

Do you dare to scrub your EGO

**Effective feedback and 9
other super powers for
successful leaders**



brout

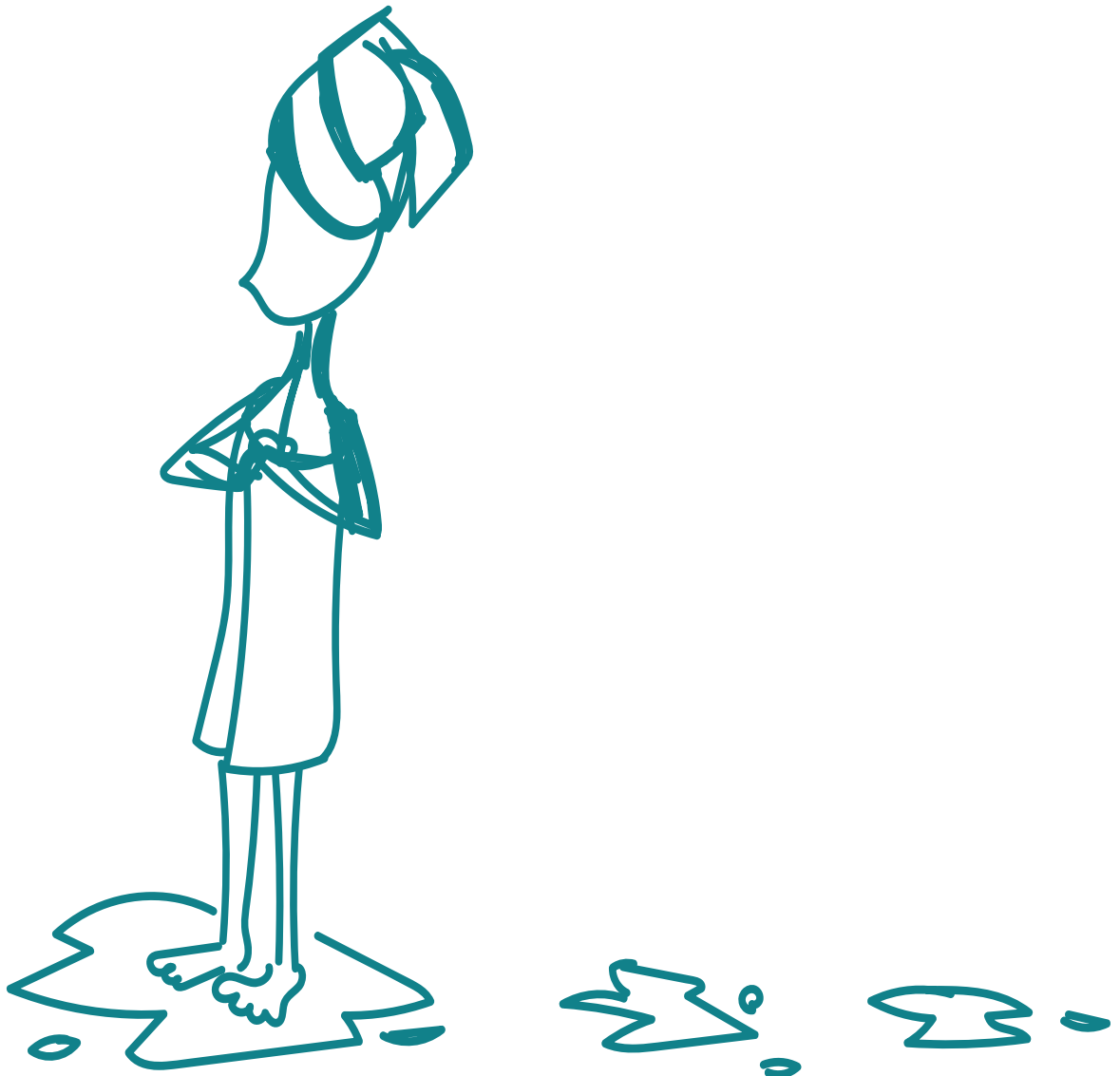
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How good does it get?

You participate in a personal growth seminar. On day three you feel elated! You feel transformed, and your outlook on life brighter than ever. Friends ask you to join for a Friday night drink, your girlfriend surprisingly prefers to visit your parents instead of hers, and your boss spontaneously gives you a raise. You are walking on sunshine, you feel relaxed and nothing can go wrong.



If only it were so easy.


Everyone knows what a perfect body that looks good, is healthy and in shape, implies. No way around it, you will need to exercise at least three times a week and watch your diet. Ever wondered why some people act like signing up for the gym, showing up once, and reading a bodybuilders magazine, will suffice to look amazing and have stamina and health?

Of course, this won't work! And, this also holds for personal growth and development. Just like a tree grows ring by ring, humans gradually grow, physically and mentally, step by step!

Personal development unfolds, moment by moment and day by day. Apply new insight and behavior in real-life situations and expect to receive immediate feedback. While this can be exciting, it can also be frustrating and tiring. Think of a relationship that does not run as smoothly as you know it could. This booklet is for those moments when you're not sure you remember how to make the relationship work. Think of it as bodybuilding. What was this muscle I needed to build? This is your guide to power, growth, and development!

Here is the thing to keep in mind: Whenever things don't turn out as you hoped, it's likely to be the case that your ego was at play. Your ego interfering is ineffective by default. Ego wants to be right, dominate, blame, and run a different agenda than yours. This means that if a relationship is not working, you feel invisible at work or that people are not concerned with what matters to you, your ego is probably playing tricks on you. We offer no less than 11 models that should help you. If you feel, even after trying on the models and tips in this booklet, that it's not working, give us a call and make an appointment with one of our Brouters: We're happy to help you on your journey!

Mr. Brout

A large, thick yellow brushstroke curves from the top left towards the center. To its right is a rectangular bar of light blue soap, partially unwrapped from its clear plastic packaging. The soap has several white bubbles on its top surface.

Feedback
is the
breakfast
of
champions.

Effective feedback

Deadlines, a full agenda, and projects that demand your attention. Sometimes it can make you feel on edge, seemingly small annoyances quickly turning into frustration. You snap: “You’re too loud!”, “Come on, clean up your mess!”, or “You used up all the paper, why can’t you just be a little considerate?!”

From the undercurrent to relatedness

We are all no stranger to frustration. Fortunately, it can be handled effectively! In trainer jargon, we speak of feedback. Brout prefers to call it the Undercurrent. Whenever irritation arises, talk to the other. Prevent the Undercurrent from gaining the upper hand and avoid frustration turn into a dispute.

This will foster relatedness, as opposed to distance. We describe a simple step-by-step method that helps you deal with the Undercurrent.

Before you get started, think: What is the source of my irritation?

Is it grounded in the other’s behavior, or am I overreacting? Say, you are sensitive to noise. You could ask everyone to be quieter. Alternatively, you could consider purchasing earplugs. Notwithstanding, if you are regularly distracted by a loud colleague, you should be able to address it.

