



# In Search for Good Organisations

Character and Wisdom  
Needed



# Good Organisation Inquiry



## Agenda

### 1. Stop the Suffering

- Organisations: Despair and Devastation
- It's the Values (and Systemic) Stupid
- New Organisations: Good Life for All

### 2. Good Organisations

- The VPI+ Model
- Bringing (Moral) Practices Back
- Making the Institution Good (Again)

### 3. Sparking The Revolution



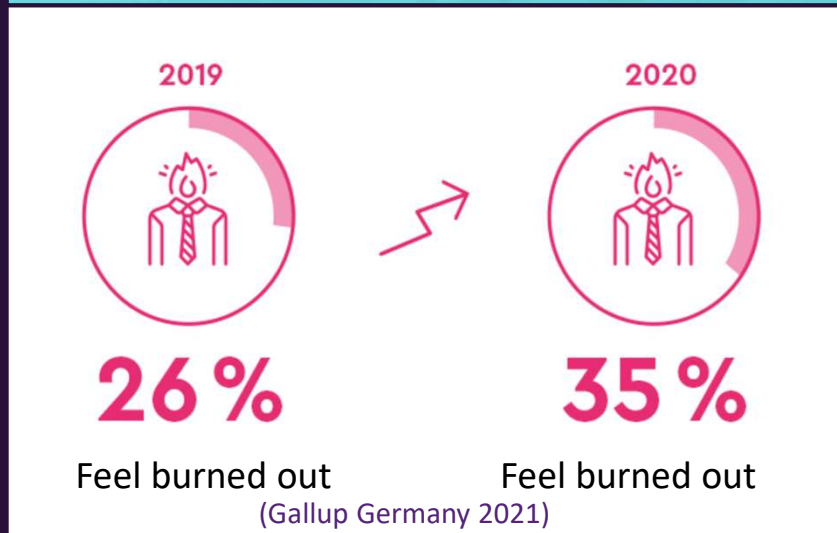
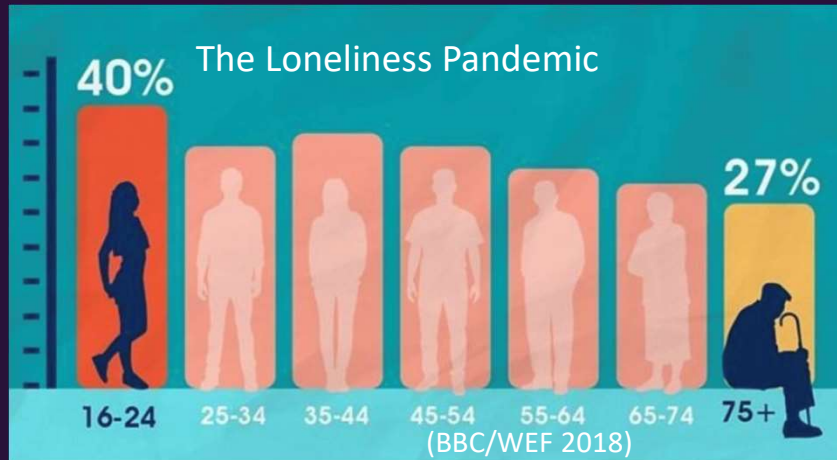
## #GOODORGANISATIONS STOP THE SUFFERING

”You cannot  
make man good  
by law, and  
without good  
(wo)men you  
cannot have a  
good society”  
— Clive Lewis

# Stop The Suffering – Why We Need Good



# Where we are: Despair and Devastation



## DYING FOR A PAYCHECK



How Modern Management Harms  
Employee Health and Company  
Performance—and What  
We Can Do About It

