasion he reacted in a heavy and peremptory way against his friend Boccaccio, who insisted he take adequate rest, declaring: “because true life is industriousness, I will not listen to your advice”.

He was aware of his worth; he knew his works would be eternal. He therefore expended his whole life correcting his *Canzoniere*, producing nine editions, working uninterruptedly on perfecting his writing.

While in Liège the great humanist discovered two orations of Cicero. He kept the large volume of the Letters of Cicero, which he loved so much, on the floor of his study and the falling book caused him a serious wound on the left leg.

Although never reaching the heights of Dante’s poetic creativity, he readily intervened with stern determination to help people. In Padua,

he defended a young man threatened with death after being accused of rape. Thanks to his patronage, the young man was proved innocent and acquitted. Recognized as both a true leader and poet of the language, he leaps off the dusty shelves and imposes himself as the leading man.

The *Leader*. Robert of Anjou, a highly educated king of Naples, examined him for three days, to see if he could be crowned poet at the Capitol in Rome. He accepted, preferring the Capitol to Paris, where on 8 April 1341 he was crowned in Rome as *magnus poeta et historicus* by the hand of Senator Orso dell'Anguillara, obtaining the *privilegium laureae*. Later, he humbly proceeded to deposit the poetic laurel on the tomb of St. Peter.

After the *memento mori* phase, the stasis, the medieval closure, he began perceiving life as a journey to other dimensions, railing energetically against every dogmatism. Petrarch firmly states: “*Life is worth living*”. Petrarch was influenced by the transition to Humanism. He considered the ancient world with syncretism: it was to be respected as an instrument of Providence, but he looked with interest to the winds of change.

A most vivid portrait, and the closest to our concept of leader - this justifiable forcing to the extent of our admiration - this is the one we report as it is: “*The cult of friendship was for Petrarch almost second nature. Throughout the long span of his existence the poet continued to forge new bonds of affection, to revive the older ones, to write and remember friends with friends, to host at home or move to meet the most diverse characters who enjoyed his trust: kings, princes, famous intellectuals or even, as in Boccaccio’s case, men of great value and of little fortune. Nor was it enough for him that the court of his friends, trembled with affection for him: he expected them to be also united among themselves, all of them, overcoming misunderstandings or coldness. And in addition to demanding this, he did everything he could with all possible means available to him, to dispel the reasons for dissent and bring harmony back to where the quarrel was looming. On his part, he tried with extreme subtlety not to hurt or offend the susceptibility of anyone, while retaining full freedom of action and absolute spiritual independence*”¹.

There is no better representation of a driving quality at all levels, which

1 see Library of giants of literature, Mondadori, Francesco Petrarch, edited by Marisa Paltrinieri)

is most suited to the character of a *leader*: not only an attachment in the sphere of relationships, but also a concern - and defence of - human and professional unity of all the closest cultural collaborators, both with him and among them, intervening himself to ensure that, in the event of breakage risks, *misunderstandings and coldness* be overcome, *doing everything possible with every possible means available to him to dispel any reasons for dissent and restore harmony*. The note is keen to highlight the *extreme refinement* in not undermining *anyone's susceptibility*, absolutely respecting *every freedom of action and every independence of individuals*. If we needed to sketch the ideal figure of a leader we could not find anything better for the purpose of our thesis.

Humility was his finest quality: he managed to be humble despite the affirmation of his works, his stature as an intellectual, and his success at the many royal European courts that competed for him. Furthermore, he also cultivated a field with wisdom and love despite not having a green thumb. You feel tenderness when walking today in his orchard and in his garden in Arquà. Capable of good relations with his staff and neighbours, in his will he left the house to the Free University of Padua, provided that a "not illiterate" keeper be appointed. Always in pursuit of stylistic perfection and often hypercritical with himself, he always proved willing to correct himself, as the nine editions of the *Canzoniere* show. The Vatican Latin Code 3196 contains, all by the hand of the poet, the entire body of rhymes.

He depicts his personality in the presentation of himself in his *Letter to Posterity*.

Although modest, he shows great self-awareness of his own skills, which, anyway, were widely compared to Dante's. He shows pride, spiritual balance, a deep inner life in continuous conflict between heaven and earth.

Horace says: "*I have raised with my poems a monument more lasting than bronze and one day it will be said that I, born of humble origins, I made Latin literature as beautiful and great as the Greek one*". This is the self-awareness which always dwells in higher minds - in the leaders of our society. Self-awareness that extends to self-esteem, to the fullness of the person.

Beliefs about ourselves and about what can be done in the reality that surrounds us have a strong impact on our daily efficiency. We all have beliefs that are assets, but also beliefs that can limit us. Our beliefs are a

very powerful force that affects our behaviour. The beliefs which others have about us can also influence us too - the *Pygmalion syndrome*.

The critical success factors in life – it is well known - have more to do with one's ability to relate to ourselves and to others, than with cognitive or intellectual skills: “*Managers are bombarded with advice from consultants, professors, business journalists, and assorted management ‘Gurus’ on how to manage their employees. A lot of this advice is well thought out and valuable. Much of it, however, is a gross, ambiguous, inconsistent generalization. Some of it is even just downright wrong*” (Stephen P. Robbins – 2003).

It is hard not to share Robbins' strong statement.

This effort to select and highlight the poignant elements of leadership also wants to move on a track of universal value, in view of a message of aesthetics too.

I think it is a pity that good experiences which have been lived and deepened are not shared. The text you are going to read relates the experience of a corporate life lived in human fullness and in the success of the achieved business.

The author of this book is not a university professor, nor is he a consummate speaker, and he is not even a management consultant. He is an entrepreneur, confident that the time you will devote to reading will be compensated by providing you with a more serene insight than the associated work. It will prove to be a useful tool, a *livre de chevet*, which you can use whenever you have the impression of not being followed to the end by the people who depend on you, whenever your dreams fade away, whenever your leadership becomes blurred; whenever your heart catches unpleasant echoes, inappropriate resonances. Whenever, while reflecting about the things happening around you, you feel lost; or, when only you, with your sensitivity, perceive the silent, dense, and gloomy sound of the great bell hidden deep within your soul.

Do you want to react, to be stimulated to do so? Then follow me in the reading. The text comes from a series of notes collected in the course of long and passionate conversations, held with friend entrepreneurs, friends and managers, on the issues of modern *management* of that phoenix that is the indefinable *leadership*: everyone claims to know what it is, until you are asked to explain it. Just like St. Augustine, who said he knew very well what time is, he had a notion of it, but he stopped knowing

it when he was asked to explain it. Or, like Morin, when preparing to define his theory of complexity. Passionate research in disciplinary and popular texts followed casual conversations or meetings with specialists, to further the credit and reliability of the concepts that are presented here. Thanks to the irreplaceable contribution of friends, themselves also men of business or culture, substantial co-authors of the content, another century of lived life has been added. The energy of collective intelligence is very powerful, much more so than the sum of the individual contributions. The contents expressed are therefore a reflection of our Western culture, Rhenish, Italian, in particular, and come from direct experiences gained in the field by successful entrepreneurs, who, in a whisper, reveal to those who want to listen many important aspects of their human experience gained in all the evolutionary phases of their companies which they have been able to create, develop and lead to excellence. This is not disclosed advice. The consultant, who enjoys all our respect, shows the way, advises, informs, and sometimes solves.

We are artifex, frontline people, managers.

The manager acts, he is the *homo faber*, he takes up precise responsibility, he knows how to learn from his mistakes which he corrects immediately, experiencing things in his own skin. The contents you will read come from people marked by the hardness of application, of experience, from which they emerge more accomplished and satisfied.

You will likely have a better and more peaceful future if you treasure what we will try to transmit to you cordially inviting you to this remote dialogue.

So here are the messages that come directly from the field of battle, from lived lives and achieved successes!

Let Petrarch's example load the gravity and hardness of the topic with nobility.

*"May death never take us while in stupid idleness"*².

*"If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants"*³.

2 Benedetto Croce

3 Isaac Newton

1. Manager, Entrepreneur, leader

I am writing this text after having matured 50 years of uninterrupted work, with the prospect of continuing on and on - health allowing - simply because I like doing it.

Work has been the pentagram on which I have built every single note of my life and it has compensated me in an extraordinary way. The effect that love for work manages to achieve is impressive, making it a joyful activity that pays off generously.

Someone even goes beyond the situation of normality, to grow, to move to higher energy levels involving other people, towards sharing his dream, committing himself to a mission that will be rewarding for everyone.

That is a little of what happened to me too. I left with limited, completely normal personal endowments. In my bag, however, bundled with great care by a trusting mother, there was much and very little at the same time - strong feelings and youth! At this point, I like to recall the poem *La Piccozza*, The Axe, by Pascoli, his only weapon in his ascent, his will.

Poor financial means, but there was always a great confidence in myself, a courage, a determination, a vision of my future that I was able to imagine and which I wanted to achieve. There was the certainty that the future would be mine, because it belongs to those who are able to imagine it. Moreover, the necessary spirit of sacrifice has never failed me. I think success is within reach of any person of good will who starts, even alone, on the path towards his dream and seeks appreciation, greater well-being, wealth if possible, then opens an initiative and creates an enterprise to invent, produce and sell; looks for support, looks for credits all the while moving people whom he calls to work. He distributes wealth created together, starts off growth paths for himself and for the others.

When we talk about leaders and leadership, it becomes natural to open a conversation about those people who make up an anthropological novelty,

and they are the entrepreneurs: people who are accomplished by building around themselves an organization, a company, a result that sublimates and surpasses even their own expectations and energies employed at work, a whole that then becomes a social asset.

At the origin of every business there is the figure of the entrepreneur who begins his journey with no return, “either with his shield or on his shield”, recalling the determined, affectionate greeting of Spartan mothers to their children who left for war. The decision is to avoid being a “*Perdu dans ce vilain monde*”, to quote Baudelaire.

The approach to the reality of the world that surrounds a man becoming an entrepreneur is therefore changed, his analytical thought, which is previously limited, expands towards systemic thinking, so that the way of looking at the world, and of acting, is profoundly modified and put at the service of the dream that is to be realized, inserted in a context that becomes ever wider.

From reductionism, which is the most typical form of speculative analysis of our culture, the individual makes a qualitative leap and begins to evaluate the phenomena as a whole, their very same components only make sense when they are related to a result, as opposed to the selective analysis that separates, distinguishes, and seeks causal elements. Systemic thinking, on the other hand, organizes the individual parts and evaluates them in relation to the result.

The reductionist tendency of our common modality of thought unfortunately emerges also in the course of many dialogues we listen to or take part in. We begin to notice that this is why it becomes the tomb of effective communication, and we break free from it with difficulty.

The essential component to be able to make this existential leap, the individual *Great Leap*, turns out to be courage, a courage that opposes fear - that widespread negative feeling which must be removed, because it is capable of affecting deeply people’s minds and pervading also human organizations, preventing their development.

“*Audaces fortuna iuvat*”.

The ability to overcome fear - which blocks, orients to renunciation, resignation, and provides misleading interpretations of the possibilities that surround us - makes us unable to read and interpret the rich menu of choices that society continuously offers us. That fear, which in certain circumstances we have all known, the fruit of our mind, existential fear,

fear of the other; an atavistic legacy of when the struggle for survival implied the constant activation of this feeling, to avoid becoming some predator's dinner.

Let us therefore abandon fear and feed our courage: it is responsible courage that characterizes the leader, like fear characterizes the renouncer. Therefore, it is good to keep in mind the motto of our Latin fathers, "*Memento audere semper*". *Remember to always dare*.

Without risk, no economic processes take place, not even individually.

Human organizations must also show courage, like the courage to experiment, which involves acceptance of the concept of movement, of necessary, continued evolution, a combination and recombination of roles.

Therefore, the fear of experimentation does not emerge, it is experienced as a delight, not a pain. "*On the one hand it pushes. On the other it blocks. It pulls and let's go. It clarifies and confuses. It is an encounter which you cannot ignore if you want to continue on the road of satisfaction and balance*" (S. Zanolli 2006).

Our fears, individual or collective, must be recognized as such and removed, as did people and successful businesses, who, having identified them in their essence of negative feeling, succeed in removing them without hesitation: "*Those relating to our preparation to face what is new. Those related to questioning habits and life styles. Those relating to different skills to be acquired and invented. Those relating to professional mobility and responsibility for our future. Those that refer to a certain income polarization and show us that, if we do not implement creative actions, we may very well go and join that part of the population that is already struggling with marginal, precarious and underpaid jobs*" (S. Zanolli 2006).

The entrepreneurs are also, in general, men of great courage. In particular are those of medium-sized Italian companies, the companies that the OECD defines as a splendid Italian anomaly, and which constitute the first front of the economic defence of the nation. They are certainly men to put at the centre of the scene, because it depends on them in particular if there will be work and wealth for many, if young people can have perspectives, to cultivate their dreams and thus the human worlds will be rearranged and evolve in their social systems. The entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized companies show themselves not so much as the *homo economicus* of literature concerning business, as much as *artifex* - the *actor economicus*, because he is the inventor of what he does, *he* is the

author, the enterprise is *his* work, *his* personal invention. The Economic Actor, not just an actor. The actor interprets a text composed by others and in economics the actors are many, the entrepreneur is only one. Financial operators, suppliers, consultants, workers, the customers themselves, they all become actors: each of these entities is a part, claiming only one role in the company. The company is like a movie: many collaborate, but using resources and people, then organizing them into a functional operating system, this is the work of the entrepreneur, who rightly is the director and, in the end, becomes the sole author of the film.

The entrepreneur is the one who is capable of overthrowing, through his own choice, the system of Hegelian subjectivist criticism, which was his first criticism of civil society, seen as a sphere of division and dispersion.

On the contrary, he gathers, aggregates, and creates order. He is a figure to imitate, a hero of modern society, showing the way out of collective labyrinth. Like a new Prometheus, he has taken possession of vital energy and makes it a gift to men; like a new Epimetheus, he controls, reflects and takes responsibility for the actions that he, and the people he calls to work, accomplish.

“It is the economy that offers the strongest possibilities for unification, the traditional way, the pastoral way, it has a dissolving character, it disperses activities and the ephemeral crystallizations are built up only around a mountain, a tribe, a market; on the contrary in an economy of growth, the city, the factory aggregate around the pole they have created”¹.

The entrepreneur plays an important social role in addition to the economical one, because he introduces something new into society, he involves a little or a large part of society, such as individuals, organizations, institutes and institutions. His enterprise produces social development, environmental evolution, job opportunities. He induces infrastructural organizations, promotes local and general legislative activations, thereby setting various policies and cultures in motion.

“Regarding the entrepreneur, it must immediately be said that the studies on the formation of new businesses have traditionally been interested in the subjective characteristics deemed necessary in order to undertake an entrepreneurial activity. In particular, such studies

1 Blanc, *Géographie des Balkans*

have attempted to define a series of connotations (expressible in terms of personal abilities, psychological characteristics, attitudes, etc.) typical of the entrepreneurial figure and capable of marking the border with that, so to speak, alternative of the employee/manager [Brockhaus 1980a; 1980b; Carland, Hoy, Boulton and Carland 1984; Ronstadt 1983]. Other areas of interest are represented by the biography of the entrepreneur, in particular through the evaluation of the role that some biographical aspects play on the choice to create a new business and the spread of entrepreneurship in certain contexts [Brugnoli 1990; Storey 1982]. It is about aspects such as previous work experience, managerial or entrepreneurial skills, level of education, the social class of origin, belonging to ethnic or religious groups and the type of family environment”².

At the origin there is the entrepreneur. “... *The economic fabric of the Veneto region is supported primarily by entrepreneurs, people who take risks on their own and produce wealth for all Veneto became a case history for the world, the protagonist of an economic miracle based on small businesses and international competitiveness*” (Interview with the governor of the Veneto Region, Dr. Luca Zaia, Weekly: La Conceria, June 2010).

The SME entrepreneur, who emerges from the study of cases proposed and from many published researches – particularly clearly in the book *An Emerging Treasure*, which we will mention several times - and through personal experience, is a man who plays his own game in the enterprise under his own responsibility, without appeal hearing.

The company is his creature, he cares deeply about it. He participates in it with total emotional involvement, so strongly, that we witness several cases of painful episodes of suicide by entrepreneurs overwhelmed by crisis, unable to withstand defeat, who reached the point of sacrificing their lives, or of falling into the abyss of serious illnesses without any solution.

There is a constant dialogue between the sympathetic system and the neural system, and this connection, in the presence of strong emotions, can become disruptive.

2 R. Cafferata, P. Genco, 1997, *Competitiveness, information and internationalization of small-medium enterprises*

We may reiterate, that the strength of medium-sized companies - with all due respect to Collins, who seems to know better and be oriented towards large companies - is precisely the entrepreneur, who, at the end of the day, determined its genesis and development.

There are many reasons, but: “*First of all, it is a question of psychological traits that would characterize a potential entrepreneur such as, for example, a strong motivation to achieve personal success connected to an intense need for self-realization, a moderate appetite for risk, a developed ability to tolerate ambiguous situations, a substantial tendency to consider himself - rather than external events - as the exclusive architect of the results achieved*” (R. Cafferata, P. Genco 1997).

The many successful business cases confirm how decisive the presence in the scene of the entrepreneur figure is, in a market far from perfect, malleable, where the protagonists are not omniscient, where there is still a multiplicity of opportunities not yet fully understood and exploited. “...*No real market can be described as perfectly competitive*” (L. Cabral 2000).

We are far from the perfect rationality of the homo economicus, the game unfolds between several people.

“*Seek first food and clothing, and the kingdom of God will come alone*”³.

The general uncertainty of the economic systems, exasperated by the turbulence and the rapid changes we are experiencing, leave space for entrepreneurial activities to be able to free new potentialities and introduce new production processes, as well as new products and better services; new ideas and business styles; better quality; more sophisticated and simpler technologies, along with the development of more aesthetic qualities.

“*By entrepreneurial formula we mean the specific system of resources, knowledge and relationships that the company develops and makes consistent in its history, which produces the competitive advantage of a company compared to its competitors*” (V. Gandolfi – 2006).

The entrepreneur is ready to seize profit opportunities rather than generating them. He responds to the situations which are waiting to be noted, he sets the goal towards which to proceed with a total involvement in the corporate governance.

3 Hegel, 1807

“I see the entrepreneur not as a source of innovative ideas ex nihilo, but as an individual attentive to already existing opportunities, that are waiting to be noticed. Even in economic development, the entrepreneur must be seen as someone who responds to opportunities rather than creating them; he takes the opportunities for profit rather than generating them” (I.M. Kirzner 1997).

In the general situation characterized by complexity and uncertainty, generated by the pandemic in progress, in medium-sized companies the crucial role of the development process is played by entrepreneurs accompanied by managers: the entrepreneur, seen as a man with his set of emotions, his strength and his fragility.

The manager who supports him, runs with him, shares his efforts and the dense taste of victory, his broad horizons, his positive thinking, his dream.

Leaders have a vision, and are able to make others dream.

“To dream anything that you want to dream. That is the beauty of the human mind. To do anything that you want to do. That is the strength the human will. To trust yourself to test your limits. That is the courage to succeed” (D. Boohar 1991).

Our society offers a menu of choices, our nature offers the hunger to use it.

Sartre analyses the desire to be: *“I am what I own”* and he puts it side by side with the desire to have, because they both lead to the same result.

It is impossible to find a desire to be that is not accompanied by a desire to have and vice versa. Desire moves man to action, pushes him to undertake.

Italy is a great repository of knowledge and practical know-how and shows to possess this yeast, less frequent elsewhere: a kind of entrepreneurship that is passed on from person to person, takes possession of the hearts and minds of many and thus changes their existence.

The effect that need first, then love for work are capable of producing, is impressive: it becomes a playful activity.

If the made-to-measure game does not exist yet, they invent it and they put their means, their credibility into the idea, they put at stake their individual story, their feelings, and look at what sort of companies have been created: North-East Italy has thus become a huge factory without walls.

*“He or she who does not turn things topsy-turvy,
who is unhappy at work,
who does not risk certainty for uncertainty,
to thus follow a dream,
those who do not forego sound advice at least once in their lives,
die slowly”*⁴.

For these people the pleasure of undertaking becomes tangible, an unstoppable desire to best solve their own existential problem, to outdo themselves, their personal, social, economic limits, to want to change the endowment of means received to participate in the race of life. The thrusts are: culture, selfishness, measure of convenience, personal moral cosmology, and once more, the influence and the offers of the environment. We may state, once again that what we are, ultimately, we owe it to others.

The choice to start an enterprise is generally supported by a need, a noticeable lack of *being* that demands to be compensated - to be in order to have, or, to have in order to be? We leave the response to Erich Fromm.

A process is set in motion for the satisfaction of the need, which generates useful results for the community, in a process of evolutionary adaptation: *“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, it is the most adaptative to change”*⁵.

In this way, the individual takes on difficult responsibilities. He does it for himself. Ethics springs from self-love. It is about a vision that is formed in the mind of a man which conditions and directs his existence with an irreversible force.

The drive for individual growth, the ability to organize ways towards excellence, the challenge of starting from where others stop, being helpful to society, effectively teaching virtue, have led an overpopulated, structurally poor country to success, a country scarce in natural resources, where the capitalism that other countries had known had never taken off.

The entrepreneur can achieve the priceless satisfaction of being able to

4 M. Medeiros – Die Slowly - Poem

5 Charles Darwin

share the peculiarities of his own socio-cultural commitment with other people, which becomes a conditioning reference for the whole company and can carry out its own process of human development that proceeds along with the cognitive, affective and economic one.

Far be it from us to propose the entrepreneur hagiography as the company mythopoesis: unfortunately, there are many cases of deviation. But I like to dwell on the even lyrical aspects, which, lo and behold, are found in the many cases of excellence studied.

Entrepreneurs and managers tend to remain enclosed in their own factories, where they continue to invent, organize, produce, innovate, and improve.

But it seems that in recent times, entrepreneurs in general have entered a new, freer, liberated dimension where the entrepreneur no longer takes care of just the job, but develops greater openness and social sensitivity, promoting cultural initiatives, supporting initiatives of general interest with solidarity.

Emile Durkheim argues that the economic rationality of individuals is deeply rooted in society, that is, it belongs to groups whose choices reflect social and historical structures. Human behaviour, in its totality, is a cultural product. Here, by culture, we mean the set of ideas, values, symbols, perceptions, desires that the environment transmits, and even the language of signs and signifiers.

Studying the fundamentals that generate leadership, such as we have decided to do, is the best way to understand it well and trace back the development process.

The presence of entrepreneurship is poignant, as the effect that the environment has on people appears immediately noticeable. It favours their choices and determines their destinies.

Its basis is hereditary and congenital, it conditions their perception of the outside world. The environment is then the generous source of precise information that the individual collects and metabolizes.

“Plato had more advanced ideas in psychology than Rousseau and Durkheim. In the Republic he writes: ‘Each of us has the same characters and the same customs of society; because they cannot come but only from us’. This means that the environment is shaped by the individual and subsequently there is a process of interaction” (Ancona, Armengaud et al 1984).

“The internalization of the social situation in his complex constitutes only the social basis of the self. Now the self does not consist solely in the simple organization of social attitudes. The self is a whole that includes within itself time, the me (moi) and the I (je). The me is the social basis of the self. The I is the individual’s reaction to the attitudes of others, it corresponds to what is truly personal in the behaviour of the individual” (Ancona, Armengaud et al 1984).

The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs “... will show how each social category determines the conduct of its members ‘with such a force that men who are part of separate social classes, while living in the same environment and in the same era, sometimes give the impression of belonging to different species’” (Ancona, Armengaud et al 1984).

The values widely shared in the world of the company emerge from society, such as attachment to work, discipline, commitments, respect for order, solidarity, and the ability of those who determined and supported the first big industrialization and highlighted the principal value of the organization.

The prerogative of a mentality of social redemption, totally linked to work, sacrifice and passionate dedication, affirms itself. These values are widespread in the environment and nourish all this propensity to get busy, to do things one’s own way, all by oneself, which soon join those cultures which today have become company specifications. So much availability and propensity cannot be explained without referring to the great tradition of work that was behind it, a tradition that formed generations of families fully mobilized to work in manufacturing which strengthened and shared the values that have now been transmitted to us.

Hence also that heritage of mental and behavioural rules, those aptitudes to learn and perform, those attitudes aimed to finalizing the very purpose of wealth.

“Structures are artefacts made up of relatively stable rules, procedures, contractual, social and emotional relationships, roles and functions, which are intended to regulate relations between individuals and to coordinate their activities to achieve the purposes of the organization and of the individuals” (G. Costa, P. Gubitta 2008).

A kind of work psychology, culture of practice and attention to those objectives that count in the economy of a family and which are the basis of this economic progress, constitute the pre-requisite for the qualitative leap

that the country has fulfilled, with a promise for a better future.

“The link between places and people is an intertwining of feelings, perceptions and emotions / sentiments; it is an intense relationship in which the affective dimension merges with the economic and material one. since when man appeared, all the variables of identity have come into play in creating the link between places and people, those variables that refer to cultural and experiential roots, that connote a person, a city or a territory”.

“If it is true that the narration of places has always been a central way to the self-representation of knowledge, then drawing a topography of the places offers the opportunity to find a form of representation that knows how to ‘tell’ the culture of the territories as a set of different ‘places’ that coexist, sometimes indifferent to each other, but always linked by an intertwining of relationships, oppositions, debts and multiple analogies” (Gallucci, Poponessi 2008).

We read how the memories of many entrepreneurs interviewed in a research “... appear linked to the moment of their cultural and professional training. In the immediate post-war period, the time of youths was often divided between school and family shop, and indeed the latter sometimes replaced public institutions in the transmission of skills and abilities. At the age of ten, twelve, he begins to ‘help around the house’, to ‘make himself useful’ ... [...]. Next to and outside the family there was a world in which poverty, unemployment, the absence of opportunities and real alternatives between a countryside unable to feed the resident population and the few companies existing, force to seek individual solutions. The post-war period offers the most enterprising people endless possibility: in a society lacking everything, anything can be sold. Common to many interviews is the centrality of the moment when the idea of founding the company was developed, the one in which the protagonists made the decision to start a new business, to become self-employed or, more simply, to get fully involved in the family business. For some it was a coincidence, for others an economic necessity, for still others a planned goal, for many the continuation of a path already traced by their parents” (Celetti, Novello 2007).

A great entrepreneur, who, at 14, started working in a newly formed family company, states today at the pinnacle of his success: “I had my son do particular studies, three months for each production cycle” (ibidem).

Reading the cases presented in *Un Tesoro Emergente (An Emerging Treasure)* and those of the text *Raccontare l’Impresa (Telling the Company)*,

combined with direct personal knowledge of many entrepreneurs met in associations, on other occasions of socialization, clubs, and business world, I can see clearly how the greatest educational contribution of many entrepreneurs, of first generations in particular, is the result of the ability of the environment to propose values and opportunities which more sensitive people manage to grasp, to make it a matter of life. Training bases, therefore, are often the strong inputs radiated by a specific environment. It is not always necessary, although obviously desirable, to possess a solid academic culture in order to become a successful entrepreneur: *emerging treasure*.

I made similar observations myself, some time ago:

“There is an academic culture, a more extensive culture that derives from experience and the culture of doing which we should perhaps re-evaluate and put back in the centre of our attention, in a world that is becoming more and more crowded, more and more competitive, in a country like Italy which has only few natural resources, but a profound work culture.

Practical know-how is a cognitive, intellectual value, and leads to the development of specific manual skills in constant self-implementation and spreads rapidly, offering new opportunities for those who want to take them, to the point of allowing them to be better than their master” (G. Pisi - Spaghetti Marketing - The entrepreneur 1998).

The same thought is even better clarified in a next passage:

“Too often reference is made to the poor culture of the entrepreneur, culture understood here in its classical academic meaning, but it is probably a wrong judgment ... [...] ... The entrepreneur manifests his specific intelligence in the ability to organize the various productive resources, in the ability to take risks compatible with his own project, in the ability to play a fundamental role in the intermediation between economic actors, in interstitial areas, in which he puts himself both for the ability to understand markets and the opportunities they offer. In short, he is a person with specific skills which, however, it must also be said, are not revealing and much less are they a guarantee of general potential in all cases. One must avoid therefore even the presumption of believing that good entrepreneurial performances are, for example, also a guarantee of political abilities or potentials. Governing the country, or its peripheral structures, is a much more difficult task than running a business, even if I can imagine with irony the result of one of our companies being run by a

politician, an experience that no entrepreneur would agree to do” (G. Pisi, Spaghetti Marketing -The entrepreneur 1998).

At the conclusion of these considerations I would like to propose below some revealing statements made by entrepreneurs interviewed in *Raccontare l’impresa (Telling the company)*:

- *“there was no work, there was nothing*
- *in Australia I was a miner*
- *this will not be my job*
- *the passion for the work that my father did has always been deep inside me*
- *you went to school and went back to work another time*
- *I was in the tannery for three months and three months in the fields*
- *my mother worked a lot*
- *they would teach a little of everything and a mechanic would come out*
- *a little at a time I began to add my own*
- *then I’ll start doing something myself*
- *but we learned quickly. Meanwhile, our Italian eye was very useful, the eye, the taste*
- *growth sky-rocketed*
- *you must set the company towards a system which is run more by a manager than by the family” (Celetti, Novello 2007)*

I will conclude with this statement by Rino Mastrotto: *“They are all jobs that I remember, I have done practically all of them and I have made an exemplary experience from a cultural point of view, in producing leather. And I believe that this applies to me as well as to my brother Mario, my brother Angelo, my sister Nella, my brother Bruno, who was the most experienced, and my brother Santo. At this point we would begin to understand more and more. My brother Santo followed the technical part, I learned first to slaughter, then to shave, little by little I learned the whole production phase” (Celetti, Novello 2007).*

Rino Mastrotto is today one of the major tanning industrialists in the world. These are industrial stories that strike deep chords, to quote Kotler. Italian medium-sized companies are the many pages of an extraordinary book that demands to be read carefully to better understand what leadership is.

Entrepreneurs will stop having subjection, intellectual subjection too, towards others who operate in different contexts, in other environments,

who have different stories, different determinisms -both geographical and cultural - to condition them.

Perhaps it is easy to become a big corporation in the US, in the presence of a huge market with a propensity to consume, where you all speak the same language and enjoy ease of movement, without customs or cultural barriers. It was different here, operating in spaces of strongly differentiated cultural identity, with a diversity of languages, a difficulty of movement of people and vehicles, political barriers, and many difficulties above all related to communication. But, this is past history, for Europe today constitutes a great, new, opportunity. We managed to achieve the dream all the same, each of us on our own, even if perhaps we have been little, or never, supported by our political representatives.

“Many companies examined show virtuous stability of its own nucleus and testify to the significance of this factor in explaining their growth path. The continuity of the business (and family) nucleus does not guarantee quantity and quality of growth, nor its lack prevents the company from growing, but the hypothesis is empirically founded that this continuity allows the company to enjoy a competitive advantage, providing some opportunities and strategic resources” (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi and Tunisini 2009).

Yet in family businesses you can also spot deep reasons of crisis that undermine its ability to survive and can result from:

- lack of heirs
- continuity ensured by supporting relatives without ascertaining the validity of the choice
- development of a risk averse attitude, with short-range visions
- increased complexity of the context, with the entrepreneur who feels in difficulty, no longer up to the role
- chronic refusal to open to partnership

“The generational change represents one of the most delicate and at the same time strategic moments in the life of a company. This is it also testified by the fact that less than a third of family companies survives the generational change and only 15% manages to overcome the second generation” (A. Giampaoli 2008).

In a medium-sized company, family ownership therefore shows its

possible limits, the key is to find a way to overcome them without losing the elements of advantage it possesses.

“Ultimately, the stability of a family unit, even if differentiated and articulated by experience and skills, constitutes the basis for development, for innovation and for change...[...]... In all highlighted cases the continuity of the entrepreneurial core and its frequent coincidence with a family produce positive effects in the process of growth in both qualitative and quantitative sense and also for its sustainability”.

With a thoughtful expression of synthesis, Daniele Dalli recognizes how *“...the continuity of the entrepreneurial nucleus assigns to businesses that can benefit from it a kind of personality to spend on the market and ability to read and interpret with effectiveness the evolution of the competitive environment”* (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi and Tunisini 2009).

Most entrepreneurs consider the family as the founding core of the company in harmony with the role that it fulfils in many cases.

“Few exceptions contradict a rule that wants this core as the backbone of short-term economic choices as well as the long-term ones. These settings, if they emphasize the potentially deleterious and destructive aspect of the insertion of wives, children and brothers in the company structure, if they stigmatize them as factors of decision-making uncertainty, of confusion of roles, of insane mixture of affections and affairs, if they emphasize as their own family is the major factor of weakness of Venetian companies, precisely because of their eccentricity with respect to common experience, they also reveal themselves fundamentally unrelated to the mentality and to the feeling which are common today” (D. Celetti, E. Novello 2007).

In order to realize the situation of hybrid entrepreneurship, which we have already mentioned, and to consider an ideal outlet to guarantee the future of businesses, a choice already adopted by successful businesses, the implementation of this method will favour, in every way, the transition from forms of relationship based on power to interactive sharing, that is to relational situations where the parties share common visions, goals, information, knowledge, and - why not? - also feelings and emotions. The managers involved in the strategic echelons will thus be able to help make the fundamental decisions of the company, the markets on which to operate, the technologies to be used, the resources to be activated, the choice of collaborators and the organization of their relationships, into one dynamic structure. Medium-sized enterprises occupy productive

market spaces useful to those who can better manage them. They live in a context of extreme competition with the need for constant technological renewal, effective marketing, and a lean and efficient organization. There are many challenges facing motivated and coordinated managers, co-opted to cooperation with the entrepreneur. Success, mediocrity, or failure are all part of the same reality. The difference comes out depending on the way with which the variables involved are combined. An interesting solution for the new generation of family businesses, emerges from the study conducted and presented in the text that guides us and seems to lie precisely in the success of the union between manager and family business: the hybrid company.

“Stevenson distinguishes two management behaviours: the purely entrepreneurial and purely administrative one” (V. Gandolfi 2006).

The evolution involves the transition from managerial entrepreneurship, typical of the initiator, to entrepreneurial management, with purely administrative behaviour on the part of the continuator.

“The initiator relies above all on his gifts of intuition, of creativity, pursuing business opportunities even in high default of knowledge, with the most diverse consequences in terms of development or failure... [...] ... The two behaviours are distinguished above all by informality, in the case of the innovator and for the formalization of the acts in the other case ... [...] ... neither the one, nor the other, considered on their own, is sufficient to manage effectively the company’... [...] ... The ‘managerialization’ of small and medium-sized enterprises particularly invests the areas of formulation of strategy, organizational development, control systems” (V Gandolfi 2006).

In essence, it is a question of passing the knowledge deposit from a capable, unconscious nucleus, to conscious and capable receptors. Often the entrepreneur cannot explain the reason for his successful choices, but what he does works, it works well! We are talking about natural flair, about unconscious ability.