Step 1: Articulate the behavior in specific terms

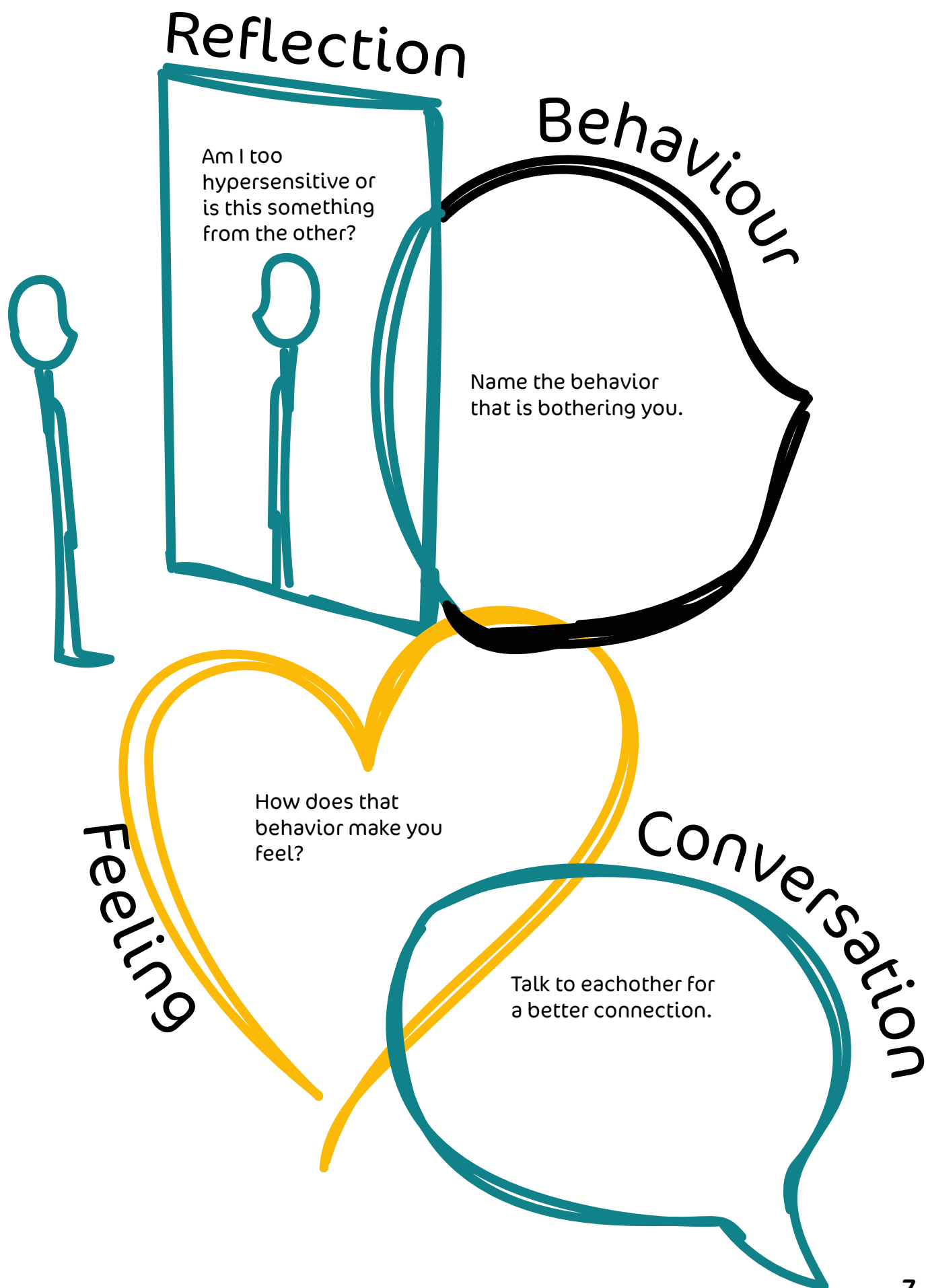
The more concrete, the better. Do not say, “You are always late.” Instead, indicate when he or she was late. As a rule of thumb, point to two or three specific instances: For example: “Last week, I was kept waiting for 15 minutes for you to arrive for our appointment. And yesterday we were supposed to have lunch together, but you stayed on the phone for 40 minutes”. Articulating unwanted behavior minimizes the risk of engaging in a futile argument.

Step 2: Communicate how this unwanted behavior impacts you

How does the other person’s behavior leave you feeling? This is possibly the most crucial step. When describing your feelings, recall the four categories of emotion: Anger, fear, sadness and happiness. All other emotions derive from these four basic emotions. For example, about being late. You could say: “Your being late, saddens me. I then worry I don’t matter much to you.” Note, you should never have your emotions dismissed. The other person may not say something like: “your sadness doesn’t make any sense at all.”

Step 3: Look for a solution together

The other person may undertake to do their best to be on-time. They may also promise to text whenever something unexpected comes up. Most important is that you initiate communication. That’s the secret to staying related.



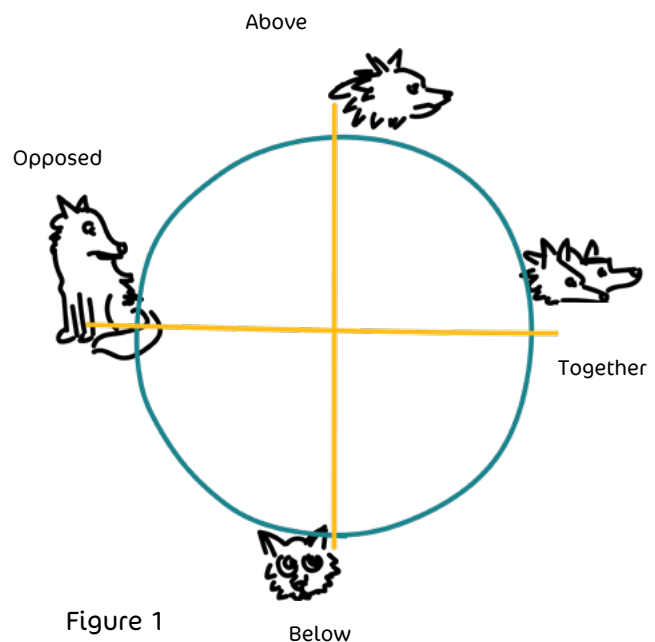


You are always communicating!

Communication is much more than just speech. A mere look or gesture can be enough to trigger a misunderstanding. Subtle messages can have far-reaching consequences. Going out of communication by leaving the room doesn't solve anything. Silence, absence, an empty chair, or an un-replied email, are all examples of common forms of communication.

Leary's Rose model

Fortunately, there is a way to effectively untangle communication. Timothy Leary's Rose model, also known as Interpersonal Circumplex, provides insight into communication patterns. Leary plotted communication on two axes: Dominance and Relatedness. He calls Dominant communication Above, and Submissive communication Below. The degree of relatedness ranges from very related (Together) to total unrelatedness (Opposed), see figure 1. Leary's Rose model goes on to describe the effect these different kinds of communication have and offers some rules of thumb.



✓ Rule 1: Above behavior evokes Below behavior and vice versa.

For example, a person in Above-Opposed says:

"I know exactly how to tackle this problem, so follow my instructions."

The other will automatically go to Below and respond:

"Okay, I'm glad you know what you are talking about it."

✓ Rule 2: Together invokes Together

Person 1: "This is a tough issue. I'm glad that we are tackling it together."

Person 2: "Yes, I feel so too!"