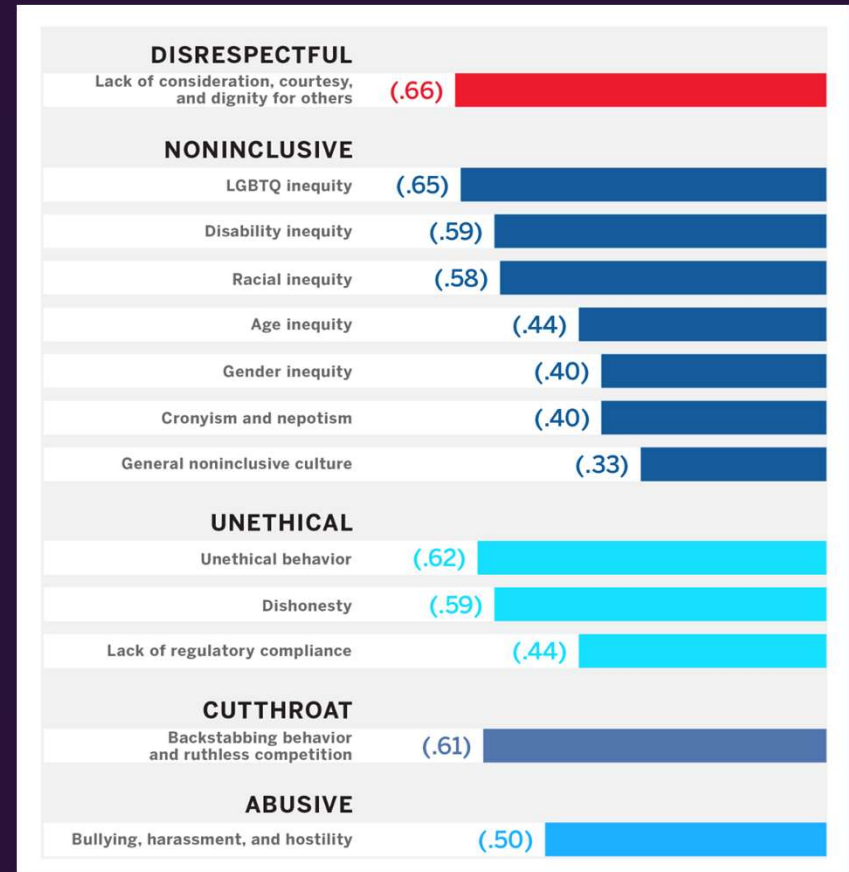
**JEFFREY PFEFFER**

STANFORD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS





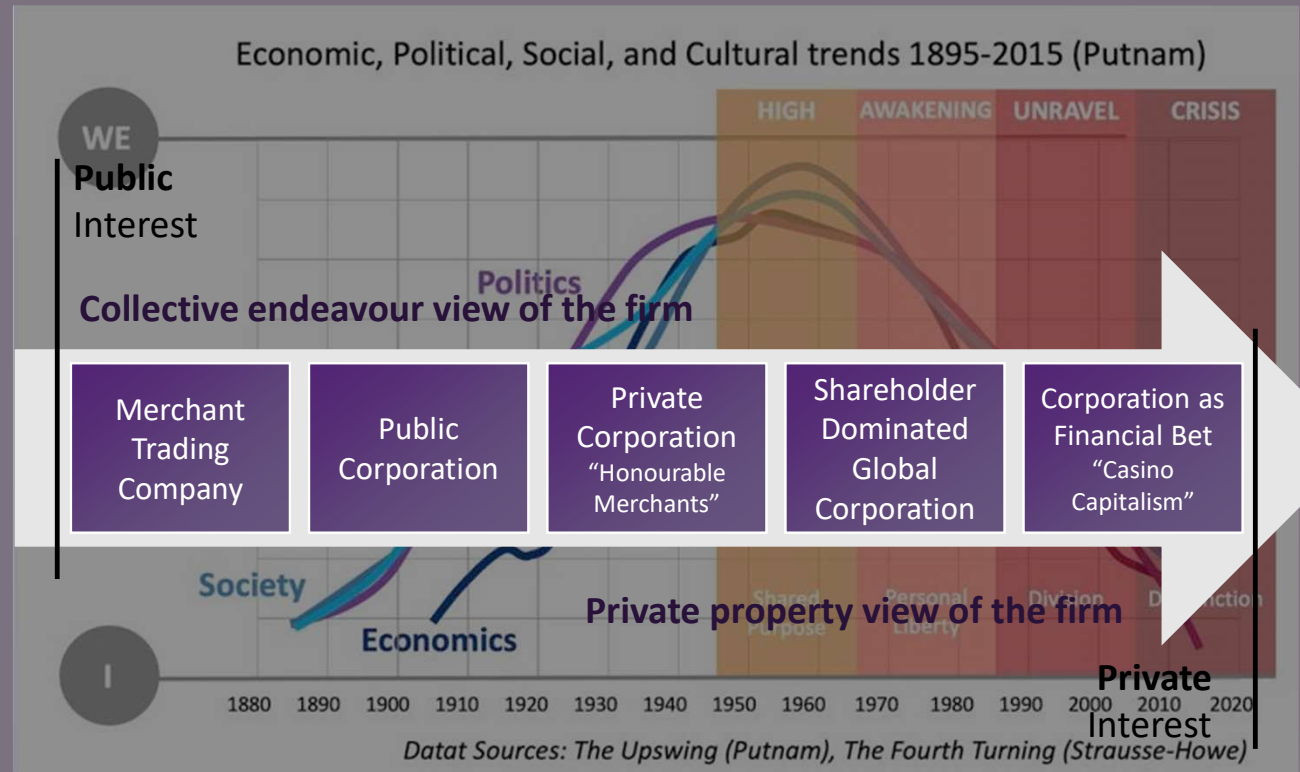
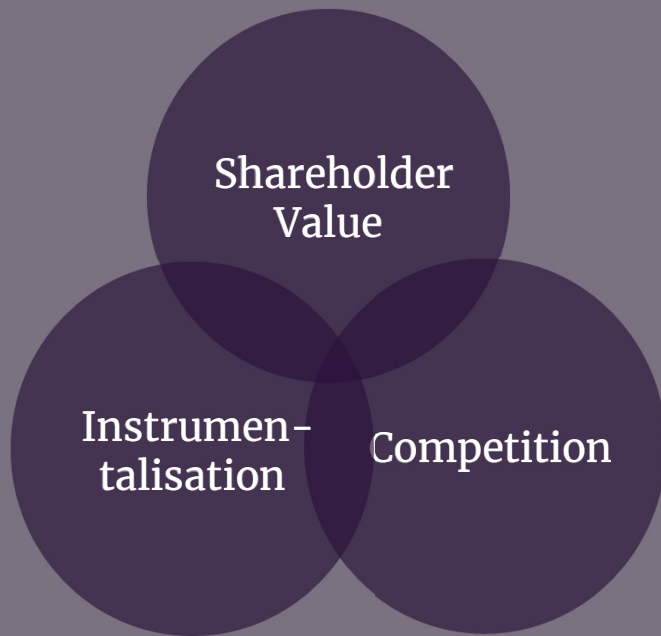
# Where we are: Despair and Devastation





# Why are we stuck? Values and System

Hidden Values in a Neoliberal World

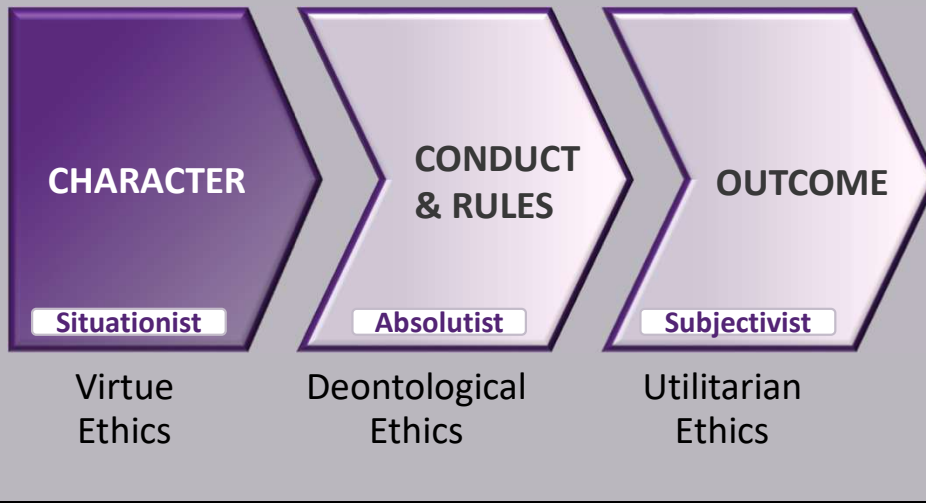


Based partly on Colin Mayer Prosperity – better business makes the greater good



# What is good? A Theory of Value Needed

## THREE GENERAL THEORIES OF ETHICS



## Theories of Ethics: what is “good”?

- **Utilitarian Ethics:** Action is good, if the consequences are net beneficial (for the majority, but in practice often only for the individual)
- **Deontology:** Action is good, if it follows the rules
- **Virtue Ethics:** Action is good (beautiful), if the actor is virtuous and it supports the “good life” (for all)



# Utopia for Realists: A Virtuous Society

## Self

We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.