“The other fundamental concept of Polanyi’s epistemology is that of tacit knowledge. ‘In every act of knowledge’ – he states - ‘there is a tacit and passionate contribution from the person who knows what is known’ For our author the tacit knowledge is ‘the fundamental faculty of the mind’, the one which ‘creates explicit knowledge, gives it meaning and controls its uses’” (M. Baldini 2003).

Not surprisingly, in family businesses, only a modest 3% of them grow over the years, while the vast majority die before the business is passed on to the grandchildren. In the evolutionary and successful family – the management *hybrid form of business* - the entrepreneur operates by exercising strong leadership, using lean structures that favour communication among a small number of managers.

The highest volitional power, such as ultimate responsibility, rests on him, the entrepreneur-leader, but this does not prevent him from operating in a winning context of comparison and delegation.

Ownership, therefore, no longer necessarily coincides with entrepreneurship but its strength remains - along with the guide of initiation and amplification - the point of reference and control.

“... Say was ‘*the first to assign the entrepreneur - as such and distinct from the capitalist - a definite place in the strategy of economic process...*’ ... [...] ... *In the footsteps of Adam Smith, we find also Ricardo and Marx, these being authors for whom the processes of production and trade are ‘even more automatic’; Marx claims, as a matter of fact, that just an adequate availability of capital is sufficient for the functioning of the economic process*” (M. Baldini 2003).

Entrepreneur and manager are staged together to create an economic process that works. The essential character, the entrepreneur, had already been identified by Cantillon in the 17th century, as the decisive element of economic activities, but, it is a figure that, alone, is no longer enough to guarantee progress and business continuity.

We can continue our reflection on what are the concrete benefits which an organization can enjoy, in the presence of strong components of entrepreneurship, with the aid of the patient and incisive work carried out and published in the volume *An Emerging Treasure*.

The separation of roles between entrepreneur and manager, in the medium-sized business, has greatly reduced and this has become a strength. The evolution of the entrepreneur’s role has pushed him towards managerial functions: he knows the company well, it is the result of his creativity, it was made and modelled on his own ideals. He knows every single function and can play any role from worker to president. Consequently, he understands its problems, he experiences its genesis, development, and control. The manager, for its part, works in close contact with him, in an atmosphere of sharing and collaboration.

“Whoever thinks of surrounding himself with a host of collaborators and, in particular, of managers - immediately delegating the functions that are peculiarly his own - is a very good candidate to get out of the industry in which he has just stepped... [...] ... If you do not understand the difference between ‘Function’ (i.e. service) and ‘contract’ (i.e. rights and duties) you do not understand anything, neither of the managerial function, nor of the primacy that the operations to be done have in an enterprise, compared to the formal role that each play in the corporate administrative process” (R. Cafferata 2009).

While the entrepreneur-manager collaboration in the medium-size business works well, separating the governance from management involves many more risks and is much more difficult.

“The management of the company in all its decisions and actions must always have the objective and the constraint of economic result. It can justify its existence and its own authority only through the economic objectives it achieves. The management of a business fails if it fails to achieve economic results; ... [...] ... Every act, every decision, every management resolution have their first dimension in economic performance” (P.F. Drucker 1978).

“We have times when the ownership, while being separate from managerial functions, must necessarily get involved in operations already delegated because of the loss of a valuable employee. On the contrary, if a governance vacuum is created - when, for example, the ownership is in financial crisis or is in a phase of transition from founder to successor - it may happen that one or multiple executives temporarily assume functions relevant to the ownership, which is very different from usurping power, on the contrary it favours the solution of the problems that have emerged” (Cafferata and Caselli 1995).

Cafferata recalls how: *“The methodological approach of agency theory offers an important tool for understanding the cost of ownership and management relationships, as well as the potential of harmony and conflict that nestles in the aforementioned relationships [Gallinaro 1995]. The power relationship between principal and agent, although not changing the contracts, can move in one direction or in the other. For example, there could be a concentration of power on the agent, when he is able to generate and / or take over technical, managerial and commercial knowledge in an exclusive way. He can use it to get away ‘opportunistically’ from the discipline of the*

contract: misusing the acquired power” (R. Cafferata 2009).

Managers, in the medium-sized enterprises studied, are generally co-opted from within the organization within a process of selection and training, a long and careful *internal venturing*. In this process emotional ties matter as much as the necessary skills involved.

Internal co-optation carries out individual growth projects, becomes a source of staff motivation while increasing the stability of the organizational structure, loyalty to the company; it strengthens the protection of knowledge and makes the inclusion of the manager in his new function less traumatic and risky because of possible rejection, in the other cases, by the organization. “... *the company must be aware that 20-30% of hiring will not be a success*” (Brunetti, Rullani 2006).

This choice, to be sure, is not always possible, and it will be necessary to look for the managerial resources and skills deemed necessary outside the company.

The addition of managerial positions allows a progressive easing of the pressure exerted by the entrepreneur and therefore a progressive re-composition of the entrepreneurial core and of his style of government. And, that is: “... *given the increasing complexity of the organizational structures and business processes, a progressive insertion of external managers or at least the development of a style (and structures and processes) of a governance of managerial kind is fundamental*” (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi, Tunisini 2009).

Sometimes the manager tends to conceive the company as an opportunity offered primarily to himself. His is a tendentially self-centred viewpoint with a participation distinguished between what in some way pertains to his personal sphere and how much, instead, belongs to the company. His vision is normally long termed, aimed at satisfactory results while often contrasting with that of the entrepreneur, who is more interested in short lead times with ambitious thrusts for excellence and improvement of economic results.

We are all familiar with some opportunistic managerial behaviours, such as maximization of growth at the expense of profit, expansion based on the potential of the company, even if contrary to the interest and orientation of shareholders, the adoption of financial practices that are sometimes not shared. These dangers in the joint entrepreneur/manager management tend to dissolve.

Once again, the disciplinary literature proposes the model of hybrid enterprise that we share:

“By focusing on qualitative characteristics, we can say that in medium-sized enterprises entrepreneurs need to be supported by a managerial structure... [...] ...” Again: *“Businesses have bought machines, invented new products, learned to compete internationally without much change in their ownership and governance structures. In the galaxy of small and medium-sized businesses the centre has remained, almost always, the entrepreneur and his family; few are the partners admitted to some form of participation to the business, rare professional managers; while the procedures and the organizational relations remained informal. Today, however, this organizational model is no longer enough. The first to realize it were the medium-sized companies, that is the companies which have gained visibility and influence in their supply chains, which have grown ‘from below’ to acquire a position of recognized leadership. From an organizational point of view, the medium-sized companies represent a case on their own: they are too big to be handled informally and personally, and they are too small to support the fixed costs and rigidities of large central staff, which administer power in large corporations”* (Brunetti, Rullani 2006).

All this is confirmed in the case studies addressed in the volume *An Emerging Treasury*: *“... investments are made on employees or even on resources external to the company in view of a progressive integration into the entrepreneurial core. In this sense, the ownership structure that often coincides with the family, in reality frequently presents a broader range of action and includes additions and changes depending on conditions, times and context ... [...]... In the businesses analysed, however, it seems that work is being done to achieve a balance between the needs and specificities of the family and those of the company that refers to it. This means that, on the one hand, the company evolves on the basis of resources and characteristics of the reference family and, on the other hand, the family gives in to the needs of the business by changing their own visions, ambitions, needs.*

The generational transition is one of the most sensitive aspects in this area, and the companies analysed seem to be able to anticipate and ‘manage’ these appointments well in advance, for example, by resorting to structural governance transformations and seeking the support of external

managerial or financial resources. On the one hand, to ensure the continuity of family control and, on the other hand, to support the company growth. ... [...] ... In some of the analysed companies the entrepreneurial core remains the same for long periods. The advantages deriving from the continuity of the entrepreneurial core are multiple and significant, the foremost being the quality guarantee and the reliability that a stable core testifies to customers, suppliers and financiers” (Varaldo, Dalli, Resciniti, Tunisini 2009).

We would now like to consider the contribution of Jim Collins, particularly where he states that: *“Having a great idea or being a charismatic visionary leader is ‘time telling’; building a company that can prosper far beyond the presence of any single leader and through multiple product life cycles is ‘clock building’” (Collins, Porras 1994).*

For Collins it is more important to build a watch rather than developing the skills to tell the time by watching the movement of the sun or the position of the stars. “Clock building, not time telling” is his orientation. The recommendation that can be offered here, the emerging necessity, is that the entrepreneurial core should manifest a strong presence but should also make sure it will use its own skills, not only to act directly, but also to ensure that the organization develops the energies and the contributions it needs. This proceeds from the development of its self-regulation.

In particular: *“... the builders of visionary companies tend to be clock builders, not time tellers. They concentrate primarily on building an organization - building a ticking clock - rather than on hitting a market just right with a visionary product idea and riding the growth curve of an attractive product life cycle” (Collins, Porras 1994).*

Collins identifies an architect-like attitude in visionary entrepreneurs, as it is the case towards their organization, and suggests the development of this precise attitude.

“Indeed, few of the visionary companies in our study can trace their roots to a great idea or a fabulous initial product” (ibidem).

He also notes how the entrepreneurial contribution in the successful businesses he analysed, is aimed more at the realization and at the control of an incremental process concerning knowledge, organization, and product quality, rather than at great ideas or superior technologies. They are companies that patiently went to work, carried away by a desire of constant improvement and the ability to understand what it means in the eyes of their client.

Thus: *“If you’re a high-profile charismatic leader, fine. But if you’re not, then that’s fine, too, for you’re in good company right along with those that built companies like 3M, P&G, Sony, Boeing, HP, and Merck. Not a bad crowd”* (ibidem).

After this appropriate contribution, which, if it does not down-size the role of the entrepreneur of medium-sized companies, it will allow, however, a more critical view, moves him off the hagiographic pedestal and opens the way to the idea of substitutability. It is a fact to be noted that in large companies, which were the subject of the study of Collins, the management runs the company and the entrepreneur becomes a more evanescent figure, although growing as far as representativeness is concerned.

The success of SMEs, when compared to the substantial stagnation or ongoing regression of large companies, may also depend on the significant difference highlighted by our passionate defence and research of the powerful engine of the company, its entrepreneurship.

Around us there is, I am talking about the north-east of Italy, the necessary cultural humus that allows us to develop both at both a personal and economic level as well.

I wish to write in this book what could become a stimulus that someone could pick up. After all, man, right from childhood, learns by imitation, by looking around and by analysing the behaviours and systems of today’s society, rich in ferments and possibilities. He can try to enter and increasingly animate the formidable anthropological circus made up of entrepreneurs who, particularly in Italy, is both large and dynamic; although today, it finds itself facing a great need for generational changes with further new, magnificent anthropological figures: the visionary and honest entrepreneurs, the true social authors and not just actors.

Despite everything, I believe that economy can expand in the climate of freedom that Europe enjoys today, where people feel as their innate inner urge, the desire to acquire security and wealth.

Garcia Marquez said: *“Rich, no! I’m a poor man with money, which is not the same thing”*.

Money doesn’t always cloud the mind if it stays in its better function of operational means.

Conversely, carefully consider the companies where politics or the dominant philosophy of religion push in opposite directions. Here we observe stagnation, sadness, and annihilation.

It seems strange to me that our present political leaders do not understand how depressing, blocking, and to be rejected, this message of sadness is, how hypercritical, purposeless, empty, and full of rancour and illusory retaliation. Our wise Constitution implements and regulates the freedom to undertake - I would even dare to say that it proposes it - almost like a suggestion, to have the courage to change, to evolve, and to overcome *the anxiety of influence*.

Harold Bloom highlighted the importance of the *anxiety of influence* by demonstrating how the creative motion, in all the arts, takes place under the instigating, deforming, and reactive pressures of the works of the predecessors.

Influence is the inevitable context. Händel was a great musician, whom I mention because he is my constant passion (you know his *Hallelujah!*). He managed, like many others, to make the break with the past, also aided by his physical transference and integration into the stimulating reality of London, leaving his native Germany.

Remaining cautiously, but with determination and profit, on the edge of chaos and looking out over it helps to heal from the anxiety of influence and allows for evolution. After all, we owe everything we are to others: Emile Durkheim, father of sociological positivism (1893), who originated functionalism, argues that economic rationality of individuals exists *a priori* and is deeply rooted in society; he thus highlights how people belong to groups, and how much their choices reflect pre-existing social and historical structures.

From a functionalist point of view, each specific company has its own internal adaptive mechanisms that keeps it in dynamic-functional balance. The individual can choose how to integrate in an orderly and energizing way into the dynamic social system that surrounds it.

Four powerful motivational engines are present in each of us: the need to acquire, to socialize, to learn and to defend oneself; these are felt as necessities which must be satisfied. That is, they are stimuli to take as much action towards our objectives as the culture in which we are immersed makes possible.

Society provides us with a splendid menu of choices. Our nature stokes hunger and culture will allow you to feast, in compliance with precise rules of conduct, in the interest of society itself.

This work springs from conversations on the themes of modern

management, leadership, assisting us to understand how to get the best out of people, and how to set and reach goals that make the team of people working with us happy too.

We see around us groups of people engaged in social or religious activities, or in the business world, capable of heading, with determination and satisfaction, towards the achievement of shared goals which they then fully realize. We wonder, what makes a winning team? What is the mechanism that makes these groups become so determined to reach high peaks, inspired by one vision, while other groups seem to go nowhere?

People tend to unite spontaneously, to bond, thanks to common emotional impulses, which lead to an implicit social contract of mutual commitment, care, and support. Subsequently, the rational component intervenes, which leads to the separation of tasks and responsibilities.

We will see the essential figure of the process, the leader, the *dramatis persona*, come into play. We will try to investigate it further. Above all we would like to try to understand how a head, a manager, or a leader can get the people on their team to act as they wish, and be satisfied with it. Great things are the result of effective collaborative work, not of a single person, although being the critical catalyst.

We are talking about hard work, a strong and continuous commitment, the kind of work that requires emotional drive and dedication.

Richard Bandler, the brilliant founder of Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP), writes: *“Most of the individuals do not actively and deliberately use their own brain. The brain is like a machine without a switch with the ‘off’ position. If you don’t give it something to do, it does nothing but it keeps spinning, and in the end, it gets bored... [...] ... Most people are prisoners of their own brains. It is as if they were chained to the last seat on the bus, and someone else is behind the wheel. I want you learn to drive your own bus yourself”* (Bandler 1986).

A Chinese saying insists that behind a skilled man, there are other skilled men. Here, in Italy, the saying has become this: *“behind a great man there is a great woman.”* The malicious add: *“... and he is surprised”*...

Teamwork brings together physical and mental energies, concentrating more nascent energy in the form of ideas, will, and balance. A group maximizes the qualities of the leader and minimizes his weaknesses in a collective growth process. Understanding the importance of the contribution given by others and knowing how to organize it, means to

know how to take the first step towards leadership and it also to know how to lead a group of people who will all benefit from the result, by continually being motivated to work together for a common goal.

If we have a healthy ambition to become leaders, individuals who, in addition to solving their existential problem in the best possible way, contribute to the development of society, people who others respect and follow, we must make sure that from our own interactive process with others, satisfied people will emerge, motivated, fully involved. Heart and brain, that is, with their rationality, but also with their emotions that are to be respected and protected because they are essential to survival and play a vital role in motivating behaviour. Purely rational solutions are often not resolute. Rather, they must also deal in some way with human emotions to be effective and produce the results wanted.

I understand rationality as coherence of behaviour between personal values and those consolidated in society, which hopefully coincide with the purposes that the individual aims to achieve. Rationality should guide him in setting goals, evaluating all possible alternatives and in choosing the coherent alternative with values.

People - rationality of behaviour taken for granted - want to be treated as they wish, as they feel they should, only in this way can the bonds between them be consolidated. Every human relationship shows cooperative aspects that coexist with aspects of competition. The leader manages to orient the relationship in order to bring out the cooperative aspect, and he achieves this primarily by treating people as they legitimately wish to be treated.

The leader is also careful to develop the best relationships possible with colleagues and subordinates, including those who have interests in the organization: customers, suppliers of goods and services, social partners, community, and territory.

The exercise of leadership, especially in the world of business, requires personality and character attributes which include integrity, self-esteem, communication skills understood as a critical value, and a passion for excellence.

Some leaders show they have a similar mental endowment. However, if their psychological endowments are frequently similar, the way of achieving them is quite different, therefore, we are talking of a psychological matrix that can be compared to a theatrical script, which can be interpreted in very different ways by different actors.

Leaders are aware that, with their passionate dedication, they can make a difference, eliminate the *status quo* that prevents the evolution of organizations. They can glimpse and show a better future, thus knowing how to create an ideal image of what the organization can become. They do that through the magnetism that emanates from them, supported by culture, preparation, style, and aesthetic values. They do it with modalities that come to be quite different, the result of daily application to the exercise of leadership, and through quiet persuasion, thus inserting others, all others, into their own dream.

They manage to bring vitality into their vision and to offer opportunities for a better future to people who seek to excel. To do that, they also demonstrate the courage to try new ways, taking the risks themselves.

The leader also manages to help people experience the present moment better, to remain totally immersed in the present, in the ongoing action. Only the present matters. The good Lord put our eyes in front of us, not behind us. We must break our rear-view mirrors, we must acquire the courage to break with the past, to innovate, to break out of the plaster mould of patterns which lead nowhere. The history of companies, organizations, and work groups, in a world changing at the speed of *leptons* but constantly referring to the past can be the brake, or the anaesthetic dulling any progress. Only the present counts, which does not exist, being already future, so that by remaining in the present we work for our future.

The Japanese even have a term for the need to stay strongly focused on the present: *Tadaima*, *only now*, only now counts.

If you allow me a digression, this is also the attitude of European nomadic people, the Gipsy. “*There are other cultures that have difficulty in conceiving the past, and consequently also the future: these are cultures of nomadic origin... [...] ... In the nomadic culture, life essentially unfolds in the present, therefore the two dimensions of the past and the future somehow are missing and it becomes difficult for these people to conceptualize them*” (Paolo Balboni 1999).

The case of the Arab populations is different, since: “*Interjections such as the Arabic inshallah or his Spanish counterpart si Dios quiere, are well known. This is not mere fatalism, as a European may think, but a deeply rooted religious necessity, explicitly required by the Koran, to recognize that the future is in the hands of God and therefore also the use of the future tense of verbs can be blasphemous; a challenge to God*” (ibidem).

It should also be kept in mind that in reports, in communicative events, you can only achieve success if you can tolerate failure. A salesman, during his sales pitch, gets a “no” on average five times, before two “yes” at the end (sometimes with variations, such as: *call me back*, etc ...).

In the insurance sector, a sale takes place after an average of seven refusals.

Rejection can often be an unconscious request for more information or for a more intense feeling. Far from viewing it as being resistance, accepting it, understanding it, and persevering, becomes the key; in those cases, it is necessary to keep being respectful, capable of asking effective questions, therefore developing a relationship.

The leader devotes a lot of time and effort to maintaining his own leadership and pays constant attention to developing his own skills; he manages to induce energy in his collaborators, and to make organizational procedures and objectives compatible with those of the employees. In short, he creates consensus about the values of the organization and maintains the high morale and productivity of people through helping them to develop their full potential; he learns to listen even to the weak signals and not only to the strong ones. Listening to them can be a natural gift, but, more frequently, it must be acquired.

This last skill comes from a positive respect for others, it is its very premise. People do things for their reasons, not ours.

It is therefore essential to discover enough of these reasons. It is still the leader who knows how to develop persuasive communication, because he understands the interests that move man and the mechanisms that determine the motivation, and he creates an environment of mutual trust, a prerequisite for every effective and durable interaction. Such trust makes up *the petri dish* each of us needs to accept the other person or not.

Trust is often defined by Anglo-Saxons as *countability*, and gives the idea of accounting for something that is the sum of good feelings, character, competence, commitment and concreteness.

Misplaced trust can cost you dearly, but we need adequate levels of trust to keep any relationship together.

Each person is a world on his own, which however reflects many common characteristics that we can find in every human being.

We quote: “*Part two of the book, describe the four primary innate drive that we believe are hard-wired in the brains of all humans: These*

drives shape the choices we make. The first (D1) is the drive to acquire objects and experiences that improve our status relative to others. The second (D2) is the drive to bond with others in long-term relationship of mutually caring commitment. The third (D3) is the drive to learn and make sense of the world and of ourselves. The fourth (D4) is the drive to defend ourselves, our loved ones, our beliefs, and resources from harm” (Lawrence, Nohria 2002).

Any organization, in any business, has the need to guarantee the participants the opportunity to acquire what their drives require. Genetically inserted into the limbic system of every man, there are the needs to acquire, learn, socialize, and defend oneself. The goals that those drives impose, and that must be satisfied, are the product of an evolutionary wisdom that does not allow the possibility of interchange or compensation. Each of them will receive the bill on time and without discounts, they will want it to be settled, even if interactive and hierarchy forms exist among them.

Work, which guarantees the opportunity to satisfy these needs, almost physically sculpted in the brain of every man, will turn out to be the most fulfilling activity, and the best way to effectively meet perceived needs.

We might wonder, therefore, how to be able to inspire, motivate, and lead to get the best out of people. The leader must be able to understand others, to persuade them, to motivate them, to inspire them and to assist them, to achieve the highest levels of effectiveness, and be able to accomplish for them several things, which we will now review in detail, without neglecting any in order to guarantee effectiveness.

This is the theme of the reflections that follow. Ultimately, we are going to discover together, if we too can develop an effective method to get the things we propose done in the best way.

In the book *The OK boss*, by Muriel James, we read: “*I am firmly convinced that aspiring bosses want to be good bosses, constructive and positive bosses, OK bosses*”(James 1986).

The world needs managers and leaders in every sector of human, social, political, economic, professional activity: the manager, to make people do things, the leader to get people to want to do things, arousing in them the most suitable emotions.

Determination is the state of mind that precedes conscious, voluntary behaviour.

There are three phases of intentional action, as described by Lewin.

At first, there is a tension, a conflict between different options, which precedes the decision to resolve that conflict. Then we act... *Akrasia* permitting, I would add.

People know that smoking, overeating, alcohol, etc. are bad for them, but they cannot stop the harmful action. There is an obstacle, a certain apathy, an absence of the will that moves them to go on. To react, emotions far beyond rationality must intervene. It is emotions that play a vital role in motivating voluntary behaviour and they deserve all the attention of managers and leaders.

If we look at our managers, from whom we ask a lot, in the world of industry, for example, we realize that we ask them to take responsibility for the success of the company, to ensure profitability, to highlight the qualities of integrity, transparency, vision, passionate dedication, along with the human talents of intelligence, inner strength, courage and charisma.

We cannot be surprised that many managers seem, at the end, to provide an unsatisfactory performance. Expectations are often too idealized, too high, out of the reach of most people, although capable and committed, but who are not thaumaturges. They have heard of the magician Houdini, but they are not as skilled.

We demand from them a knowledge of finance, marketing skills and sensitivity, organizational skills, technical knowledge, skills in finding and managing the necessary resources, skills to develop aesthetic contents, to improve the quality of interactions between people, resolving conflicts and winning difficult commercial battles, never forgetting to smile and distribute serotonin, the happiness hormone.

The wisest strategy in trying to deal with resistance to change and resolve conflicts, is to agree and collaborate, as much as possible, instead of fighting, precisely because we are aware of the difficulties to be faced. If we consider the amount of stress that comes to a boss from the management of economic, human, and other resources, we can see how, among them, it is dealing with people that causes the greatest stress.

However, it is difficult to deny that there exist many weak and incapable managers who make their subordinates believe that they could do even better without them, and that a flat organization would work the same and better. This may be true in some unfortunate specific cases, and it strengthens the affirmation that human organizations need good managers,

and when they are lucky enough to have one, they must support him and enjoy the results, even more so if we are talking about a good entrepreneur, with the blessing of social divisionists. Often the weak performance of the managers does not depend on them, but on the complexity and turbulence of the events that the current reality unloads on them in hardly metabolizable doses.

Recent research has shown that little more than the 30% of job interviews are sought by the manager, 5% agreed and therefore about 65% occur as interference, without planning, without specific preparation. In some work situations, this percentage is average, and shows even more difficult to manage variance peaks.

Good leaders know how to stimulate and make good use of the intelligence widespread in their organization. They know how to produce the collective good which adequately stimulates and guides the achievement of goals, but this intelligence must actually be available, the ship must know how to ride the seas in the face of storms, not just the calm.

Leadership is the ability to guide the group and to integrate with people for whom you have responsibility, sharing means and targets. Leadership is built with tenacity and courage, responsibility, effective communication, but also knowing how to learn from your mistakes with humility, accepting such correction by shouldering their responsibility.

The leader should punish his hand for failing, with the determination of Mucius who burnt his own hand for failing in his task to kill Porsenna, and became Scaevola - left-handed. He now stands as a shining example of moral strength to us too, not only to Rome's enemies of that time.

The best leaders show that they are driving oriented, they have a dedicated GPS that guides them. They are capable of fixing important objectives and not giving up until they are achieved with their group. They are driven by their own emotional intelligence, so they can read and check the emotional answers of other people. They know how to inspire confidence because of their convinced adherence to ethical principles.

They have a systemic rationality, the ability to conceive or improve products or services, strategies, and organizational models with constantly new ideas, always managing to maintain a broad overview of the situations.

In America, leaders are also called *great bus drivers*.

They drive a bus after deciding carefully - first of all - who has to get in; therefore, they scrupulously assign the seats before finally announcing the

destination, which will prove an exciting destination for everyone.

“Faber est suae quisque fortunae”, to recall Sallust turning to Appius Claudius Ciecus. Each is the architect of his own fortune, which can be reached all together on board a suitable bus.

2. Leadership

The ability to lead others is not just the prerogative of persons who occupy power positions in human organizations, that is, of people at the top of a specific organizational pyramid. Rather, it is about owning a set of characteristics and abilities that can be cultivated at any time and will be the best and most shared vehicle for the long climb up the hierarchical ladder.

Each Indian deity rides an animal, which is their specific vehicle and additional means of identification.

Let us ride the leadership, let us get carried high, to experience the thrill of the vast landscapes of freedom, of responsibility, and of the joy of bringing other people with us, towards a better future. To see that vision realized will inspire us.

Age, profession, career stage or the current goals a person may have to become what they aspire to be, and can become, are not relevant. Rather, it is important to find out how to get the most out of one's own potential; in each of us there is an energy which we individually use, sometimes greater, unexpressed and potential.

Possession of specific skills does not create the condition of leadership. Capabilities alone - however high they may be - do not make a leader. Alongside them, there must be an inner philosophy that reveals itself as specific style and behaviour, creating the climate that has the opportunity to develop, along with the ability, to express aesthetic qualities and create refined formal balances even in relations.

Leadership is the result of the endowment of individual characteristics, talents and training, ability to monitor and understand the context in which one operates, determination in achieving goals, and the ability to respond to challenges ... but, and here is the thing: while these elements are general, it is the way we choose to combine them and the priorities

and intensities that we will put in place, which will be unique, which will make everyone's style.

If you are interested in developing effective leadership, begin with leadership behaviour, to be built on a solid philosophical and aesthetic platform.

Let us get to work: "*stop smoking and start training*", as our friends from overseas say, with apparent concentration on the exterior, the physicality, but in fact proposing a precise change of life. It is not easy. Assigning tasks and getting them done in the best way is the commitment of each person who exercises the functions of leader, the head of other people.

It may be appropriate to clarify the difference that we see existing between leader and head, both vocated to commanding people and obtaining concrete results.

The *boss* is the one, who, by virtue of a hierarchical superior position, possesses a power which however he received it, exercises influence and control over those who are guided, supervised and commanded, while the leader achieves the same result, but with completely different methods.

Head is defined as the beginning, the end, the source, prominence in geography, a genre, an article, when referring to an object. In organizations, the boss is seen as the antidote to chaos, and this situation tends to be general. However, perhaps It is worth noting how highly innovative, modern organizations are also establishing themselves, finding their way in promising insidious areas of chaos, as a definitive liberation of intellectual energies and feelings.

The complexity of organizations by their nature is strongly linked to chaos, even if they enjoy only a little degree of freedom. Organizational success, the work of the leader, lies in its ability to peek over the edge of chaos, the particular threshold of balance, a non-linear area, capable of releasing energies that promote the evolution and creation of the space of possibility.

Non-linearity is characteristic of complex adaptive systems (CAS), because while the properties of a linear system are additive, the effect of complex systems is different from the sum of the characteristics of the parts that compose it and that in their dynamic interaction make new effects appear, rather than the sum of the effects put in place.

The philosophy behind leadership, the style of the leader, will freely promote original dynamic choices among different possible behaviours

and alternative choices, realizing a whole that is difficult to understand by just examining the components, nor can it be understood by decomposition, but requires the task of examining every aspect with a type of holistic approach, an overview of the whole. This is also why there is not just one style of leadership, good for all occasions.

The non-linearity of the interactions between the components put into play - and harmonized by the leader in creating the complex system, which hopefully will become self-organizing – makes it an inexplicable system when analysed in its own components, but it will be clear in the mind of the leader and clearly perceivable outside, although only holistically, and the reading will be devoid of the dynamics that govern it and that ultimately characterize it as unique.

It is a little bit like the question of bumble bees, which fly despite science, and the difficulty to implement effective benchmarking of both competitors and *best-in-class*.

This makes human organizations and companies in the business world different from one another, managing to be extremely different, even if they operate in absolutely similar contexts: same production plants, same replacement goods, same markets, and the same equal opportunities.

The dynamic recombination of technologies - resources, relationships, values and principles put in place, permeated by the ability of developing aesthetic content - is the masterpiece of leadership and makes human organizations and companies unique. In the theory of complexity, the area, rather than the demarcation line, where one reaches a point of balance between total freedom and absolute order, which is known as the edge of chaos, leadership will guarantee adequate portions of freedom, that nourishes responsible creativity and makes the work experience more rewarding, compensated by equivalent balancing doses of organization regulated by rules.

From the non-linearity of interaction – between the components of a system, its attitude to exhibit inexplicable properties arises on the basis of the laws that govern the individual components themselves.

For chaotic systems, we are unable to predict their behaviour in the long-term, but “*the inability to predict does not mean inability to learn or explain*” (Kauffman 2001).

The edge of chaos is the promising compass point, which the leader should strive for: it consists in compensating for the need to free up creative

intellectual resources in certain functional areas or certain individuals - we are thinking of researchers, marketing people, but more generally, of the work of each person (whatever that may be), which needs its own space, responsible and creative freedom. This freedom of roles and functions that the leader frees, will have to be, as it has been said, compensated with adequate doses of control and standards in order to guarantee reliability, transparency, and solidity to the organization.

All that will be related to the dynamic balance that is identified in the area that designates the limit of chaos.

In *The Voyage*, Charles Baudelaire wrote: “*Au fond de l’Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau! ... To the depths of the Unknown to meet the new!*”.

In my youth, my favourite sport was horse riding. Well, I soon learned that the reins must always be taut, not pulled, and that you ride horseback with your knees, not comfortably sitting in the saddle.

This technique, from the Italian school and adopted all over the world, allows the rider constant control of the horse while granting it adequate freedom. This highlights the determination of man in guiding events, his ability to control, with the application of the criteria that every other discipline also has consolidated, and the obligation to know them and continuously implement in his specific daily experience.

In convinced obedience to this need, at 65 I started a further course of university studies, to achieve a degree in Marketing and Communication, which led me, through a motivating and rewarding study program, to deepening fundamental issues for the exercise of my leadership, subjects such as economic law, private law, industrial law, international contract law, accounting, computer science, statistics and, above all, marketing, from its origins to its exciting, multiple expressions and modern specializations.

It was a cultural and technical revision of ideas and behaviours, capable of transferring certainties and new ideas, strengths, determination, credentialism - always necessary for every leader, and last, but not least, also useful support for one’s ego. “*Prop up the ego*” say the English, knowing that it is not a matter of pride, but of necessary emotional support, vitamins for intelligence.

So, we are not talking about just comfortably sitting on the saddle!

You can sit on the saddle only if you are stationary, in short breaks, but still always vigilant for any possible sudden shift of the horse, that may be scared of something or decide to scoff or shake off the rider, or may place

the bit between its teeth and then you definitely lose control. It is also always necessary to maintain a dignified, adequate posture. The necessary functions of a boss for the activities aimed at the management of people and the solution of problems that arise when they are working together, can be covered by the leader or by the manager.

In the case of a manager, in the business world for example, the task is objective, that is, the measurable commitment is to go from one point to another, to carry out the processes and implement the more appropriate techniques to obtain good results. To do this well, the tools of the trade can be acquired in management schools, or through the study of the excellent literature available. The manager's duties arise predominantly from needs rather than desires: to resolve problems, to heal conflicts and optimize processes, to make effective communication, institutionalize learning, to be able to bring customers to an emotional experience, to check and to promote continuous innovation, to communicate, to distribute value to target markets and customers in order to ensure the best profit to the company. Managers walk in fields mined by the KPIs, as defined by the Anglo-Saxons, the *Key Performance Indicators*.

In the case of the leader, however, the energies and resources put in play are subjective, unitary, they involve every aspect of the person and his attitudes, also revealing the respect he has for others, and leads to excellent KPIs.

Leaders are observed at every stage of their journey, interpreted for each individual episode and as a whole. They guide you to do things the right way instead of just doing them well.

A manager becomes a leader when, with determination, he succeeds into translating their shared principles and values into appropriate actions, drawing other people with it. "*Nemo solus satis sapit*". And again, "*vae soli*" is written 24 times in the book of Wisdom, in the Bible. Leadership is the vision, the opportunity to turn it into a reality, it is the happy condition of the leader who is no longer alone.

Leaders manage to set goals that enable them to grasp potential opportunities, which they can spot around the corner. Leaders have a dream to share with others and they guide them to reach it. *Plan*, therefore, but then *Do* and *Check!* Just put Dream before this trilogy known to managers and you will have the leader's guide: *Dream, Plan, Do, Check*.

He is the man who inspires subordinates and guides them to solve

problems, putting their best energy to work, making all their potential emerge. He contributes to creating a corporate climate in which everyone can identify and allow good interpersonal relationships to flow collaboratively. Companies, in order to progress, need both, manager and leader, two completely different types of people.

The managerial culture, not yet totally freed from Fordism which is struggling to die, emphasizes rationality and control, aims at achieving organization objectives, solves problems, organizes resources and structures, develops the organizational network, ensures total quality, develops the brand, strengthens links with distribution structures and its value chains, monitors competitors' activities, dominates technologies, studies markets and formulates financial strategies, production and consequent marketing.

A manager may not be a leader at all, but I can hardly see the figure of a leader who wants to exercise his leadership without being a manager. Managerial culture is therefore a necessary step to exercise leadership. The problem is that often what it takes to develop the manager can inhibit the development of leaders. You need to expose yourself to the right dose of radiation and then retract charged up, ready to begin spraying the environment with your own energy, accumulated with experience and brought by natural talents.

