Self-Leadership in Research Management and Administration
"Si tu veux construire un bateau, ne rassemble pas tes hommes et femmes pour leur donner des ordres, pour expliquer chaque détail, pour leur dire où trouver chaque chose... Si tu veux construire un bateau, fais naître dans le cœur de tes hommes et femmes le désir de la mer."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Self-leadership
– What does it mean? And how does it work?
“In most cases, the meaning of a word is its use.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein
Practical point of departure

The (ambiguous) concept was used in different ways during my everyday tasks and interactions:

- lack of mutual understanding / misconceptions of intentions
- unclear mutual expectations
- troubles coordinating
- stress and frustration
- …

Need to agree on two basic questions:

- what does “self-leadership” mean?
- what organizational framework and setup is required to enable employees to perform proper “self-leadership?”
Two levels of inquiry

• The individual performance

• The organizational framework
Teoretical background

• MA majoring in philosophy: phenomenological analysis of concepts and their use.

• Litterature:

  • Strategisk Selvledelse by Anders Raastrup Kristensen og Michael Pedersen, Gyldendal Business, 2013
  • Protreptik – Filosofisk coaching i ledelse by Ole Fogh Kirkeby et al, Forlaget Samfundslitteratur, 2008/2013
  • The New Protreptic by Ole Fogh Kirkeby, Copenhagen Business School Press, 2009
  • Primadonnaledelse by Helle Hein, Gyldendal Business, 2013
  • Works of Søren Kierkegaard og Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
  • Articles, blogs and CBS-lectures
Status

- **Leading Yourself – Reflections on Community**
  - Conference presentation, March 2015, SRA International

- **The Anatomy of Self-leadership**
  - Article, submitted November 2015, rejected with invitation to revise

- work in progress, no final conclusions
1. Present:
   • the concept of self-leadership: what does it mean?
   • performing self-leadership: how does it work?

2. Discuss:
   • Identifying lose ends
   • Your experiences supporting or challenging my preliminary conclusions.

3. Conclude:
   • Recommendations?
   • should self-leadership be encouraged?
   • are there better ways of organizing our everyday work with the same benefits?
   • what are our ambitions as self-leaders and what should they be?
The concept of self-leadership

- How is the term used (recalling Wittgenstein)?
- How should we understand and define the term?
- Self-leadership as individual performance
# Management vs Leadership

## Working according to known order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The manager…</th>
<th>The leader…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. – administers</td>
<td>1. – innovates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. – maintains</td>
<td>2. – develops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. – focuses on systems and structure</td>
<td>3. – focuses on people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. – relies on control</td>
<td>4. – inspires trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. – has a short-range view</td>
<td>5. – has a long-range perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. – asks how and when</td>
<td>6. – asks what and why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. – accepts the status quo</td>
<td>7. – challenges the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. – <strong>does things right</strong></td>
<td>8. – <strong>does the right thing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Exploring possibilities

Management and leadership - example

Management ... according to to-do list
- Organizing tickets
- Check passport validity
- Money exchange
- Visa requirements
- Laundry
- Packing
- Clearing the fridge
- Neighbor arrangements regarding the house
- Doctors appointment for vaccines
- Prescriptions
- Health Insurance needs
- Pass by the drugstore
- ...

Leadership ... according to purpose
- Should we go?
- Why? Where? When?
- Why going away rather than staying at home?
- Interesting new options?
- Old favorites being over exploited?
- The kids grow older – does this change our holiday ambitions?
- Combining different interests?

Overall guiding principle:
- How do we do it right?
- What is the right thing to do?

Prepare the trip: Safety and health

- Home base: Paperwork
- ...
Self-leadership
- Qualitative leap or gradual development?