## Relations

We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others and to the good of the community.

## Society

We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law, and collective effort for the common good. We value families as sources of love and support for all their members, and as basis of a society in which people care for others and help each other to flourish.

## Nature

We value the environment, both natural and shaped by humanity, as the basis of life and source of wonder and inspiration.

### Character

#### Self Virtues

ME

Wisdom  
Courage  
Critical Thinking  
Perseverance  
Humility

#### Social Virtues

WE

Compassion  
Vulnerability  
Trust  
Friendship  
Forgiveness

#### Civic Virtues

US

Civility  
Service  
Integrity  
Solidarity  
Justice

#### Eco/Spiritual Virtues

US

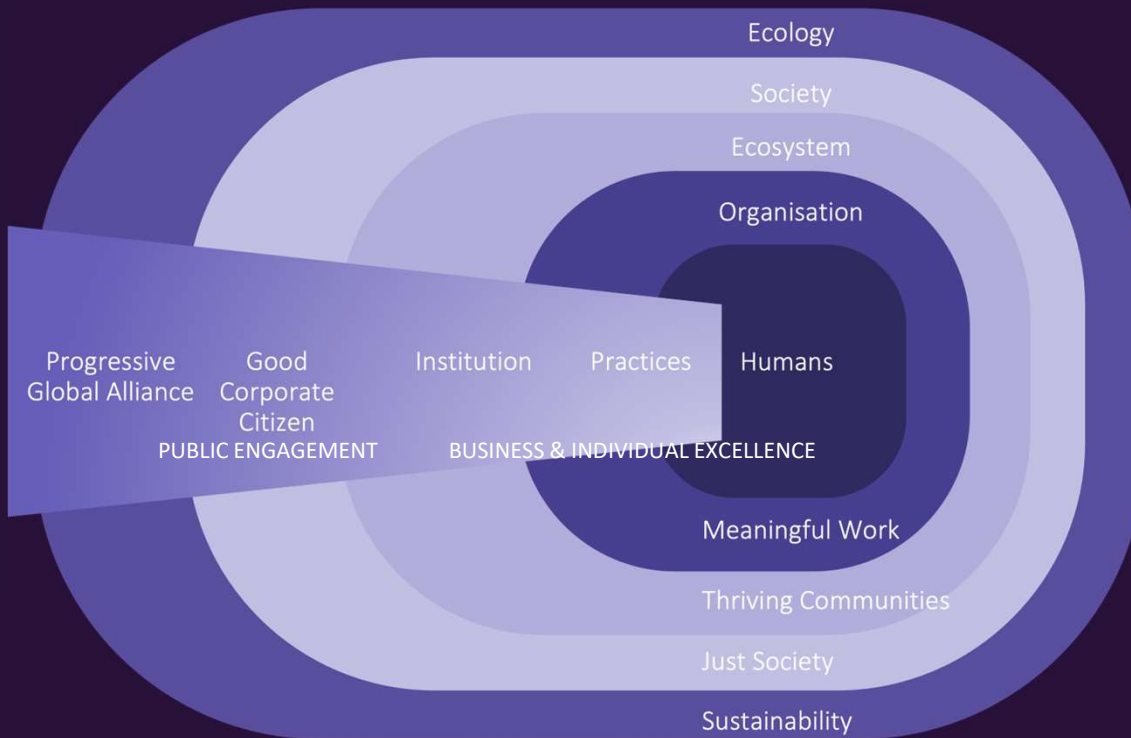
Global Caring  
Eco-Sensitivity  
Love  
Faith





# Good Organisations Enable Eudaimocracy

Good Organisations enable the good life *for all*.