The brain is seen in modern terms as a computational system capable of comparing new perceptions with those existing in its memory. If that specificity does not appear in its neuronal archive, the brain generates or presents a range of possible solutions up to the greatest possible approximation, which then is stored as new data.

Unfortunately, not all dissonances can be easily solved in the heat of past experiences. It is not always possible to warm up at the usual fireplace to find solutions to the new situations that are very frequent today.

Another consideration is that leadership expects leaders to apply one of the two theories X or Y, which we will talk about later, according to one's nature, one's convictions and experiences. Having chosen one of these fundamental leadership styles, made predominant also because it emerges from one's own nature, before implementing it, it must be adapted in time and methods to the specific situation. After that it will be necessary to be consistent with the choice made, the result of strong convictions, and be willing to wait, to be understanding and yielding if the chosen line is

underlying the theory Y, reactive and rigid in the other case.

The XY theory was proposed by the American social psychologist Douglas McGregor in 1960 in his book *The Human of Enterprise*.

McGregor's idea is that there are basically two different approaches towards people, underlined in theory X and theory Y, the latter being the one I personally think to be more productive and reasonable than the other supported by theory X.

According to the Y approach, people are considered basically good, they want to learn, they know how to grow, they need to satisfy the desire to belong and to be recognised. For them the commitment to work, both physical and intellectual, is as natural as playing. People apply themselves with self-control to the pursuit of the common goal, not so much for external scrutiny or fear of punishment; their commitment to achieving the goals is rather supported by the recognition that these results guarantee. People willingly accept and often seek roles of responsibility.

Theory Y holds that in organizations and in particular in businesses, the intellectual potential of average people is used only partially. Therefore, there is a widespread possibility of making use of a high degree of innovative capacity, of imagination, in solving organizational problems. Leaders who apply theory Y get the best performance and the most rewarding results for all involved in the process, with the human and professional growth of people. Sometimes it is good to be patient: "*natura non facit saltus*".

Conversely, theory X considers that the average person does not love work, and tries to avoid it whenever possible and, therefore, most of them have to be guided and forced to pursue the objectives of the organization even, if necessary, with the use of punishments.

Theory X holds that people tend to avoid responsibility, preferring to be directed, having little ambition and, above all, seeking comfort and safety. Working for a manager who supports Theory X and is often autocratic, is anything but pleasant and, frequently, the results achieved - particularly in the long term - can be quite modest. It is not good to recognize in one's own team the presence of people who embody what *Mister X* speculates. Nobody believes that a leader should be authoritarian. This infantile vision of the figure of the boss is not present in modern time relational dynamics, which instead requires authority. X managers are oriented to results, facts, and numbers. Little philosophy with them, they show they value results more than human aspects. It may work in some cases, but

effective leadership belongs to those who apply Theory Y with a sincere conviction. Rules are fine, but they are difficult to apply. It is much better to leverage on shared values, on consensus. However, we cannot fail to recognize the importance in organizations of managers oriented towards Theory X, which is more difficult to sustain also from a human point of view. Equally true is that if the leader is definitely Y oriented, he has to be joined by some Mister X. No doubt that virtues taken to the extreme can actually become a vice.

No poetry with them, only the hard facts count. It is them too, the Mister Xs, who provide a strong, precise and constant support to the organization and if some people can exercise their leadership, it may well depend on the completeness offered by the colder and more oriented contribution to the cognitive effort offered by others.

Too bad that the final letters of the alphabet were used to designate different approaches to the governance of people; there is still so much to be written about this exciting topic that it will have to start from letter A.

McGregor's theoretical XY model does not find much continuity, as it might seem from the succession of letters, in the Z theory by William Ouchi, who describes it in his book published in 1981: *How American Management can Meet the Japanese Challenge*.

Ouchi, a California professor of management, has tempered in McGregor's virtuous Y vision further important contents linked to the excellence of people, the latter being considered and sought after, especially in the Japanese reality that places great emphasize on the positive attitudes and the great sense of responsibility of the workers. Ouchi shifts the focus from manager to worker and thus he attempts to dilute the American managerial approach into the Japanese one.

We have therefore introduced the current three XYZ variables with their possible infinite nuances. Learning to distinguish the characteristics of the person gifted with leadership from the manager can be an inspiration to people who want to give that wing stroke that their own nature and the opportunity of life allow them.

Conversing about leadership and looking for its more peculiar characters, on numerous occasions judgments and fragmentary information are collected, sometimes contradictory and not always useful, but everyone seems to agree at least on one point: the importance of leadership itself.

Successful leaders are observed to be more than just oriented to the

achievement of a goal - this is a typical attitude of the boss - but also able to structure a shared program in order to achieve it.

Leadership in the business world, *executive leadership*, presupposes the ability to influence the actions of others and must accompany the ability to recruit and retain in the team human resources suitable for achieving the objectives of the organization.

As we can notice: *“To perform effectively a team requires three different types of skills. First, it needs people with technical expertise. Second, it needs people with the problem-solving and decision-making skills to be able to identify problems, generate alternatives, evaluate those alternatives, and make competent choices. Finally, teams need people with good listening, feedback, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills. No team can achieve its dull performance potential without developing all three types of skills”* (Robbins 2003).

The manager's ability to evaluate and select, assisted when possible by the human resources manager, can play a vital role in the performance that the group formed will reach, but we must not forget that, habitually, people behave differently according to the specific situations in which they are involved, and they may or may not match their aspirations or even fulfil their emerging need, depending on the specific drive that pushes them with more hypnotic force at that time of their life.

Recruiting is a delicate process that can be based on detectable individual characteristics, which will constitute a good assessment basis. It is recognized, for example, that 70% of the IQ of a person is due to genetic factors, is more or less inherited. This is also the percentage weight of genetic factors on people's attitude to happiness.

It is a widespread evaluative practice to refer to the past experiences of the person, but even here it does not mean that they have been experiences which generate learning and have the same general value.

The recruitment is usually based on paradigmatic parameters, which is not the best choice, because people and companies today operate in complex environments, where linearity and Newtonian mechanics have given way to the dynamics of constructive destruction, which are all called to participate in to create a better future for all.

During recruitment we move within the theory of agency, which sees a principal and an agent in relationship, being also typical of the relationship between entrepreneur and employee.

“The opportunism of the parties leads to a use of information asymmetries to their own advantage, generating two problems: the adverse selection (ex-ante opportunism) and moral hazard (ex post opportunism). In adverse selection, the agent provides incomplete or inaccurate information on its characteristics in order to get hired, the moral hazard comes from the possibility for the agent not to respect their commitments in the execution of the contract (however incomplete) also due to the difficulty and the onerousness of control by the principal” (Costa, Gubitta 2008).

Candidates to the most significant roles or functions for the organization must be open to eclecticism, be available to approaching the brink of chaos, which is the most fertile and promising area, from which people and organizations can draw on *“Clear fresh and sweet waters”* (to quote Petrarch) of renewal, towards the peaks of excellence.

We will approach the brink of chaos without forgetting the bitter consideration of Napoleon in St. Helena: *“From the sublime to the ridiculous there is only one step”* And, therefore: *“Cum grano salis”*, friends, always with that pinch of wisdom.

Companies learn through people, who have an extraordinary power to learn. It is the people who make the difference and who know how to lead organizations to the self-regulation typical of structures that emerge as effective in addressing the complexity within them and the environment in which they develop. Along with, and more than, the objective requirements, possibly already in possession of the candidates forming the team, his willingness to learn as a permanent condition must acquire significant weight in the evaluation: his feelings about work, his motivations, the ability to adapt, the willingness to align behavioural traits with the changing needs of the organization.

I would like to say, with all due respect, that it is valuable construction material that must be gently moulded with respect and skill, to lead him to his full satisfaction coinciding with the organization’s objectives.

Unfortunately, the culture of the organization, its organizational and spatial structure, its values, its internal and external relation and communication levels, including the climate, can also become the cause of failure, and not only of the success of his collaborators.

People will be capable of a broad-spectrum performance. It will be up to their leader to attract them, to empower them, to polarize them in coherent energy waves, turning them into just as many laser beams of positive

emotions and productivity, capable of cutting deep furrows in the context.

It is a matter of creating favourable conditions for the emergence of potential: that expressed, actually disbursed potential which is usually a part of what the person has.

A Campanian saying about failures recalls that: *“a rotting fish always starts smelling from the head”*. A metaphor for the fact that the responsibility for failure must be sought first and foremost in the heads, the leaders.

A true leader, in fact, never puts the responsibility on others. He takes it up personally and with this attitude he proceeds to the serene examination of what happened. He does not say: *“we won, they lost”*, but he prefers to say: *“they won, I lost”* - an attitude that he cultivates as his dominant thought.

A person tends to keep the characteristic traits of one's personality stable over time, and this is the basis of the trust that he manages to create around himself, because it allows predictability of his behaviour. However, an effective, motivating organization manages to help change behaviour, in order to make them match the needs of the organization in the best way possible, obtainable, not with manipulative interventions, but with contributions of convinced adhesion. The degree of response to change that we can expect from people actually depends on the fascination that this change will exercise on them, on their understanding, and on their correspondence with the individual satisfaction of the motivational motions which are most active in the circumstance.

A manager in office is endowed with a certain power, that power which comes into play, for example, in the initial approach with people of his staff whom he coordinates and inserts into roles and routines.

People, at first, will respond to the desire of the manager, precisely by virtue of this power. Inevitably, though, in the long run, other components of coordination and motivation must emerge and create a climate or a situation more favourable to the development of projects and people.

The manager's ability to persuade will then have to emerge, with the strength of his example, of his ideas and his personality. People have to be convinced of the goodness of the goals, and their action must also be supported by the belief that achieving them is worthwhile, while the manager's activity becomes the exercise of a set of measurable skills, such as effective planning, ability to use and to model the functional organization, the appropriate use of means of communication, and leadership presupposes

the adoption of these skills, typical of management. But in general, they are seen as an aid to the exercise of leadership, which instead resides in less tangible and less measurable skills, such as inspiration, the ability to build trust, positive thinking, professional and decision-making skills, the leadership attitude of others, his own personality and abilities.

People who exercise leadership are carefully monitored by their followers concerning their integrity, honesty, knowledge, commitment, as well as their sensitivity towards people and their wisdom in judging.

A management can be of one type or another, according to the methods and processes that the leader puts in place, each working well different contexts.

Leadership, on the other hand, is mainly characterized by the style with which management methods and processes are employed. There is no specific and unique style of leadership that is good in every case and for all seasons. Some leaders have a style that works well in specific situations, but inadequately in others; other leaders adopt completely different styles when dealing effectively with apparently similar situations.

A leadership style originates in the leader's philosophy, a philosophy that forms the basis on which relationships, strategies, and operational activities are built, including the modalities of their flow, their rhythm, and their intensity.

His philosophical platform will be the launch pad for his projects, but also the constant reference for the decisions and actions of his collaborators.

The most common types of leadership go from an autocratic style, which tends to flex its muscles, is direct, preferably making strong use of command, with the leader who thinks he knows perfectly what should be done and how, emanating orders and directives in accordance and where the relationship is based on the univocal decision-making power of the boss. This is the opposite style of the participatory type, which involves a continuous exchange between leaders and subordinates, on whose basis common levels of understanding and action are reached.

A specific leadership style is not necessarily always better than another, in every context and for every person. However, it appears that the best formula is that of a democratic style, which is located in the middle of the two realities highlighted above which requires that final decisions deemed right are always and, in every case, taken by the leader - as long as they are reached through a participatory and convincing collaboration. It is a

democratic style because decisions are made by taking the contribution of the people involved into account.

Of course, we have only sketched a distinction between the more frequent styles, but within this large grid we can detect other types, such as the autocratic one, polarized with extreme rationality on the objective, then the transactional one, the inductive one, etc. In other words, there is not one unique and cloneable type of leadership. There are as many as there are leaders, with many nuances, that reveal one point in common: they are recognized as leaders and, when followed, they work well.

With daily exercise, leadership grows, it matures and attracts even more followers and continues to develop in the exercise of his role. This reminds me of Sartre (*L'Être et le Néant* - 1943) when he writes "*faire et en faisant se faire*", so dear to existentialist philosophers "... *un pouvoir créateur présent en chaque homme*" (Jules Lequier).

The aspect that dominates the conventional notions of authority, and which most characterizes and makes leadership unmistakable, however, is that linked to profound human values put in place - as are the attitudes and behaviours which emerge from deep mental and spiritual reserves and emotional strength.

Leadership is exercised by taking responsibility for other people, the followers of the leader or the team assigned: his *ship*, precisely. This is virtually impossible to define and measure. It cannot be learned in management schools. But it can be inspired, and - if it is made the object of virtuous exercise and daily commitment - it can become the trait to which one aspires.

Some people are born with more characteristics of leadership than others, but each person who wants to become a leader can develop leadership skills.

Leadership, as we see from many situations in common life, is not the exclusive possession of cultured or powerful people, it most frequently finds its origin in strong personal convictions, in the ability to pass them on to others, in having a dream to be realized in which they firmly believe.

So, what is this Phoenix? This *umbrella concept* of leadership? It is the ability to formulate a dream and share it with others, as well as to lead them to make it happen, making them satisfied.

"*We have a dream!*" Martin Luther King shouted, dreaming of the end of racial segregation. And he attracted crowds.

It is comforting to hear it repeated even in the world of business, of social commitment, religion, politics, or work, indeed, wherever men come together with a common feeling, inspired by a source that guides them and organizes them into effective teams.

Leadership is an intriguing word, a semantic entity, difficult to translate but a concept in fact; a set of elements both coordinated and coherent with each other, an aura and an activity that arises from certain people: the *leaders*, it then projects itself onto other people, to create the suffix *ship*.

Joseph O'Connor in his: *The leader's book*, writes:

“Leadership is based on a paradox: whatever is your merit, no one can directly afford it. It is a gift that only others can offer us. Being a leader makes no sense if nobody decides to travel with us”.

To better define and understand what leadership is, etymology is of little help, which only perceives the leader as the one guiding, leading, from *lead* = to show the way, to guide, and *leadership* = supremacy, primacy (market leadership, etc ...).

In *Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology*, we read: *“Lead, show the way, guide. Developed from old English (before 725) laedan, cause to go with one”.*

The same roots are found in the High Germanic languages, Saxon and Friesian. In modern German it is *leiten*. But it is better to stop, without delving further into etymological research, otherwise it would take us to the Greek *loitè* from which the Indo-European etymology *leit (h)* comes, which means ‘passes away’, with the implication of something that *dies*.

Before 1325, it is found in the English language as *lede*, with the meaning of *guide, to guide*.

The term leadership appears only in 1834 and belongs to the kind of words that are almost impossible to translate and often efforts to translate it result in a futile semantic exercise; but even though it is difficult to say what leadership is, everyone understands its complex meaning, and they recognize it immediately when it manifests itself.

Each human organization identifies its own leader; each group of people chooses it consciously or unconsciously. It is a spontaneous notion with a need to have a precise reference, a point of convergence of each of us towards what attracts, then reassures before building loyalty.

It is a reasonable adhesion to the one who, for the authority that is

conferred upon him, represents and defends our aspirations before guiding us to an accepted goal better than others.

It is enough to look around: leaders emerge in continuation.

The question is: are they capable of effective leadership so as to be useful to others.

Let us see how some human groups turn out to be better inspired, motivated, and organized to be more effective in achieving their goals than others.

In these groups there is a particular leader, oriented to the others, which is the reason and the internal mechanism of effective operation.

However, the concept of leadership remains difficult to define, even if the different and complex realities in which it manifests itself have been dissected and carefully analysed by many authors. Despite the testimony of the conspicuous literature concerning leadership, it has proved impossible to explain it properly.

What do people expect from their leader in order to recognize him as such and obey him with conviction, with participation, and with effectiveness? What are the fundamental conditions that must be satisfied so that the collaboration becomes total, convinced, as well as gratifying for the people involved? What are the components of leadership which need to appear continually, what aspects of this ethereal source, mobile but coherent like a beam of laser light which appears and disappears as in a game of mirrors, reflecting a single creative force, which in turn becomes a beacon of light to others, whose intermittence is revealed, recognized, and accepted, because the beam of light may turn away at times, but it returns with constancy and strength, thus allowing to correct or to maintain the orientation.

Leadership is a virtuous force that demands - of those who have it or want to enhance it - to shape it and dominate it continuously, day by day.

In the complex and dynamic modern reality, the leader is required to arrive at scepticism, the *modus operandi* suggested also by Karl Popper, the philosopher of modernity, who can speak to us men of action, who does not write for philosophers, but for us, and who asks us to examine things by suspending our judgment, resisting the temptation to always give ourselves explanations in every case. In this way we will be able to avoid the temptation to take into consideration past situations favourable to our theories, with the risk of them being taken as proof of our meagre and

convoluted certainties, as meagre and convoluted as all that is crystallized, preserved, not questioned, can be.

There are many ways of interpreting past events in our favour. Man is an agile athlete in this terrain, but the consequence is an unproductive increase of the viscosity of one's ideas, both outgoing and incoming.

We must accept the discipline of uncertainty, of what is new, of its unpredictability. Look forward to the brink of chaos with confidence, and defend it. A chaos of ideas, of organization, of relationships and aesthetics, achieving within this happy dimension, the pulsating areas of renewed energies; a fertile place where we can sink our mycorrhiza to ensure its absorption and the related possibility of improving the context in which it occurs. Like truffles, which are not parasites, but inherently symbiotic with the plant that hosts them, *hypogeous*.

The uncertainty resulting from the need to suspend judgment, to cultivate scepticism, is the new dimension that surrounds the man of today. It is inevitable. We must move in it, accepting it rather than trying to oppose it, in a situation where the information available is partial, not always accurate and especially undergoing rapid change. The reality around us is complex, difficult to pick and clean, like chanterelles, small and mixed with pine needles and grass, but delicious when properly selected.

It is a reality that is not even temporarily crystallizable in defined shapes, with a *butterfly* effect, always ready to unleash upheavals in a world that is anything but linear, where relationships among the variables are not clear or regulated, constant and therefore somehow predictable.

3. The leader, the head

During training meetings, congresses, and round tables on the theme of leadership - its nature, its means of expression - a question such as “*how would you like your boss to be?*” is often asked and, surprisingly, almost always, the people interviewed - after adequate reflection - come to the conclusion that the question must be changed and better formulated in this way: “*what would you like your boss to do, how would you like him to behave?*”. In fact, most people believe that the behaviour of the leader - what he does – must be in accordance with what is expected of him. This is what matters most to qualify the relationship.

The characteristics that distinguish modern leaders have changed from the model that has established itself over the past decades and their hierarchies have also changed: some features have become confirmed or strengthened while others have faded.

Leadership was recognized and rested upon values and features related to the person: such as energy, perseverance, culture and formal education, intelligence, analytical skills, along with physical stature, personality, and levels of self-esteem put in place etc....

These traits are still largely considered essential in a leader, but not pre-eminent.

People today are interested in what the boss does for them and with them, not what he is.

When the question was then re-proposed in the latter way, considered more correct, it was easier for each to present a list of the things that are expected from a leader, or at least from a boss. Therefore, the situation began to clarify, because the various requirements proposed by different people in many cases were coincident, overlapping, giving rise to a recurring request, in fact, a sort of check-list of attitudes and skills expected to successfully take off towards the adventure of leadership.

So, what is the secret thus revealed, the essence of obtaining the best by people, to get them to do what is expected from them, making them happy?

A handful of requirements have emerged as absolutely essential, things a leader must do to get his own collaborators to perform their assigned work in the best possible way.

Not even one of these requirements can be missing; the possibly weak ones must be strengthened. Once individual points have been identified and well defined, a few in reality, but rather demanding, we can rightly think that now we possess the key to identify, acquire with our daily practice, and thus effectively exercise the functions of leader or at least of an accepted and followed leader, an 'OK' leader.

In the fundamental game of the relationships formalized in the organization, the leader is placed on a qualitative level superior to the head, but inferior to those who are recognized as having leadership.

So, the techniques, the virtues, the requirements of the head are metabolized both by the manager and the leader and find further expansion in situations of leadership.

4. The treasure map

So let us see what people want their bosses to do, to perform with satisfaction, and how the leader gets the extraordinary result of having people perform the tasks assigned to them to the best of their abilities.

He will be successful when he:

- Clearly specifies what the assigned task consists of
- Clarifies the purpose of that task
- In assigning the task, he also knows how to listen; his stone in the pond produces a movement that he knows how to observe and to interpret
- Makes the necessary and agreed resources available
- Plans times and methods for measuring progress
- Formalizes the appropriate compensation plan
- Ensures process control
- Respects people, is comfortable with them, but avoids friendships
- Earns trust, does not demand it, does not make promises
- Makes competent decisions without delay

At this point we have flipped our cards, we could put a bookmark in the book and close it, with the style of the popular: *The One Minute Manager*, and start the stimulating journey of leading people effectively, holding the *instructions for use*.

Instead, I hope that you will continue to follow me, to deepen your examination and gain a better understanding of the nature of the requirements. Let us dig together around the roots, *nema washu* as Japanese managers say.

While there is no secret to success, there are hundreds of not-so-secret ways to get it. Let us then have a better look at those who people elect as

important and who form the essential grid of leadership in action.

The driving action exercised in compliance with the points indicated is just what people expect in human organizations, where those who exercise it become its natural source, taking up its recognized, accepted and followed power and authority.

In the course of the dialogue with the reader, I will prefer to call *source* the person who, with other terminology, can be defined as the manager of an organized group, its leader or its *head*.

There is a big difference, as we have seen, between being a leader and being a head, because the fact of exerting influence and control over other people can depend on a position of power, of attributed status. Conversely, being a leader, a source, is the happy state of people who show constant commitment and effectiveness in motivating and guiding others towards clear and shared goals.

The head arouses fear, says I have power of position, not always valuable, he demands respect. The leader has ascendancy, arouses spontaneous respect, says WE.

Ultimately, the head identifies a hierarchical position superior to those inspired, directed, guided, commanded, and supervised.

To be the source, the personal ability to know how to deal with situations, even conflictual ones, must suitably accompany sensitive attention to others, and the knowledge of the mental mechanisms that can lead the others to improve their performance and behaviour by motivation.

The leader can coordinate the flow of their joint energies towards the common goal.

The source, therefore, succeeds in getting people to form their vision of an alternative, better future; they can look ahead and dream for himself and others, foreseeing what can be achieved and how, and plans its implementation. He knows he is capable of improving the results his group is achieving; if he succeeds, he will have implemented the happy condition of leadership.

The source achieves success where others fail, he can start where others stop, not thanks to technical and intellectual skills - which he certainly possesses - but rather, thanks to the leadership qualities he is able to project.

We have thus entered a new historical period at breakneck speed, a period which has known the pandemic of systems, a globalization which

is no longer to be considered only as an aspect of modern economy, culture, uses and customs and of law, but as a new glaring transmuting phenomenon that involves every aspect of human activity, and touches, in a transversal way, society and its very way of thinking. The transmuting phenomenon is favoured by the widespread diffusion of the new powerful communication technologies which modify, with ever increasing energy, all kinds of human activity; prompting, firstly, the world of business to perfect itself, and then secondly, requiring each person to develop increasing and new skills - to become capable of greater commitment.

Thanks to the numerous researches undertaken in this aspect, in every continent it is now established how excellent professional skills do not depend fundamentally on the intelligence quotient or skills acquired by people; the titles of study become mere fig leaves: research reveals that personal skills and high IQ only matter for 15% in excellent performance, while 85% is due to *emotional intelligence*.

The most successful impact a person can determine in his professional activity and in his life, derives mainly from the way in which that person manages to dominate himself, to build and to maintain relationships with others.

The source of energy that fuels these successful attitudes, that moves towards action in its best direction, is defined as emotional intelligence, and it is the personal support needed to face situations in the best way. It makes a person sensitive to other people and capable of changing his performance in the interests of the group.

Emotional intelligence, which must be deployed to secure a successful business, does not just come from specific personal endowments and skills, but also from a whole series of other skills that can be acquired through learning and practice.

Here too it is the function that develops the organ. The following poetic verse enhances its quality: "*Listen, gods and you all, oh goddesses, while I speak what my heart prompts*"¹.

If we are acting as the source, we can improve the results which we are getting from the people that we are guiding, and also succeed in making them happy.

1 Homer, Iliad, XIX v. 101

Probably many of the benefits we offer are already very effective, so let us ask ourselves what these skills are, let us recognize them and cultivate them even more, as they have succeeded in granting us a good degree of success. But let us also look closely at the aspects of our behaviour that we can improve, thus aiming at accelerate our personal progress towards excellence.

When each of us focuses on the personal areas that require more development, we are committed to improving them, as we can verify the best results that we progressively achieve; this may be the first step in developing our own emotional intelligence.

After all, if we continue to do what we have always done, we will always get the usual results, while there is always something that can lead to difference: they are our interior resources that we have left so far less developed. If we change what we are doing, we will get different outcomes - just like that. The improvement processes start from our mind, and, if addressed to others, are adequately transmitted by becoming real new actions.

Still, a great deal of emphasis should be placed on the leader's necessity to control the state of their own emotions, never allowing himself to be overwhelmed in such a way, that the results he gets are the consequence of how he was able to control his mind, not the other way around. Emotion comes from the Latin *emovere*, to put in motion, to bring something to completion. The quality and intensity, coupled with the ability to dominate emotions plays a decisive critical role in supporting his own leadership, and it is imperative that he keeps a constant check on his emotional state, so that, if necessary, he works to improve it.

How we deal with each situation depends on our inner world, on our mind, on our perceptive modalities and, above all, on our emotional state. If we change one of these modalities our global perception of the situation will change too and, with it, the way to face it and therefore the results we get. Things *happen* around us, but the way we perceive and face them can change in determining ways, and consequently, the results we get. It really depends on us.

The ability to dominate one's emotions, to modulate them, should become a characteristic of every leader. How many more or less intense emotions can emerge in our mind, willingly or not, in the span of a day: from anxiety to fear, to depression, to anger, or, the intoxication of joy, the happiness of full satisfaction... important things must be done only when

emotional control is achieved: decisions are to be taken only when in a neutral or, even better, in a positive state of mind.

Developing healthy optimism is a commitment that leads to extremely favourable results to a person.

Believing that the future will be better than the past and the present is defined by Time magazine as '*Optimism Bias*': "*To make progress, we need to be able to imagine alternative realities - better ones - and we need to believe that we can achieve them... [...] ... they are more Likely to remarry - and act that is, as Samuel Johnson wrote, the triumph of hope over experience. Even if that better future is often an illusion, optimism has clear benefits in the present*"².

Sometimes, to change our emotional state, it is enough to resort to the anchoring technique, as NLP teaches well, that is the neurolinguistic programming technique, which consists of anchoring our positive emotions, which each of us, in different favourable circumstances experience, to a gesture; someone touches his right knee with his right hand, others join the thumb with the index finger, so that subsequently, whenever they feel the need, it is enough to repeat this conscious movement, and... it works! Thus, they snap in positive thinking that changes the intensity of the signals, changes the colours, contrast, brightness of the world around us.

The finger ring is an imaginative icon to be proposed on a front plane, but it is better not to show it in Slavic countries, Russia in particular, or you will drop a clanger like President Clinton. The meaning is not very elegant at those latitudes.

With these programmed gestures we can change our network connection to a system that leads us to success, and brings us back to serenity.

In the same way also, negative emotions can be neutralized or weakened, when they try to surface, anchoring them to unlikely postures so as to avoid unleashing them inadvertently. For example, in experiencing negative emotions you can touch your... hey, are you smiling? But no, what the heck! I meant the right ear with the left hand!

Every now and then, touching the area charged with negativity while simultaneously with the positive one, you can try to download the emotional tensions accumulated.

Another effective way to take control of your emotional state is to change

2 Time - Vol.177. n. 23 - June 2011

the internal dialogue mode, the way we talk to ourselves. Let us keep in mind that our brain always acts based on dominant thinking, does not distinguish what is right or wrong, good or bad. The dominant thought moves it.

Sometimes if we want to change the way of internal conversation it is enough to change the speed or pitch or volume at which we talk to ourselves; we use what works best, as we keep talking to ourselves, turning up the volume of our inner voice is often enough and things change.

The Venetians sometimes use asseverate words of bad taste but they work ... they work indeed!

As we have seen, body language is the most important factor in establishing the relationship-connection with another person: mirroring is a way to establish trust and credibility.

Men tend to like like-minded people with whom it will be easier for them to agree. When we mirror a person in practice we are saying: I am like you, with me you are safe, trust me. Spontaneous mirroring, immediate identification, is an unconscious event, characterising all effective human interactions. When it does not occur spontaneously it signals the differences and problems between obtaining cooperation and meeting resistance, an aspect on which it is advisable to work quickly.

Verbal communication is capable of strongly influencing the depth of the relationship we establish with the other person.

Even the very speed of the other person's speech, along with its volume, must be mirrored, imitated, if you want to influence, establish a relationship, and eliminate communicative barriers.

Maintaining different tones, volumes and speeds creates and underlines differences, which we instead want to eliminate, to appear the same. When we talk to other people, and especially when we intend to establish a relationship is a good idea to use the lexicon, phrases and images of the other person, carefully avoiding imitating the pronunciation or the accent. It must be recognized as our own communicative material, not recycled or imitated, or it will lose its value.

Another way to get in tune in order to establish the connection quickly and then proceed to the leading phase, the ultimate goal, is to tune in with their fundamental vital activity, their breathing, adopting equal frequency and depth.

Mirroring something that the other person is doing, such as drinking, smoking, sitting or standing together, also works very well.

We can then move on to guiding: while mirroring is doing something similar to what the other person is doing, guiding them is our expected result, because now we want the person to do something different, what we have proposed.

Before launching into the guide, so as not to get hurt and have to start all over again, it is important to make sure that the rapport is actually established.

Hence the need for establishing easy checks. The other person will subconsciously adopt attitudes that we project: putting our hand in the pocket, touching our face, bending forward, if seated, opening or crossing our arms, tapping our fingers, etc.

We first mirror a position of the person in front of us before we change it and observe if the other person likewise changes his position. These are not manipulative techniques; intentions matter and they are precisely those of wanting to communicate effectively.

In case the person shows that he is not following the change of posture and instead repeats his gesture, it is better to wait for a most favourable moment of the interview, before proceeding to the guiding phase.

We can mirror even when we use technological means of communication, such as e-mails or telephone calls. In these cases, it is a matter of using words, phrases, and images projected by our interlocutor and insert them appropriately within our communication.

Mirroring also works well when it is aimed at ourselves: harming ourselves with our thoughts is a potential mental trap which can be easily avoided by adding an auto-mirroring phase, and proceeding in the case of guiding-driving the other person.

We can sometimes deplete our personal power with negative images. Our mental eye sees previews of upcoming shows which are not pleasant. In the outer life we all usually avoid going to these shows, but in our inner life it is not so easy.

We often sit helpless in front of our screen while instead we must reclaim the projection booth of our mind.

We, and only we, are in control of the images formed by our mind and therefore we have to choose which is destined to predominate. We implement the *swish pattern* by choosing that small television image, on the screen, which we then decide to make bigger, clearer, more colourful, strong, and thus dominant. Experience tells us how positive thoughts

make us stronger while negative ones make us weaker. Negative thoughts and feelings even decrease our physical strength as well as our personal power. It is an enemy to beware of.

It often happens, for example, that rejection is just a necessary phase towards consent. Failure can be a part of the road to success.

An individual generally has a single predominant decision-making strategy, for each category of decision. The obligatory stages of the flow of the decision-making process seem to be:

- *Motivation*: the person is deciding to decide
- *Decision*: motivates, decides a particular course of action based on technology? safety? cost? The dominant perceptual modality, which he puts into play, can be visual - the outward appearance of the thing - or auditory - how it sounds, what others will say, what people say about it – or based on sensations: how the person “feels” about the idea
- *Verification*: after the decision he must be supported to avoid the buyer’s remorse (service, assistance, availability).

If the person who has to make the decision had already made a similar kind of decision in the past he has likely developed a pattern that leads him unconsciously to repeat the same metaprogram.

For years, *Stefano*, my dear friend, with whom I shared many experiences, continued to buy boats and cars of the same brand, while I was equally fixated on different brands. We will probably continue to do so.

Also, for this reason setting up a database of users who, at least on one occasion, approached a specific product or service is of great value. When we are together with another person who is experiencing a strong emotion, whatever we do or say at that moment is associated to that emotion. The process usually takes place on a subconscious level. We also cry in the cinema or when listening to an exciting story. Anchoring is a very powerful process, so avoid as much as possible harmful people with their hidden suggestions which they transmit to us, involuntarily casting a spell on us.

The leader feeds on knowledge through continuous reading. Fortunately, there are many good publications for professional training. It takes time to dedicate ourselves to this, possibly of value is the adoption of suitable techniques which streamline our reading, making it faster and more effective.

We talk on top of each other constantly and unfortunately it is the case of the reading technique used by many of us, which becomes slow and tiring. We learned to read the text to ourselves, we narrate it to ourselves.

Today the reading technique has made great strides and it has landed on photographic reading, where the same conscious part of the mind is excluded from the active process, and we find people able to read entire books in just three to five minutes, with percentages of comprehension and retention of the text that exceed 80%, a lot higher than the modest 20%, more or less, that we get by reading consciously, rationally, narrating the text to ourselves. *“Photoreading makes use of the greatest device for the processing of information known to humanity: the human mind ... omitted... among people who buy a book, less than 10% read beyond the first chapter”* (Paul R. Sheele 2004).

Leadership therefore needs to be continuously nourished, so that it can continue to be help to itself and a guide to others. Its qualities need to be constantly implemented.

Leadership does not exist in itself as an independent quality: it is a construction of the heart and mind supported by effective communication.

It is implemented through relationships with other people. It is the group that it follows that recognizes and legitimizes it.

It is, therefore, based on ethical behaviours developing between people seduced by the vision of a better future for everyone. The leader's work is wise, but cloaked in modesty. At the end of that work, satisfied people will say: we did it ourselves.

The leader intent on building his own leadership can start by developing a sincere love for his work, and then learn to lead other people to share that same realistic dream, going through the recognition of their own values, their interests, trying to dialogue with their culture perceptual modality, their metaprograms.

The oriental approach to life is based on cooperation and on the harmonious resolution of a conflict, which leads, in many cases, to more productive results. Success and excellence, can be within reach: it is amazing how normal people can produce extraordinary results for themselves, for their organization, and for their country when they are inspired by an adequate source. This is what we want to talk about now, that is, how a leader may get the best out of others, with their deep satisfaction.

5. Barrel hunting

The story you are going to read, and that inspired me to write this book, began this year, on the night before the holiday of the Epiphany, on January 5th.