Identifying, defining, and developing the content and scope of the job

Prioritizing well-defined work-packages

Prioritizing well-defined single tasks

Flexible hours

Development from inner to outer circle viewed as a gradual development – continuously extending responsibility relative to increased overview, experience, and competencies..
“With a focus on innovation, work-life relies on various forms of self-management, necessitating a new reflexive self, who is no longer a ‘presumed to be an individual’ but ‘presupposed to become a ‘di-vidual’ a divided self, constantly distinguishing itself from itself, relating to and reflecting upon itself.’”

Professors at CBS Sverre Raffnsøe and Daniel Hjorth (my underlining)
Leadership and management – relative to unit goals

Pre-award

- Identify funding
- Help with the proposal and application process
- Costing

Doing the right thing:
- Funds?
- Political trends?
- Emerging opportunities?
- Etc.

Getting it right: :
- Reviewing application
- Application formalities
- Budget eligibility

Imbedding

- Negotiate contract
- Consortia and co-operation agreements
- Internal accounting

Doing the right thing:
- Legal framework?
- Co-funding?
- Etc.

Getting it right: :
- Negotiate
- Conceive
- Etc.

Post-award

- Manage awards
- Financial claims
- End of Award reports

Doing the right thing:
- Monitoring needs?
- Stakeholder involvement?
- Etc.

Getting it right: :
- Reporting
- Monitoring contracts and budgets
Performing self-leadership in organizations - Leading yourself together

- Why has self-leadership become a relevant concept?
- The master-plan logic as opposed to self-leadership
- Self-leading strategies - examples of getting it wrong
Why has self-leadership become relevant?

Individual professional reason:

- Management tasks trusting in the wisdom of others
- Experiencing unreasonable choices
- Doing the wrong thing right doesn’t make sense
- Getting involved in leadership tasks

Institutional reason:

- Simple funding system
- Increasing complexity – loosing overview
- Loosing out on opportunities and making suboptimal choices
- Trusting in the choices of the experts
Context of self-leadership

Me!
The team
Other team
Other team
The organization
Society and stakeholders
Informed decisions – relevant input on all levels

Crucial information enters the self-leading organisation at all levels
Leading self-leading organisations

- Me!
- Other team
- The team
- The organization

Diagram:
- Top management
  - Teams and departments
    - Individual employee
  - Teams and departments
    - Individual employee
  - Teams and departments
    - Individual employee
Traditional Hierarchy - supporting the master-plan

Implementing master-plan

Society and stakeholders - all information collected and processed at top level
Possible self-leading strategies - examples of getting it wrong

• **Strategy 1:** replacing the missing master plan with your own
  -> power struggle

• **Strategy 2:** following your heart and personal interests
  -> every man for himself

• **Strategy 3:** ganging up in little groups with mutual (self-)interests
  -> political games
Paradoxes of self-leadership

Leading yourself ≠ leading yourself alone

The power paradox
Paradoxes of self-leadership

Leading yourself \( \pm \) leading yourself alone

The power paradox
The coordinating principle: the purpose

Society and stakeholders

Me! The team The organization Other team Other team

PURPOSE! GOAL! VISION!
The coordinating principle: the purpose

The traditional hierarki
– no longer stand-alone but embraced and maintained by goal and purpose
The organizational raison d’etre

• Guiding principal or raison d’etre rather than an achievable end

• As distinguished from Key Performance Indicators

• As distinguished from individual task goals
Quoting Albert Einstein:

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count;

everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

Albert Einstein
Driving force and centre of gravity

Individual goals circulating the organizational purpose that serves as a center of gravity when defining individual goals, tasks, and initiatives.
### Leading self-leading employees - mutual expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-leading employees can be expected to:</th>
<th>Leaders of self-leading employees can be expected to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make crucial decisions</td>
<td>• Have a strong sense of direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be accountable</td>
<td>• Question and guide the decisions made or planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take responsibility</td>
<td>• Assist the employee in remaining focused on the goal of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Share responsibility</td>
</tr>
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Anatomi of self-leadership

The anatomy of self-leading organization as a trinity of Purpose, Language and Leadership.
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