**Sustainable  
and Just  
Society**

**Businesses act honestly and take joint care of their ecosystem for the common good** beyond simply maximizing stakeholder utility, customer satisfaction, or shareholder profits.

**Thriving  
Communities**


**Businesses enable mutual development of members and partners** within wide communities. By nurturing participation, trust, virtues and quality relationships, good organisations can “create” both good products and good people.

**Meaningful  
Work**

**As trustees for the development of individuals, businesses create opportunities for members to grow,** deploying talents and creativity with pride and dignity in their organisational roles, whilst contributing collectively to a greater purpose.

**Fair  
Return**

**Businesses enable a fair return for all stakeholders** and secure the long-term viability to honour its responsibility towards organisational members, stakeholders and society at large.



"We are what we  
repeatedly do.  
**Excellence**, then,  
is not an act, but  
a habit."

— Aristotle

**Crafting Good Organisations**



"It is no longer true that producing will lead to a better way of life. The connection between more and better has been broken."

— André Gorz

Meaningful Work

Excellence

Viability  
& Value

Collective  
flourishing

PRODUCTION

(Extrinsic Good)

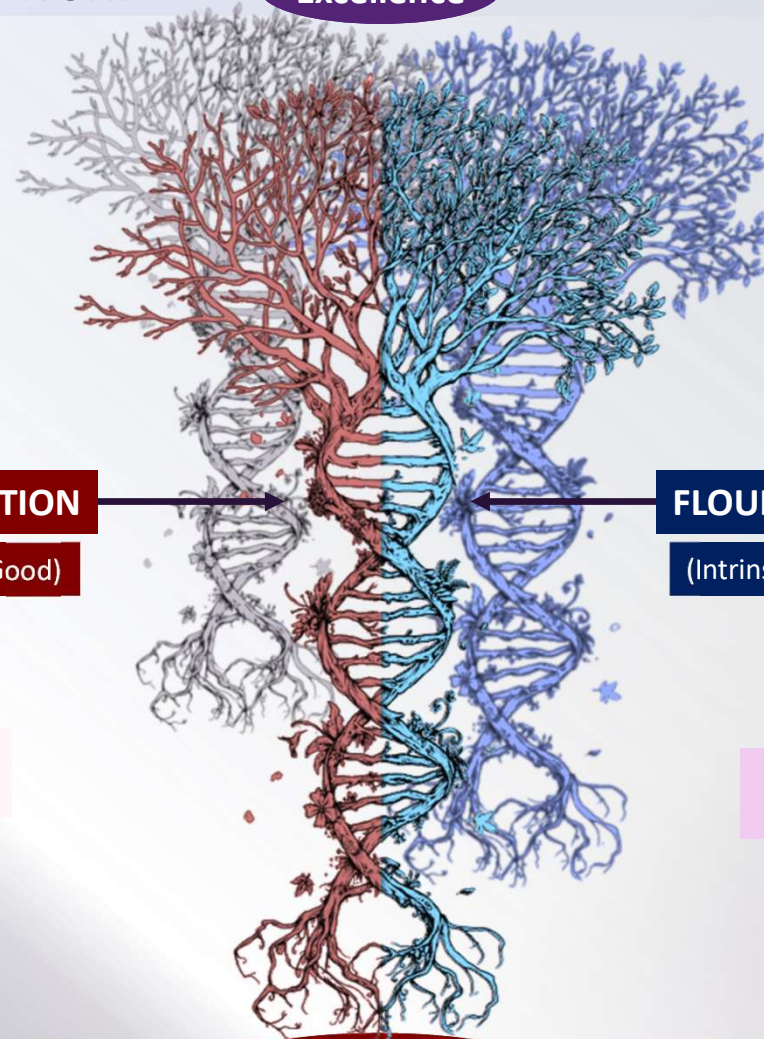
FLOURISHING

(Intrinsic Good)