In Friuli, where I was at the time, Epiphany is a much-loved event and important for the agricultural world. It is celebrated with the country rite of bread and wine, *pan e vin*, as it is defined in the area of Pordenone, or *foghera* in the lower Friuli area and *pignarûl* in Carnia.

It is an ancient ritual of *Cimbrian* tradition, which allows you to draw auspices for the new agricultural season: in the afternoon of the eve, on the threshing floors of the big farms, generous piles of wood are built. Generally, they are prunings, which are positioned around a large central pole that will support the mound representing the *stria*, the old witch who personifies the sterility of winter, slowly going away, and that she will symbolically carry away with her, when darkness falls, consumed in a great sparkling fire, taking away all the bad things which occurred during the past year.

It is a ritual that praises life, implying rebirth, an epiphany for every man of good will. People now want to focus only on their own future which they attempt to interpret.

There are many needs and desires of renewal. As the bonfire crackles, the elderly draw auspices for the New Year: when the sparks and the column of smoke rise towards the east, towards the morning, it is bad news. Bad omens are also drawn when the central pole, now conquered by the flames, loses its strength, and, overcome by the fire, falls into the flames towards the east.

The tradition is very old and includes the participation of children as well as adults. It is difficult to assess whether the excitement and enthusiasm are greater for the one or for the other.

Every family that is lucky enough to own a farmyard invites relatives and friends for the recurrence, and brings them together outdoors around a long table set with care and pride and with the traditional cake of this event: *the pinza*, a delicious flat bread, made of flour leavened several times with brewer's yeast, whole eggs, milk, sugar, butter, and a sprinkle of anise.

The rather bitter seasonal cold is mitigated by the great bonfire, but the broad smiles of the people are framed by the collars of their coats, lifted high around their necks. Inexhaustible stocks of mulled wine are available to the adults, to compensate for the low temperature and to promote socialization.

Enthusiastic children follow the bizarre development of rising flames, listening to the songs of the adults mixed with the crackling of the wood consumed by the fire in fulfilment of the propitiatory rite. The violent reverberations of heat and flickering light pierce the darkness, meeting the wide-open eyes of the little ones, arousing strong feelings of vitality, energy, amazement, and happiness.

All around, the night is no longer dark, the countryside becomes dotted by the great fires that call to each other and compete in power; there is not one farm that is not involved in the festival.

I spent that night in a *cason de vale*, actually a wonderful aristocratic residence of the Venetian lagoon, because my plan for the day of Epiphany was to go out early in the morning, with the lucky owner, an expert hunter, with the intention of participating as an observer in the exciting experience of *barrel hunting* and, as far as I was concerned, to satisfy my hobby of photography.

The breakfast appointment was set at five, then before dawn we had to leave, to arrive silently at the nearby lagoon lakes, moving cautiously through the canals in a flat-bottomed punt.

Before the awakening and the first flights of the ducks, we were well hidden inside the barrels, to avoid the risk of disturbing and thus scaring the sought-after prey away from the hunting ground.

Breakfast was prepared with care by my friend, since our wives preferred to continue their sleep during that holiday.

The house that hosted us was a perfectly isolated construction integrated with very good taste in the centre of a vast Venetian lagoon where the gaze is lost all around, liberated, towards a flat horizon, without obstacles, and proposes reflections on the infinite.

As we ate our breakfast, we randomly started a conversation that became the dominant theme of our considerations during that busy day, and continuing on the occasion of many other subsequent and serene meetings.

It all began with talking about the organization of men *in vale, in the valley*, about the role of their boss, of the substance of leadership, of how some people succeeded in human organizations and, particularly, in the hectic modern business world, to get the best from others, to make them effectively do what the organization needs, leaving them fully satisfied. The first point that was proposed to our consideration was the need for great clarity in setting the task.

6. The leader clearly states what the task consists of

“If you want to lead people, you have to know where to go”.

The decision to assign a task to a person postulates their need. You have to feel the need for collaboration, to be accustomed to looking for it, convinced that according to a classic of managerial thought, you should never do anything that other people can do as well as or better than you.

We may be moved to intervene with the assignment of new tasks by the need to sustain or improve the quality of the performance of the work group we lead or to implement the effectiveness of its organizational level, or by the opportunity to add values and skills.

“Boyatzis (1982) defines competence as ‘an intrinsic characteristic of an individual, casually related to an effective performance’. He distinguishes two types of skills: threshold skills which are essential characteristics to cover a certain role and distinctive skills which are those characteristics that differentiate the performances and lead them to a higher level” (Costa, Gubitta 2008).

People join me, even if they are perhaps the last comers within a work group, to help us in solving a particular problem, to cover an existing need. They, in turn, participate in the process out of existential and self-accomplishment necessity. Need leads us to the encounter, offering us possibilities for development.

We are moved by the same emotion of solving a problem and no matter how short the journey we will do together may be, it will always prove a precious period of shared life, of reciprocal influence.

We will not fail to be grateful if the contribution offered is loyal and if people show themselves willing to learn by bringing their smile with them, they will effectively help us in our effort to grow professionally together by identifying an opportunity in every difficulty that arises.

Furthermore, a good attitude to develop is recognising that you need

other people, to view them as an integral part of your project, and do everything you can to help them to be successful while working with you.

The leader's commitment is to concretize the vision offered through the fulfilment of the planned mission, to grow together in skills, in the control of ability and also in the satisfaction of emotions, thereby improving our economic situation.

We will explain precisely what the assigned task consists of, and why we will both be responsible for the results. The levels of responsibility in the company can be represented as an inverted pyramid, base up and vertex down, respect to the hierarchical scale that is represented by the classic pyramid, which will be more functional when presented with a widened base and as low as possible.

You can see clearly how the operational people, who have front line responsibilities, are actually the people who enjoy the least power, they are at the base of the hierarchical pyramid and, also graphically, they support the entire corporate structure.

These people often feel they can do the job better than their boss, but, unfortunately, they often act more with the intent of satisfying their superior rather than orient themselves to work improvement.

The tendency to orient towards the top of the hierarchical pyramid does not seem very productive, and perhaps this aspect deserves more consideration. After all, if someone keeps his eyes fixed on the top, he will also probably turn his back on the customer, on the user.

Being able to make vital waters gush out, starting from the deepest level of the organization, perhaps is the secret to promoting self-organization, which is the element that most characterizes complex systems open to innovation, the organizations better capitalize on the power of connections, which counts more than the connected elements, and produces a result vastly greater than the sum of its parts. They are organizations that have metabolized sharing.

We also see a growing trend of the company to adopt this type of organizational orientation, which is reflected in medium-sized enterprises: "*... the medium-sized enterprises of success are characterized by the growing de-verticalization of structures ...*" (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi, Tunisini 2009).

To the companies examined in the aforementioned text, satisfaction of the customer is the point of reference to which all innovative effort tends,

both in the process and, naturally, in the product. Customer orientation is not just a strong impulse supported by Marketing Concept, which is tirelessly powered by Internal Marketing, but it is also the force that shapes part of the organization: in the relationship structure - *marketing, sales, logistics, R & D, production-technical assistance* - all are aware of the importance of customer satisfaction. The organization in its individual functions is structured in such a way as to guarantee the thrill of the experience that the customer will have when using the company's products / services.

Creativity, which generates innovation, becomes a source of competitiveness for the company which motivates the actors involved, because it is the reflection of the culture put in place and thus confirmed, feeds on both the organizational model and the leadership that governs it. Creativity means putting ideas to work to invent more effective ways to create synergies between systems, improving relationships, products and processes, besides knowing how to monitor and dominate technologies and markets.

Thomas Edison reminds us, describing Inspiration as predominantly Perspiration. How 1% of the innovative process is due to inspiration, and 99% to hard work, to perspiration. The activity of research and innovation continues to be carried out in many companies, according to an incremental process, and it is often rewarded by chance, which has accompanied - and continues to accompany - great scientific discoveries. However, that springs from hard and intelligent work. The cases of serendipity were frequent in the scientific world, almost bonuses awarded by nature to the commitment and tenacity of people who carry out research in their own ways, and they were the genesis of great discoveries useful to humanity.

“According to Waldrop (1996), rather than being designed from above down, in the way an engineer would work, living systems always emerge from the bottom up.

The emergence from bottom to top leads to a natural hierarchy.

According to Prigogine and Stengers (1981), this idea is already present in Hegel's philosophy: to Newtonian philosophy he contrasts the idea of a hierarchy within which each level is conditioned by the previous level that it exceeds and whose limitation it denies to affect in turn the next level which will manifest the spirit at work in nature more adequately, in a less limited way” (De Toni, Comello 2009).

I apologize for the long quote, but the lyricism that goes along with it, combined with the importance of the message transmitted, moves me to continue to report what we read in this book:

“There is no doubt that emergence is an important phenomenon because it allows you to understand self-organization. It is equally certain, however, that emergence has to do with aesthetic beauty, with the emergence of new and changing structures.

And Morin (1983): *The emergence of what is new cannot be predicted otherwise it would not be new... [...] ... Internal transformation starts first of all from local and almost microscopic creations, which occur in an environment initially restricted to a few individuals and which appears as a deviance in relation to normality”* (De Toni, Comello 2009).

This creates a wonderful *butterfly* effect that rises from the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid and helps to imagine and prepare a better future and improving the present. The process is quite delicate and must be carefully controlled from top to bottom with dialogue and continuous interaction. It is about ensuring that the structural knots remain confirmed and strong and that the organization maintains its identity.

I may say that it is necessary to evaluate things with the lesbian metre, which is always the same, but able to adapt perfectly to the phenomena it measures: the ebb from the bottom towards the top intended not as a *repeat*, but as a fine, delicate and persistent perlage of an excellent champagne, enhancing its liveliness and quality, anything but uncontrolled bubbling. In this way, you can proceed with the management of the energies emerging from the bottom up, ensuring a feedback resulting from top to bottom, to reach a state of dynamic equilibrium, precisely that self-organization that will produce results superior to the sum of the constituent parts of the complex system that is a human organization, a company.

Only in the presence of a strong and effective management will all the people of the organization be able to join their efforts in a way consistent with the objectives and enjoy the positive results obtained; at the same time, the responsibility for the tasks assigned to them will be kept high. In the absence of excellent leaders or managers, a horizontal structure will work more effectively – knowing instinctively how to elect its natural leaders, according to the rules of human groups.

The distinction made between leader and manager introduces another important aspect on the difference between the two functions: the first

destined to anticipate the future, the other to govern the present.

Leaders are not problem solvers, if so they would be people condemned to go from the solution of one crisis to another.

In every human organization there are people who have problems, people offering solutions, and here I see the managers, and people that open up new possibilities, and the latter are the leaders. Once the task has been given, a process of necessary control by the source will have to follow, but it will only serve the purpose of verifying that the task has been understood in its completeness, that the delegation works, that things get done as planned, in mutual agreement, and, therefore, that everything has been perfectly well understood.

At this point the best has been done: the task has been understood, entrusted, accepted, and transferred to another person. From this moment on, it belongs to him.

The source must also help people who want to move towards a goal, to reconcile their individual needs with the objectives of the organization and chart their course, creating the conditions for them to develop the courage and the determination necessary to follow the transmitted vision, to continue to believe in something - which in some cases is not yet visible, but only imaginary and possible - and to work assiduously for a goal that is remains a magnificent opportunity.

In the convulsive modern world, fraught with difficulties and doubts, it takes courageous and determined people to appreciate and direct change, which is necessary, because we know that, by continuing to do the things we have always done, we will be blocked because we will only have the results that we have always had. Innovation is the engine of development and it only takes place by doing the usual things differently, or doing different things in order to receive better results.

A vision requires faithfulness until it is achieved. Thanks to hard work, the skills deployed, and the great loyalty to a vision, Japan for example, a limited island torn to pieces after the Second World War, even morally, became a great world power in the course of a single generation.

This is what we can see happening in China, Brazil, India and, soon, also in the two Koreas which, if they succeed in reuniting, will become the new Asian tiger.

In the aforementioned Japan, the pine tree has sacred value because it represents loyalty, it is in fact the conifer that remains unchanged in the

adversity of the seasons, continuing to grow even at dizzying heights. Its branches are always green despite being in continuous renewal.

The vision which the source is able to transmit by assigning a task must be kept alive and continuously projected until it becomes objectified. Subsequently, in the course of each meeting, the guide to the goal will involve the example and the experience of the leader in a holistic process, where consistency plays the essential role.

Words alone are often not enough, for they too can lead to misunderstandings, creating either suspicion or habituation.

In relationships between people there is no emptiness, if it tends to form, it is immediately filled with negativity. That is why you must never interrupt the communication.

A relationship must be constantly enlivened. The breaks begin with silence, with distancing, *away from ...*

Another great advantage of setting goals, consequent to clear visions, is that it also allows us to be proactive, avoiding the danger of being suddenly involved emotionally in events to which we have to react, when instead we can plan our work rather than suffer it.

Study after study reveals how the daily activities of managers, each called to be a source, are fragmented in brief reactive, highly variable and action-oriented discontinuous actions, where the space devoted to thought is very limited, sometimes non-existent.

Time to think is the best activity you can do as a leader. In work dialogues, which occupy up to 80% of the time of each senior and middle manager, less than 0,3% of the conversations are not related to a specific aspect that may be defined as planning, but is discharged in reality in a random way. A manager can rarely dedicate at least half an hour, without interruption, to a specific topic. In short, the pressure of work overexposes and conditions the activity of a *top manager*, but, above all, it takes valuable time away from performing his most important function: thinking and planning, reinventing and innovating.

The best re-engineering activity seems to be today more aimed at people than at things, oriented to reprogram the use of time. Managers, like companies, have two limited resources: time and money. Both must be managed with a great deal of care.

I have tried to superimpose and to make the function of a manager match the one exercised by a person endowed with leadership; in reality

this does not happen, these two figures do not coincide because there are obvious differences between leadership and management. You may meet charismatic leaders who, for various reasons, find it very difficult to become effective managers, and, conversely, people who are excellent managers but not leaders who can draw people.

The manager is called upon to face and resolve complexities by organizing practical activities and processes, which are, to a large extent, the response to the complexities and emergencies that the organization is facing, while the leadership exercises and confronts itself more intensely with the need for change and interest in others.

It is not difficult, however, to come to admit how in an organization the presence of people with strong leadership, but of weak managerial capacity, may be less effective than its opposite: both have to deal, in the end, with the need to decide goals, create work groups, take care of interpersonal relationships, and check that things are accomplished as planned. It is in these activities that a skilled manager finds wide competitive advantages over a person gifted mainly with ability to generate realistic visions and motivate and inspire others, someone who can make them understand the vision of a better future, but shows little ability in being able to organize human systems and the resources allocated to implement planned activities as effectively and precisely as possible.

Failure to reach the natural point of arrival, leadership, does not cloud the activities of managers who do not reach it, but who are, however, very skilled and indispensable in their roles. What the heck, they cannot all be gifted with leadership and therefore suffer from it!

“Pay attention to little things and develop big visions”¹.

It is therefore necessary to create new forms of cooperation, to avoid giving orders, but above all to use the energies of people and working groups, co-opt people to decisions so that they are more responsible for the actions they will perform, and will not complain about the reasonable efforts required to reach them: that is the problem.

As we confront each other in the exciting conversation, that is destined to continue throughout the day, every so often I glance apprehensively at the windows trying to see, still immersed in the dark, if the light fog that

1 Tao, 52

surrounds us is beginning to dissolve. The fog would not allow me to take good photos and, *Alberto* tells me, would make the very hunting trip little productive. Well, let us hope!

Refreshed by breakfast and heavily dressed, we left home, to face a long morning, exposed to the rigors of winter, inside a barrel immersed in the waters of the Venetian lagoon. There was just one single faint light on outside the house so as not to disturb the habitat in any way.

A dense mist enveloped everything, the cold was intense and favoured the still noticeable stagnation of the acrid smell of the smoke from the many bonfires lit everywhere the previous night.

Among the tenuous fog I glimpsed a wedge of the moon that tried in vain to impose itself on the darkness of the night. Dogs barked in the distance. From their shelter they had already smelled our presence and were ready, excited by the new hunt that was looming.

They would prove essential for the recovery of those ducks which were culled or wounded but did not fall into the water, but rather into the dense, wild vegetation of the islets that dot the small internal lakes, almost impenetrable, and which, in any case, would make the finding of the culled birds improbable.

At the edge of the canal that runs by the house *Claudio*, the skilled boatman, had already prepared the slender flat-bottomed boat which made moving in shallow waters easy and that would take us to the hunting place, where we would be dropped off. He picked us up at the end, bringing the dogs with him for what would be the exciting phase of the recovery of the ambushed game.

The boat was the same type as the one that Hemingway used, who spent some peaceful hunting periods in this locality. He speaks about it in his novel: *Across the river and into the trees*, written right in the valley and in the *cason* that hosts me:

“They left two hours before dawn and at first there was no need to break the ice on the canal because other boats had already passed. In every boat, in the dark, so that you could hear but not see him, the boatman was standing in the stern with the long oar. The hunter was seated on a stool fixed to the lid of a box containing the lunch and the cartridges, his two or

three rifles were resting on the pile of molds"².

That same scene has been repeated for the last sixty years.

On the water that morning there was a thin layer of ice, which the boat broke with ease, powered by a small silent motor, and as we moved closer along the canal to the lakes, the ice tended to progressively thin, until it disappeared completely in correspondence of the lake where the large body of water and the weak currents prevented the surface from freezing.

Long before arriving in the lagoon, to the north, near the hunting area, *Claudio* turned off the small engine to avoid even the faintest noise and proceeded by pushing the boat with a long oar. At the beginning, the cracking of the ice broken by the bow was heard with greater intensity, and accompanied almost to the lake, before it disappeared completely.

The darkness of the night still enveloped all things. The boatman skilfully followed the canal and reached the exact place where the barrels were hidden, on the edge of the expanse of water, carefully camouflaged in the ground.

On the bow of the boat there were about twenty molds arranged in beautiful order, very accurate reproductions in painted wood, of various species of ducks, among which the males stand out, one every two females.

Near them, all lined up, were also the live decoys, consisting of four female ducks plus two males, each tied at the paw with a long thread that ends in a lead ballast, destined to keep them bound where they were placed.

We cautiously disembarked, slipping into the barrels while always maintaining the most severe silence. This station had two barrels, which were arranged less than one meter apart and just wide enough to contain a man comfortably sitting on the stool, which is located on the bottom and under which it seems that Hemingway, who loved to hunt often from those barrels, never failed to conceal his own antifreeze stuff, excellent whiskey, which was anyway destined not to return to the *cason de vale*, whatever was the outside temperature.

The barrels were high enough to ensure that, once seated and with head lowered, nothing can be seen from the outside, so that other eyes, those of the poor ducks, would notice only with difficulty, the burnished canes of the menacing shotgun, and a shy Leica large telephoto focal lens. I was

2 E. Hemingway, *Across the river and into the trees*

careful to take with me only films which were very sensitive to the poor morning light, to the dynamics of the hunt and for the remarkable speed of the ducks in flight, which require very short exposure times. *Alberto* told me that shortly thereafter the ducks began passing and swooping into the lake, most likely in the vicinity of our positions, attracted by the live decoys and molds of the two decoy islands, that the boatman *Claudio* had set up at about ten meters from our position, east and west, before going and hiding with his boat in a thicket of high reeds, at a hundred meters from us, carefully invisible.

Tien zò a testa, keep your head down, was the sentence that I was told more frequently during that morning, recommendation interspersed in our chatting about leadership, while, fascinated by the show offered by the surrounding nature and full of adrenaline for the imminence of the hunt, I watched, ecstatic, the environment in which I was literally immersed.

The fact that we had to speak softly lent our words greater relevance and required a great deal of attention, proving useful for the free unfolding of our ideas on the subject. The cold was intense. The grass that branched off from the edge of the barrels was fragile, white, covered with icy frost, we instead, indomitable, motionless inside the barrel, were immersed in the water at the edges of the lagoon, our heads lowered, in the faint progressive light that possessed ghostly aspects on that Epiphany day. The prospect was to spend five to six hours in that state! Viewed from the outside the situation appeared almost comical.

The barrel shielded us, however, from the cold whipping air, and being immersed in water it guaranteed us temperatures above those of the outside air, maintaining itself constant thanks to the topoclimate created from our body, which occupied it almost entirely, but without any contact with the walls, apart from the bottom.

The waiting for the first flights began. Meanwhile, with voices rigorously subdued, we resumed our conversation. Once clarified and given the task to one person, it is essential that the purposes are elucidated.

7. Clarify the purposes of the assigned task

My friend *Alberto* kept his eyes wide open towards the sky and his gloved hands were tight around the collector's rifle. I clutched my camera and, both hidden in the barrels, we continued our conversation, whispering.

We agreed that we can get results of greater effectiveness when we move strongly oriented towards a precisely identified goal, about which we have formed a clear vision, it was very important both to know and, above all, to share its purpose.

It is not enough to say go and do, but also to explain why. This is what emerges from the interviews with those who feel fully involved in a project and appear satisfied.

The goal has been examined in detail, now we must move away from the scene to see it better from an exterior point of view, figuring it up with greater clarity, viewing it three-dimensionally.

From this moment on, it will be like traveling on an overhead road, we can give less importance to everything else and proceed to the goal. Let us enjoy a moment of relaxation and have a pleasant experience together. Try to close your eyes and imagine a very special evening: you are inside your home in a very bright, spacious, living room. You can see yourself decorating a large Christmas tree, helped by your children and your affectionate partner; you are surrounded by smiling faces, people who love you, who value you immensely for what you are and do. The environment is warm, cosy. From the large windows you can see your beautiful garden, muffled by a fresh snow blanket. Pleasant festive voices come from afar in the silence of the land covered in a snowy mantle.

The house is the result of your work, of the success you achieved by conquering the goals you set and is a further proof of your skill and determination. The family is the fruit of your love and your dedication.

Enjoy the pleasant feeling that this vision brings you, abandon yourself to fully savour the positive emotions it arouses. Focus on the details that attract you most: the fireplace radiating a warm light, your bookcase where you have collected the volumes that have accompanied you to personal success, the furniture you chose carefully, your paintings, your car that winks at you from the outside. Make the image even clearer, more colourful, think only to that and fix this positive emotion, anchoring it where you think best, perhaps your right knee, touching it with your right hand, in short with an easy gesture.

The art of hermeneutics was even practised by Greek philosophers to induce the mind of the listener to generate the truth they were seeking, with the suggestions of rhetoric. Keep the excitement strong, embrace it: it will be useful to you in the future, as much, and perhaps more, than the famous happy childhood of Freudian memory. We went through our infancy, or even happily snoozed through it, anesthetized by situations created by others. Here we are the protagonists, the creators of our destiny: we are building, we are actors and directors of the magnificent building that our leadership will be.

We will then keep doing the same with all other strong, positive emotions, that we will happen to experiment with or to arouse with our positive thinking. We will ensure there is a positivity credit that can be useful in many circumstances. Every time we want to awaken positive emotions and thoughts, we will repeat the operation of touching with our right hand the point that we have elected as our personal positivity tank, the right knee, and the travase of positivity will immediately take place, the brain will be flooded and will start to act according to this dominant thought.

Let us now return to the representation you created in your mind in a clear, strong way; you can almost touch with your hand the things you have visualized, the large window, you can feel its cool contact, you can hear the roar of your car, exactly the one you want, the scent of its leather.

This is what I mean when I talk about *vision*, creating in the mind a clear, desired, achievable and very rewarding situation for you. Something that coincides with your real interests and values.

“The archetype of this dream is the almost perfect novel The Mysterious Island, where the man-child reinvents the world, fills it, isolates it, closes himself in it, and crowns this encyclopaedic effort with the bourgeois

attitude of appropriation: slippers, pipe, and a fireplace, while outside the storm, that is, the infinite, rages in vain”¹.

The emotion to act can only be triggered when we are well aware of why we are offered a task that we accept, and what purposes we are required to achieve. It is not enough to say: *it will improve sales*, or *it will raise the image of the team or improve the organization*. We must become familiar with the primary objectives we want to achieve, their enhancement, and the why; what will ultimately be the elements of the monitoring and the evaluation of our performance.

The vision, when projected towards others so as to involve them, such as when entrusting a task, must be clear, full of details, shared, strong and representative, respectful of your values; it is the source’s job to convey all the elements that are useful to the one who is involved in order for him to create a precise picture of the mission that he has been entrusted with, above all of its purposes.

An assigned task must arouse a desired state; it must be clear, as well as engaging. The source will have to understand if the task is accepted without reserves, if it is considered satisfying, especially if all the details are captured as in a high-resolution photo.

We might feel we are being redundant in explaining. But who said that in communication there is the risk of redundancy and that the tireless repetition is not actually a necessary communication modality? After all, the way the message is received in reality is also the way the message was transmitted. Leaders continually practice the skill of communicating ideas to others and it is not so easy, since in this current hyper-communication society we have become, in defence, a deaf society, where it is necessary to shout to try to be heard and overcome the babel of the many mass communication tools.

The leader, on the other hand, knows how to carve out suitable spaces for isolation, as Petrarch did, a lover of silence, because he recognizes the importance of reflection, of meditation before action. The man who cannot listen to himself, cannot probably listen to others.

“There is nothing that benefits us as much as being quiet, talking as

1 R. Barthes - Myths of today

little as possible with others, very much with ourselves"².

Knowledge is power, so information is indispensable and must be suitable for the work assigned, provided with completeness and speed to the people to whom a task is assigned.

People show that they have an innate need to satisfy their curiosity, they have the right, they want to know, understand, possibly appreciate, form a full picture of the situation in which they are placed, they want to communicate and they feel the inborn need for it.

Managers know the effectiveness of the habitual adoption of the management technique that overseas is defined MBWA, acronym of: *Management By Wandering Around*. The leader's communication strategy must ensure that the general vision, the goal to be achieved and what is expected of each contribution, are clearly communicated to all the people in the organization involved in the project, making sure that communication is both effective and repeated.

The means available for the leader to communicate are multiple, and possibly all of them should be used. Among them the foremost is the personal, face-to-face dialogue, essential in the phase of assigning the task and checking the results. During these meetings he will seek to strengthen the bonds between the members of the team, aware that the effective functioning of a business unit depends largely on the degree of cohesion created in the group.

Face to face to unite, never to divide.

Each of these encounters will emit strong signals about the commitment of the leader, in deciding, communicating and controlling the performance of the person and the group: it is an irreplaceable opportunity for building relationships, coordination, in order to develop around the project those aesthetic components that will characterize it far beyond the concreteness of the results achieved.

Other communication possibilities to consider in the strategy communication of the leader are the meetings held regularly with the contact people, therefore, the regular informative additions, the updates via e-mail, the scheduled meetings expanded to all the staff involved in the project, the exchange of documentation required to support the activity

2 A. Schopenhauer - The art of being happy - Maxim no. 12).

and monitor the progress.

A good leader keeps his door open; he is always available for supplementary 1-2-1s (one-to-one meetings). He will take care to never refuse them, and once fixed, he will avoid moving them in any way, taking care to prepare a list of priorities to be discussed, thus demonstrating full attention to the person and his concern for efficiency.

In the course of the meetings, personal questions should be avoided, which must instead be immediately shared with the Human Resources manager, for a speedy resolution. This urgency derives from the fact that it is unrealistic to think that personal events do not interfere in work performance, and their suffocation would lead to stress, a poison for the organization.

An effective 1-2-1 meeting should start with a discussion on the general trend, in order to put the person at ease and allow the surfacing of information relevant to the climate, the relationships, the level of commitment, the degree of understanding of the current project, doubts, perplexities as well the suggestions emerging from the experience in progress.

It will therefore be productive to support or reward the behaviours leading to the planned result.

Then, reiterate the objectives entrusted to the individual person, so as to further clarify and strengthen them.

A collaborator's performance is optimized when the objectives are clear and shared. The manager's commitment is to define clearly the tasks assigned and measure their progress. The task has been entrusted and understood: the source has passed the two critical points of the process that are strongly desired by the other. He has entrusted the task that has been considered feasible and it has been accepted, specifying once again the purposes.

Now let us see the further modality required of the one who want to exercise effective leadership.

8. Knowing how to listen

“Plan your advantage by listening”¹.

Knowing how to listen is an essential condition for being able to communicate effectively.

Those who know how to listen guide the progress of the meeting, and we saw that a *top-manager* spends more than eighty percent of his working time in verbal interviews. It therefore appears clear how the effectiveness of these talks is the critical vehicle of effective leadership and communication, observing how much attention should be dedicated to it.

I realize that I insistently associate the adjective *effective* with the noun *communication*. P. Martineau says why: *“The great enemy of communication is the illusion of being able to communicate”*.

Research carried out on the activities of managers reveals how just over 30% of interviews are scheduled, of which only 5% are agreed upon, the vast majority of them happening without the leader planning them. The obvious consequence is that the leader finds it difficult to insert his primary mode of communication, dialogues, in the projective context of his competence.

In daily practice the manager is unfortunately absorbed by the commitments related to his specific function and the problems to solve, which often cause him to jump from a topic to the other. Carving out adequate spaces to ensure a necessary effective communication is far from easy, but the goal must be pursued by giving it adequate attention.

There are many relationship problems that arise from hasty meetings, unfinished, not well clarified speeches which in more important cases have not been adequately prepared. Rather than manage the problems that

¹ Lao Tzu, 28

follow, it is better to dwell more carefully on every single event, as if it were the only one, the definitive, and then move forward with serenity. It can certainly happen that we commit some errors of form, of content, but if the intention is honest and our behaviour is consistent and clear, we will understand other people and future opportunities of clarification, without any inconvenience to the organization or to the recognition of our leadership.

It seems incredible that two cold people, hidden inside two lonely barrels in the middle of a grey winter lagoon, may, while whispering, pass on many personal experiences, sharing enough material to try to write more about leadership, especially on how it is possible to entrust tasks with great responsibility that will be realized in the best possible way.

Meanwhile the sky painstakingly cleared up, becoming a pale bluish grey that reminded me of the lagoon paintings of Virgilio Guidi, Pietro Fragiaco and Guglielmo Ciardi. Among the reeds we began to glimpse a big red sun, faint, not very defined in the contours, but determined to climb along his daily arc. With the appearance of the sun, the light fog slowly dissolved... *bang... bang*: two sequential shots brought down, inexorably, two ducks which appeared suddenly, in the deadly circle of 30 meters of range from our positions; expert hunters fire shots that do not forgive: they were the first two of the many trophies of that day.

From that moment on, I decided to pay more attention to the environment that surrounded me and which began to colour and come alive. The light now seemed sufficient for quick snap photos.

The shots from the shotgun followed one another incessantly and inexorable. After a few hours the calm waters of the lake around us were studded with multi-coloured downed ducks, wigeons, spoonbills, many shovelers, pintails, delicious in a pasta sauce, a real delicacy, and again mallards, the *masorini* of the Venetians. The barrel hunting technique has a long tradition, an invention of these fishing valleys. From here it spread into the world.

Around noon, with a modulated whistle, the boatman crouched among the reeds as the retrieving dog was recalled as they reached us and began collecting the game floating on the water.

The animals that were only injured and had taken refuge in the thicket of the reeds surrounding the lake, were discovered by the infallible nose of the Hungarian hound and brought back to the boat. The show of the

recovery is exciting: the agile animal, remaining quiet and silent all morning, suddenly runs barking up and down the banks in the midst of an impenetrable tangle of shrubs and reeds, and when running he sniffs the prey, he flushes it out with deadly precision and haste, captures it and brings it back. It is carefully aligned by *Claudio*, together with the others, on the flat bottom of the small boat, to better prepare the presentation of the fruit of a long and cold morning of hunting to the ladies who are waiting for us curiously, but not so much being they used to the show, at the small pier in landing wood.

We suspend our conversation about leadership and devote ourselves to enjoying the lunch that, in the meantime, has been prepared: a lunch worth remembering. They had no doubts about the success of the hunt. For our part we expected the usual refinement of food and record-breaking wines, which from the times of Hemingway have never been lacking in the valley.

Alberto wants to clarify how persistent criticism on the mediocrity of the modern manager's performance can be the consequence of the important levels of continuous stress that press down the management following the objective difficulty of operating in a world that has become turbulent, where the time dimension, the speed of change, have reached such levels as to make it more difficult for the manager to carry out his highest duties, which, at times, will make him feel frustrated, dissatisfied with results and, in the long run, unfortunately, could also make him decide to give up, to change, to leave the job for possibly better prospects ... when he is not invited to do so.

The average duration of their work, at a *de facto* company, ranks around five years, and this is a big problem, as the manager writes very little. We learn from investigation statistics, which continue to be a distinctive American feature, that out of the four essential ways we have to communicate with others: writing, reading, speaking and listening - 65% of the time is spend in dialogues, especially listening, 20% in speaking, 10% in reading and 5% in writing.

The percentages relating to writing and reading are eroding further spaces, in modern times, from listening and speaking, that is from talking, thanks to the development of new means of communication that electronic technology has made available to us, even if talking and listening still remain the main methods of communication of managers, and, as we have already said, currently occupy an average of 85% of their time.

Things are therefore filed in the manager's head, and, when he leaves, he inevitably takes them with him, without considering the training investment made by the organization for his own insertion, training, information. All to be done all over again to restore the function! Stress for the organization, loss of time, uncontrolled dissemination of information, and possible gifts to the competition of people prepared to fight with renewed effectiveness.

Once the function is restored, if the reasons for the previous failure are not removed, most likely the problem will recur with the new candidate.

The concepts exposed are certainly shared and after striking a blow for the manager, we return to the point that people want to be heard. They are often less interested in the result they get with the interview, than in the degree of attention paid to their person. How beautiful to see Japanese or Korean women and men doing a convinced bow at each meeting, they put the plan of relationships in order before moving on to the contents: nice too aesthetically, as a delicate expression of a gentle and respectful soul, asking for and offering respect and recognition.

When people are treated well, they tend to reciprocate and treat others in the same way: precise unconscious processes, positive for the relationship, are thus activated automatically.

You cannot talk to a person who comes for an interview, even in informal way, while continuing to work at the computer or be distracted in the thousands of ways that everyday life offers us: people who come and go, phones ringing, paperwork, etc.

“Like Bacon, Hobbes also sees in language the source of many errors which prevent men from having a rigorous and scientific comprehension of their problems. According to Hobbes speaking means to combine words together with a procedure under all aspects similar to arithmetic. But to add and subtract correctly it is necessary to operate with homogeneous quantities and here is where language errors nestle. We use terms and names, or conventional ‘signs’ to represent our ideas, and in doing so we start from often inaccurate, generic or equivocal definitions: Hence the need to re-examine ours words and our linguistic conventions” (Sini 1979).

The main problem of communication is that everyone thinks they can communicate, which does not seem to happen so frequently.