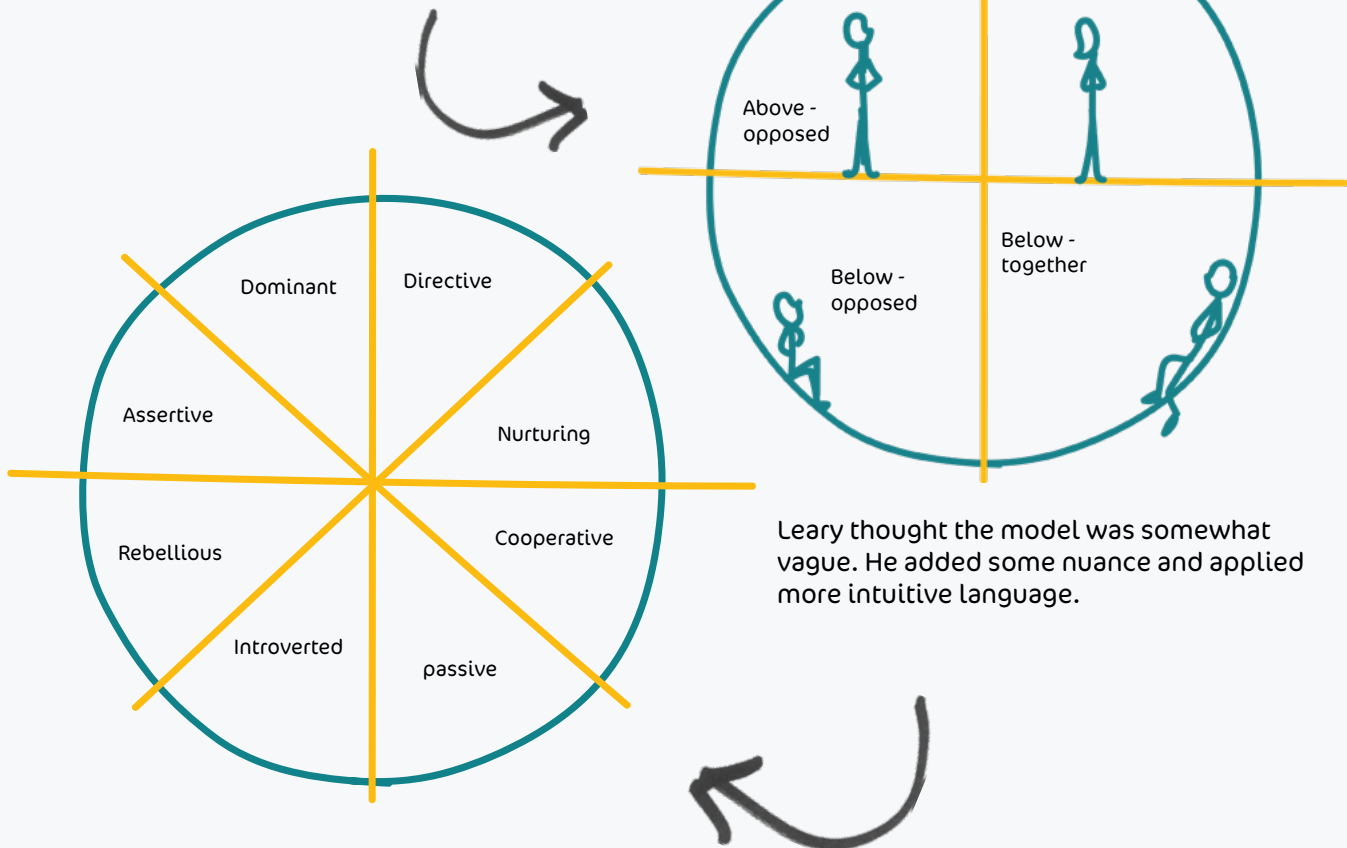
✓ Rule 3: Opposed behavior evokes Opposed behavior

Person 1: "Your stuff is always all over the place. Why don't you ever cleanup your mess?"

Person 2: "I'm hard at work and I don't always have time to cleanup."

The Bigger Picture

When crossing the two axes, four kinds of communication emerge:



Leary thought the model was somewhat vague. He added some nuance and applied more intuitive language.

Here too, the same rules apply. **Leading behavior evokes Passive behavior**, and Aggressive behavior evokes Rebellious behavior. **Authoritarian behavior evokes Withdrawn behavior**, and Cooperative behavior evokes Supportive behavior. You surely recognize these patterns. A colleague walks in and says: It's cold in here, isn't it? (Withdrawn) You promptly responded: I'll reset the temperature! (Leading). In another instance, someone expresses an idea during a meeting: No, you respond, we are not going to do that! (Authoritarian). He or she remains silent (Withdrawn) throughout the meeting.

Interesting, but what use is it?

Brout always asks, what am I doing that contributes to what's happening? This also holds when applying Leary's Rose model. Aren't you happy with an interaction? Then ask yourself: How is my communication contributing to what's happening? Leary's Rose model helps you to distinguish the communication style you are using, which evokes an undesired outcome. This allows you to modify your communication style. It doesn't matter how exactly. Simply breaking the pattern and displaying different behavior, changes the dynamics of the interaction. Once you become adept at doing this, you can influence the outcome of any given interaction.

Get started yourself!

The next time your colleague says something dominant (above), try to change the situation. Is your colleague saying again to know how to tackle a problem? Then counteract it. For example, say, "You have no idea what you're talking about. I've read a lot about this and I know a different approach that works better. We'll do it my way for a change!"

There is nothing permanent except change – Heraclitus

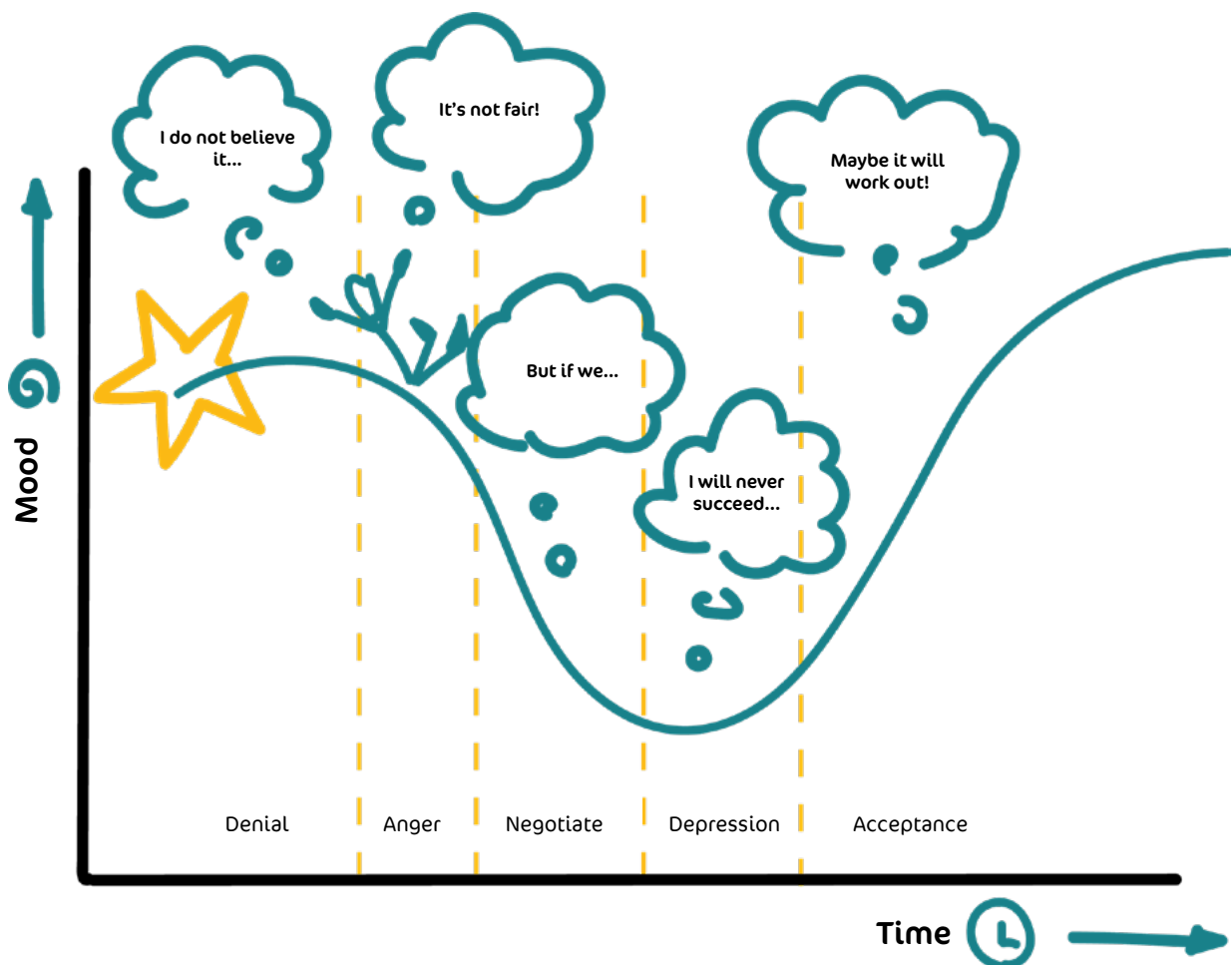
Oxford dictionary defines change as the act or result of something becoming different.