Goods &  
Services

Individual  
development

WORK







# Bringing it all together: The “VPI+” model

## Generative Practices

*“Turning work into an end in itself”*

### Fostering an entrepreneurial community:

- Strong **sense of community** and belonging
- High degree of **individual freedom** coupled with collegial decision-making
- Common **understanding of excellence**: shared agreement of quality norms, behavioural norms, morality of the profession, strong sense of service
- Continuous evolution and adaptation of norms, goals, roles, practices to enable **generative collective action**
- Strong collaboration for shared learning and **ways of working**, body of good practices
- *Could be: teams, communities of practice, functions, micro enterprises, units, circles, project teams*

*“Making the world a better place”*

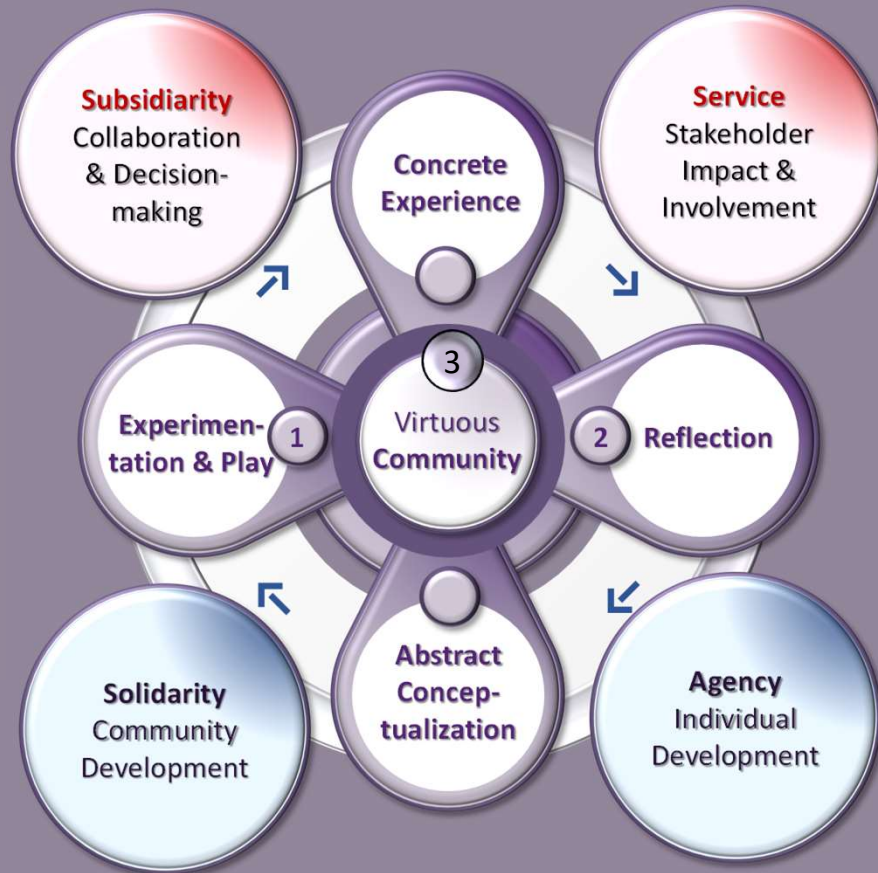
## Enabling Institution

### Enable collective value generation in society:

1. **Continuous “value work”** to develop shared purpose and coherent “moral identity”
2. **Continuous org. evolution to enable common good**
  - Increases Practice “affordances” and elimination of toxic practices.
  - **Self-regulative governance** ensuring fair return and flourishing
  - **Strategic differentiation**
3. **Continuous development of organisational system**
  - **Integration of Practices** into adaptive structure
  - Support for **cross-Practice learning** and development (inside and beyond the firm)
  - Expansion of **org. networks/ecosystem** based on potential increase in both external/internal good



# Developing Excellence Through Practice



## Crafting the task

- **Service:** Valuable contribution to the stakeholders and the common good
- **Subsidiarity:** continual experimentation to grow autonomy, participation and subsidiarity in responsibility for the team and the client

## Crafting the Learning & Development

- **Agency and Mastery:** Personal development through reflection - mental, moral and emotional, individual and collective (what I learned, how it changed me and us)
- **Solidarity:** Community development - “we grow together”, the community co-elevates



# Experimentation

## Recrafting the Task

### Self-Management (how, who and what)

For instance: Collaborative and proactive role / task / interaction design and allocation based on individual and team strengths, stakeholder impact - as well as personal and team development goals