In *87 Tragedies in two bars*, by Achille Campanile, we read the aphorism

of the donkey and the farmer:

“*Characters: THE FARMER, THE DONKEY*

THE FARMER: *I’ve been beating him for half an hour, and this donkey will not walk.*

THE DONKEY: *Blessed my soul, why didn’t he explain himself. I thought he was beating me to make me sit still (Curtain)”².*

Communication is a cybernetic process, not a digital one, and it is, properly, circular. It influences the participants and predicts the redundancy, typical of cyclicities.

Communicating does not mean generating one-way signals that would be, simply speaking, not communicating. Skills are required to participate in a communicative event.

Cybernetics is the science of communication control in the animal and in the machine, as defined by Norbert Wiener at mid-twentieth century and borrowed from the Greek *kybernetes*, helmsman, a science that saw the never forgotten Silvio Ceccato as the *genius loci* of Montecchio, a passionate scholar exponent of this discipline.

Communication skills and patience for a possibly redundant action, a real feature constituting the communication process.

As we have seen, the message transmitted is the message as it was actually received, so constant feedback and repetition, no matter how activated in the communication, are essential elements.

The effectiveness of the communication prevents participants from falling into an insidious trap: where there is no communication, there is struggle. Fight means predation, opens separations, and gives rise to distinctions, which undermine collaboration and the organization itself.

On the one hand: my time, my wages, my duties; on the other hand: the duty of the company, the responsibilities of others, the contract. The first steps of a path of dismemberment.

Effective communication, therefore, to keep alive the organization, *learning/understanding by interacting*. If things do not go right, the leaders are there: the entrepreneur and the presence of bodies capable of treating *dysfunctions* with immediacy and effectiveness.

By implementing effective communication, you can nurture motivating

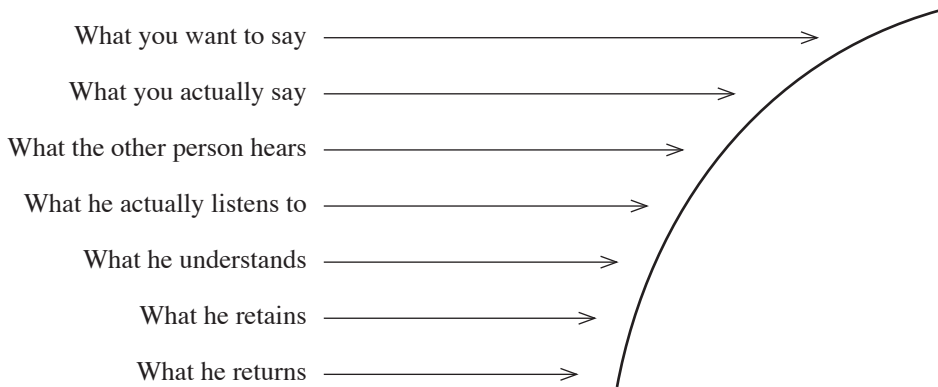
2 A. Campanile, 87 Tragedies in two bars, Milan, Rizzoli, 2008

processes that support loyalty, trust, and also innovation and cohesion between people.

Knowing how to listen is a fundamental characteristic of great men, and it is essential to leadership development: it requires attention, careful practice, and, in particular, it presupposes the will to maintain sincere respect for the other person.

It must also be accepted that there may be a *pressure drop* in the communication, to be corrected with effective feedback.

Pressure drop



To keep communication alive, there are a few behaviours to be strictly avoided during the conversation.

The first to consider is to stop someone in the middle of a sentence, which means actually ending the communication immediately, even if the dialogue should go on for hours, it means having unconsciously communicated that you do not want to pay any attention to the other and that you consider him as a person of lower level. Good manners aside, the result is disastrous on the communication plan. Individual sensitivity, of course, presents a wide spectrum of variations, but certainly every person suffers from that.

The same happens when strong value judgments or categorical statements are made: end of communication. A source cannot afford it. The greatest barrier to communication between people lies perhaps in the tendency to express strong value judgments, or in rigidly approving or disapproving, this trend is exasperated when the listener's emotions or

feelings are directly called into question.

Communicative barriers fall when listening, because you want to understand and not judge, there is the willingness to see things with the eyes of the other.

Participants in a communicative event exchange messages through a set of signifiers: the verbal sound, the tone, vocabulary and form, non-verbal languages such as facial mimicry, gestures, proxemics, objects, clothes, settings in which the event takes place. Facial mimicry uses 17 of the 23 muscles available on the face consisting of muscles that we move often, though unconsciously, but they communicate a great deal.

On many occasions it might have happened to all of us that we notice how people like to talk. Everyone seems to take pleasure in it, so let them enjoy it, listen to them. It is not easy to get someone to talk if he does not want to, then, since in these cases the process is spontaneously initiated, let them speak freely, let us allow people to feel comfortable expressing themselves, and let us show that we are listening with interest, without interruptions. Once we managed to create the conditions so that the communication process begins, let us listen to it attentively and continue until we are certain that the other has really finished saying what he is concerned about.

Cicero, 44 BC, drew up for us the important rules that can make a conversation effective, enjoyable, useful as a true exchange of ideas or feelings, to understand, to share or to disagree.

Therefore, Petrarch's inspiration suggests: *"Do not interrupt one who is speaking, express yourself clearly, speak fluently but do not talk too much, keeping in mind that the others want their turn too, be courteous, deal seriously with serious subjects and gracefully with the light ones, do not criticize the absent, stick to topics of general interest, do not talk about yourself, do not be angry"* (Francesca Duranti, 2009).

To make other people understand what you mean, first we have to comprehend how they understand, and then we will be able to organize our communication in a way that fits their modes of perception.

Each of us has a dominant perceptual modality active at all times which can be visual, auditory or kinaesthetic.

In Western culture most people use the visual modality as primary and it counts for 80%. It is understood therefore how opportune it is to try to make extensive use of means and verbal expressions related to vision.

The source cultivates the virtue of making people speak, indeed he willingly lets them speak, he listens carefully, and once sure that the other person has finished, he will pose questions capable of rekindling the fire, and thus prove to have followed closely and kept the conversation alive.

The game will be definitively assigned to the source if he acts with inner availability and sincere interest in the other person, attitudes destined to emerge in any case, and whose lack would be very difficult if not impossible to mask.

The estimate necessary to work well together, as well as friendship and love, is like a bank account: it does not allow you to keep withdrawing without making deposits. Love is also a strange game that does not predict a winner: there are two winners or none.

My friend *Alberto* reminds me of how English-speaking people say that there are six steps to climb the ladder to becoming a good listener. His observation intrigued me a lot and I propose it to you because it helps memorize the necessary process to activate:

“The six steps to becoming a better listener form a Ladder:

L - Look at the person speaking to you.

A - Ask questions.

D - Don't interrupt.

D - Don't change the subject.

E - Empathize.

R - Respond verbally and nonverbally”.

When you do this, you quickly realize that *he who asks, commands.*

Socrates, who skilfully practiced the art of maieutics, the art of giving birth, or rather the art of his midwife mother, manages to lead people to the truth through the mechanisms of individual minds that he stimulated with suitable arguments, above all with questions, which lead you to know that you do not know, and therefore will open you to a revelation, to truth.

A full vessel cannot be filled with the nectar of wisdom, it is first necessary to make room by asking questions that highlight the need to do so.

Even a broken clock, twice a day, marks the correct time, but it is broken, it does not work, it is useless, it is not productive of anything.

So, let us try to collect as much information as possible, transform our judgments and our beliefs into questions, and listen again. It will be a pleasant game which you yourself can conduct.

Eventually, we will have communicated effectively and our co-worker

will be satisfied. To keep the conversation fuelled, you need to put wood in the fireplace and take care of the ventilation of the fire.

NLP teaches that we can start by *tracing* the breathing of the other, breathing like the other person, to start the tracing which is an extraordinary method to make one perceive that we are alike. We are reassured by the unconscious emotional appeal of people who breathe like us. This reminds us, perhaps, of the maternal breast to which we huddled, or the embrace of lovers that start to triumph. It is the *prana*, the energy of the cosmos that penetrates us in the manner of the other. More alike than that! If you are the same, I can trust you: here is the powerful consequence.

Communication can also be fostered by tracing the posture, the gestures and expressions of the speaker; you can use his same words and maybe just change the sentence structure to ask questions.

When asking questions, we will take care to use the same speed of speaking as the other person, the same tone of voice and we will carefully avoid employing words that lead to negative emotions, but rather, we will change them with words that arouse positive emotions.

“With the right tone, you can say everything, with the wrong tone nothing: the only difficulty is finding the tone”³.

Every word spoken is a powerful communicative sign in sound form, which arouses a precise conscious or unconscious suggestion, not yet completely explored, not known and therefore stronger and rationally uncontrollable. The language of man, in particular, but of animals in general, originated from precise needs of survival and defence. Language developed to communicate the presence of food, of preys or predators and it evolved progressively, but left deep traces of communication potential relegated in the unconscious, still not well identified.

In William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, while Polonius, Laertes’s father, treading on a bare stage provides the last advice to his son who is about to depart Denmark for Paris, while urging him to hurry because the wind is already blowing in the sails of the powerful sailing ship that awaits to carry him ... his words alone evoke in us the frenzy of departure, the busy ampense, the movement of things, the last regards, the squeaking of the sailing ship’s masts stressed by the sails filled with wind.

3 George Bernard Shaw

There are words that should be used in a precise context, others to be avoided with great care, if we want to implement an effective communication and be able to activate the suggestion created by the sounds, through suitable words, which will find immediate reflection in the mind by creating precise mental images.

In a recent experiment conducted in the company of a group of psychologists, we tried to highlight the importance of using certain words in the negotiation act, and of carefully avoiding other terms to enable the creation of the most favourable climate.

The words found more appropriate to use, for example in sales interviews, are those of cooperation, inclusion, alliance, development, opening.

The lie detector, used in the experiment, repeatedly and unequivocally revealed that certain words are to be avoided in the negotiation process due to the load of negative emotional reactions they induce in the other party and, conversely, how the idiosyncrasy brought by suitable semantic evocations worked in our favour.

We also tried to understand what happens inside the person who speaks or listens, the activities that involve their whole being, modifying their breathing, palpitations, perspiration and the intensity of certain brain waves, moreover inducing them to make movements, to assume spontaneous attitudes, not controlled, legible, interpretable by others.

It was possible to evaluate the way in which the communication proceeded, what made it fluid, effective, and what about it altered the trend. Above all, we tried to highlight what causes in the other person, *the customer* (in our experiments they were real customers, who kindly participated in the experiment, purchase decision makers and buyers of major companies). We did not want an actor but the actual usual interlocutor, to proceed in the search for idiosyncrasy, and therefore aversion, intolerance for certain words or evoked situations, or vice versa for favourable openings.

We did not even neglect to observe carefully also the reactions of the people who attended the experiments, thanks to the cameras installed, to direct observation, both during the process, and during the subsequent feedback.

The goal during the communicative meeting is to be able to create a situation, an atmosphere, a world in which the other can recognize himself,

and which is in favour of our idea, project, product, and thus make the communicative act productive.

“For many theorists, particularly attentive to the dynamics of knowledge, the main activity of communication is not so much that to transfer information and then to encode and decode messages, but that of deducing from clues, therefore drawing some consequences with detective skills and manners, as sometimes Umberto Eco likes to indicate by quoting Sherlock Holmes” (Fiorani 1998).

A few months went by before I saw my friend *Alberto* again and this time it was in another relaxing context, once again favourable to resuming the conversation that we were so passionate about on that very cold January day.

We met on the pier of the marina of Punta Faro, in Lignano, where my boat moored. We decided to set sail, together, towards the coasts of Dalmatia, which I know quite well, considered the best European area for sailing and where we planned to spend a short vacation. Dalmatia extends from Zadar to Montenegro, includes a multiplicity of islands and coasts that do not penetrate very deeply, because they soon meet the Dinaric mountain chain.

Our first stop was planned for the Brijuni Islands, which face the city of Pula, south of the Istrian peninsula. This small archipelago constitutes a large natural defence dam of the vast port at Pula, which, in the Habsburg era, was the largest and most powerful of the imperial ports.

In fact, Pula preserves many archaeological remains from the Roman era: a beautiful Arena from the first century, the Arch of the Sergians, the temple of Augustus, the forum, and a theatre. Reaching the Brijuni island group with an engine boat is pretty easy, but from Lignano it takes about three hours of sailing.

The boat is moored by the head, with dead weights. Once the powerful engines have been set in motion, you get many more horses at work than General Custer had at Little Big Horn. The procedure of clearing the yacht begins by letting go of the lines, starting from the dead weights in the bow, and finishing with the lines of the stern, the first, the leeward one. After retrieving the gang-way the boat starts off, piloted by the flight-bridge, she opens the calm waters with her elegant bow, the rhythmic splash-splash sounds like applause and, progressively, the boat picks up speed and planed trim, kept on course by electronic driving systems set towards

the desired destination, while the low speed allows the motors to heat up.

A commander today is especially a *system observer*, as in the case of airplane pilots too. He is called *SO*, but certainly the many fixed and mobile obstacles present in the sea and the manoeuvres of landing, perhaps in strong wind conditions, require constant attention and highlight the *skills* that are acquired over time, when you have the aptitudes.

It is then necessary to season everything with a profound and healthy culture of the sea and of navigation, a sense of responsibility and a respect for other sailors, along with an ability to express aesthetic qualities.

My friend is sitting next to me, up to now interested in the manoeuvres and in the equipment of the boat's instruments, now pleased by the sun and refreshed by the rushing wind, he decides to resume the conversation. We start reflecting again on the availability of resources - we discuss them almost until we dock at the pier on the island of Brijuni - which includes not only the provision of material resources, instrumental to the accomplishment of the task, but also the assurance of intangible resources such as trust, serenity of judgment, the ability to wait and support, combined with the expected reward for the work assigned. We talked about this aspect also later, because we had the opportunity to examine it during the long tour among the avenues of the nature reserve aboard the golf carts, available on the island.

The Brijuni Islands were one of Tito's places of relaxation, I would say they were his favourite, and he regularly spent at least four months a year there. Here he preferred to receive the Heads of State of various nations which were part of the Non-Aligned Movement, which he founded by a socialist treaty between the Soviet Bloc and the Western world, systems in which they did not recognize themselves.

Tito hosted them in the peace of Villa Brionka, overlooking a crystal-clear sea, surrounded by parks, woods and meadows which remain populated by splendid animals, some exotic, donated by those foreign diplomats.

In the villa they recall, among others, the visits of Ho Chi Minh, Nasser, Nehru, Luis Cabral.

Tito spent most of his time on the Vanga islet, one of the fourteen islands and islets that make up the Brijuni National Park and they tell me that, during the summer, they would set up a tent at the top of the hill for him. On its side, like a Greek theatre, the archaeological ruins

of the Roman *castrum* unfold towards the sea below: the barracks of the legionaries enclosed within large walls. From that point, about fifty meters above the sea, you can enjoy a superb and fascinating view, which includes the archaeological remains which embrace a bay of amethyst waters, immediately in front of you.

The Brijuni has suffered a long period of neglect: from 1312, the year in which the Benedictine monks were forced to abandon the island, which they had anthropized in an exemplary way, due to devastating epidemics of plague and looming malaria, until modern times. The island became a place of exploitation especially of precious marbles, of which the Venetian Republic was insatiable. Many marbles were mined in the past; the Mausoleum of Theodoric in Ravenna is built with these beautiful marbles, like many Venetian bridges, churches and palaces.

I had the opportunity to visit extensively Tito's Yugoslavia, to assist the many customers who made up my best overseas market in the 1970's.

There were tanning industries scattered almost everywhere: from Slovenia to Macedonia, and they produced mainly for Russia.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall there remain only a few scattered in the former Republics which are today autonomous states.

During my trips, always by car and on roads quite different from today, narrow and very dangerous, lacking refuelling services, after barely making it to a rare service station, I would find it closed because: *nema struje* - there is no power, or because *pumpa ne radi* - the pump is out of order, or simply because, for hours, they had to unload the tankers in the tanks and, for safety, they closed the distributor. We travelled then with dangerous jerrycans on board.

Beautiful highways today crisscross the country, where happily the use of mobile phones, iPads and laptops has also spread. It seems impossible that a phone call to Italy in those days was a real adventure: you had to go to the post office, book it, and wait patiently for hours. Often the answer of the operator was *nema linja* - there is no connection, and in the meantime, at home, they would be waiting for news. Tipping the operator was not enough. In the hotel, to ensure assiduity in connection attempts, and only the next day, thanks to the old, dear, noisy telex at the customer visited, I could punch the tape and send short news to my anxious family. Today, young people have little conception as to what the telex meant to us.

In the course of this wandering I saw, in addition to many official public

residences of Tito, numerous places of hunting or rest of President Josip Broz; magnificent abodes, sometimes immersed in boundless forests while at other times overlooking calm lakes full of fish. Places made inaccessible to mere mortals, but Tito definitely preferred the mild climate and beauty that today still enchant every visitor to the Istrian Brijuni islands.

There were also people from our country passing through Brijuni, like Sofia Loren, Mario del Monaco, Gina Lollobrigida, but also characters such as “Che” Guevara, Richard Burton with Liz Taylor and Josephine Baker.

While we keep alive the conversation about the passionate aspect of the importance of words, we pass through shady thickets of conifers, strawberry trees, laurels, ubiquitous magnolias and palms, myrtle bushes, tamarisk shrubs, grassy clearings enlivened by a hundred species of sedentary and migratory birds, along with the ever-present hopping squirrels and rabbits.

Each person is sensitive to the suggestion of words, at different degrees, linked to his experience, his culture, to the particular situation, but each and all of us are affected by them. Words can induce fascination, seduction, and hypnosis.

Furthermore, a word can characterise a person and, indelibly, a person's origin: *“thy speech makes thee manifest of that noble homeland native”*⁴, says Farinata degli Uberti to Dante.

It is enough to adequately propose specific words, to activate a stereotype and influence behaviour.

We spent a lot of time talking on the subject of communication, as we recognized its basic value. We cannot not communicate, indeed we communicate immediately when we come into contact with another person, even if we are silent and still. In fact, we confirm and communicate that we are still and in silence ... it will mean something, and it will be an attitude interpreted in some way by the other.

Let us imagine now that we are in a lift, we are alone and relaxed. We are continuing our internal dialogue ... another person enters, and then, even without any intention of communicating, our behaviour changes. Thus, we begin to communicate unconsciously, at least in kinesics modality,

4 Divine Comedy - X Canto dell'Inferno

with gestures, and with the proxemic modality relating to interpersonal space: are we smiling? Are we saying hello? Do we back into a corner? Do we begin composing our necktie? Freezing? Tapping on the walls... the communication process, unconscious or not, has been activated, just as the decoding by the other, which we also see and we interpret.

The communicative competence of the manager serves primarily to transmit and receive information without distortion, but, at the same time, it consolidates the feelings of belonging, of safety and it serves the purpose of keeping the relationship alive over time.

Any communicative event tends to extend far beyond the people directly affected by the activated semiotic process. Communication is like a rhizome, an open network structure (unfortunately also in supposedly confidential things) where every knot is connected to all the others, in narrow or enlarged geometries, mobile, variable, but closely interconnected, they are all part of the network: they are the communication network.

The same sender will receive influence from the receiver, in the non-digital cybernetic process which is the communicative act. Communication also does not exclude in its exchange process the presence of competitive or cooperative attitudes.

I remember *The Ways of Wisdom*, the school time rhyme:

“If wisdom’s ways you wisely seek.

Five things observe with care:

To whom you speak, of whom you speak

And how, and when, and where”.

If you seek the ways of wisdom, look carefully to whom you speak, and of whom, when, how and where. The content is perceived, influenced by the environmental and relational situation.

If things are not right in terms of relationships, effective communication in terms of content is difficult, disturbed and sometimes impossible.

We talk to people.

The messages transmitted must also be consistent with our deep feelings. If our feelings towards the interlocutor are good and consistent with the situation, this is immediately perceived, due to the influence exercised directly on the strings of emotions from the significant amount of not verbal messages that, even unconsciously, we transmit, and on which we have limited control possibilities. Our ability to dominate words is very high, it reaches 70%, but the relevant non-verbal message shows limited

possibilities of being controlled and, as we have already said, it accounts for 55% of the actually transmitted message. It is therefore normal that people place more weight on these signals, even unconsciously, than to the words themselves. The problem calls for honesty, conviction, psycho feed, motivation, self-esteem, which cannot be missing to make the communicative episode useful. Non-verbal messages are studied by specific disciplines, such as kinesics, semiotics and proxemics that investigate *social space*.

Let us think about the dialogue with a torero in the arena. Our enthusiastic “*Ole*” is the feedback of intense emotions of aesthetic type, try observing the skilful, elegant and gentle liturgical positions, kept canonical even in situations of great stress and danger. Let us think of the messages transmitted by dance, by the skill of actors. Gestures are the most ancient visual language, a form of communication that was frowned upon in previous ages: I remember the mockery with which the Anglo-Saxons used to say that Italians (Mediterranean peoples, by extension), speak with their hands.

Now look at an American speaker: for example, you may have had the good fortune to see and hear her, the author of *Blue Ocean Strategy*, Renée Mauborgne, who also expresses herself very well by activating an amazing and showy kinesics, like a true theatrical actor.

Anthropologists are constantly studying whether, even before the existence of a verbal language, whether man, along with almost all animals, possessed a biological form of communicating at least the strongest feelings such as fear or the presence of food ... in the mists of time. Once they descended from the trees and into the savannah, the first hunter-gatherer men could easily become some predator’s dinner or they could feed themselves, perish in conflicts, or promote social bonds. Of course, in this case, man would continue to unconsciously transmit and receive these strong signals as well as those of rejection, acceptance, and benevolence, which escape our conscious control because they are not yet known as communication mechanisms, but somehow reveal what we feel, with completeness.

We are said to be living in the age of images and that the current illiterate are the people who, unfortunately, cannot read images.

Communication takes place through a set of signs - signs which are defined by Saussure as combinations of signifiers and signified. Images,

sounds, and even words, constitute the signifiers that allow the formation of a precise mental image, the signified.

The Maglev of communication, the most comfortable and fastest train in operation which connects Pudong to Shanghai at 430 km per hour, runs on the track of accepted, available and non-conflictual relationships. If not, they are doomed to scatter, or worse, they can become a matter of controversy, and the train derails. What we say is important, but what is of greater importance is how it is said.

The famous study by psychologist Albert Mehrabian, published in 1971, revealed how the speaker's *body language*, facial expressions, postures and body movements, influence the transmitted emotional content for 55%.

Hence, over half of the communication power of a speech depends on non-verbal elements which are constantly present. The unconscious is a generator of strength and energy, but it is difficult to control.

We come to regard non-verbal messages as more important than verbal messages, and in different situations it becomes the essence of activated communication.

The verbal relationship plan can be prepared, be controlled, reaching the heights of rhetorical charm. Non-verbal communication is something else, more spontaneous, more sincere, difficult to check, because, in large part, it is unknown, unconscious, and automatic.

It still does not mean that the remaining 45% can be associated with the words said, because the tone of voice, its pitch, the message speed takes an additional 38% of the effectiveness of communication, to total 93%, which, according to Mehrabian, leaves only 7% of the effectiveness of communication to words.

During a sales interview, which lasts an average of 20 minutes, seller and customer exchange 600 to 800 non-verbal signals. Non-verbal language therefore plays an important role.

Communication experts say the ideas and the content transmitted account for 2%, while 98% is related to the sphere of emotions.

“Methodology is the way to concretize the attitude.

Attitude is the dream that methodology makes come true.

To know how it is possible we must consider that they are always on two levels of understanding: one is rational and the other emotional. The emotional has an unconscious, irrational, symbolic and often absurd logic

which is opposite to rationality, where everything is known, predicted, reasoned.

The inner heritage a man is gifted with is above all unconscious because not studied, not known” (Cuttica 1996).

Among the words that should be introduced into the conversation, we have seen some excel: availability, benefits, commitment, trust, agreement, convenient, opportunity, help, immediate, saving, resolving, present or future conjugated verbs, avoiding the conditional.

We must also pay attention to sounds. The first human language, akin to the forms of oral communication found in animals, are based on modulated sounds, which sounds have the power to arouse mental images. A scream communicates more than an entire speech, music can inspire more than many conferences.

“The sacred expression ‘Om Mani Padme Hum’, the most frequent chant in the Buddhist world, the prayer engraved in all rolls of prayer that with their movement multiply the prayers every time I hear ‘Om mani peme hum’, I suspend my work, I give up the guide of thought, and I allow myself to be enveloped in the fascinating mystery of this dense sound vibration, so full of meanings, so much investigated and loved, that it was also Gautama Siddhartha’s habit of prayer... Om is the seed syllable, which was able to create the universe with its vibrations. It vibrated for a long time in the deepest darkness, in the most total silence, in the absolute void, it persistently vibrated in chaos, non-human times and generated the universal order ... ‘Om’, its mystery value is immeasurable for the educated and the simple, it binds man to the universe, makes him perennial matter in the cycle of reincarnations and of his liberation” (Pisi 1998).

In the course of our experiment, an obvious negative reaction was recorded instead with the emergence, in the flow of the conversation, of words like price, complaint, dispute, delay, problem, bargain, buy, cheap, you can’t, impossible, sacrifice and so on.

We wanted to experience all this directly, in the company, because, through the power of direct experience we wanted it to become a kind of imprinting capable of influencing the behaviour of our collaborators.

Anyone wishing to deepen this interesting topic can use the *Prentice Hall Press publications of Jack Griffin books: How to Say It Best and How to Say It at Work.*

Of course, Griffin’s important remarks hold true in the Anglophone

cultural field, but, following the diffusion of English in the business world, albeit in the form of pidgin-English, Griffin's text becomes a safe and versatile manual for a more productive use of this *lingua franca*.

The Italian language understands and excludes its peculiar words, but in any case, a good orientation can be given by avoiding uttering words with negative content, expressions of rejection or of negation, words that divide, distance or limit; words that close doors instead of opening them.

Negation, which tends to compromise the effectiveness of communication, must be prudently avoided. In some cultures, such as the Chinese, it is to be avoided with care, because it generates very strong reactions as it somehow affects the institute of enormous importance for every Chinese, the *Mianzi*, the face, which in that cultural sphere constitutes one of the most relevant cultural differences with our Western world.

The face, for a Chinese, is his social capital and is a rather fragile institution in China.

“One even comes to fear the use of negation. In front of a request to be rejected, the need to say ‘no’, the most convenient attitude may be to take time, or to express the need for further study, or consultations with others. Later the Oriental counterpart, not receiving an immediate response, will have understood well and will not come back on the subject” (Pisi 2005).

In the negotiation experiences made over the years with the Chinese, I had confirmation of their consequential manner of developing their thinking and subsequent negotiation. They do not start from a precise point, from an idea, but they live this interlocutory experience as a more circular process, I would say spiral, because the resulting shape always remains open and destined to last as long as we perceive that we continue to have a mutual benefit, otherwise the negotiation construction, even if it led to the signing of a contract, would be worth less than the paper on which it is drawn up. The Chinese sage seems, paradoxically, to have no ideas, he does not support any in particular, but exposes himself to reality like a virgin film.

Unlike us Westerners, the Chinese negotiator is not interested in the categories of true-false, right-wrong, being or not being, but he admits everything in his experiential or speculative petri dish. He does not reject anything *a priori*, he is not used to negation, and this attitude has gradually permeated the whole culture of that great country. Negation, pertaining to the sole rational sphere, does not exist in the concrete world, there is no

non-elephant, so the speculative process, which negation suggests, must be traced back to the sphere of personal experiences, it cannot exist on its own, better not to put it in the field, not to put it on the negotiating table. Therefore, never oppose net denials to a Chinese, especially if in the presence of other people.

Chinese wisdom has never sought absolute truth, a principle, the *arché*. It tried that in some historical periods, before preferring another speculative direction, unlike the choice made in our Greco-Roman world.

The consequence is that in Chinese thought, things that appear to us as evident contradictions are not considered incompatible parts, but useful, because they offer the possibility of alternatives. Since truth does not exist, he does not investigate, but rather he tries to create it case by case. It is not loaded with immutable, eternal or absolute valences.

Truth is suspended in a plasma powered and moved by delicate passages in high contrast areas, created by the continuous rotation and passage within them of the Yin and then of the Yang and vice versa, which is the place of possible genesis and ongoing reconstruction.

For millennia, China has avoided applying rigid rules but it has been forced to do so today. For example: following their entry into the WTO there have been imposed general rules valid for the whole country. On the other hand, we are used to putting the world around us into patterns, where we form concepts and proceed decisively towards the identified purpose.

Accustomed to rhetoric, we proceed by single steps, giving for acquired every single step that we manage to climb, for which we may have had the consent of the Chinese interlocutor. This situation may mean nothing and may have to be patiently recovered from the early stages, if it does not lead to harmony, always sought after and which constitutes the essential request.

For the Chinese negotiator, a change of opinion or strategic line, even when already approved in many of its phases, is considered normal, lawful, and appropriate - a kind of further turn inside the plasma Yin Yang. We Westerners proceed digitally, step by step, taking every single step for granted in the effort to realize our *a priori* concept that has led us to act.

To this day the coexistence in the country of two large systems continues to be present in many aspects of the Chinese society, the political system and the legal system which proceed in parallel. In case of conflict, supremacy belongs to the political system which has allowed the development of

legal systems significantly different from one province to another.

Chinese wisdom does not provide for foreclosures towards one's own ideas and those of others to be activated.

The world perceived by a man is his own representation, "*Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*", the famous peripatetic axiom of St. Thomas Aquinas, re-evaluates empirical experience while remaining faithful to the Aristotelian assumptions for which the intellect allows us to conceive principles which, although born in reason, prove to be very true. He reminds us of how man perceives the world and makes a mental representation of it through sensory experience. The five senses are his sensors grafted into the external context that he monitors continuously, through the filter of his personal genetic heritage, the filter created by one's own experience, culture, life, education and the emotional filter that induces reduction or strengthening of some incoming signals, before correcting the distortion and regulating its enhancement.

"Everyone lives in a different world, which is different according to the diversity of minds: in accordance with these, it is poor, dull, flat, or rich, interesting, significant. Even the diversity that fate, circumstances and the environment produce in everyone's life is less important of the diversity of minds" (A. Schopenhauer - The art of being happy).

As opposed to the willingness to listen, it is the depressing way of treating a co-worker by putting him directly in front of *a fait accompli*, making him feel excluded from any participation, from every choice, and every recognition. It turns him into a mere object, taking away from him every minimum decision-making power.

How can people feel motivated to reach the goal if their opinions do not matter?

Before we decide on people's heads, we have to take the time to discover the sparks of greatness we encounter, and they can be many.

Knowing how to listen always becomes an element of great importance in building one's leadership.

A new problem has arisen in recent times following globalization, which has made not only things but also people extremely mobile. We travel the world with ease; the frequent travellers' lounges are overflowing with people with impressive personal mobility records.

We have entered assiduous relationships with other cultures, other uses and customs, and other languages. We need to develop intercultural

communication skills by deleting the idea that what is not spoken is taken for granted, that also in other cultures it is right for default.

Pidgin-English, which we all speak a little bit as a lingua franca, raises further communication difficulties; unfortunately, we are still not all able to speak English like Joyce in *Ulysses*.

Pidgin-English is the simplified and contaminated variant of local languages, rather tolerant of errors, which develops autonomously in continuity; it is enriched with contributions from other cultures and accompanies technological and scientific development.

The written language requires laborious studies; alternatively, the spoken one naturally develops in the social context. Hence, we witness the constant change of every living language.

The lingua franca, in the business world in particular, is more the art of communicating than aesthetic elegy, in short, it is just a little better than smoke signals!

Until the 1980's, there was a fierce struggle underway for the linguistic supremacy of one language over the others. I remember the many French and German initiatives in this regard, but also Italian and Spanish enterprises. They even tried the path of creative compromise with Esperanto.

English won for the simplicity of its own grammar, versatility of use, ease of learning, and because it was already the language of culturally and economically advanced countries, guides to others. Promoted by British colonialism, supported by the great Country of economic and cultural reference and customs which the United States is, it has definitely succeeded and become a global franca global with the advent of computers and global communication.

The entire semiotic paradigm: language, gestures, objects, clothes, postures, settings, distances, must be revisited in the light of adaptation to other cultures.

The business world has brought people closer together, acquaintances are intense. Knowing how to communicate and how to listen becomes difficult due to the language barrier; translating often means betraying, and therefore our commitment must extend to maintaining the knowledge of foreign languages, their implementation and, possibly, to the addition of new ones. And above all, we must be aware that we can get the passport of language learning only by careful listening to the language spoken by the natives, with their phonetic articulations. There are no other successful

choices beyond participating, talking, listening carefully and continuously.

No matter how hard we try, we will always find obstacles to perfect communication, even for natural reasons, as Walter Passerini and Alfred A. Tomatis recall:

“We can memorize dictionaries and grammars, but without listening, no language is truly dominable. The reason consists in the fact that each people, each ethnic group has a preferential band. It turned out, for example, that the French speak preferably between 800 and 1,800 hertz. Italians between 2,000 and 4,000 hertz, the British between 2,000 and 12,000 hertz”.

Dialogue should be understood as the means to think together, to share thoughts and not just to talk to each other. There are barriers to effective dialogue, created for example by the common habit and tendency to fragment the parts of the speech of the person who is speaking, not allowing them to be recomposed in the general context, fragmentations and clarifications become important in case you are looking for specificities, or to better understand certain aspects or parts of the speech, but only as long as you then immediately bring the dialogue back to the main riverbed.

Sometimes an interlocutor does not listen at all as he should because his mind is busy preparing his response or making an addition consistent with his previously expressed thinking. Sometimes the person looks into his own memory for the suitable file to use in a kind of play back to continue a monologue instead of a dialogue, which then becomes increasingly sterile and leaves people with the ideas they had before meeting, rather than thinking together.

We know that making clear judgments kills communication, just as the rigid, inflexible attitude with which one wants to make his idea stand out without paying attention to the objections of the other, who thus is not respected and probably becomes closed and aggressive.

The talk shows that Italians have been forced to undergo for years, in particularly those with a political background, are the demonstration of everything that an effective dialogue is not, and should not be. Often most of it is a mere exhibition that leaves both participants and listeners perplexed. It happens that the participants express their opinion and then they act and react trying to defend it, even when the opinions of others should be taken into consideration. The opinions of others are immediately tagged and archived. Few manage to take that short step back, to get out

of their mental block and calmly confront others. These are not dialogues, but monologues with aspects bordering on good manners.

Unfortunately, Italians, accustomed to melodrama, to the minuet, are led to the overlapping and interruptions of voices, and tend to reduce the impact of what the others are saying, with the intent of tonal prevalence of the voices when it is their turn to speak.

After a dialogue with friends or in work situations, I like to look inside myself and reflect if I have acquired anything new, fresh, even in emotional terms or if it was only a sterile conversation, a stirring of already acquired ideas, stuff already filed that springs back up, without new contributions.