This definition summarizes an all-encompassing concept. Everything changes, continuously: Culture, traditions, the law, you and your boss too. Even, your customers, skills and turnover keep changing.

Some changes are gradual. You probably won't remember when you first started emailing, using a smartphone, or ordering a meal in 3 steps, sitting on your couch. Other changes are abrupt. The next morning you could find yourself at a different location, working on a new assignment with a different team. Big and abrupt changes often evoke powerful emotions. But they also open up new possibilities!

The stages of change

The Kübler-Ross change curve describes phases we go through when experiencing change. You may feel the anticipation of something new, and yet you may wonder whether you will be able to deal with it effectively? Perhaps you experience apprehension, resentment, or resistance? It is useful to remain aware of these phases. It helps you recognize what is going on, deal with it effectively, and improve the odds of a successful outcome.



The corona case



Phase 1: Denial

Denial is perhaps the most obvious phase of change. Recall the onset of the corona pandemic? People said it's no big deal, that it's just the flu, and besides, thousands die each year of ordinary flu. Just before the lockdown, former Dutch minister Bruno Bruins said the chance of the virus spreading across Europe is small. In hindsight, many would retract their statements. Denial was prevalent, not only in words also in deeds. Even after stricter measures were introduced, many kept on frequenting crowded places.

Phase 2: Angry/sad

Change is a tough bullet to bite. Most of us have difficulty coming to terms with it. It took us a while to realize the Coronavirus is not going anywhere anytime soon. Stringent measures were announced, and people were fined for violating them. The company you worked hard for had run into trouble, you are forced to cancel all your appointments, and loved ones fall ill or die. Anger, resignation, and grief set in.

Phase 3: Negotiation

We find it hard to cope with phase 2 emotions, so we revert to negotiating reality. The Dutch Prime Minister held protracted negotiations on whether schools, childcare centers, restaurants and pubs should be closed. Even after these measures came into effect, people were still hoping new data will lead to the relaxation of the measures. Belgium nationals endured a stringent lockdown. They interpreted the seemingly vague Dutch measures as an opportunity to frequent Dutch pubs.

Phase 4: Depression

This is when the going gets rough. It has become obvious that change is inevitable and people can't yet see new possibilities starting to emerge.

Phase 5: Acceptance

Eventually, you will emerge out of the dark and perhaps even stage a comeback. In the first four phases of change, you will experience resistance. You feel like you have no power to alter reality. Once you have accepted the change, you are free to start exploring opportunities to influence and shape your new context. This holds for the corona pandemic, and also for something as benign as a switch from iOS to Android.

Once you've embraced change, you will notice new possibilities beginning to emerge. Initiatives sprouted up during the corona pandemic such as online pub quizzes whos proceeds went to organizations in need, living room benefit concerts, students that aired aid websites, and the father who asked his colleagues to send his daughter a birthday card to cheer her up.

I am not
what happened
to me.

I am what
I choose
to become.

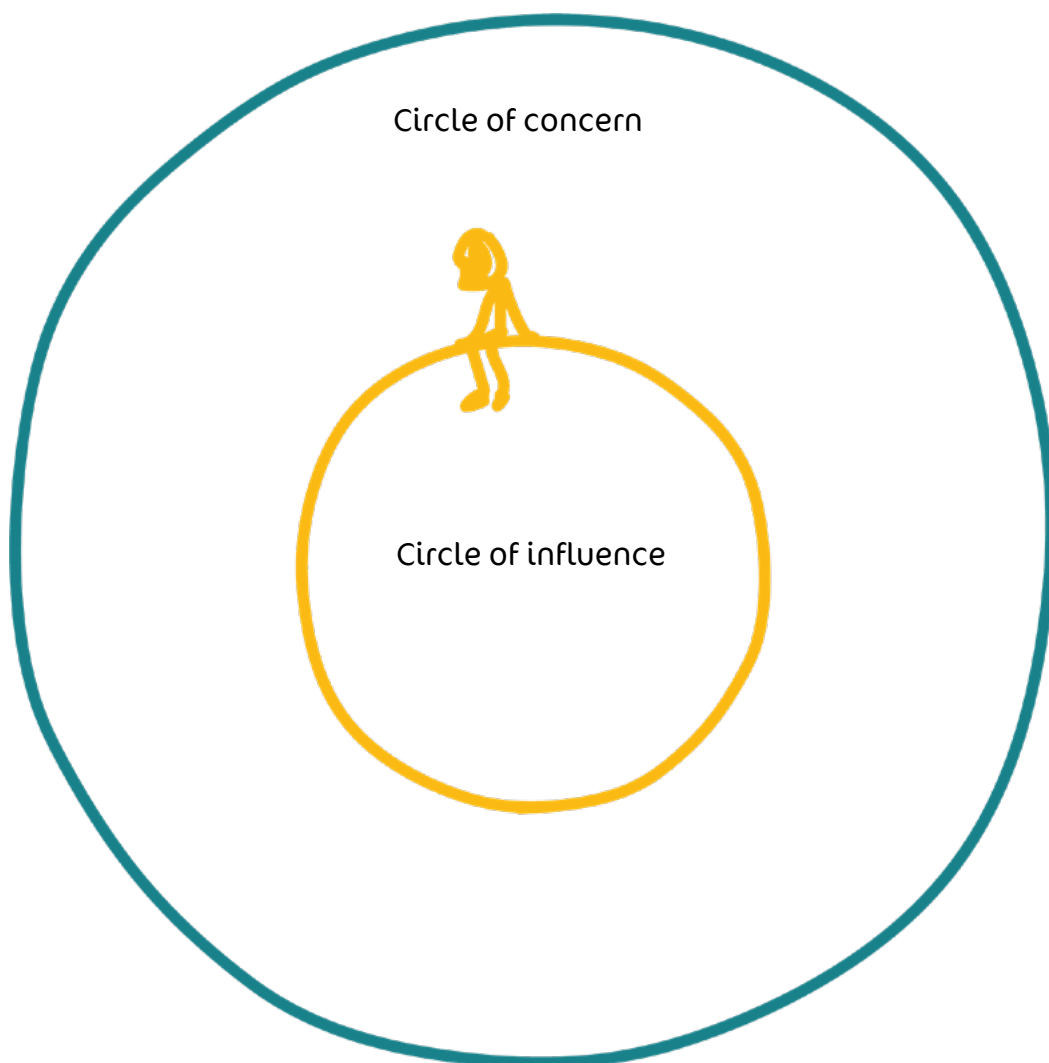


Spot opportunities and take initiative

didn't go off, it's raining, a tire went flat, you're caught in traffic, you will not make it for the meeting, and your pants are ripped. To make things a little bit worse, the report you were about to complete is now soaked in coffee. You then rant: Shit happens, but why does it always need to happen to me!? Whining and complaining are human and okay for a while. But note, a persisting complaint will end up costing you precious time, energy, and happiness.