### Responsible Subsidiarity and Integration

For instance: Co-definition of cross-functional common principles, shared standards, protocols, interfaces, ways of working

### Active learning, innovation and development

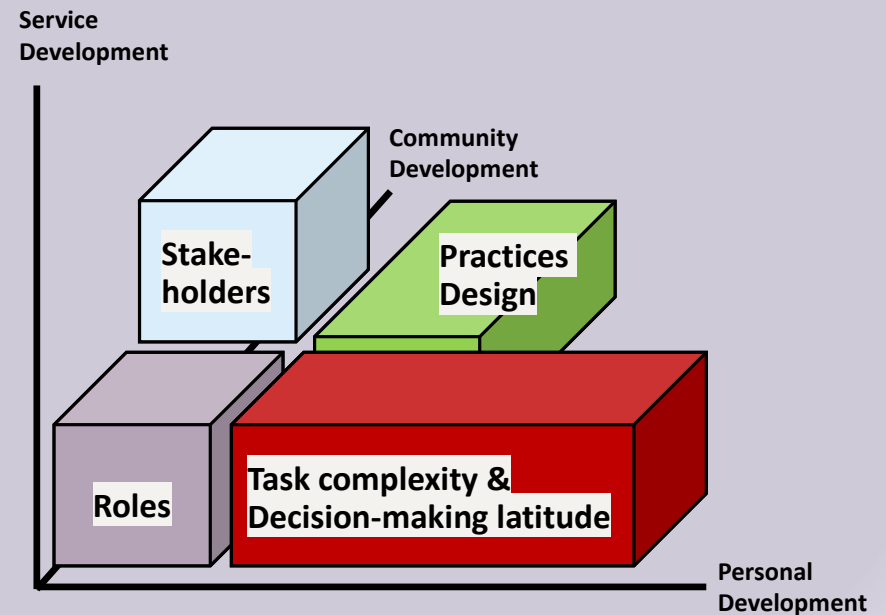
For instance: Rituals to enable information sharing, peer-to-peer learning interdependency mgmt., innovation, parallel experimentation

### Decision-making and ethical deliberation

For instance: Active experimentation with different decision-making methodologies (e.g. by advice, consent, majority, consensus)

### Transforming with virtues for Effectiveness & Flourishing

E.g. what would “compassion” mean in Finance?



# Reflection

## Recraft Learning & Development for Becoming our Best

### **Task Reflection: what happened? What does it mean?**

For instance: what worked, what did not work, how did it feel, stakeholder feedback

### **Self-Reflection: how are we? who are we? Why are we here?**

For instance: Depth Analysis coaching – values, purpose, ethics, authentic self

### **Relational Reflection: how do we relate? How do we co-elevate?**

For instance: Peer coaching, case-clinics, (living)-labs, Feed Forward conversations

### **Ecosystem: what is our impact? How can we care?**

For instance: Organisational role analysis, social network (nodes) / stakeholder analysis

### **Moral Reflection: what is good? Who can we become?**

For instance: Moral Imagination: multiple perspectives, cultivate the dream, virtue frame

### Reflection-on-Action: Becoming our Best





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# Enablers: Organisational Affordance

## Mastery & Development

- Reflective places: **Well-thinking retreats, storytelling huts**, empty chairs in 'no-mobile' theatres, play areas
- Time-budget: 10% reflection time, sabbatical week, **stakeholder days, no-meeting Fridays**, recovery time
- Budget: for development work, lifelong learning, **individual/peer coaching**, mentoring, academic learning etc
- Cross-company development: systematic knowledge sharing, global talent/career management, professional practice model & communities, **practice-to-practice audits**, ethical trainings, internal coaches and supervisory groups
- Firmwide communication: development-as-honour, virtue awards, **virtue stories**

## Subsidiarity & Service

- Work Design: Flexible job, role and team structures, information transparency to **support job crafting**; flexible job titles
- HR: Performance management enabling subsidiarity and development, **systematic upskilling** of managers, teams and HR in organisational evolution and design
- Decision-Making: Move towards **self-management**, cross-functional and customer-centric working teams, stakeholder focus