9. Securing the necessary resources

The boat proceeds fast and, after stopping in Rovinj for customs and police checks, another half hour of navigation will see us dock in Brijuni. We pass before the beautiful fortress of Rovino, a dense settlement of colourful houses, narrow alleys and pretty squares, full of the scents of Mediterranean cuisine. It is a small town built around a fortress that rises from the sea and crowned by the great early Christian church of St. Euphemia.

The village is conditioned in social relations by the proxemics of its architectural structure, capable of consolidating and transmitting binding values for the inhabitants: the houses built against each other, the narrow passageways, the small squares that promote solidarity, simplicity, essentiality of choices, always respectful of the canons of good taste.

Once the customs and police formalities are completed, we resume our journey and decide to anchor in the bays of the nearby island Rossa, actually two islets connected by an embankment and formerly the site of a Benedictine abbey, and there we prepared lunch. This too is a tradition that we have maintained for years with each transit, weather conditions allowing. My children like these bays very much, because they allow safe raids with jet skis or diving on a nearby islet with a beautiful, large, submerged cave. The place is enchanting: rocks, a sea with shades of turquoise cobalt, sometimes emerald when reflecting dense pine forests and lots of sun!

So, I go back to reflect with *Alberto* on the process of effective entrustment of the task and we considered it the most immediate request that the source has to face, after entrusting a task, clarifying its purpose and listening carefully to suggestions and doubts. He must then make the necessary resources available by reaching an agreement on them.

So, let us see the next step to take in order to ensure the success of the

assignment process.

It is therefore assumed that the person, to whom we are entrusting a task, is a member of the organization, carefully selected after an analysis of the skills and abilities they have previously demonstrated.

However, at this stage, it will be appropriate to implement a timely verification, in order to possibly implement upgrades of areas that may be inadequate.

When you ask a manager what the main asset of his company is, the most frequent answer is: *human resources*. An answer that, in our opinion, deserves to be better specified, as people can also be an unproductive cost, carriers of problems, and anything but useful to the cohesion of the organization.

The correct answer turns out to be: *the main asset is how much and what can be obtained from human resources*, which evidently means that in order to be productive they must operate in an appropriate climate, with continuous training and education, motivation, respect and adequate compensation, in an atmosphere of institutionalized learning in the company.

Some companies have started an interesting initiative in my opinion: they have been able to formulate and keep their human balance updated, which acts as a counterpart to the economic balance sheet, considering that the intellectual specifications of the company must be evaluated, including in the financial statements.

The goal they set out to achieve is not simple, because in many respects of significant value, it is a question of measuring the intangible; however, there must be a method that, even by approximations and initial errors, allows the measurement and creates the conditions for monitoring the progress.

Even the intangible is measurable at least on a qualitative level.

The evaluation criteria, initially, will be probabilistic/random. It is a matter of putting apples together with pears, however, even in this case, for example, the number of calories provided, or kilograms of fruit available, can become an acceptable parameter.

The purpose of the evaluation, leading to the formation of the budget plan, is not to make a sterile x-ray examination of what is already existing which, moreover, can create the *Pygmalion Syndrome*, so the bad will remain bad, and the good will remain good to the bitter end: each through the repetition

of their own behaviour and one day, in negative cases, they will end up with the label of a person unable, blocked, unsuitable for the role.

Ovid's Metamorphoses tells the tale of how *Pygmalion*, a talented sculptor, had so carefully modelled the figure of a woman, whom he called Galatea that he fell madly in love with her. This so moved the sensitive Goddess Aphrodite to actually bring Galatea to life, thus generating the concept of the ideal woman who *Pygmalion* had transferred into marble.

The management of the human budget will aim to clearly highlight the potential of each one that both the person and the organization must undertake to bring out.

People are a strategic resource essential to the progress of the company. It is the people who make the difference, if they are treated differently.

The personal energy of each one includes a delivered energy, which is the power in place, but also energy to be delivered, which is potential energy.

The rational intelligence of people, quantitatively logical, is accompanied by an emotional intelligence, which matters much more than emotions because it recognizes them, recovers them, channels them, and uses them. This is also a specific area of action for personnel managers in the Company; every leader must personally take charge of it.

The whole company, all its management, must rediscover a new way of managing people, through respect, recognition, help and mutual fulfilment of agreed rules and regulations.

The validity of interpersonal communication and of implemented and shared values will constitute the strategic advantage of companies for the future years. The centrality of the person in the company must solicit the constant attention of every manager.

It is the leaders who manage to bring people to excellence, creating around them the necessary conditions, being able to lead them to the happy state of their full realization, under the human, professional, organizational profile, in order to achieve the organization's objectives in a satisfying atmosphere.

Leaders are responsible, even in the event of failure. The tools at their disposal are many: reward and lack of a reward that can already be punishment. Interventions can originate from the outside. More powerful instead is the motivation to be triggered and cultivated, producing an inner push.

A prize is such only if it has value for those who receive it, therefore the

relational plan, communication skills, and the existence of a methodology return forcefully into play.

Ordinary money is not always functional, even if it is a reward for all seasons. There is quite a large area of interventions geared towards the growth of respect, esteem, good reputation, and of a serene atmosphere; the restructuring of the semiotics of corporate spaces, the values to be affirmed, and the culture to be strengthened and proposed again as an acquisition.

People must necessarily be judged in order to activate the reward-punishment process correctly. Judgment is difficult to express and may not necessarily be centred in everything. There is a need to start a job: the important thing is not to arrive to an absolute vote, but to analyse progression, in the course of time, the successes of the investments made and the results achieved.

If there are additional people to be assigned to the collaborator for the execution of the task, you will take care to present him with an exhaustive profile.

We can then move on to the analysis of the hardware needed, to define together, if planned, the availability of funds, of equipment and systems deemed necessary for the execution of the task.

The position that the delegate will occupy in the hierarchical ladder will be clearly clarified for the case of important tasks and for the type of power that may be involved. Every person wants to know clearly whom they depend on, who is responsible for the activation of their reward-punishment mechanism, who is the contact person they can rely on in case of need. Hopefully this person is the same leader who entrusts the task.

Particularly the source will also have checked that the employee actually has the time necessary to dedicate to the new task.

Anzolin, a Venetian tanning entrepreneur, speaking of the opportunity to relocate the company, a contemporary issue, states:

“The tanning company is not a company where you can imagine separating the thinking part, the head, from the arm. The two must necessarily go together. The tanning industry is still an industry that cannot be managed in a managerial way. All tanning companies imply direct involvement of the entrepreneur in the daily management of the company. The entrepreneur usually has in charge the purchase of the material and in the majority of tanneries the leather is handled directly

by the owner. Moreover, generally the employer has also an extremely watchful eye as far as production is concerned. He lives the company daily. How is it possible then to relocate the company without running into serious problems? Another relevant element is the strength of the district. If we take a technician, who is perhaps the best, and we send him to work in China where he remains for example for six months, he continues to apply there everything he has acquired until then, but he loses what happened in the last six months, he loses a daily increase that here instead constitutes his main training base” (D. Celetti, E. Novello - 2007).

These statements highlight how midsize companies are often organized around the dominant figure of their entrepreneur-owner who has reached that position progressively, growing inside it, and, as we know, man tends to climb until he reaches the limit of his inability.

If in the meantime the entrepreneur fails to organize himself for the new challenges that the rapidly and constantly evolving markets keep demanding of him, the company is destined to follow its natural biological involution.

The bond of medium-sized enterprises with their osmotic environment also appears immediately to be very strong. Moving them, trying to clone them, locating them elsewhere, is a delicate, often unsuccessful operation.

The cemeteries of companies in the Far East and South America are full of young western lions.

An alternative response to reallocation may come from reorganization, going beyond people, beyond the entrepreneur, to satisfy the market expectations with lower costs and greater effectiveness, to form satisfied and motivated human groups, which keep growing, parts of a neuronal system of efficient internal and external communication. A streamlined organization, aiming at long-lasting bonds to transfer value, leadership work, success that manifests itself as the organizational-relational typology that is most evident in fact and widespread in successful midsize companies.

Organization is a necessity resulting from the fragmentation of work, the relationship between people is the glue which maintains its dynamic stability: it seems an oxymoron, but it just wants to underline the continuous, necessary adaptation which each person and the group as a whole must be able to do in the relations between the parts and the environment.

Like a large orchestra that randomly passes from a piece of music to another with skill and spontaneity. Relationships between people are supported by the rules that the organization has given itself, by its routines, the corporate climate and culture, reinforced by the roles played by each one.

At the base of everything we find the '*fides*' that back in Roman times was "... *A concept of the utmost importance in the Roman system of ethical values: it is the value that guarantees the relationship between two parties, both of equal and unequal rank; thus, it regulates marriage, friendship, the alliance between states; and also, the relationship between patron and customer, between winners and losers. In essence, it expresses the reciprocal trust of the two parts*" (Cicero, Friendship).

Fides, the good faith that each of us both demands, and guarantees to others, was for Cicero, the very basis of every possible form of friendship.

The most relevant elements in the organizational context of successful Italian medium-sized enterprises, and which are found with greater frequency, almost become an icon of the organization that works, and we can summarize them as follows:

- *There is a close interdependence with all stakeholders of the company.* In particular the suppliers of productive inputs are considered an important source of information, of technological progress, they become co-designers, co-makers. Some entrepreneurs state that they consider their relationships with their suppliers more important than with the customers themselves! Service providers and suppliers also emerge as important financial resources. The relationship with trade unions is inspired by mutual respect and convinced recognition of workers' rights. Many businesses have adopted the ethical certification, the SA 8000.

Organizational structures are very far from the extreme fragmentation supported by the Scientific Management, and far from generating obtuse workers of Hegelian memoir: "Search for maximum profit or income (Gewinn), disproportionate accumulation of wealth in few hands, dependence and narrowness of the company's workers, whose work is also increasingly fragmented and divided, and therefore limited and obtuse ..." (C. Cesa 1997).

When it comes to organization, first and foremost are their human

figures - with their frailties, but also with their skills - the institute of rights, and great learning and growing skills. They need to be given the opportunity: medium-sized enterprises winners show that they have institutionalized the learning and the attention to people. Of course, the organizations, although unique, original, are also the result of the general dominant *Zeitgeist*, of the world view offered by contemporaneity, the *Weltanschauung*.

Once again, the human society that hosts the company, that is, the dominant culture of the environment has a powerful influence in the evolution of people and of organizational systems. After all, as it has already been said, a secret of lasting success of the company also lies in its ability to collect and metabolize the signals, even weak ones, of its socio-economic-cultural environment, in order to be capable of continuous renewal, which will above all be consistent.

The *best-in-class* companies that I have had the opportunity to examine show availability and ability to read, listen, and of participation, activation of methods that favour the continuous exchange between the organization and its own environment.

In the current disciplinary literature, we find the fundamentals of contemporaneity, which must, however, be subjected to a constant renewal over time.

Lots of texts - dated only a few decades ago on the topics of economy, marketing, organization - which from time to time we pick up from our library, turn yellow not only in the pages but also in the text, so to speak, as the concepts exposed and the significance of their presentation, the conceptual hierarchies, are now rather worn out.

Philip Kotler dedicates his latest book, *Marketing 3.0: "To the next generation of marketers, who will improve the social and environmental contributions of our discipline"* (P. Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan 2010). Economic discipline is not a dogma. It cannot be. It is rather a pragmatic doctrine capable of progressive adaptations to the *Weltanschauung*, its world view must be gently modelled by the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of times.

Markets are like children; they take what they like and reject what they do not appreciate.

We read, from Brugnerotto's book: *"In conclusion: Marx did not get his analysis or his predictions wrong. He has maybe committed*

the unforgivable mistake of announcing them to the world” (S. Brugnerotto 1995).

The author of this agile book starts from the consideration that Marx did not get it all wrong: *“In the faculties of Economics of the most prestigious American universities, today Marx’s books are studied to understand the distortions inherent in the capitalistic system. And if the country symbol of capitalism performs such an operation, it means that the studies of the German philosopher are not unfounded, they have a recognized validity. All this only adds to the confusion: if your analyses were right, why was Marx never disproved by History?”*

A French author, Yves Christen, in a book entitled ‘Marx and Darwin’, offers us an explanation based on the comparison between the theory of natural evolution and that of social evolution proposals by the two great thinkers. Basically, says Christen, while Darwin’s followers were able to modify, gradually, the theoretical assumptions of the English scientist, adapting his thoughts according to the new data emerging in the research, followers of Marx have always remained perched in defence of the original doctrine, even when this meant denying the reality of facts. Marx and Engels, says Christen, were no less intelligent than Darwin; the fact is that ‘they dragged their successors on a path that forced them to submit facts (especially new facts, those after the original theory) to an ex ante judgment of the dogma and this can be called a closed or better, waterproof world view. On the contrary, Darwin gave birth to a scientific movement, indeed a movement of ideas susceptible to change in contact with new elements... and this can be called an open view of the world.

It is therefore no wonder that, about a century after the death of the precursors, the two systems are struggling more and more to coincide” (S. Brugnerotto 1995).

Are major religions not doing this, fuelling syncretism?

“So, the Bretton Woods Accords and the economic system and monetary policy that were the setting for the economic post-war miracle owe just as much to Marx and to the critique of capitalism, as to Adam Smith’s ‘magic hand’. But after the Fall of the Berlin Wall Marx was swept away together with the Soviet regime and real socialism, and ended up collecting dust in libraries. The dynamic relationship that existed between liberalism and Marxism has failed and with it also the

modernity of the economy. Here is why this discipline in the West has become monothematic, celebrating a unique model.

But the eastern one is not. After 1989, only in China did they continue to study Marxism along with all other economic theories. Well, this work led to the creation of a new, modern model, marked by the most severe pragmatism. As psychoanalysis, also 'Made in China' capitalism uses everything which works (from private enterprise to capital control) and is therefore more flexible and more topical than the Western one. The Chinese model knows how to adapt economy to epochal and sudden changes, such as the globalization process, and this flexibility helps China to become the superpower of the global village and to redefine the parameters of modernity" (L. Napoleoni 2010).

If someone prophesies something, we also do our best unconsciously, instinctively, to try to deny it.

- Kristian Ghedina offers us the opportunity to introduce a second organizational feature found in the analyses conducted about successful business cases: *the flexibility of their organizational formula.*

"When you put on your skis at the age of four, like so many others who live in my area, and you throw yourself down increasingly steep slopes, fear gradually goes away without you even realizing it. All these challenges, these races, these competitions stimulate us to think, to foresee, to react in infinitesimal time to the unexpected, so at some point you realize that the descent has become a slip at 155 km / h but fear is gone. Sure, a lot of tension remains, first, but fear dissolves. At least for me" (S. Zanolli 2006)

The aspect we want to emphasize here is the great value of the courage to experiment, which we find as a constant in these companies: everyone's acceptance of the concept of movement, of necessary continuous evolution, of combination and recombination of roles. The Ducati Company arrived right on the verge of chaos itself. The feared, often misunderstood, creator-destroyer, the Shiva of the contemporary world, chaos, as their last - for now - functional organization: *"I prefer to call it gaseous creativity. Think about boiling water, about the particles that aggregate and disaggregate generating energy inside a transparent container. That is what we are doing' ... [...] ...*

it marks the end of the organization, replaced by the community, 'that is that chaotic container in which there is a bit of everything. The company becomes a tribe' ... [...] ... 'Our engineers work according to simultaneous rather than sequential processes. The target is central, not final. If an element is weak it does not break the chain, but it is energized by the other' (Costa, Gubitta 2008).

Chaos is a word that usually has a negative meaning, associated with confusion, disorder, and a lack of control – in short, nothing good.

Here, however, we want to rehabilitate it as an area of great fertility, which emanates extremely stimulating essences for people and for organizations ... the Venetian lagoon reminded me of this. The confusion of the sea into the land and the land inside the sea, in an embrace that intensifies, loosens and creates an area teeming with life, with great contents of formal balance, aesthetics ... chaos, as a dangerous area upon which to look with confidence and strong control, because it lavishes with opportunity. It is the place of infinite possibilities, while there is little chance of fulfilling the ordered state.

For each of us there is only one prevailing way of putting order into things. Chaos is liberating.

On the verge of chaos, the rigidity of structural parts meets evolutionary possibilities in the relationship with fluid, apparently disordered parts, which stir the old and the new, from which they let themselves be licked and penetrated, they filter the vital energetic elements, they manage them, metabolize them in the organization, which thus evolves, innovates and grows.

You can be reactive to complexity in a losing way by trying to oppose it, to cancel it, to stem it, while it is more productive to absorb it, adapt it and manage it by exploiting it conveniently in favour of your organization.

Thinking of your organization or your company as stable, in a stable environment today is anachronistic for everyone. Instead, you should strive for a stable balance between the liberated area, liberator of chaos, and the paradigmatic mindset, which allowed, but only until yesterday, to read events and predict the future based on past experience. This attitude has allowed us to operate so far, as it has supported our personal representation of the world, consequently it has filtered for us or attenuated all perceived stimuli, reducing our risks,

almost like those who, applying a protocol, think they are relieved of any responsibility.

Predictability and stability have been around for a long time, supported by old paradigms, no longer valid in the turbulent changing complex current environment, which requires exercising rapid and effective evolutionary skills and wearing the necessary new mental habit capable of exploring and feeding on stimuli that absorbs at the brink of chaos.

The imperative is to have the courage to question and then be willing to update our mind maps, because we no longer live in a world where it is enough to do the usual things better. We are asked today to be open to every new external stimulus, both us and our organization. We are required to know how to monitor and dominate new alternatives, new technologies, new organizational forms, and new marketing strategies so as to continuously develop aesthetic qualities in every relationship and modality that accompanies our involvement and which continues above all to demand while being able to dream. Great things originate from dreams!

Always remembering that, as the Germans say: *Traüme sind Schäume* - dreams are foam, and must be treated with delicacy, humbly put to work while also willing to see them better in the light of rationality.

Therefore, the fear of experimentation will not emerge; the feeling of fear will be rationalized and experienced as a delight - not a pain. *“On the one hand it pushes. On the other it blocks. It pulls and slows down. Clarifies and confuses. It is an encounter which must not be ignored if you want to continue on the road of satisfaction and balance”* (S. Zanolli 2006). *“One can’t give courage to himself”*, the poor Don Abbondio muttered to himself, but he was a loser, overwhelmed by life. Our fears must be recognized and reported, as successful businesses have done, and they must be removed intelligently. *“Those relating to our preparation to address the new. Those relating to questioning habits and lifestyles. Those related to different skills to acquire and invent. Those relating to professional mobility and responsibility for our future. Those linked to a certain polarization of income and showing us that, if we do not take creative actions, we could go and swell that part of the population who already finds itself struggling with marginal, precarious and underpaid jobs”* (S. Zanolli 2006).

- Another important element that characterizes successful companies is their dominant *marketing concept*, especially medium-sized enterprises, which is expressed as orientation to the service, to the market, and therefore to the individual customer with progressive implementation of service activities and consequent shift to a bracket of higher income and lower competitive aggressivity. The tendency to move away from commodities - then product - is a constant search and it manifests itself in many operational and strategic proposals. It tends to think about the value, not the product.

“Successful medium-sized companies show a decisive customer satisfaction orientation. The latter is considered as a recipient but also as a point of reference of the innovation of the inter and intra organizational processes of the company. The levers used to understand the specific needs of customers thoroughly are numerous. Strong attention is dedicated to creating and transmitting a complex offering, rich in tangible and intangible elements, in application value adaptable to different consumers and contexts of use, as aligned as possible with the solution expected by the customer.

Some studies have shown that a misalignment between what the customer means by ‘solution’ (about which he develops his expectations and formulates his satisfaction) and what the supplier companies mean as solution (Tuli et al. 2007). In essence, the concept of customer solution is much more complex and ties strictly to the nature and quality of the processes of interaction with the supplier, starting from the contact phase and first negotiation up to continuous after-sales assistance.

In successful midsize businesses there seems to be a considerable alignment between concept and content of the company’s offerings and the substance of the expected solution by customers. This is one of the fields in which Italian companies manage to gain a not easily imitable competitive advantage” (Varaldo, Dalli, Resciniti, Tunisini 2009).

An entrepreneur says: *“My company doesn’t have four walls, it has four doors!”*.

Many know *El Restaurante Siete Puertas* in Barcelona. The name is derived from the architectural structure, sure, but why not call it *Siete*

Ventanas? And then, the clear trend is this, openness, availability, basic humility, a full vase can no longer receive anything.

- The last relevant element emerging from the analysis of successful companies is *their network of relationships with their chains of value*, which appears to be the further critical element for their success and stability. Actually, many of these companies, over half of them, serve the markets through local distributors and struggle to pass through direct forms of presence in the markets, due to problems related to organizational difficulties, to control, to available human and financial resources, to cultural and linguistic problems.

The result is that sales, through commercial intermediaries, account for over 30% of the turnover of Italian medium-sized enterprises. We would also like to highlight the indisputable advantages that this choice, even if forced by the causality expressed, brings along, such as:

- further contribution of entrepreneurship
- the formation of new functional reference and completion models
- overcoming the language barrier, quick acquaintance with the market, the local culture, the customs of businesses that are sometimes inspired

by business ethics very different from ours.

Unfortunately, there is no direct communication with the customer, with all the aspects, negative in these cases that it involves. In the book *In China for Business*, I described the relational forms essential for conducting business in the new economic planet, where I have been working for twenty years. I tried to investigate and report the salient customs of that people, the origin of the same, trying to combine the suggestion, the result of personal observation, to *bon ton*. I consider the cultural approach, the knowledge of the other, in this case so different from us, a preparatory and essential step to then conduct business effectively. I often say that in my opinion the distance with China turns out to be more cultural than geographical and appears essential to any business man who wants to efficiently study their attitudes, uses and customs carefully. Ignoring them can sometimes lead to disastrous effects. Once again culture and knowledge are called for to precede the action. The modern hero, the entrepreneur, the Prometheus.

Medium-sized companies take great care of their network of external

relations, woven by the company with customers, suppliers and, in general, with anyone who has any interest in the company, in its way of producing and selling, and this network is very accurate and tends to extend into time, in line with the modern need to develop a relationship marketing - *life time long* - in a saturated environment offers.

Considering their suppliers, you can generally see how the first ten cover more than half of the company's needs. Pareto, with his 80/20, is certainly respected. Therefore, the relationships entertained with suppliers considered strategic by these businesses, date back over ten years. Significant customers too constitute a limited number, a situation typical of medium-sized enterprises operating in B2B. Less than 20% of customers account for 80% of turnover. We understand, therefore, how much attention medium-sized enterprises should pay to the care of their clientele, including some important commercial intermediaries considered as customers.

“In the business-to-business and high- tech sectors, in particular, the network of partners allows you to keep up with the most relevant innovation processes by grasping in advance the possible impact on your business” (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi Tunisini 2009).

We have tried to highlight the importance of choosing and maintaining suitable relationships with strategic suppliers, which are a means of acquiring fresh technologies and innovations, at least of product, and how important is *recruitment* that is the choice of the customer we want to serve.

Companies are aware of the acquisition and service costs, wishing that the mere economic business will also be followed by an opportunity for growth, mirrored - which will be appreciated in every contact - in every relational form put in place with them, also having important effects on the informative / innovative dimension of the company.

Sort to say: *you can tell a man by the company he keeps*.

Relationships with customers and suppliers in particular, but with each stakeholder, pour cultural ferments into the organization, bound to influence, in some way, the consolidation of its culture. Someone even more pragmatic, says that everyone has customers that he deserves.

Successful companies are constantly: “... *looking for a growing interaction, aimed at better understanding the customer needs, at anticipating their needs, at accessing their know-how by increasing their own knowledge base with new and renewed application implications that can be used in relation to other customers; this, for example, is found with particular evidence in companies operating in industrial markets (Inglass, Cobra, Sorbini) where the innovative application experiences with a large customer allow you to improve also the offer to other large customers ...*” (Varaldo, Dalli, Rescinditi Tunisini 2009)

10. Agreement on how to measure progress

Our friend *Stefano* is sailing ahead of us with his boat and we are going to meet him in Brijuni. In the early years he was a patient teacher to me, offering indispensable help to deal with navigation in conditions of safety. I especially learned from him to love and respect the sea. I think that, sooner or later, Poseidon will rise winking to the surface to congratulate him on how he helps keep his fluid blue kingdom, and the creatures that populate it, safe.

The first time I went to sea was with a pilot boat for day trips and then I moved on to the yacht we are on now. Switching from the command of a pilot boat to a yacht is no joke. The available on-board technology changes, expands, becoming more complicated, and the sea is unpredictable, the situations to be faced are many and varied and in some cases extremely demanding - such as that evening when sailing between Syracuse and Catania, I found myself inside a 6 or 7 force cross-sea hell. We were coming from Pantelleria and we had to reach the comfortable transit port of Syracuse, which, however, due to the stormy sea, had no free moorings. We had to suffer an hour of strong experience between frightening skids and waves that, at times, crashed down onto the *fly*.

Equally strong was the experience lived in Greece, while we were lazily anchored in front of the island of Skorpyos, a few meters from the shore on a flat sea. We were engaged in onboard activities: reading, conversation, swimming, conducting minor maintenance. A sudden surge of the local wind, an enraged Meltemi, began to make the chains stretch and a dozen sailing boats anchored all around us, previously enjoying a quiet afternoon were suddenly pushed towards us. Getting away from them without damage was not exactly easy in the midst of a whirlwind flight of robes and pillows.

Another time, inside the port of Milna, on the island of Brac that faces

Split, a terrible and sudden thunderstorm tried to bundle all the boats that, until then, were moored with care, but were now unable to face such an angry nature, capable of penetrating with its fury into the harbour. The large ship of a famous designer which was anchored there, protected us as a providential shield and allowed, with emergency manoeuvres by all of us, to avoid a possible disaster.

In short, we are all good with a calm sea and moderate wind, but at least these are sailing conditions which however you can always choose, not as in the business world, where things often happen, unexpectedly and violently, and must be managed with skill and determination.

Over the course of years during my various summer vacations I have sailed particularly along the Greek coasts and the islands of the Heptanese, all the way down to Sapienza Island, then our Aeolian Islands, the Egadi Islands and Pantelleria.

All very nice, but far away for people who must be within reach of their office and so, more frequently, we sailed along the coasts of Croatia and around its beautiful islands, going down to the land of Queen Elena, Montenegro, discovering its splendid bays and inlets, and the thousands of easy landings that Dalmatia offers.

From the top of the upper deck you can enjoy a broad, soothing view, of great relaxation. You see the front of the boat: a long bow that cuts decisively into the sea. It conveys a sense of power, supports the ego, increases the secretion of serotonin, you feel better about yourself and friendlier towards others.

Alberto starts again making considerations on the fact that, after the task has been assigned, well understood and accepted, the person delegated must feel free to act, and the moments of control for the verification of the results achieved must be clarified and agreed upon immediately. We will always keep in mind that the more rules and restrictions we set, the more people will feel debilitated in carrying out their task. Only a possible crisis situation will later legitimize and require, from the source, an immediate intervention and a corrective command.

Control perceived as excessive, or the attitude of looking insistently over the shoulders of people, debilitates individuals and denying space for their desired growth and adopting any other responsibility. This attitude is also a serious obstacle to achieving self-organization, a desired situation, fertile with results.

We must also accept that we cannot live with dignity if we are constantly under pressure, that the performance of people can experience more or less intense and effective moments, therefore we will not wait anxiously for them, or, as they say, at the gate, at the first sign of weakness or loss of emotional tension.

Our life is more important than work, and it is necessary to develop a joyful approach to it by making sure that inevitable moments of loss of emotional tension or concentration do not become the elements on which to base our assessment or that of others towards us.

An effective organization manages to achieve extraordinary results from ordinary people. Exactly *people, ordinary people*, who we must accept and love for what they are and not for what we would like them to be, and help them grow through the realization of the task assigned to them, after having judged that they are suitable.

Their smile will be proof that we have created the necessary climate of trust and collaboration. A smile, moreover, is not only the result of experienced, ongoing, favourable emotions but it is also able to arouse them, better if it is also opportunely distributed by the leader.

The Chinese say that if you cannot smile, you must not open a shop! It is hard not to agree. The business relationship provides for the pleasure of meeting, a premise to the serenity of judgement. Exposure to stimuli is enough to create preferences

When people smile, they feel comfortable, they experience feelings of well-being, and their brain is stimulated to positive thoughts. A smile is a powerful release valve and an unsurpassed means of relationship, which influences others by stimulating emotions favourable to the relationship.

On the plane, for example, we have all experienced the comfort of a smile from the flight attendants, which is a constant of their way of relating to others, which distracts us from the reasonable anxiety that we might experience because of the take-off, or maybe from the bitterness of leaving our loved ones. A smile, therefore, is a very contagious relationship tool, which affects effectively. *Smile, Think YES*, they are taught.

Happiness is a state of mind, let us dedicate five minutes a day to smiling and it will become our spontaneous attitude. Children are experts, by nature, in the art of smiling to ensure the necessary parental care, smiling is their first system to communicate favourably. I noted with pleasure how a smile is the only attitude of man that we can find in any culture, it

reduces our stress and that of the group, it helps us to relate more easily and allows us to emerge from stressful situations with less difficulty.

In establishing and implementing the necessary checkpoints, therefore, we must always keep in mind that our attitude should be supportive, with fellow feeling, *think YES*, and instead of giving orders, it is better to use the great energy that the group manages to develop, in its self-regulation process.

Work, in its physical and mental aspects, is a natural fact for man. Man is capable of exercising the necessary self-control to achieve the goals in which he feels involved, but he needs the support of his intelligence moved by emotions to do it.

Emotions, from the Latin *emovere*, the roots of which means to set in motion, are always the wings that allow us to fly high. The average individual learns, under certain conditions, not only to accept, but also to seek responsibility, and this attitude it is not always related only to the economic reflex that it may involve. There are, in fact, other important incentives besides money.

However, participation in company objectives is always a function of the satisfactions a person can achieve.

11. Remuneration appropriate to the task performed

The organization's objectives have been made clear to the people involved. The leader has shown himself to be motivated and emotionally engaging. What about the objectives of the individual people? Do they coincide with those of the organization? It is important to make sure of that.

Have the objectives and incentives been set by the leader consistent with the vision and, above all, with the general strategy?

Have they considered also those of the people involved, this process being essential to ensure their motivation towards an effective performance?

After completing the writing of these notes, the computer informed me that the word strategy was widely used in the text, so it seems appropriate to me to clarify the concept. I attribute a great value to this magic word, as I am also an avid reader of Sun Tzu, the writer of the ancient book on strategy which is carefully studied today in every Chinese business school.

Strategy is the process by which the individual is activated on the basis of his own targets; he programs, plans, puts to work, and modifies them so as to make them more effective, correcting them. A process that can be patterned then recognized and even reproduced.

We have already had a chance to remember how normal it is for the individual to learn through imitation. One learns from one's parents, then from their own experiences and from those of others, observing and recognizing the successful strategies of people and organizations - that is good, smart.

If other people adopt behaviours that lead to good results, why imitate them? Is this not a basis of the same NLP?

"If there is anyone in the world who is very skilled at doing something, you can learn the strategy of his ability and teach it to all those who need it.

The world is everyone's territory, the world map is a personal

construction, this map is not the whole territory, but only part of it.

To achieve excellence and success, it is necessary to overcome the limits of one's perception of reality and NLP extends or exits from the limits and increases the perceptions of what is possible.... [...] ...Strategy is a series of attitudes and consequential logical behaviours that lead from one state to another, from one behaviour to another, from a learning to another, from one movement to another, from one image to another, from a word to a speech etc” (Cuttica 1996).

No strategy is possible without there being a vision, a dream to achieve, a goal to achieve, that intense desire to arrive at a different state. These are therefore primary mind areas to cultivate with care, often self-generated by mind, thanks to the constant effort, imposed on oneself, to maintain and develop positive thinking.

“Cogito ergo sum,” said René Descartes.

Descartes, who upheld the thaumaturgical virtue of doubt, affirmed: *“I think, therefore I am. I can doubt everything except than doubting, that is, thinking”*. I think positive and become visionary. I build a dream with the power of my mind, a vision and a mission to share with others and which will be a source of energy for its realization. Positive thinking can be the transition to the fascination of living in hypnosis.

Favourable emotions, which we induce by keeping a positive control of mental discipline, drive our subconscious, which is the most relevant and powerful part of our brain, estimated to be 80% of the available brain power: the rational actions that we undertake will have the powerful support of our unconscious and we will become unstoppable.

When you know what you want to get in these dimensions of involvement, the others will step aside and let you pass. And they will admire you.

The beautiful things we can do are the fruit of dreams. I cannot imagine a life without dreams, we would not even want our powerful collaborator, the subconscious, to work against us or to leave us alone.

It is therefore convenient to cultivate our dreams intensely and make them become the dominant thought so that our docile subconscious accepts, and develops for us all that is needed to realize the vision.

In leadership strategy, the first thing a leader needs look after and manage is the motivation of the people who collaborate with him. Leadership is a process that influences the behaviour of collaborators, a difficult task,

because it is limited by the individual motivational system to which he is not always allowed to have access, at least not at all its levels, and by the rules imposed by teamwork. The leader will know, however, how to develop empathic relationships that will lead to understanding the motivating factors still present, which can be stimulated in people, in order to orient their behaviour to the purposes of the work group and the simultaneous growth of the person.

Leadership is like a comet: its largest, most beautiful, essential part is its long wake, its *ship*.

“Mother nature destined us to take pleasure in a stream of small but constant pleasant rewards. As I said rewards need not be large, but only frequent, a little here a little there ... [...] ... Happiness depends more on the number of positive feelings you feel, which psychologists define ‘Positive effect’, rather than from their intensity ... [...] ... A great deal of fairly good news is better than little great news” (Taleb Nassim N. 2008).

Human nature seems to be like that, it prefers frequent and irregular rewards. Therefore, the leader takes it into account the articulating of a reward plan for the task he assigns, a reward that will also be dependent on specific characteristics of the person meant to receive them.

However, human nature presents a paradox. In fact, while it reveals great similarities between men, it also highlights the profound differences that exist between people and therefore between different personalities, which derive from inherited individual biological characteristics such as the physicality of the person, his ability to learn and to solve problems, to understand the surrounding environment and adapt to it, interacting with it in the way deemed most convenient.

Arthur Schopenhauer: *“...founds the difference in the fate of the mortal in what one is, i.e. His personality in the broadest sense, comprising health, strength, beauty, moral character, ingenuity and intellectual education”*¹, and this makes it the main element followed later by what one has and what one represents, i.e. his reputation, rank and fame that consist in the opinion that others have of him. Careful attention to developing one’s personality is the secret of happiness: *“personality is the highest happiness”*².

1 A. Schopenhauer - The art of being happy

2 J. W. Goethe – West-eastern Diwan - Book of Zuleika

Another important component is added to the biological legacy and it is the continuously growing personal experience, matured in the course of work and through the continuous perceptions that a culture captures and filters from the environment.