The circle of influence and the circle of concern

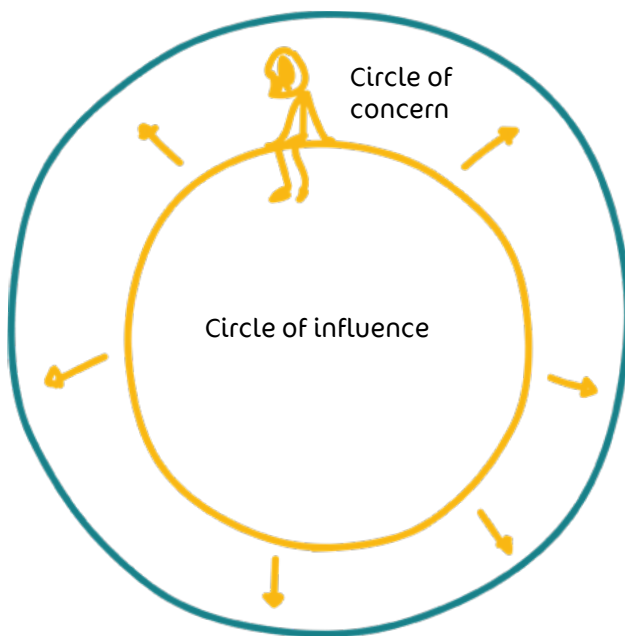
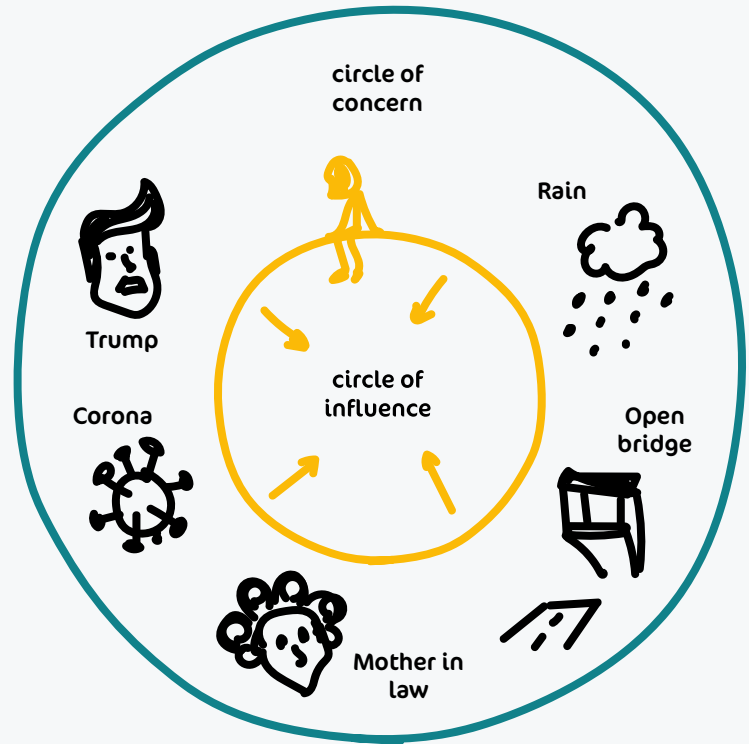
The circle of influence and the circle of concern were introduced 30 years ago by Stephen Covey. The circle of influence pertains to things you can influence and do something about. The circle of concern pertains to things you can't do much about.



Your life inside the confine of two circles

Rain, a flat tire, and traffic can all be classified as the circle of concern. Anything at all can be fitted into the circle of concern. This allows people to position themselves as victims of circumstance. People to whom things happen. Do they have a say!?

Try on an experiment in which you will spend a day-long complaining. About everything and anything: The weather, your boss, the tax authorities, your partner, corona, president Trump, a leak... Be passionate and vocal about it. Then see what happens. The first 5 minutes may feel good, but not much later you will notice you are running empty. You will despair and feel lonely. Welcome to the depression phase of the change curve. **Observe how a narrow focus on the circle of concern, significantly diminishes the scope of your circle of influence.**



From reactive to proactive

Fortunately, there's an alternative! Say it's raining. This easily fits in your circle of influence. Some people walk through the rain without getting wet. They just grab an umbrella. This metaphor applies to just about anything in life. In other words, see where and how you can expand your circle of influence.

Experience relationship problems?

Talk about it. If this doesn't work, try counseling. Notice this belly fat? Try jogging twice a week and eat less candy. Find yourself frequently caught up in traffic? Try the train or leave earlier. Take charge of your life, focus on expanding the circle of influence.

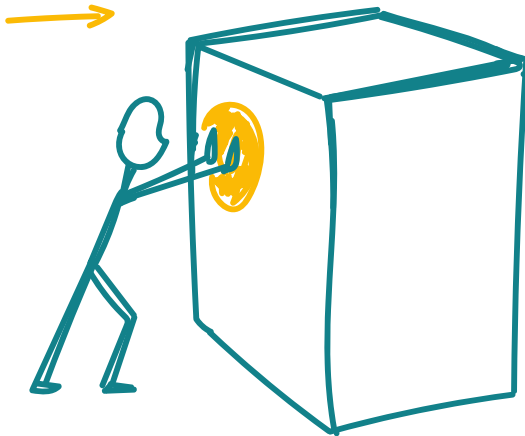
The art of influencing

Winning idea or convince customers your product is the best since sliced bread! You may also notice that sometimes it goes effortlessly, and sometimes it feel like a chore. When it comes to influencing, no one shoe fits all.

We examine two methods of influencing: The Push method and the Pull method. You already employ one of these methods without you realizing it. Which one that is, depends on your personal preference and the context.

The Push method

Pushing is attempting to actively convince the other of your arguments. You will project an expert image, referencing previous successes, and citing relevant information. Under certain circumstances, this is exactly what the other expects.



Use the push method whenever:

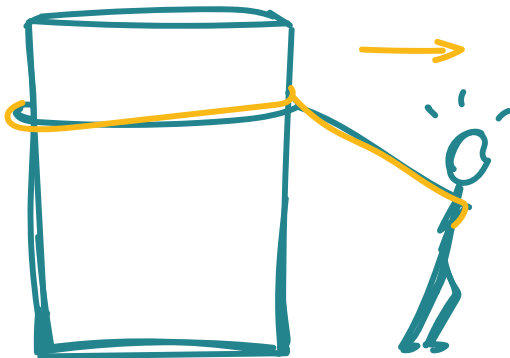
- ✓ You are more knowledgeable than the other person;
- ✓ You have checked whether the other person wants you to provide detailed information, and trusts you know what you are talking about;
- ✓ A choice needs to be made quickly.

The Pull method

An alternative approach is to listen, summarize, and ask questions. This, as opposed to being knowledgeable and offering information. If you consciously apply the Pull method, you will discover the other person's needs.

Then, you can discover a bridge between their need and your idea, offering, or point of view.

The outcome will always be a win-win.



Use the pull method whenever:

- ✓ The other person knows what he or she wants.
- ✓ You're flexible and adjust as the conversation evolves.
- ✓ The relationship with the other person takes priority.