## Solidarity & Community

- HR: **Management selection for character** and relationship skills, from performance to collective learning management
- Routine Crafting: Firmwide **norms for civil and respectful** engagement, solidarity, trust
- Technology Platforms: to enable communication, exchange, organisational journeys, assistance in routine work, budget pooling, work and resource pooling, **project market places**



**No Reflection**  
Profit over virtue

- **Corporate irresponsibility:** Ethics as “minimum standards” and “greenwashing”
- **Downsizing** for profit (to please the analysts) and share buybacks
- All-male “same country club” **non-representative boards and management teams**
- **KPI blindness:** e.g. ESG/CSR, employee or customer satisfaction surveys when used in lieu of true inquiry and engagement

**No Solidarity**  
Ego kills Eco


- **Pay for individual performance** (carrots and sticks)
- **Excessive CEO Pay** (beyond 10x median)
- **Performance rankings** and ratings (aka “mortality curve”)
- **Pampering high potentials** – forgetting the rest
- **Promoting narcissists & selection for competence** over character

**No Subsidiarity**  
Command & Control

- **Quarterly results “prediction addiction”** and budget cascades
- **One-size-fits-all** organisational structures, policies and routines
- Top-down limitation of authority, secrecy, power hierarchy







"Joy, sublime  
spark of life, thy  
magic binds again  
what markets  
strictly divided. All  
people unite,  
where thy virtuous  
tune sets in."

— Hymn of Joy (almost)

**Virtuous Contagion Wanted**

**SPARKING THE REVOLUTION**



# Make Leadership Good Again: A Leadership Society

The Good Leadership Society is the independent professional association for Leaders. We are the voice of Leaders and drive excellence in the profession to safeguard the integrity of business and society.

**A leader is a professional role.** Leaders are important catalysts, architects and trustees of good organisations in a good society.

**Leadership excellence** means to act with appropriate skills, character and wisdom to collectively craft a “good society” and attain sustainable prosperity for all. Therefore, we must nurture and safeguard the moral identity, character and embeddedness of individuals, communities and organisations to enable collective flourishing.

## How can we achieve good leadership?

### 1. Practice-oriented and integrated in community

- within an intact team
- Combination of classroom and on-the-job learning
- regular peer-group reflection

### 3. Transformation for systemic impact

- Integration of individual and organisational development
- Members contribute to evolution of practices


### 2. Holistic character and leadership development

- Personalised learning
- Integrated development

### 4. A Lifelong Pilgrimage of Learning

- A staged pathway to discover “the leader within”
- Every member contributes to the development of peers and the Society



A hand is shown hovering just above a DJ turntable. The turntable and the surrounding area are illuminated with vibrant, out-of-focus lights in shades of purple, blue, and red, creating a bokeh effect. The hand is dark and its fingers are slightly curled, as if about to touch the turntable. The overall atmosphere is one of anticipation and focus.

"There is something in all of us that hungers after the good and true. When we glimpse it in people, we applaud them for it. Their inspiration reminds us of the tenderness for life that we all can feel."

— Desmond Tutu

**Returning Home**

**Our Future is In Your Hands**

# MUCH MORE THINKING NEEDED

## Join The Good Organisations Inquiry

### LEADERS FOR HUMANITY



The focus for our first “season” of interviews was centred on moral philosophy and the question of “good” – what makes a good society, what makes a good business... Throughout 2022 our inquiry will shift progressively towards the operationalisation of “goodness” and the transformation of organisations and leaders.

### GOODORGANISATIONS.COM



Time has come for revolutionary change. We must collectively re-embrace a humanist purpose. We must rebuild our organisations with virtues and wisdom, courage and compassion - and with the best of knowledge, practices and insights. But above all, we need to learn how to become the conscious and caring leaders humanity needs. Together, we must stop the suffering!



- Big thanks to everybody who supported our inquiry!
- Join our **LinkedIn Good Organisations** page or subscribe on GoodOrganisations.com if you would like to continue the conversation
- Find our **Leaders for Humanity** series on Youtube or podcast
- Contact us if you are interested in **starting a gLab**
- **Be good!**





**Because Good Matters**  
<http://goodorganisations.com>