Charles Darwin writes: *“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It is the one most adaptable to change”*.

Thus, specific aptitudes enter the field continuously, dynamic evolution of negative and positive experiences that determine and condition aspirations for the future. Therefore, negative attitudes are an aversion to reasonable risk, antagonism, mistrust, and the tendency to give up. While among the positive ones, I want to highlight social openness and a cooperative spirit, the ability to rationalize risks, to accept creativity and to develop trust and empathy.

The exercise of leadership therefore involves the delicate ability to influence the attitudes and behaviour of people, usually proceeding from the mapping of an employee’s cultural background, which the leader cannot change, but can monitor closely.

You cannot change the experience acquired by a person, neither can you change his initial biological endowment, his acquaintances, family, religion, friendships, or local culture.

From the analysis of the person’s cultural background, it will then be possible to identify his motivating factors. Ultimately it is a question of knowing how the individual thinks and reacts in the face of certain solicitations, to predict how the person will act or react in certain contexts in which we want to engage him.

The motivation that leads to an immediate and constant improvement of behavioural and distinctive skills finds consolidation in the outcome of this analytical and decision-making process.

The performance of people, given a certain context, is a function of two factors: motivation and ability. Both are necessary but not sufficient conditions to reach the desired levels of performance, both in terms of quality and quantity.

The context is given by the available resources, the company climate, the working conditions, the relations with collaborators, the rules, along with the amount of information available.

Capacity is considered, in the world of work, as the whole of the intellectual characteristics of the person and his mental, psychomotor

abilities to use available technologies and interact with others and with the leader, checking the results of their work.

In order to carry out a task you need specific skills whose presence must be previously ascertained.

Motivation comes from the fact that individuals tend to perform actions that bring them pleasure, advantages, and satisfaction. The set of reasons that push them to act - and are in relation to different goals and interests - are driven by acquired processes which are cognitive and emotional.

The behaviour of an individual is the result of a stimulus, which is transformed into action by a unique set for each individual, of hereditary, cultural, environmental factors which induce him to respond to the stimulus in his own way, differing in intensity and response from person to person in both quality and sign.

A device used in the chemical laboratory suggests a clear picture of a behavioural system: I am thinking of the coil which cools and condenses the distillation gases.

The coil is immersed in a coolant, the vapours passing through a suitably long course cool down and liquefy ... often the result is an excellent grappa, rather frequent in these parts. Well, the incoming vapours represent the input, the stimulus. The condensate that comes out is the result of the action performed. The coolant - which determines and conditions the change of state and which envelops the whole serpentine in solidarity - is constituted by the personality of the subject, his experiences, attitudes, perceptions and expectations.

The external container is modelled by the cultural environment of the person: education, acquaintances, relatives, religion, and nationality.

The delicate mechanism of people's motivation was unveiled by attentive researchers, who have dedicated their entire professional lives to it, and have led to the knowledge of individual needs and their hierarchies. It is by knowing the aspirations or the frustrations of a man that the leader can help him and bring him to self-motivation.

Self-motivation, because people cannot be motivated, but we can provide them with the useful elements to lead them to generate, in their inner self, the motivation process.

Living beings on earth, whether humans, animals or plants and including many other biological forms, are all frantically searching for the satisfaction of their perceived needs, which impose themselves as very

strong, urgent, often sophisticated and more evanescent desires, but they are always waiting to be satisfied.

Abraham H. Maslow was a scholar, who dedicated a lifetime of studies to the subject, setting a milestone on behavioural knowledge.

The New York psychologist Maslow drew a model of hierarchy of human needs from an American military matrix, which he created in the 1940s, and that was published in 1954, in his book *Motivation and Personality*, where he highlights hierarchies that a good leader must always keep in consideration, remaining continually valid and representative of our Western culture.

The condition is quite different in Asian cultures.

An Oriental man, in fact, expresses his own hierarchy of needs in another way. He tends, or rather tended, given the turmoil current of cultures, to put social values before individual ones.

His *self* is not so developed. In the ancient Chinese language, the verb *to be* as a predicate was missing, the identity emerged from juxtapositions. The lack of the verb *to be* - I exist, I am - has inhibited the development of our peculiar metaphysical philosophy in the Chinese cultural sphere.

The *aut aut*, the *dichotomous caesura* typical of the Western world to be-not to be, is missing in oriental culture where the *Yin* and the *Yang* are closely related: they are the same thing in manifestations of different modulation.

Again, remembering the Cabal as a tradition, a historical stage of Jewish mysticism, we read: “*Since it absorbs water from two sides and knows how to distinguish them, like the one who drinks the sweet and the bitter, being immersed in them, it is called the tree of knowledge of good and evil*” (Toaff and Toaff 1988).

For the Chinese, individuality dissolves within the community.

I am does not count, what counts is ‘*we are*’, and the representation that I project of myself, how others see me, how other people consider me, is what counts even more.

This reminds us of the Latin verb ‘*videor*’

I am seen, therefore, I appear. “*The perfect man is without I*”³.

Social solidarity has deeply permeated Chinese society and still

3 Zhuangzi, Nan hua zhen jing,15

characterizes Asian values, although showing signs of pressing change caused by the irrepressible and majestic economic development in progress.

In those cultures, the judgment and vision that others have of my personality becomes the real one, the one that matters, mine is not considered because it is very limited, just mine, and, therefore, easily aberrant and distorted. It is obviously the result of the use made for many decades of the Dang'an institute, the rigid personal profile compiled and jealously guarded by Danwei, the work unit to which each Chinese was associated and which reported the psycho attitudinal profile, the work experiences, social activities and any other indicative aspect of the character and attitudes.

The rest was done by the *Pygmalion syndrome!*

Chinese culture avoids rigid prescriptions or univocal definitions, it does not persist in the search for absolute truth, which it assumes it does not exist.

Even today, for example, when there is the need to have, by government bodies, extensive clarifying clarifications for a correct interpretation of specific rules or provisions, these are received immediately by the officials questioned, and in an extremely courteous way, with extensive explanations and clarifications, but they are never in writing and always are to be considered as a courteous aid to better understanding and application.

Things are also changing at those cultural latitudes with the pressing spread of wealth, which already sees 250 million of people in China with a spending power comparable to ours in medium-high range, immersed in an existential reality that increasingly reveals the characters of the west, or is overtaking it. In a few years it is likely that China will become the first economic and military power of the planet.

Let us go back to our western reality: the Maslow scale, already referred to, highlights the existence of hierarchical needs; it puts the need of self-realization at the top and then the other two, social content and safety and physiological needs.

The realization starts from the base, where the basic needs of life must be met first, being part of human nature, and the subject of evolution and consolidation for thousands of years.

Only after the physical and psychological needs essential to life have

been satisfied, our desires will orient us towards the realization to the needs of a higher order, until the full development of the personality is achieved.

In case the conditions, which, until then, have guaranteed the satisfaction of basic needs were lacking, we will find ourselves totally involved in their frantic search and we will forget, in this difficult existential situation, the higher-order needs that are literally wiped out.

The physiological needs are the most powerful of all, because they are linked to the defence of life, how to feed, shelter, sleep, defend oneself, and reproduce.

In modern times they coincide with the guarantee of the salary and basic working conditions.

On this hard core stands the second step, consisting of needs for security, order, legality, defence from adversity, and, particularly today, certainty of job and stability of social relations.

On the third step, then, we find the needs of belonging and love.

Man is a social animal and feels the need to create for himself a relational network in which he is recognized and appreciated. Therefore, family, loved ones, and quality of relationships with the others become relevant.

In the world of organized work, the approval, recognition, and friendly relationships with colleagues, are considered vitally important.

We go up to the fourth step where we find the needs of esteem, understood both as self-esteem, to feel good about yourself, and esteem offered by others, to constitute a good reputation and a positive self-image, a welcome social location, status, independence, prestige, and responsibility.

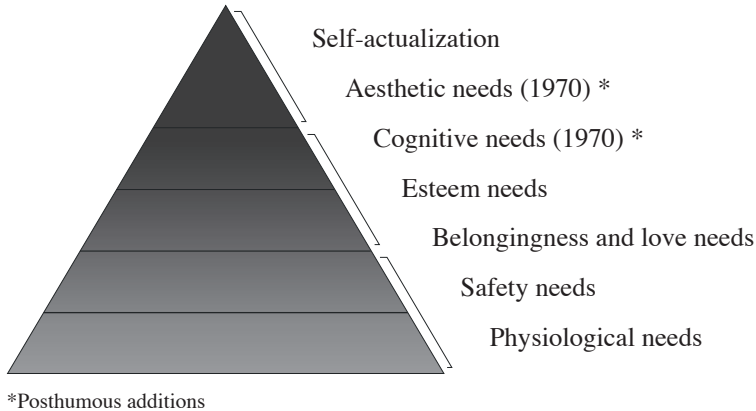
This is the level most correlated with the condition of stress.

At the top, finally, is the need for self-realization, the need to realize all our own potential, to free up our own creativity and to consolidate deep human relationships, feeling the comfort of full self-acceptance.

Each person possesses, to some extent, all these needs.

However, only one will emerge as prevalent in any determined period, to guide behavioural choices, as McClelland was able to support and highlight. In a later study, unlike Maslow, he claims that needs are not static over time, but they are subject to evolution, varying in intensity, depending on the personal history of the individuals. In 1970 Maslow's pyramid recognises two important additions posthumously.

Between levels 4 and 5, we can find: the level of cognitive needs, that is, the desire to know, and on the next step the level of needs of formal balance, i.e. appreciation and pursuit of beauty, attention to shapes, development of aesthetic qualities.



The hierarchy of these needs, according to Maslow, is destined to vary over the course of life and sometimes it might even overturn the scale, which, however, just as it is in its natural development, is a valid indication of human needs, as investigated by the researcher.

To further comment we can add how the needs of significant self-actualization require that the person enjoys reasonable independence and sees the results of his work - that esteem arises in the world of work as a positive feedback, recognized by the activities performed.

Positive feedback cannot be lacking, nor can victory, commitment, and good execution always be taken for granted. It would be similar to not rewarding an athlete who wins.

Work must involve the possibility of progressing, of learning new things from the job.

The need for belonging and love is satisfied, in the company, from the feelings that exist between the individual and his own colleagues and superiors.

The need for security follows from the development of the feeling of belonging and the role that, within the group, the person manages to occupy and is recognized.

Finally, physiological needs are related to the conditions of work, the adequacy of the organization, the clarity in relationships, to the environment.

Moreover, a positive attitude towards work is obtained only when the individual's needs are satisfied by factors that the organization makes available, as people direct their efforts towards behaviours that lead them to the desired rewards.

Faced with a task, the person wonders how much he will be able to affect the result, with his contribution. This becomes his target and he investigates what opportunities he will have to be compensated for the result he obtains, measuring the value of the reward, that is, the value it assumes for him.

Motivations are therefore recognizable as individual needs, mental patterns, inner thrusts, which, in a given moment of a person's life, guide behaviour, inducing to perform a specific action with its different modulations of intensity, commitment, passion, and conviction.

The satisfaction of needs becomes an essential motivational value. In the absence of such satisfaction, people begin to look for defects in the environment, in the people. Sellers will blame products, the quality, or the price; employees the management style or management choices, workers the work organization, etc.

According to Maslow, needs must be met in the hierarchical order highlighted by his study, so that, for example, it is difficult to motivate a salesperson (level 4) if the person was facing relationship breakdown problems in his family (level 3).

Maslow also defines levels 1 through 4, as motivated by deficiency, that is, it is their lack that becomes a problem and moves to action, while satisfying them will not be a cause of motivation.

In the case of a seller of goods or services, for example, his degree of satisfaction, which becomes the motivating context, presupposes the possibility of developing good human relationship also in the company, since the quality of the interpersonal relationship is what matters most in motivational management. Immediately after that the fact that the company manages to create positive environmental conditions also counts very much, particularly in the company-seller relations.

The seller needs to feel that his peculiar qualities as a person are used in an effective and efficient way, that his work continues to be stimulating and stimulated, that repetitive routine actions are eliminated. In fact, a job

perceived as demanding feeds the feeling of self-actuation.

Even with him, goals must be defined with clarity and performance measurement systems must be agreed upstream.

The seller will be particularly sensitive to the degree of autonomy that he will be able to guarantee himself in carrying out his task, but also to earnings increases, since the chances of career are rather limited in sales, hence the prestige in position rather tends to be measured by the degree of autonomy achieved and the possibility of economic progress.

We recalled Abraham H. Maslow's pyramid of needs because it comes to the mind and therefore influences decisions of managers when they want to correctly interpret the behaviour of people or want to help them develop their own personality.

The levels of motivation therefore differ greatly between one person and another. What is the reason why successful people have such high levels of motivation?

Motivation emerges as the fruit of mental strategy. We live situations in which we find ourselves strongly motivated, in a natural, spontaneous way; other times, however, we would like to get the results we need and desire, but we are not stimulated to take those necessary actions, or to be consistent enough to achieve them. Motivation is an inner desire that moves us in the opposite direction from what we dislike: *away from*, or in the direction to what we desire: *towards*.

This force is to be considered as a vector, that is, it possesses a direction, a way, and, above all, an intensity which constitutes a mental strategy, a work program.

We are not always conscious or aware of the metaprogram that has settled inside us, but it acts undisturbed, strongly affecting our behaviour, always influencing what we do in our life.

It then happens that people who are motivated tend to get away from negative things, and go towards the desired results, towards their goals, towards what is important for them, concentrating the necessary energies there.

Like quitting smoking or drinking or going with consistency on a diet or in practicing an exciting hobby.

To be successful it is therefore necessary to work hard to be able to build a life based on our personal values, understanding what you want to get from and where you want to go, what is important to us. All these

together constitute our values.

When interacting with another person, you understand how important it is to understand his values, which are not necessarily common, homologated, possibly quite different from ours, or may be organized into hierarchies that we must consider.

In the book "*Human Resources - People, Relations and Value*" (Costa, Giannecchini 2009) we read the result of a survey carried out by the agency "*Ad Interim*". To the question: "*What gratifies you most in your work?*" the responses of 2852 workers were as follows: 30% replied that the most rewarding element is the salary, 29.3% believes he is more satisfied with contact with people, 28.5% with the achievement of roles of greater responsibility and the 9.5% with the compliments of their leaders. 55% of the respondents were women, included in the range of age 20-35.

Individual values, therefore, influence a person's motivation. There is no point in trying to motivate another person, it makes sense to transmit to him and to share with him values towards which to move, driven by the metaprogram that is created.

Success, both professional and in terms of self-actuation, emerges because of specific modalities of thought - modalities that can be learned by anyone. Our mind allows us to achieve levels of excellence in our life, arousing in us the moods that favour the achievement of the goal.

Only positive moods are productive: we must flee from negativity because it leads us in the opposite direction from our target; denial does not exist in the neurological process and does not support any constructive process.

The source avoids implementing micro-management techniques, which end up eroding people's trust and leading to creation of *yes-men*, always dependent on the leader, perhaps with proxies that turn out to be, in the end, very ineffective.

*"The Master said, 'Hui is of no help to me. He accepts all my words'"*⁴. They will not last long, because the person's tendency will be to shake off the situation and, with it, whoever is responsible. The querulous and boring Santippe was no longer needed to not even cook for Socrates although she claimed she could give him many important tips!

4 Confucius, XI, 3

Motivation theories were subsequently enriched with the important contribution of Frederick Herzberg, considered a great original thinker in management issues and in motivation theories.

Both a Clinical psychologist and a university professor of Management, he left us at the dawn of the new millennium. His extraordinary book *The Motivation to Work*, published in 1959, expresses the theories he formulated about motivation in the workplace after having studied two hundred cases which included accountants and engineers.

The quality of the methodology used, and the accuracy of the study carried out, supplemented by the in-depth scientific knowledge of Herzberg, led to an extremely high and sophisticated level of data collection

“Herzberg concludes that the elements that generate dissatisfaction are closely linked to the context, while those that generate satisfaction concern the content of work. The former, active only when absent, are defined hygienic factors; the second, whose absence does not generate dissatisfaction but whose presence gives rise to a positive attitude towards work, are defined motivating factors” (Costa, Gubitta 2008).

In the books published later, Herzberg expands his theory on motivational and hygienic factors. I recall the unmissable: *Work and the Nature of Man* (1966), *The Managerial Choice* (1982) and *Herzberg on Motivation* (1983).

Herzberg’s theory is truly relevant in understanding the modern relationship between entrepreneur and employee, the reciprocal understanding and alignment with the *psychological contract* about which we will have a chance to talk later.

What is the main content of Herzberg’s theory and his importance?

Herzberg, first, shows that satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not generated by the same factors, that not always, for different people, it is a question of the same reactions caused by the same factors; furthermore, he highlights how the mechanisms investigated were not fully explained in the theories extant until that time.

Herzberg is thus able to establish unequivocally that the motivating factors have to do with the work-related factors that the person is doing, while the dissatisfaction factors are related to the context in which the work is carried out.

Herzberg’s constant commitment was to bring more humanity and attention to people in the workplace. His constant concern was to

emphasize the importance that people should feel good in the workplace, thanks also to the satisfaction of the factors considered *hygienic*.

He also did not want his theories to be of much use as a motivation tool to improve the efficiency of organizations, which regularly occurs with their application, but Herzberg's primary purpose was always to explain how to treat people, with the purpose of achieving their well-being at work.

People are relentlessly trying to satisfy their hygienic factors because they feel dissatisfaction when they are missing. However, once satisfied, they cease their motivational value. Therefore, organizational efforts oriented to the satisfaction of hygienic desires do not lead to the desired results and people then seek the satisfaction of other real desires, as strong motivators in the workplace. These are: development of people, improvement of conditions, recognition of their value, the type of work itself, and the levels of responsibility.

In the context of hygienic desires, Herzberg identified working conditions, salary, relations with the superiors, corporate climate, management style, safety, relationship with colleagues, and so on.

Motivation theories, so relevant in daily practice in the guidance of other people, find further development with David McClelland, the American psychologist and university professor, who dedicated over twenty years of his life to investigating the mechanisms of motivation.

In the book he published in 1961, *The Achieving Society*, he identifies three types of motivating needs:

- *motivation for personal affirmation*: success is the need to assert yourself through personal effort, you try to achieve personal levels of excellence by putting yourself in open competition with others, but also with yourself through the desire for advancement in your work and by achieving important and stimulating goals. This kind of people are willing to run even greater risks. Reaching the result, or the goal, is more rewarding for them than receiving prizes or awards. Wage improvements are seen as proof of appreciation and not primarily for their venal value. Security and status are not the primary motivators. Concrete and quantified feedback is especially important for them because it monitors and confirms their need for success and improvement. It is a question here of the motivation of entrepreneurs, managers in the world of business, and sellers. The temptation of managers strongly motivated by the results to be achieved, will be

to adopt the style proposed by Theory X. But they can be smoothly oriented to theory Y when seeing the immediate benefits, especially if adopted in doses proportional to the maintenance of trend X for which they reveal a strong propensity.

- *motivation for attaining authority / power*: a status recognized by others i.e., a need to influence, guide and make their own ideas and actions prevail to achieve greater prestige and superior status. People motivated by this particular desire generally set themselves goals that they can strongly influence with their efforts and their abilities, becoming goals that will surely be achieved. The predictable style of the managers motivated by authority / power can only be conformed to theory X.
- *motivation towards affiliation*: it is the need for friendly relationships, to be appreciated by others, and to be held into account. They are people oriented to group formation, attentive to others, their style will be that supported by theory Y. The need for affiliation is experienced as a need to establish, maintain, or restore a personal relationship with others.

People, characterized by this prevailing need, feel good when working within a group where they come to also establish relationships of friendship. They feel protected, accepted, recognized. These motivating needs are present in different degrees in each person, in each worker or manager, it is this weighty mixture of needs that ends up characterizing the style and the behaviour of people.

Each person has a *software for the mind*, according to the metaphor by Hofstede G., 1991, in *Cultures and Organizations: Software for the Mind*. Motivation is therefore a strong urge to do and to do some things sooner or with more commitment than others. It is an inner strength of the individual, difficult even to define, but immediately perceptible, when there is a form of energy that is released by people. It is the desire to do a certain task well, from which a recognition is expected, although different from person to person.

Enthusiasm and positivity in the work environment: giving confidence and collaborating with others puts a fire inside, making one excited at work, managing to make adversity seen as stimuli that strong people accept and perceive as useful for achieving results they would not have planned without adverse conditions.

Our visit to the Brijuni meanwhile proceeds through rich vegetation and wide grassy areas crossed by fallow deer, deer, mouflons, climbing on gentle promontories, skirting enchanting bays with clear waters and white beaches, some sandy, some rocky, along the coasts that on the larger island extend for about twenty kilometres, a magnificent place opened to the public only in 1983, after 40 years of total closure, including the neighbouring sea, as the residence of Tito.

We arrived at the extremity to the east, near the archaeological sites of the Chane Valley villa, built on four terraces sloping down to the sea following the natural slope of the land, and so called because the bay - private harbour of what we can rebuild as a splendid villa, probably the home of senior officials or resort of the very imperial family - was barred by chains, and the port facilities are today immersed in a few meters of water, but still partially visible.

In Roman times, as can be seen from the archaeological remains present in various other sites on the island, the Romans frequented this little archipelago and built sumptuous villas, temples dedicated to Venus, Neptune and Jupiter, warehouses for processing and storing olive oil, wine, and cereals.

The nearby city of Pula was the most powerful Austro-Hungarian naval base in those days and the Brijuni, even if deserted and marshy, being abandoned above all because of malaria which claimed many victims, were part of the empire.

In 1893 Greater Brijuni came into possession of the Viennese magnate Paolo Kupelweiser. The island had been abandoned because of its swampy conditions and being invaded by mosquitoes, especially the malaria anopheles. Kupelweiser managed to turn it into a splendid garden with stubborn determination and with a great profusion of means.

At the beginning of 1900 the Kupelweiser family, determined to transform Brijuni into the paradise islands they are today, called the scientist Robert Koch, the famous discoverer of the bacillus of tuberculosis.

After identifying the mosquito Anopheles as responsible for malaria, Kock, after two years of assiduous research and work, was able to eradicate malaria completely by reclaiming ponds and marshes. The island therefore hosted a Study Centre supported by the German and Austrian governments for advanced studies, experiments and training of doctors destined to operate in the world to fight malaria.

Alighting from the cart, our visit continued by foot among the foundations of the archaeological structure, and *Stefano* – already completely involved in dialogue - drives our conversation towards an important fact: every job must offer an opportunity for the individual to acquire, to learn, to socialize and defend himself. The leader must know how to surround everyone with stimuli, rituals, larger company standards, an almost mythical garment, sometimes.

So, people expect to get some compensation consistent with the task assigned to them. They need to see with clarity the link between the effort they make and the compensation they get, and if what they get matches their current need, as well as being proportionate to their commitment.

This delicate aspect highlights the strategic and critical role of the human resources manager, who maintains a constant monitoring of the expressed and latent needs in a single person, to bring them back within the culture and the possibilities of the organization, to satisfy them as far as possible.

The way of perceiving the adequacy of the remuneration is certainly not the same for all individuals, and the widespread tendency that we can see in the collaborators is towards overestimation of their own abilities, their merits and, therefore, more expectations regarding the remuneration they consider fair.

Here, once again, the leader comes into play, with his ability to guide, his knowledge of evaluation techniques and the serenity of his judgment, which will allow him to orient the person towards a more objective analysis. After that he will be willing to comply with their expectations, to be remodelled together. I have often met people happy with their work, but when it comes to compensation, the general trend, at least in my experience, is that of considering oneself not entirely satisfied, and certainly deserving of higher earnings. We also hear this from entrepreneurs.

The leader's charisma is not to be used to dampen or silence legitimate expectations of a consistent remuneration for the assigned task, when well done, compensation that instead must be immediately agreed, not in terms of a promise, but of a pact.

So, what prizes will we deliver? Money, this essential Faustian transformer? Too easy and often unnecessary, it can become ineffective, as are sometimes the commissions on sales, which in the long run become a mere right, not foreseeing the necessary doses of uncertainty that move

to action even more than acquisitions, even losing motivational skills.

The company that pays it is seen as a payer of a debt, nothing more. Fixed or variable rewards for everybody? Variable in courtesy, quality, value, and temporality, and above all frequent or they are not rewarding. They become something else: an institutionalized fringe benefit.

Giorgio Nardone, a psychologist and psychotherapist, reminds us how: *“Even the most exciting stimulus repeated over time reduces his effects by virtue of our adaptability that slowly dampens enthusiasm”*.

Certainly, understanding what is the right reward for a specific action and person requires extra work and is a delicate matter to which attention must be devoted, but the positive results it generates are such as to amply justify the commitment.

In my professional life I happened to see a few times my collaborators refuse cash incentives, which were subordinate when not even considered with respect to other types of motivational proposals. In what sense is money a motivator then?

When we talked about motivation, we paused on the fundamental theories of Maslow, Herzberg and McClelland that clarify the concept - also taken up in the four *drives* - (Paul R. Lawrence, Nitin Nohria 2002) - and we refer to the complex problem of man's first need which is to acquire - to acquire to solve his own existential problems and the ones of the people he is responsible for. Which can mean, in our day, to enjoy an adequate salary and work guaranteed in time. This also affects and satisfies another need, the one for safety.

The salary level is also a form of recognition that affects self-realization and self-esteem. Which, in turn, constitutes a powerful element of satisfaction destined, according to McClelland, to act devastatingly if it is missing.

From experience I feel it is not a factor of dissatisfaction in the short term, but it can become such, and, in the long run, in an irreversible way.

Great attention must therefore also be paid to seemingly calm, quiet, waters that must be appropriately stirred from time to time, but with caution, to understand if it is an apparent calm. The company must contain costs, but the cost of a replacement must also be carefully considered, due to recruitment difficulties, training, integration, and not to unintentionally make good, trained resources available to competitors.

The salary level is seen by Herzberg as the element that, more than others,

defines the goodness of a job, and it is primarily a factor of dissatisfaction, it acts when it is absent, inadequate, insufficient, while, unfortunately, it does not act as a motivating factor when it is, and is considered adequate!

However, this extraordinary motivator - although having great importance to many people and being the primary factor of satisfaction in evaluating a job - in my experience, leaving aside what people instrumentally tend to say (what the heck! money is never enough and everybody needs it), for most people it is not the principal motivator, for there are others of heavier weight.

Just look at job offer ads, where, alongside the guarantee of salary appropriate to the position, and in compliance with collective agreements, additional motivating conditions, and, at times, decisive for the decision to accept a different employment are generously envisaged.

A stimulating job, the chance to be appreciated for one's own work contribution, career opportunities are an important aspect because they account for over 40% of cases of abandonment. The variability of work and location are Herzberg's other classic motivators, unfortunately only active when they are missing.

The leader is extremely sensitive to these issues and must act in the real interest of the company, keeping the reins taut but not pulled and, above all, taking care that the enthusiasm and the motivation for the work he assigns to his group remains extremely high.

“In the business world, enthusiasm for one's work gives life to that entrepreneurial culture that then generates the pleasure of working and acts as a magnet for others. Customers also like to deal with people who love their work and there is no doubt that companies thrive when everyone works by choice, with passion and energy. It is a priceless energy that cannot be bought” (O'Connor 2000).

People react very differently to the same stimulus and the variability is linked to the most pressing need at that moment, a need that must be interpreted and satisfied. The reward system - of which remuneration in its various forms constitutes the preponderant part, consisting of salary, incentives, premiums, insurance, supplementary pension - which can also rely on professional and human growth, the possibility of a career, the happiness of carrying out a pleasant task, and of being surrounded by the appreciation of colleagues and managers, which becomes a guarantee of certainty.

In addition to the level, it is therefore necessary to evaluate its salary change, its temporal dimension, in short, its dynamics beyond the structure itself.

In proposing changes in parameters, the leader will need to be assisted by human resources experts whenever possible and, in any case, to apply the criteria of justice, fairness, and prudence. The ship must also be able to face heavy seas and situations other than the current ones, without excessive weights that would lead to painful cuts. A slower, steady growth in safe conditions is to be preferred.

Companies must provide part of the wealth created to their employees, not money from suppliers of goods and services and must, above all, create the conditions for long-term development.

The employment relationship is asymmetrical between the entrepreneur and employee, due to the tax shield that creates different expectations between the two: the company pays out much more than the net received by the worker, and therefore a productivity correlated to the high cost is expected, while the employee's expectations are related to the net salary, to his economic needs, and to the commitment required by the job. The my-your mechanism can be triggered, predation or not, and the issue of rights and duties.

Communication, understood as it should be, that is, as a willingness to share intelligence and heart to really understand each other, can solve these problems as well. Where there is no communication there is struggle; where there is struggle there is predation.

People are reasonable, they understand the problems of all parties involved and are not always fundamentally rewarded by purely economic criteria. The leader has many not trivially monetary possibilities of support and pays great attention to the serenity of people at work, monitoring and dominating the alternative emergence of the four essential drives that move man, which he seeks to understand, in their current hierarchy, so as to involve himself in creating the conditions to grant them satisfaction.

In the meantime, we have resumed navigation and we are now at centre of Kvaerner which, with its archipelago of four larger islands and thirteen smaller, constituting an extraordinary landscape and ethnic habitat, possessing a wonderfully mild climate, characterized by human settlements which, in their various eras, have left traces of grace, balance, and functional simplicity: laurel, myrtle, juniper, and dogwood. These Islands were inhabited since prehistoric times, experiencing a glorious

past through Roman times, especially in Ossero, on the island of Cres Lošinj.

There are also rustic Roman villas here and there, with oleanders, pomegranates, rosemary, broom, boxwood, holm oaks, smaller shrubs, and flowers of all kinds. There is a scattering of fishing villages, welcoming bays, green coves between rugged rocks but covered by a rich vegetation, between Istria and Dalmatia - a beautiful mixture of waters and islands.

The idea is to moor on Lošinj, one of the four large islands, the southernmost one, rich in crops of broad beans sown among vines, figs, plums, and junipers. Extensive bright green woods of maritime pines, but sparse enough to allow a glimpse of the trunks that have been able to resist, now the fury of the sea, now the bad weather, twisted into multiple forms full of charm, delicate resin fragrance mixed with liquorice, helichrysum, thyme, fennel, and sage, reflect the exuberance of an intact nature.

With respect to Sardinia, a comparison that every Italian tends to make whenever they see a clean sea, crystal clear waters, a colour palette, the Dalmatian coasts presents a limited strip of bare rock in contact with the water, which, just a meter or so above, are colonized by the bold, robust flora, especially from the irreducible maritime pines, before exploding into lush pine forests, while in Sardinia, fascinating rocks with bizarre and zoomorphic shapes rise out of the sea.

12. Feedback, keeping control of the process.

Control skills are essential in a good manager, because there is a specific need to keep the delegated process and the behaviour of the people involved in it, monitored. It is the people themselves who desire it, they require to be evaluated and appreciated for what they do, judged, and possibly guided or oriented to correcting themselves, not to be left alone. *This is what you have to do and now go.* No, this is not the spirit of collaboration expected, and frequently does not bear fruit.

“In all sports, both individual and team, the results are immediately communicated to the player and constitute a fair basis for making comparisons... [...] ... Long-term evaluations must be carried out with a great impartiality, but the short term, daily ones should be source of encouragement and good humour” (Kondo 1992).

Taking people’s successes for granted, ignoring them as a routine, is a powerful demotivating reason to continuing well and improving.

“... Work has an intrinsic reward, beyond all further gratification that can be offered. That is to say that making the workplace fun, stimulating and enjoyable is worthwhile far more than any incentive program” (O’ Connor 2000).

People who have accepted a task from us want to know if they are doing well, if they are appreciated for what they do, needing the comfort of a judgment.

The source will not shy away from praising people in the appropriate way to support their positive actions, offering them help in overcoming shortcomings. Assigning a task does not mean challenging a person to do it, perhaps in this case, adopting the destructive attitude of a judge, but it means, conversely, that the leader is able to get help to carry out a task by delegating spaces of autonomy, always ready to support the people he involves both emotionally and concretely.

We all need to be recognized for what we do, we need to know how much our activity is appreciated.

The people we have given a task to, even if they perform it in an excellent and autonomous way, require that the source continue to consider them as people under constant learning and teaching, requiring high levels of attention, redundancy of communication, different from leaving people abandoned.

People perform better when they have clear goals and positive feedback which helps keep or correct the route. If the task was assigned in a participatory spirit, rather than imposing, its acceptance was guaranteed, as well as the acceptance of support interventions, precisely in the spirit of achieving together the best, expected, and promised results.

In modern times, people always want to be constantly informed - always. For example, they are used to following the route of the airplanes or of the ships carrying them, from their monitors they listen to all relevant information relating to their journey, they often add their control systems (Google Map, TomTom, etc.). They know in every moment where they are with all related information: speed, temperatures, time, weather conditions and many other things that comfort them, involve them, and give confidence to them, allowing them to be prepared.

“Estote Parati”, the recommendation of our ancestors.

I got to experience how ignoring successes demotivates and taking what is good for granted impoverishes the will.

A good feedback process must provide for the minimal deviation from the foreseen conditions to be promptly reported and justified. The result is a sense of belonging and serenity. Why then deprive our organizations of such a rewarding, expected and necessary process?

To activate improvement processes or corrective measures, the current results achieved by people or by organizations must undergo a planned screening, shared with the people who will agree a priori on how to measure progress.

In the working world there is a widespread belief that people, rather than doing what they are told, tend to do what they are controlled to do. A statement that smells like theory X, okay, but: why could it not be just like that? The person has been given a task, has understood, and accepted it, has been with adequate means, there has been an agreement on the criteria for progress measurement. At this point, the activity of feedback

must come into play, in support or correction of behaviour. How control takes place, and when, must also be defined so it becomes a stage victory or cause for careful consideration.

The ball is raised under the net to the collaborator, the control will refer to the level of performance related to the expectations assigned to that role or function, a different assessment will be related to individual or group skills.

Measurement criteria must be agreed upon and be based on parameters not on judgments, and it is necessary, however, to dominate the critical evaluation processes. We can refer to the various levels of achievement of the goal, to the respecting of deadlines, to the performance related to the quality or quantity produced, to the levels of safety achieved, the company climate detected, the improvement of the skills, related to individual tasks, that each group or each individual is called on to perform. The control process aims to optimize performance, to solve problems, to raise people's skills in a climate of open communication, with the concern of promoting the development of the person.

Feedback from this point of view is seen besides as being a necessary *ship point*, also as part of the process of enhancement of people, because it highlights their actual contribution, measures their value in terms of behaviour and responsiveness to the role. The spirit should be to provide for the worker, precise information to help him perform well, as expected in his work.

The feedback leads to improved results because its primary *raison d'être* is not the measurement of a phenomenon, but it is a survey to be used as information that leads to the planned result.

Particularly in the event of failure, the leaders do not blame others but they blame themselves.