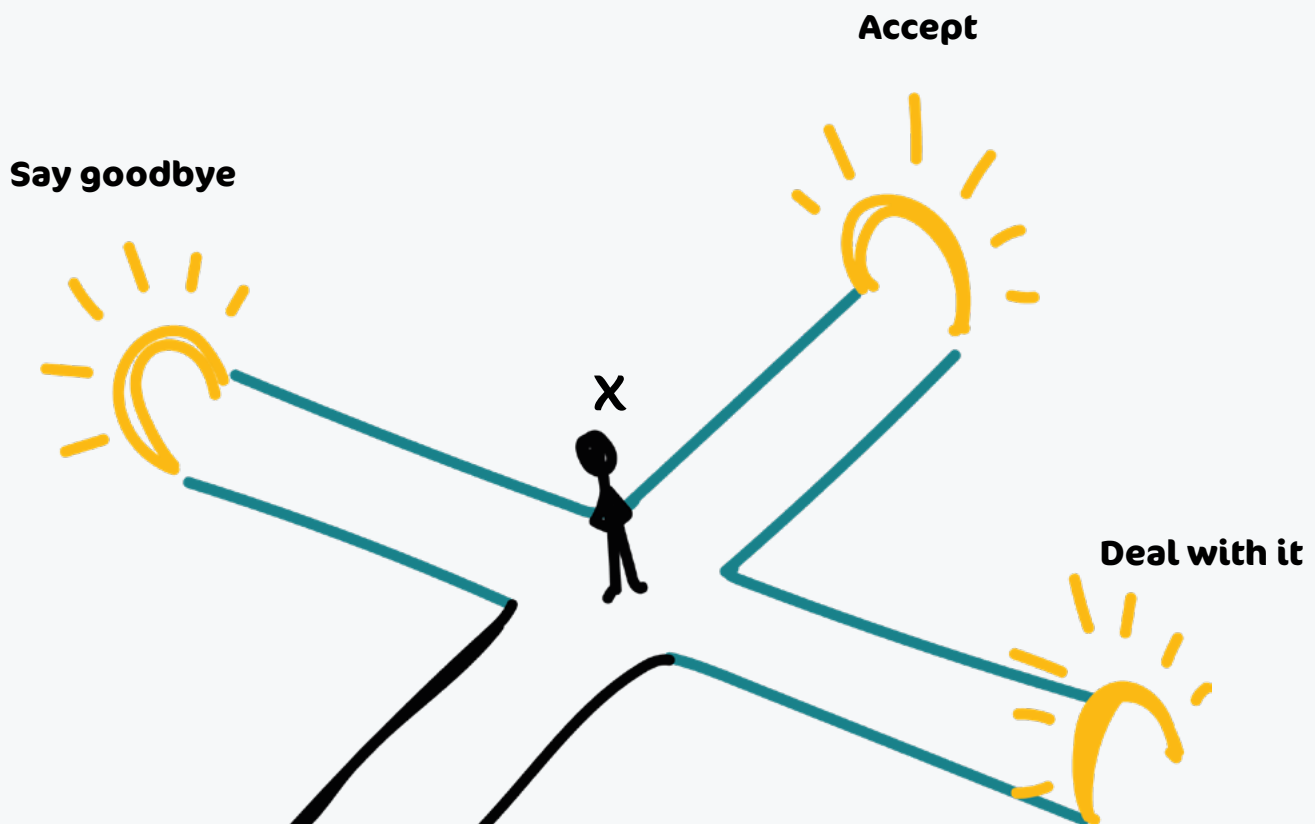


Three paths to happiness

There are three paths to happiness: Accept, Deal With it, or Say Goodbye. Sometimes, choosing one or the other seems easy and obvious. Sometimes not. So how to choose?

Problem X

Think of something that's been on your mind for quite a while. Something you worry about or something you wish was different. It can be something like a lack of clarity about your position, an unresolved dispute with your management, or tension with a colleague. Let's call it X and imagine you're standing with X at a crossroads. You see three road signs pointing to different directions, Accept, Deal With or Say goodbye.



1. Accept

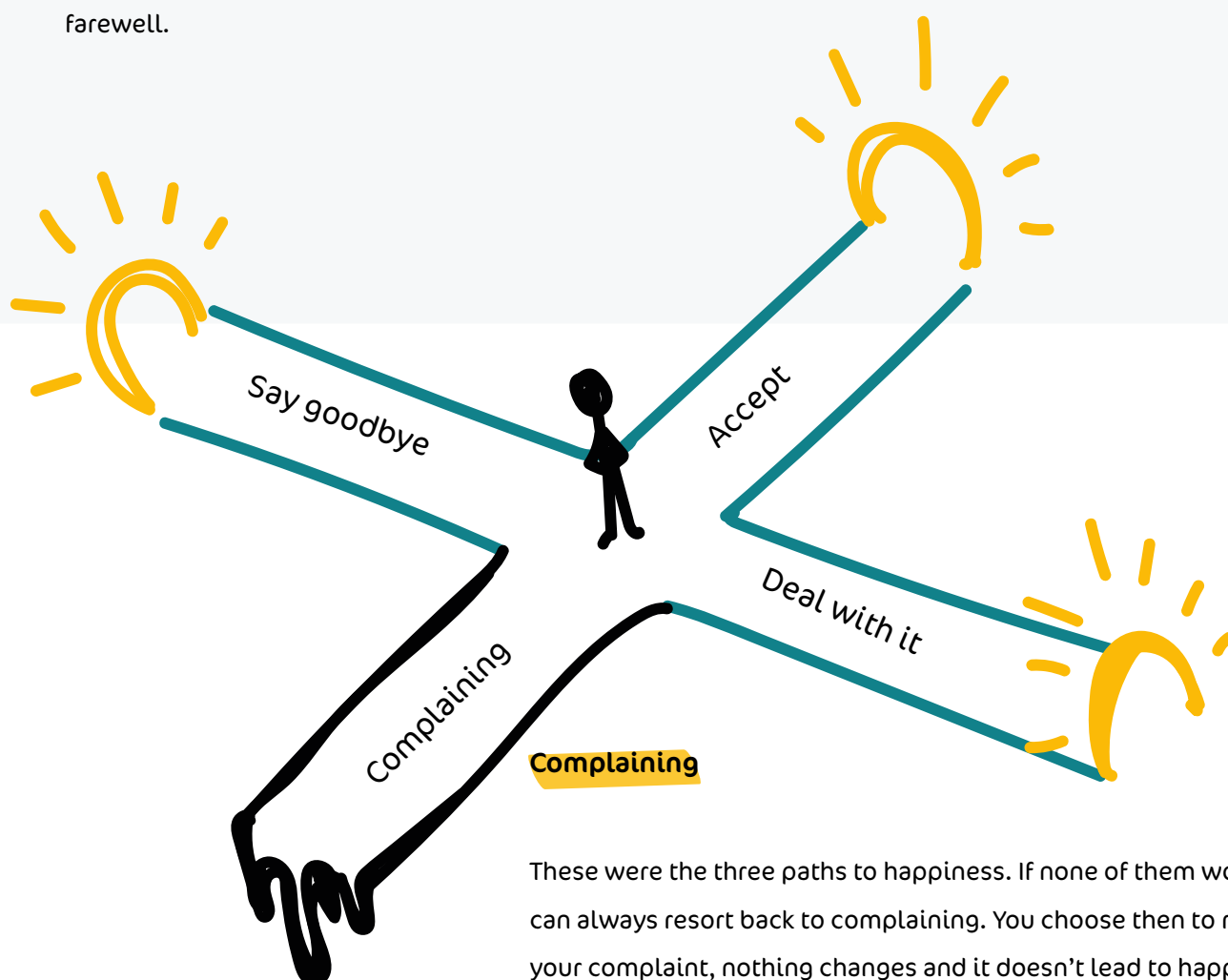
The first option is to accept X. Imagine, you're offered a tempting position, but it has some downsides. Or, you notice you don't possess the energy and stamina you once had. Accepting might be the only viable option. Note, accepting should not be confused with resignation. It is a good option, only if you are authentically willing to accept and isn't an expression of resignation.

2. Deal with it

Is accepting X not an option? Then you will need to figure out a way to handle it. Distinguish what does lie within your circle of influence. Can you talk to the person you've got an issue with? Could you apply for a new job? Or perhaps get yourself a coach? The point here is to take a good look at what you could do to impact your outcome. Note, you should stick to your circle of influence. Whilst you may dislike the CEO, it won't serve your interest to turn the organization against him.

3. Say goodbye

If you can't accept or deal with X, goodbye is an option of last resort to happiness. This implies you honestly exhausted all other options. Without anger, cynicism, sorrow, or resentment, you say: We tried our bests, and it didn't work out as hoped. Unfortunate, but it's just what it is. I wish you all the best and, farewell.



These were the three paths to happiness. If none of them worked, you can always resort back to complaining. You choose then to remain in your complaint, nothing changes and it doesn't lead to happiness. Worse, it won't energize and empower you.

$$Ego = \frac{1}{\text{knowledge}}$$

More the
knowledge,
less the ego



The four pillars of success

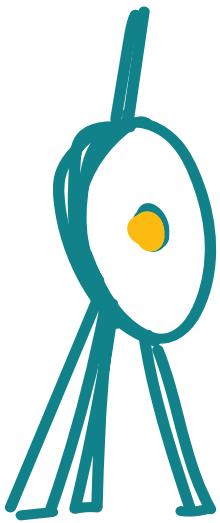
While success cannot be guaranteed, there are four things we can do that improve the probability of a successful outcome. Think of them as the four legs of a table. If one is shorter than the rest, it wobbles and the probability of success diminishes.

Pillar 1: Commitment

Don't be a ship without a compass! If you want success - be it work, love, happiness or leadership - first set your goal. Ask yourself, "What am I after?" It's about commitment. Do you want to be an inspiring leader who contributes to a sustainable world? Or a hardworking colleague on whom others can rely? Your course determines what you are doing every day.

Pillar 2: Integrity

Do you know your purpose? Then make sure you are honest. Show the behavior you want to see. Do you want an open and transparent culture in your organization? Then you shouldn't gossip about your colleagues. After all, that's the opposite of what you're after. Do you really have that commitment? Then you address colleagues when they gossip. Then you create what you are after. Or as Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world."



Integrity can reflect in seemingly trivial things. If you are expected at 09:00 am and you walk in at 09:05 am, you are late, period! Save people your excuses about being caught up in traffic, et. Be honest, shoot straight and say sorry, I'm late.



Pillar 3: Leadership

The third pillar is leadership. It starts with you leading yourself. Ask yourself whether you're willing to do this if no one else is? Leadership is by example, which inspires and empowers others to contribute. Note, this does not assume you need to do all your team members' work. Grant them the opportunity to contribute.

Pillar 4: Responsibility

It's easy to blame others if you haven't held to your commitment, but you achieve nothing by doing so. If you notice a colleague cutting corners, first ask yourself whether you have done something for this to happen. Were your instructions unclear or incomplete? Were you dominating, or have people come to expect you will always fill the gaps and complete the job? If you're willing to take a look at yourself, you get the opportunity to be more effective and successful.

Establishing limits

There are days you wonder what you've been doing all day?" You were very busy, and yet you didn't get much done. Instead, you read emails, took phone calls, answered questions, and put out fires.

Why do you do this?

Couldn't they have fixed it without you? Do you worry they don't like you when you say no? And do you relish in the role of the savior? Notice how often you fixed other people's stuff last week. Was it really necessary? Consider that working effectively also implies delegating work and responsibility.

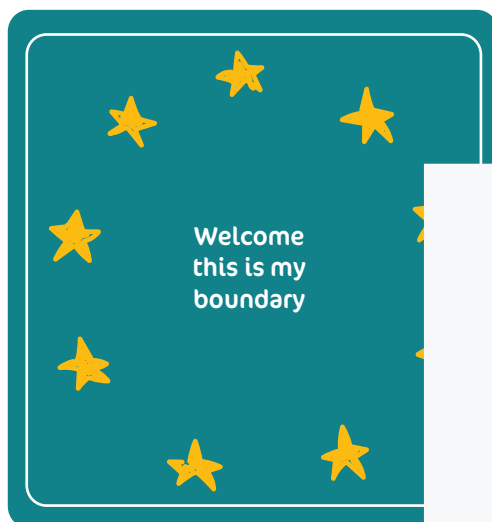
There are three steps to putting unnecessary work right where it belongs. Eventually, this will save you lots of headaches, frustration, and enhance your wellbeing.

Step 1 - Set your limits

Boundaries can only exist if you know where they are. If it's not clear to you, how should others know? We set many boundaries such as the time you are willing to spend working beyond office hours, or how long you're willing to wait for a colleague who's late.

Step 2 - Guard your boundaries

Can you recall how often you notice yourself solving other people's issues? You are the only one charged with guarding your boundaries. It's not always easy. Take a look and notice where and when you are too lenient guarding your boundaries. Why? Are you trying to look good and avoid conflict?



Armed with this insight, you can start practicing. Have trouble saying no to your demanding manager? First practice, with your partner or a good friend. Whenever trying on a new behavior, things might come across differently than expected. Your guinea pig will tell you how your communication came across. Was it too blunt, too timid, or unclear?

Step 3 - Defend your boundary

You know your limit, and believe you also know how to guard it. But what happens when your boundary is breached? Do emotions such as tension, anger, or apprehension hijack you? The best is to take a step or two back and relax. One way of doing this is by temporarily walking away. When you return, calm, and composed, you can assert your limit. For example, "I don't appreciate being talked to like this or, I value spending time with my family in the evening, which is why I answer emails the next day."

Set your limits



**Guard your
boundaries**



**Defend your
boundaries**



Upsets and how to deal with them

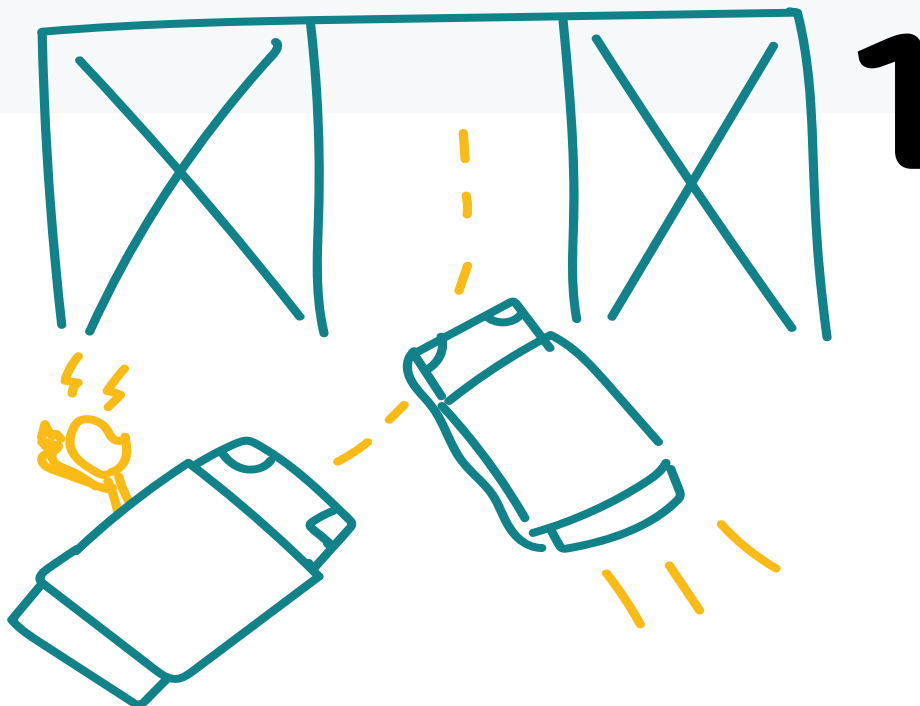
Can you recall the last time you were angry or upset, what it was about, and the context?
Were you angry with someone else or with yourself? And vice versa, can you recall the last time someone else was angry with you?