Accomplishing extraordinary things in a work group can constitute a major commitment, and the leader must reward these individual contributions out of an act of awaited justice and to keep motivation and determination fuelled, promptly rewarding the group that obtains the planned results.

Thus, we witness the presence, in organizations, of attitudes to promote self-generated feedback activities, and in this the *Quality System* excels, as it involves indicators of effectiveness for each activity. This generates powerful and functional energy waves that are also, and above all,

motivating if the results expected autonomously were not reached for some reason to be identified immediately.

People are good, they love work, they want to learn, they want the approval of others, they feel better about themselves if they obtain the results they propose. The individually self-generated feedback must be checked by the leader, it is powerful, but it can also become discursive because, unlike the feedback generated by the leader, it opens possibilities of isolation, of loss of contact with others, with the goal, with the satisfaction to be shared, solidarity belonging to the group.

The most motivating of the factors in the workplace is *recognition*, expected by the heads and by the colleagues.

Our friend *Stefano* then adds that the performance expected from people is linked to the roles assigned, to the skills consistent with the commitment undertaken, and the expectations of an organization possessing the true Rhenish spirit calibrated on the single person, but always coinciding with the purposes of the organization and his own balance.

Human organizations, companies, are organisms that need a homogeneous development and too much of a good thing is not so good, while too little is not enough.

I mean that the development must be harmonious among all functions, or problems may arise very soon. Rebalancing function, which, belongs to the leader, can be implemented thanks to constant feedback *dialogue*.

People who have accepted a task from us feel the need for the comfort of a judgment. So, the leader gets organized to be able to obtain the information necessary to express it fully.

Modern organizations and businesses are networked systems. The constant exchange of information allows people to know if their job is okay, or needs to be changed, modified, or improved. In the absence of feedback, the operator might feel lost, disoriented, or even worse if it is too self-referring, because it can create real damage to the whole by deciding what is right on his own, that is, therefore, how essential the information collected methodically, by the leader, are as a guide to people's efforts.

The source will not shy away from praising people in the appropriate way for the purpose of supporting their positive actions, as well as of offering them help in overcoming shortcomings. Assigning a task means that the leader can get help to carry out a work, delegating spaces of autonomy, always ready to support the people he involves emotionally and concretely.

The ability to elaborate and provide a critical judgment, and therefore to make consequent decisions, is one of the most important tasks of a leader.

An attitude that the leader carefully avoids is to be always ready to criticize, withholding praise, when instead, both reward and punishment must be administered with the same caution.

People also expect contiguity between the times of administration of the reward or rebuke and the action that has caused it immediately before. The latest event must be the cause of the intervention, and it is also for this reason that a regular feedback is needed, to prevent them in the presence of performance oscillating between values, perhaps positive or negative, from ending up in a balance sheet which thus lacks its motivational, supportive, or corrective strength.

Feedback should not be limited to a cold report, possibly forwarded by e-mail, but it should be an important moment of sharing and decision making. On this occasion, the data collected with care is turned into information, personal relationships are then consolidated as the commitment becomes even more supportive, the noises and disturbances in communication and relationships dissolve.

How to give feedback effectively is the problem that our friend *Alberto* now raises, further stimulating our conversation.

We agree that the main purpose of the feedback is to reinforce behaviours conducive to the project or to correct them to obtain the desired result.

The essential thing, to ensure the effectiveness of the feedback, is the promptness of reply. There is the law of contiguity, mentioned above, which must be respected, temporal contiguity: when aspects related to the inner world of people are involved. The effectiveness of the intervention is linked to the fact that an immediate reaction corresponds to an action.

There is little point in rewarding a collaborator who obtained positive results months earlier, when perhaps, in the meantime, he behaved in a reprehensible way, even in a way we do not know. By doing so we risk rewarding his deviance, or at least he can interpret the situation in that way. When a person who has committed an infringement presented himself with a sincere apology, it would be a mistake to react by putting the mishap back into the centre of the attention and emotions, rather than emphasizing the appreciable expression of repentance, which instead must be valued, thus acquiring a positive value in the interpersonal relationship and with the organization that takes him back fully fledged, without

nurturing any rusts, rancour, fears and which is, above all, the premise for better future performance.

An effective feedback technique requires the manager that is dealing with it, to take care to create a serene and favourable atmosphere to dialogue, to strengthen the relationship of trust with his collaborator, and he can do so, even succeeding in settling things on a relational level. Beginning to examine and congratulating for the positive results obtained and, always in an atmosphere of great positivity and collaborative spirit, will then proceed to examine the parts that require correction or strengthening, but always maintaining the climate of positivity which has been created.

It is that atmosphere that will make people feel at ease, safe.

Here attitudes referring to theory Y must prevail over axioms of theory X.

You must not talk about past failures or let yourself dwell on rebukes or you will risk compromising the motivational and informative outcome of the briefing.

The force of positive thinking will work for us, it will make us achieve the best result from our interview. We will not have therefore evoked negative feelings or frustrating images by unnecessarily remembering past mistakes or failures. In doing so we will have charged our collaborator with energy, and, given the law of the mutual influence of the communicative act, we will feel both better, and better prepared, to reap the successes that await us.

The Pygmalion syndrome, the *self-fulfilling prophecy*, continues to be a great modifier of men's behaviour and to produce results sometimes exceeding the rosier expectations. I have experienced it myself. I have always been accompanied by people who pointed, pushed, pulled, waited for me on the path of personal and social growth. At the end of the day, we owe everything we are to others. My "others" have been selected and sincere friends, good acquaintances, along with many books, and of course the Italian society that welcomed me and provided me with its culture, assistance, and opportunities.

Referring to books, I like to quote a paragraph from a book that I consider excellent for individual training:

"Umberto Eco belongs to a rare genre of encyclopaedic, insightful and not at all boring scholars: he owns a wide personal library (of three thousand volumes) and classifies visitors to such a library into

two categories: those who react by saying: ‘Wow, Professor Eco, what a library! Have you read all of these books?’ and a small minority who understand that a personal library is not an appendix of one’s ego, but an instrument of research. Unread books are much more valuable than read ones. A library should contain all books on unknown topics that our financial means, the mortgage payments and the difficulties of the real estate market allow us to buy. Gradually as we advance in age we accumulate more knowledge and more books, and the unread books that look at us menacingly from the shelves are more and more. Indeed, the more you know, the more the shelves of unread books. We call the set of these books ‘anti-library’” (Taleb Nassim N. 2008).

How can we forget Petrarch’s great love of reading:

“I have read Virgil, Horace, Boethius, Cicero not once, but one thousand; meditated and studied with infinite care. I swallowed them when young to ruminate them as an old man” (letter to Boccaccio, 1359).

He was always driven by the curiosity to know: *“Fine videndi ardor ac studium”*. Hence the love for travelling, for rummaging in the various European Libraries in search of the classics. His cultural, human, and political leadership was recognized throughout Europe.

Knowledge is a pillar of life. You can be a leader thanks to what you have been acknowledged to know.

So, let us keep our intellectual curiosity alive and nurtured. Blaise Pascal also reminds us: *“Travaillons donc à bien penser, voilà le principe de la morale”*.

In 1690 Pierre Daniel Huet wrote the: *“‘philosophical treatise on the weakness of the human spirit, a notable text that shatters dogmas and questions human perception... [..]’*. Huet, that was over ninety years old, was followed by a servant with a book in his hand and had it read aloud during meals and breaks, so as not to waste time. He was considered the most educated man of his time: *‘Let me insist on the fact that erudition is important to me, it expresses genuine intellectual curiosity, it is accompanied by an open mind and a desire to probe other people’s ideas’*” (Taleb Nassim N. 2008).

But it is beautiful and interesting to consider what we report about the importance of reading (text taken from the letter that on 31 May 1468 Cardinal Bessarione addresses to the Doge Cristoforo Moro to offer his library of 482 Greek and 264 Latin volumes to Venice):

Reading

*Books are full of the words of the sages, of examples of the Ancient,
of customs, of laws, of religion. They live, they talk,
they talk to us, they teach us, they train us,
they console us, they give us presents
by placing under our eyes
things that are very
remote from
our memory.
So great it is their
dignity, their majesty, and
finally, their holiness, that if there
were no books, we would all be crude and
ignorant, with no recollection of the past, without any
example; we would have no knowledge of human and divine things;
the same urn that welcomes the bodies would also erase the memory of men.*

We are strolling, accompanied by our wives who are walking together ahead of the three of us, engaged in their conversation, along the promenade that runs along the entire island, winding sheer above the sea and among luxuriant pine trees scented with resin while casting cool shaded areas in a breezy afternoon under a sun made strong by the clear atmosphere resulting from the light rain of the previous night. We go as far as Rovenska harbour, a place of unspeakable beauty, of disarming, genuine, and reassuring simplicity.

There are a couple of restaurants there that allow you to dine on the pier with tables almost in contact with the sea. Rovenska, in the Habsburg era, was the favourite port of the Royal House. After dinner, we resumed our walk through the pretty Veli (big) Lošinj, with a small villa that belonged to Sissi, an absolutely romantic village built around its port, before returning us back to Mali (little) Lošinj, our mooring place that in reality, despite its name, is the largest town on the island. The path winds around small, green, enchanting bays with the magical reverberations of the sunset on the sea that Lošinj can offer.

About thirty routes unfold from Lošinj, mainly by the sea, but also through the fascinating inland, the famous Lošinj Trails, which I have

travelled several times and always with great satisfaction.

The next day we resumed navigation in a still flat sea, windless, headed for the Kornati islands, the *crowned islands*.

They are islands arranged in a crown around the main island which gives them the name and of which they make up the extensive diadem creating one of the most beautiful in the world: a paradise for sailors, especially for sailboats.

The islands that we skirted and visited going down towards Kornati are characterized by the intense green of an exuberant Mediterranean vegetation.

By contrast, the Kornati are barren islands, burned by the salt that the winds of Bura and Sirocco pour on them, lifting masses of water, blowing impetuously from the north and the south, making the earth barren and arid, yet highly fascinating. These islands, capable of evoking surreal atmospheres, are practically deserted, the only traces of man and his past activities are their characteristic long dry-stone walls, which cut the islands in straight lines here and there.

There are a few fishing villages, today's popular destinations of fleeting summer tourism, and some small characteristic settlements of restaurateurs who arrive in the summer from the nearby Murter island. The Kornati archipelago is in the centre of the Adriatic Sea, in Dalmatian land, spreading for 15 miles to the south from Zadar to the island of Murter.

There are about a hundred islands, islets, and rocks, which form an archipelago belonging more to the dream dimension than to reality. Sailing along their coasts you feel immersed in a long dream, nautical miles of a heavenly path. Some rare solitary shrubs of euphorbia and centaury attempt to survive among the ochre orange colour of dried grass, a metaphysical place.

The areas of the *Kornati National Park*, authorized for anchoring and staying overnight are more than enough to host the yacht people who choose the disarming peace and purity of these lands where aridity reigns, but in a context of exuberant marine life and lively atmospheres. The light of the Kornati remains imprinted in the visitor's soul, like their silences, and the majesty of the visions that allows up to infinite.

Over the years, we have enjoyed staying overnight in some of the bays which we later abandoned because of the increase of presences, or were equipped for more extensive, welcoming tourism.

I remember Levrnaka, Kravljacica, Vrulje, of course the marina ACI of Piskera, Lavsa, in our wandering among islands and bays. At the southern end of the archipelago, we spent many happy times in Zakan staying overnight and for catering, but today we have decided to moor in Opat, a small quiet bay open to the south and where, from the top of the hills that surround it, you can enjoy a breath-taking view over a cobalt blue and turquoise sea, which reveals the whole palette of the most beautiful colours and where the only permanent structure is the small pier of the islet restaurant, the only possible sophistication apart from the comforts of the boat. Large snapper, sea bream, sea bass, lobster, and sea bass are present in the very fishy sea beds.

The islands of the strip most exposed to the sea, heavily eroded during millions of years of opposition to the force of the sea winds, appear today as steep cliffs that rise boldly as vertical walls, measuring up to 80 meters in height and which are, today, for brave enthusiasts, free rock gyms.

A little south of Zakan, after the Kornati, there is the deepest point of the Adriatic, with a measured depth of about 130 meters.

13. Respect people, avoid friendships.

Respect breeds respect and creates the necessary harmony.

“Respect not only those who respect you, but also those who do not. Respect increases respect, creates essential harmony”¹.

“When people lack respect, difficulties follow”².

The interpersonal relationship, the effective style of management accepted today and expected is the one virtuous in interpersonal relationships. The Manipulative Head, absolutist, the gorilla beating his chest, is today just a comic strip.

The complexity of the tasks to be performed, the system pandemic in progress, the diffusion of advanced information technologies, leading to rapid and frequent interpersonal connections, puts the individuals almost *on the air*, requiring that people tune in their feelings, that the reasons for anxiety, hostility, and misunderstanding be avoided, mitigated, and resolved.

“... Globalization is the coup de grace that is inflicted on Fordist paradigm, now in decline. In the global village, actually, the idea of ‘total control’ - of technology, of demand, competition, production etc - which was typical of the Fordist organization, becomes simply impossible, by bringing together the thousand varieties that coexist in the world, it triggers a highly indeterminate process, where twists and turns, creative events, unexpected effects, self-accumulating processes and a good dose of randomness dominate the scene” (Enzo Rullani 1998).

The leader is responsible for convincing people that they are all working towards a common goal, indicating which behaviours can make them

1 Tao, 49

2 Tao, 72

more satisfied in their work, where diversities, in this spirit, can be seen as a contribution, an enrichment of ways and contents, and as something to appreciate, not a source of conflict or distrust.

For the leader, getting along perfectly with the other person is very satisfying, although, however not always necessary.

The important thing is that between the source and the person who is entrusted with a task, relationships of total respect and mutual understanding are established and that all conditions shown in *the treasure map* are fulfilled.

In an atmosphere of respect, you live better and produce more, also the degree of respect with which a person is surrounded is also perceived in an unconscious way, hence this feeling must exist, be sincere and internally cultivated, it should turn into empathy.

Empathy deserves to be clarified because it is an attitude, a feeling different from the frivolous, even if always pleasant, well-mannered smile.

We understand empathy here as a way of living the relationship with others, which *goes towards*, leading to unity and identification, albeit with the necessary distinctions. It is about accomplishing an emotional experience, shared as much as possible, that brings to compassion, to unity, to put two worlds in a relationship, not by comparison but through an intertwining, in a relationship of exchange.

Ultimately, we can consider empathy as a sincere and an almost spontaneous ability to come into deep contact with the fertility of the soul of another person, with their motivations, emotions and values, a way of accessing the lived life of another person, which could also become an exponential index of the own, however a possible spiritual enrichment.

“This is the miracle and paradox of empathy: I get inner experience of an experience that is not mine, I live a feeling that is not mine... [...] ... In reality, empathy does not mean rejoicing, suffering together with the other, and not even having an exact notion of the reasons and causes of others’ feelings. Empathy means broadening one’s experience, making it capable of accepting the pain, the joy of others, maintaining the distinction between me and the other” (Boella 2006).

Empathy, therefore, will allow you to keep the needed detachment from the experiential reality with which you come into contact, a detachment, or a lack of empathy, which allows you to read better, in filigree, the soul of others.

The leader knows how to form valid human relationships, he loves and respects people, feeling at ease with them, but avoiding friendships. Friendships bring a confusion of roles, to an identification without necessary limits.

In the empathic relationship that we seek to establish, we cannot consider any certainty in the results we will get, but the kind of attitude, of approach that pays off the one cultivating it the most and produces the best possible results for any specific situation will remain in any case.

“Who does not honour others will not be honoured”³.

3 Lao Tso, 6th century BC

14. Earn trust, do not demand it

Trust is the essence of leadership.

“If we do not trust others, we will not gain trust”¹.

“Analysing others is knowledge, knowing yourself is wisdom”².

The leader who is honest, reserved in intimacies, sincere, predictable, capable, and always striving to adopt the objective criteria of fairness and justice, becomes trustworthy. He is awarded trust; this precious credit and his role is consecrated.

Integrity generates credit. Ulpian, one of the fathers of Roman Law, in 200 BC wrote: *“Pacta sunt servanda”*. Respect pacts stipulated in common agreement: *what is more appropriate to human trust?* He wondered, rightly.

“Imperare sibi, maximum imperium est”, to dominate oneself is the maximum conquest, the Romans said.

While directing others requires skill, mastering oneself requires inner strength, one is appreciated for one’s values and the behaviours that follow, not for the position of power.

The leader who knows how to lead without dominating and with moderation, fully realizes that:

“It is difficult to lead when we try to be too intelligent. Too much intelligence compromises the harmony of the group”³.

The source can support people, he never gives in to difficulties, he is aware that what makes the difference between professional skills and amateurism, lies in the way we deal with and solve problems.

Modality plays a decisive role. Charan wrote a book about it that I take the liberty of recommending warmly: *Execution - The discipline of getting*

1 Tao, 1

2 Tao, 33

3 Tao, 65

things done (Bossidy, Charan 2009).

It is not important to have or to not have feelings of anxiety or fear in the face of unforeseen events: only the quality of our response to them matters. We may go as far as bending to the ground, as trees under the weight of snow, but only temporarily, as a strategy, and immediately ready to recover as soon as the conditions allow it.

Determined in wanting to do things, the person with leadership avoids showing signs of weakness or confusion and maintains inner control; he is self-centred, not immediately reactive, but capable of maintaining emotional control of the crises which will inevitably rise.

In leadership, trust comes from below, it comes from our *ship*, from those who believe in us, follow us, support our credentials, affirming the recognition of our leadership: beating your chest with your fists and raising your voice only serves to animate dull corporate stories.

I think it is useful for the reader to summarize the most important skills that those who want to exercise effective leadership must possess, qualities that are not always possessed with completeness and in the right measure, but which, with daily commitment, can become the backpack that contains our Field Marshal's baton: as Napoleon said, ready to reward his heroic soldiers in the field.

We know how to improve our golf handicaps, our performance at tennis, our way of dominating a horse; therefore, we continue to work also on ourselves, because our leadership exists only if it is recognized by others. You cannot demand it, it must be built, remodelled, and adapted, operating on the verge of chaos that teems with life.

Stefano, after mooring his beautiful boat in the bay with his usual skill, lines on the ground as he always prefers to do, makes it easier for me to approach my boat that moors gently to its side, in a flat quiet sea, as often occurs in the Adriatic.

We gather at the stern for an aperitif before allowing him to share some reflections that he had the opportunity to make to himself during the navigation.

Thus, he introduces the stimulating theme of the psychological contract, which constitutes a relevant aspect - real even if not written - which characterizes relationships in the workplace today.

The debate related to this issue was initiated with contributions from several scholars, such as Schein and Argyris in the 1960s, and continues

with insights that tend to clarify the theoretical and practical aspects that characterize it.

The psychological contract, in its clearest expression, refers to the relationship that is established between entrepreneur and employee, but since relationships are organized by processes or functions, we can say that it is the relationship that is created between managers or leader and collaborator, and it is related to mutual expectations based on the cause-effect relationship determined by the inputs mutually put at stake, including results.

It is important that the dynamics of the psychological contract is seen not only from the point of view of the employee, which is the more frequent case, but also from that of the source.

For the employee, the question tends to be resolved in the confrontation between the overall treatment, perceived as delivered by the organization, and the leader who represents it and reflects purposes and attitudes of the entrepreneur, related to what he thinks his contribution to the work is.

We are, as you can see, in the context of delicate personal assessments rather than in the presence of objective situations.

In the absence of clear leadership, the virtuous circle of the psychological contract with collaborators to succeed in the task of providing objective data to employees about their situation cannot develop.

The virtuous circle leads to trust, openness, and tolerance. Clarity of facts replaces erroneous assumptions and distorted perceptions.

In organizations, it is more important to rise from the level of personal appreciation of the psychological contract to the collective one, to the situation of an entire work group, on which to focus the attention of the leader who will not, therefore, be wasting energy in endless and complex streams, like those that would arise from comparison with individuals.

Ultimately, it is a question of being able to agree with the working group and, in some cases, with individuals, on precise and transparent mutual expectations.

This is why we have entrusted the task; we have clarified the purpose, we have ensured that the necessary means are available, the remuneration is fixed, and we have guaranteed the positive feedback and help when needed.

For the employee, the psychological contract basically represents the rights, commitments, and acknowledgments that he believes are due to

him, in exchange for the work performance, to be executed safely and appropriately, and for his loyalty to the company.

There are unwritten mutual expectations, perceptions, and informal obligations, that exist between employee and entrepreneur or whoever represents him.

A contract intended to regulate the dynamics of the relationship, something deeper and more fertile than the formal contract which governs the performance of the parties in general terms, and which tends to frame reciprocal rights, duties, and responsibilities.

Instead, the psychological contract concerns intangible factors, not measurable with conventional criteria.

The complexity that is proper to this contract, depends on whether the expectations are the result of perceptions, and modifiable by the quality and the intensity of the communicative events.

The leader knows how to listen, and he is capable of clarifying; this ability adjusts the dynamics of mutual expectations. He makes no promises, he solves.

The literature on the matter, to define the psychological contract, also uses the metaphor of the iceberg because 90% is underwater, hidden, based on perceptions, not written, in fact, as its name makes it clear: psychological, a fruit of the mind subject to the influence of emotions, to individual specificity.

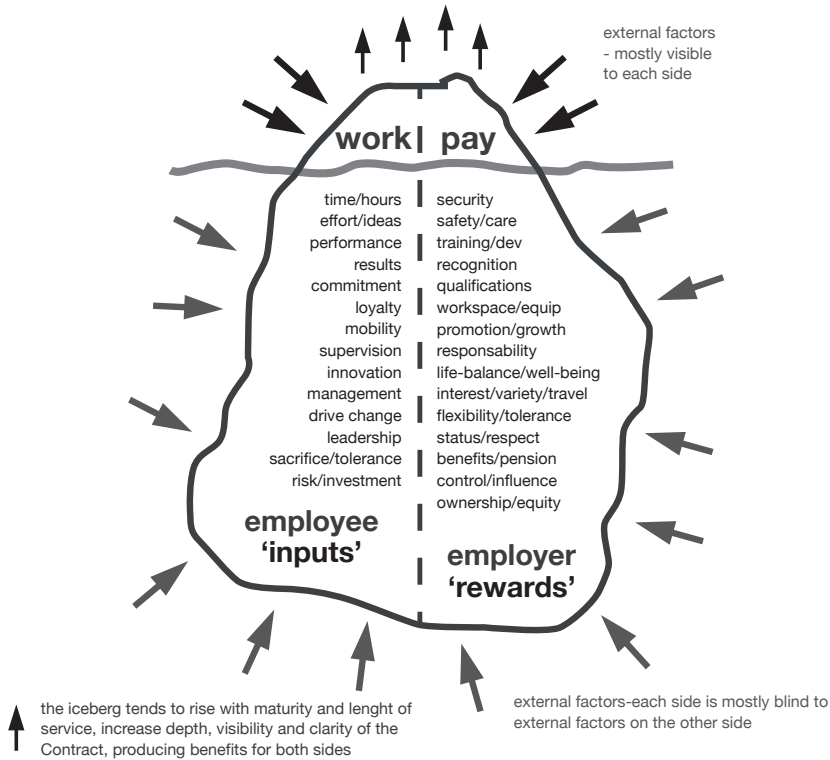
For the leader it is the opportunity to explore, to understand, and to better explain what the mutual expectations are, and to achieve an agreement on them to make progress in the search for the necessary transparency and clarity of the relationship.

The rationale on which the psychological contract is based, *Stefano* hastens to add, is of a philosophical, aesthetic nature, not so much a system as a process or a means to implement it, as if it injected organizational culture into its own reality.

It is not a formula or a protocol, but rather it is a body of profound meanings, of a changing nature in dynamic relation, where changing exogenous factors also enter forcefully, brought by the labour market, which can move the balance in one direction rather than another.

The diagram, which interprets the structure of this important iceberg, is published on the website www.businessballs.com and we present it below, for the convenience of the reader:

psychological contracts 'iceberg' model



© Businessballs.com 2010. See detailed explanation at <https://www.businessballs.com/building-relationships/the-psychological-contract/>

The site mentioned allows important insights into many issues, beside this specific one we have examined.

The psychological pact brings into play a broad spectrum of human values and attitudes, such as respect, trust, empathy, honesty, and equity.

It will be exceedingly difficult to reach a psychological contract which proves effective for both parties, in the presence of sensations and perceptions of reality not made explicit, not compared, not made to emerge, but kept well-hidden and pampered in people’s hearts when the rumour mill does not spread them around.

Effective communication, based on the exchange of feelings of trust and openness to real, mutual understanding, will, once again, be the valid weapon available to the leader.

His positive thinking and the willingness to generously recognize merits, along with his concern to make people feel good - up to making them happy at work, why not? - will induce the collaborators to be more favourably disposed towards their employment compared to other people with whom they collaborate and their leader. The way people are treated at work certainly influences the development of necessary attitudes and favourable feelings, which, in a feedback process, influences their inner vision, the mental representation of the specific job, of the leader or entrepreneur and their perception of themselves which includes the value of their performance.

Perception is the set of sensations, of memory, and of past experience. It organizes itself in our mind as a precise figure or background: it always has a meaning for the person, always, and it is his own thing, strictly individual.

Once again let us remember that a great irreplaceable help comes from implementing effective communication. After all, it is impossible not to communicate, since we also communicate with absence, with silence, and, where there is no communication, we have seen there is predation, on both sides.

The leader knows that communication must be repeated, continuously, tirelessly, because it offers the redundancy that is not Byzantinism, baroque tinsel, but a modality of transmission that must be used, and the leader also knows well that the message that he carefully conveys and for which he is responsible, is the message as is perceived by the other person.

It is not productive to assume that people are informed: you must check, it is important to trust their understanding and interest in learning.

We are far from maintaining closed attitudes, of secrecy, supported by fear or neglect. How can we think of gaining trust if we are not willing to give it? then asking for objectivity of judgment, expressed or not, to people who are only partially informed?

Modernity, with its extraordinary disruptive technologies, claims transparency. We did this with care by assigning the task, specifying the purposes, as well as creating the situation of empathy, that is, putting in place those processes that are useful to understand people's positions and feelings.

In the context of the psychological contract, empathy goes beyond the individual sphere, it becomes style, a climate, a working method that

promotes the well-being and happiness of people, and which leaders live as mission or a culture, placing clear expectations on the level to be achieved.

The ability of the leader to develop aesthetic qualities in all their activities and relationships comes heavily into play, decreeing success or failure. Where it is not possible to create empathy, it is difficult to obtain trust and consequent cooperation.

If things between people are not clear on the relational level, we cannot delude ourselves that the contents can be shared, and each seller knows this well. Even the leader who has the commitment to propose his vision, his programs, his own values to be shared, needs to know this well.

People must be supported, nourished by an atmosphere of positivity and enthusiasm, they must be happy at work, becoming flexible and available. Human nature tends to make us see things in a pleasant perspective when we observe the world in a state of satisfaction, while, on the contrary, if disappointed or dissatisfied, we tend to see everything in the worst negative aspects, sure that, if things can go wrong, they could only get worse.

We have seen how unhappiness, the hypochondriac tendency of 75% of people, unfortunately depends on genetic factors. We must be concerned, as leaders, about bringing things back, as far as possible, in balance, and add the opportunity to give a contemporary precious contribution of solidarity, of high human value to the satisfaction of seeing our work proceed as best as possible.

Lying in the cabin, I let my mind wander, stimulated by the dynamic kaleidoscope of lights projected on the ceiling by the reverberations of the sun on the water, flashes of light that penetrate through the large portholes. I can hear some seagull sounds and the gentle, faded screeching of the lines now fatigued in tension, now at rest, alternating with silence in a game exchanged with the chain that, due to the call of the anchor, stretches or relaxes, under the action of the breeze.

Ahh! This *Nautilus*, but the lure of *Rimbaud's Le Bateau ivre?* "The profound gesture of Jules Verne is therefore, unquestionably, appropriation. The image of the boat, so important in Verne's mythology, does not contradict it at all, indeed: the boat can certainly be the symbol of departure; it is, more profoundly, a key to closure.

The love for the ship is always the joy of closing oneself perfectly, of

keeping at hand the largest number of objects, to have an absolutely finite space: loving ships is, first of all, loving a superlative house, because it is irremediably closed, not at all the great departures for the unknown: the ship is a matter of dwelling before being a means of transport” (R. Barthes - Myths of today).

It is the topics of the long conversations entertained with friends that allowed us to go out “...*from a psychoanalysis of the cave to a true poetics of exploration”* (ibidem).

I am considering what is the best program and the consequent route of the day just started. I will also listen to the opinion of the other traveling companions, but then the decision will be mine and will be communicated firmly. The commander, for every situation that he must face, will have full responsibility. He responds and must take charge of it, he will not be able to hide behind the spoken or the unspoken, or the sayings of others. The first consequences of any choice fall on the leader, who must accept them.

The decision is favourably accepted: with engines running low, we penetrate deeply into the Dalmatian hinterland, along the long fjord that, from Split, climbs along the deep estuary of the rushing river Krka reaching Skradin, the Venetians’ Scardina, in the heart of the splendid Krka National Park. There we can moor in fresh water, in a charming river port, practically inside a thick pine forest whose branches lap the flybridge.

The sailor who assisted us with the mooring offered us some trays of a particular delicacy raised in that area, small and tasty oysters.

Of course, we accepted the invitation and, while enjoying them, we resumed our conversation on the necessity, by the leader, to be prepared to make competent decisions. While continuing with this conversation we walked along the edges of the spectacular and evocative large waterfalls created by the Krka which, rich in clear, fresh water, descend into a karst sinkhole, from a vast plateau through a large canyon built over millions of years. The waters flow towards the sea, channelled by travertine slabs and overcoming numerous tuff terraces, offering with its waterfalls a scenery of great fascination which recalled the other great Croatian natural park, Plitvice.

15. Making the decisions of competence

The leader is informed and capable, an example to others.

“Experto credite”¹.

“Life is a journey, if we don’t plan our own course, someone else will do it for us”.

Decisions, being the sole competence of the leader, must be taken by him, with determination and responsibility. In lack of decision-making skills, other people will tend to guide us. It seems that over 80% of the activity of the human brain is used in formulating judgments of all kinds, including on people, and the inevitable judgment, which will be formulated on the leader, will be based on what he actually does for others, not so much on what he claims.

The leader must immediately take control of every situation: either we control the situation or the situation will control us.

“A leader needs determination. It does not mean grinding teeth, tight upper lip and enlarged forehead veins; all wasted effort. What it takes is the patience and concentration of a samurai: calm, focused, willing to go around the opponent until it is time to strike; or relaxed and balanced like a cat... [...] ... Winning is a sort of faith, a mental attitude. Losers, on the other hand, tend to start from the idea that they probably will not make it ... [...] ... leaders act as if they were certain that their goals will be achieved” (O’Connor 2000).

The necessary baggage of a leader is also competence in addition to personal skills, to be an effective guide for others through his example and-*faire et en faisant se faire*- to grow in his shared dream.

The leader succeeds in having such credibility which enables him to be

1 Virgilio

considered a mentor by others, a person who can be relied upon, never an antagonist to confront!

Communication is a sharing of information or experiences between individuals. It originally had religious ties.

We choose our friends from people who make us feel good with ourselves. People like people who are like them.

The leader relates well to others only when he can establish a relationship of trust, which is a serious matter, it is not achieved so easily, and it rests on many evaluations that the collaborators make before granting it, and that - in addition to the shared values we have already had the opportunity to mention - include the competence and responsibility exercised in first person.

The following applies: *“Whoever loves me, follow me!”*, rather than: *“Let us all arm ourselves, then you go to war”*.

The leader will only be followed if others trust him or if they perceive his strength. In fact, misplaced trust can cost you dearly.

“I believe that if we are reliable we will have a relationship, but it is not granted that trust necessarily derives from this, since the relationship is established according to a moment and a precise purpose. Trust transcends relationship and purpose. It goes deep, because it crosses all neurological levels and also resists in time. A relationship is built in the short term, trust instead on the long run. If we trust someone, we will continue to do so, whether they are present or not” (O’Connor 2000).

What a beautiful feeling trust is, how reassuring it is to experience it! It comforts and reassures us, making it easy to reach ambitious goals that become closer and less difficult to attain.

When you create an environment where trust reigns, you radiate energy that feeds other people’s inner fire.

Therefore, always give trust with both hands and monitor it because it is granted only until proven otherwise, which indeed is unpredictable being possibly a surprise brought out by monitoring.

To create and nurture the trust that others place in him, the leader feeds and demonstrates the trust he places on others.

Granting trust generates trust in return, it must be mutual and so it pays off both.

The leader does not seek excuses, does not look for faults in others. He takes the blame in the first person, he has a clearer vision and an overall

view, he implements and controls the proxies. He accepts faults with serenity while also looking deeply into them to avoid any repetition. In cases where it is easy to find excuses, you lose the sense of responsibility towards work. Excuses are for shying away from responsibility when things do not work out, which, on the contrary, is the moment of taking command, of reacting, of correcting the route to reach the goal.

Leaders must be able to do more, or better, than their own collaborators, even if they have delegated, in deference to the healthy managerial principle, that what others can do as you, or even better than you, must be delegated.

“Never do anything that someone else can do for you, as well or better”².

At that point, the leader avoids interfering, but he is ready to offer his competent help in cases of difficulty, to encourage growth of his ship, whenever the need arises and he knows how to take firmly the rudder in case of a storm, even if he managed to generate an organization capable of self-regulation.

He does not hide away in the cabin, but rather he appears on deck and faces the risky situation in the first person by offering his own human qualities that he developed with the exercise of a continuous commitment.

You do not need to be as good as Paul Cajard: just be there, on the deck, at the expected time and with a competent determination.

The future belongs to those who can imagine and desire it intensely, even when overcoming storms.

The leader who can exercise leadership, surround himself with people who share his dream, with a vision that motivates to action - as the mission of a new volitional act - becoming the genesis of work that man needs, that he continually seeks and carries out before being paid back by it. Sometimes, although not always pleasant, it requires alternative research, to offer satisfaction to the needs felt by man.

Sometimes work may not be pleasant enough and requires alternative research, and rightly so, because work can offer satisfaction to many of the needs felt by man.

2 Raymond C. Johnson - The Achievers

Our little cruise, in the Dalmatian sea, *lepo y plavo*, leaves us fascinated with its aesthetic proposals supported by an uncontaminated nature and above all it allowed us to deepen these stimulating issues related to leadership, on the many occasional conversations that a peaceful vacation period can offer.

The trip ended the next day with our happy return to Lignano and the notes taken during those conversations have become the body of this publication.

Now, if we have not done so yet, let us pick our rose, without fear, as our German friends remind us:

*“Soll man keine Rose pflücken,
Weil der Dorn uns stechen kann?”*

*Should we give up picking a rose
for fear that its thorn will hurt us?”*

Take it, and give it, many people are waiting for it and they deserve it.

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