Frustration, anger, or irritation are caused by:

1. A thwarted intention.
2. An unmet expectation.
3. Suppressed communication.

A thwarted intention

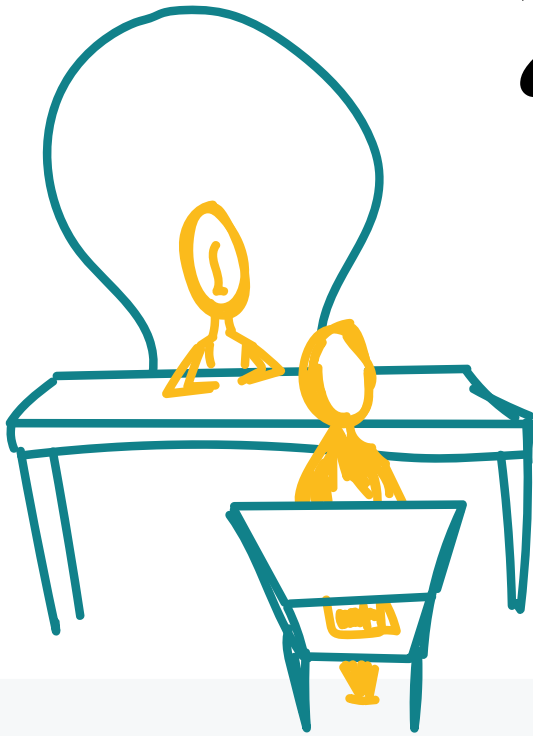
Imagine, it is 6 pm and you are driving through Amsterdam's city center. You need to get to the Prinsengracht for an appointment with a potential customer. But, you're caught in traffic and realize you're hopelessly late. Worse, when you finally arrive, there's no parking space in sight. Stress builds up, and after a few more attempts, you spot a vacant parking place on the other side of the canal! You speed to the other side, and just when you get there, someone steals your parking space! You yell and fume to no avail. Your intention was thwarted, and you vividly recall the frustration to this day.



2

An unmet expectation

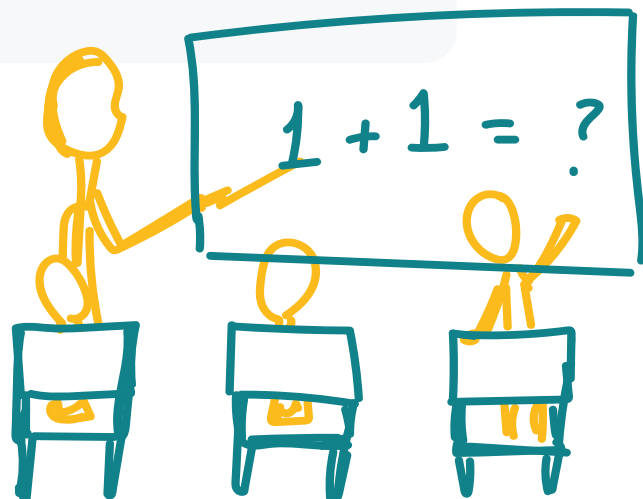
Paint the following picture: You feel things are going well at work! Your colleagues appreciate you and give you great feedback. Soon, your performance appraisal is due and you expect a substantial salary raise. But during the appraisal, it becomes quickly apparent that your manager sees things differently. She says you fell short of your targets, and are eligible to get a standard annual increase, nothing beyond. You're left with an unmet expectation. Disappointment and frustration follow.



Suppressed communication

You surely remember an instance in primary school that you raised your hand, high in the air, but weren't called on. You knew the answer and were like a loaded gun. You wanted to shout out the answer, but some other kid walked off with your credits. Fast forward, this also happens in Zoom sessions. A participant wants to speak but isn't called on. How frustrating!

3



What to do about it?

Acknowledging your emotion is a big step in the right direction. If you want to transform an upset, there's no other choice but to talk about it. This also holds for another's upset. Is your employee disappointed he did not get a pay raise? Invite him to talk about it and observe, it often works wonders.

Your stamina?

Stamina is the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort. Does your job energize you, and are you looking forward to going to work? Or does your job occur to you like a punishment? This determines the degree to which you are physically and mentally able to carry out your job.

Three factors will determine your effectiveness at work: Autonomy, Competence, and Engagement, also known as the ACE of Hearts. If you hold the Ace of Hearts, you will arrive at work full of energy. This will greatly contribute to your happiness, health, and effectiveness. Taking each factor in turn, here are several things you may want to reflect on.

Autonomy

Autonomy means you enjoy the freedom to make make your own choices and take decisions. Do you own your work or projects? Do you have a desk and a drawer? When you open your drawer, do you feel like someone is looking over your shoulder, or do you experience you're free? Limited autonomy deprives you of the freedom to choose. You're being told what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. On the other hand, excess autonomy implies you're left to do almost everything on your own.

Examples:

How do you relate to the following statements:

- *I am managed effectively, but a manager can also greatly limit your freedom.*
- *Managers, who pay little attention to you, aren't truly committed to your growth and development.*
- *I determine how I perform my tasks and experience autonomy, as part of my team and organization.*
- *It is horrible to feel like you are at the bottom of the hierarchy and get dished all the unpleasant chores.*

Competence

What competencies count for performing your job?

Do you find that your job is difficult? Is it outside of the scope of your competencies? Do you still enjoy it? If not, this isn't sustainable and may well be on your way to burnout.

And vice versa, also overqualification can result in burnout.

How do you relate to the following statement:

- *My colleagues take me seriously.*



Engagement

Engagement is the level of commitment you feel for your team and organization. It is not about whether lunch tastes good or whether chilling with your colleagues last Friday afternoon was fun. It's about dedication. Do the company objectives excite you? Are you walking the extra mile? Are you invested in your job with all your heart? Being engaged means you believe in the organization and want to contribute to its success.

How do you relate to the following statements:

- *I know what is going on in the organization.*
- *I speak proudly of my company.*

Talk about it

If you want to improve your work performance, engage in dialogue with your manager, HR, colleague, or anyone else who matters. Each time you speak, you will experience relief and get energized. If you don't, you experience an energy drain.



Get the Ace of Hearts card game with many more statements about Autonomy, Competences, and Engagement? Order via atyourservice@brout.nl and start the conversation with your colleagues right away! The card game is € 12.50 excluding VAT.

Epilogue

Brout is committed to your growth and development, and also that of your team and organization.

It starts with awareness of what's already there, and what's not there yet. The Brout School offers several fixed programs for every level in which we learn from each other. Sometimes no one shoe will fit all, and the answer is a tailormade program. At Brout Tailormade, we put our heads together and create a unique development program to suit your organization. Finally, we also offer individual support. Coaching runs through everything we do.

A growth and development seminar can be fun, but what it must boil down to is impact. That's why we begin with the end. We work together to define your desired outcome: What new behavior do you want to see implemented at work? We will translate your goal into concrete, measurable results.

Insight, Impact, and Influence.

The key question you need ask is: 'What am I doing for this to happen?' We distinguish 3I's: Insight, Impact, and Influence. Sustainable change occurs if people have Insight into their behavior, experience the Impact of their behavior, and experience an ability to Influence change. Change starts within (insight) and shows outside (behavior). This is pretty straight forward. We know it's already there, within you. We are committed to helping you manifest it. In doing so, we are kind, respectful, but challenge where needed.

Ready to go Brout?

Are you ready to shake off your ego? Don't hesitate to contact us. Brout is looking forward to supporting you.

Thanks to:

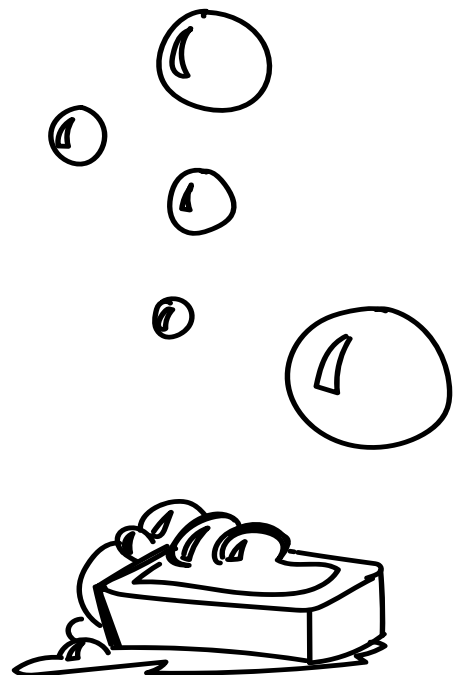
- ✓ Thijs van Wersch – composed “10 scrapers” and write draft texts
- ✓ Melanie van der Linden – editing draft texts
- ✓ Guusje Slagter – designing e-book
- ✓ Asher Cohen – translation into English

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