Chapters 1 and 2 from: Core Qualities – A gateway to Human Resources
Daniel Ofman, 2001

1] Introduction

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
DYLAN THOMAS

The Shifting Paradigm

How does a manager create an organization in which those he supervises take responsibility for their own (professional) lives, behave as part of the larger whole, act on the basis of their own core qualities and accomplish what (they say) they want?

Same cultures consider it more of an art to ask the right questions than to find the right answers, and these cultures particularly respect people for the quality of their questions. The answers are considered less important, because it is recognized that there are no unequivocal answers.

The longer I consider the question stated above, the clearer it becomes that the answer is both simple and difficult to realize. This has to do with leadership "from inside", with management from the core, with what could be described as "unifying leadership;' which was the working title of this book for a long time during its writing: Unifying Leadership: The Way to a Creative Organization, which explains in one sentence what this book is about. For a while, I considered using ''A crusade against powerlessness" as a subtitle. However, a crusade is rather reactive and primarily conducted against something, whereas the essential message of this book encourages being creative instead of reactive.

I get worked up about powerlessness, I cannot stand it. I get chills of frustration, seeing how many people at all levels within an organization feel powerless and incapable of exerting any influence on their situation. The amount of creative energy lost in this way is phenomenal. What a terrible waste!

During the past few years, environmental awareness has increased considerably. Things that were inconceivable 10 years ago are normal today, and it looks as if this positive development will continue for the time being. I think now is the time to pay some attention to our *inner environment*, to what is going on in our hearts and in our heads. How do we use our core qualities? How do we inspire ourselves and others? Why do we do things we do not really want to do? To what extent are we aware of our darker side? What do we really want to achieve? And so on.

Besides the concept of "inner environment" I would not be surprised at all if, within 10 years, the term *socio-environmental* pollution becomes an established expression, one used to measure the impact of an organization on the families of its employees. Every day, I am struck by how many people (particularly men) believe deep down that they do not devote enough time to their families, because they throw themselves into their work "wholeheartedly”. Our obsession with achieving results is getting inhuman at times.

I refuse to believe that this is the price we have to pay for prosperity. Looking at the human energy wasted in organizations, I believe we could accomplish more with less energy. This, however, requires effort, a kind of reflective "effort" that will make us focus on our inner world.

In this context something must be said about underlying principles or, in more complex terms, the underlying paradigm. Paradigm here is a definition of reality ("This is the way the world works ... "). It is the set of basic principles underlying everybody's actions. Consciously or not, everyone acts and thinks according to a definition of reality or a paradigm. We need a paradigm to enable us to explain events in our lives and to give meaning to these events.

So far, history has gone through a number of paradigm shifts. These are caused by expansion of insight and consciousness, which has a snowball effect. One such paradigm shift began with the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543). In his case, the "heaven-shaking" change was caused, not so much by his assuming the existence of a heliocentric solar system - a concept that had been formulated centuries before - but the fact that he put inquiry and ratio before the Bible, thus rejecting *authority as a source of truth*. From that moment, the Church (read: authority) would be questioned fundamentally, and thirty or forty years later (despite limited means of communication) the world had changed completely and *would never be the same*.

The Italian natural philosopher, astronomer and mathematician Galileo (1564-1642) added his bit to these developments with his far-reaching and dramatic dictum that science should confine itself to what can be measured. Until the end of the Middle Ages, the aim of science had always been to understand the purpose and the meaning of things. Suddenly, many things were no longer considered science: experience, intuition, intention and taste were all placed outside the pale of scientific thinking in one fell swoop.

The English philosopher, essayist, and statesman Francis Bacon (1561-1626) went even further, declaring that the aim of science was to subject nature. This shows how much scientific attitudes had changed in the course of a few centuries. Science no longer attempted to give purpose and meaning to phenomena, but from then on strove to wrest knowledge of these phenomena from nature. Nature was to be laid open and dissected; the earth was no longer the "nurturing mother," but something to be subjected and controlled.

With English mathematician and natural philosopher Isaac Newton (1643-1727) another shift of paradigm occurred. It was not his discovery of the law of gravity that was important (after all, this did not change the world this law operated in), but rather the fact that laws could be deduced from studying the world. This opened up a new perspective: the possibility of constructing the world. Once you know how something works, you can direct and control it. It was this concept that made its influence felt in the farthest corners of our world and thinking.

The paradigm currently dominant is still based on the assumption that the world is controllable (and can be constructed) from outside, that stasis is normal, that the world consists of disconnected components, and that everyone and everything is separate. Coherence must therefore be introduced from outside, because it does not exist naturally (paradigm A).

The implications of this paradigm are many. If I experience myself as separate from the rest of the world, it means that stealing a bicycle, polluting the environment or saying hello to someone will primarily be something I do to others and not so much to myself. If I (deliberately) harm others, this does not necessarily mean I also harm myself. Whether I subsequently approve or reject this does not change my feeling of separateness. My experiences, and therefore my actions, are determined by this "I-versus-you-thinking." This perspective explains why individuals tend to take better care of themselves than they do of their surroundings. Looking at how people treat themselves and their environment, we can only conclude that the great majority experience themselves as separate from others. This is as true for organizations as for society as a whole.

From this perspective man is a "skin-encapsulated ego."[1] Everything inside his skin is ''I'' everything outside is "not I." Although biologically correct, this is not the whole truth. Many of today's problems ensue from this paradigm. At the organizational level, this "we-versus-them-thinking" is recognizable in the struggle between levels, departments, organizations and even between organizations and customers.

If I assume that stasis is normal, then movement and change become abnormal, threatening and to be avoided. For a manager, this may mean that he expects people to object to change (and believes it normal for them to object) and that he considers the exercise of visible power an ordinary and proper way to realize the desired results. *He* has to do it, and it takes power and strength to get others to do something for you. This strength is usually sought in displays of visible strength, by stimulating action and "doing things." Power is sought by trying to keep matters *controllable* with instrumental means (such as planning systems and motivational techniques).[2] In this process, attention is always focused outside, on others.

In established medical science, disease is still considered a matter of "defective components" of the body. Once the defective component has been found, it can be repaired or replaced. It is very much the question whether this mechanical cause-and-effect way of thinking will provide solutions to diseases like cancer and AIDS, as these may be diseases not of parts of the body, but of the whole organism, and may require a different way of thinking.

At present a new paradigm is developing, which is based on the idea that everyone and everything is connected to everyone and everything else and that movement is normal.[3] In this paradigm, every individual is considered the creator of his or her present and future reality. People are responsible for themselves, and there is no room for chance, powerlessness or meaninglessness. Motivation comes from inside you, and there is no division between inside and outside; the world is an integrated whole, constantly changing, a stream of events mutually influencing each other (paradigm B).

From this perspective, people experience the world differently, both in their private lives and at work. What you do to others, you do to yourself. Stealing from others is stealing from yourself. Polluting the environment is polluting yourself. Saying hello to someone else is saying hello to yourself.
It is what Cees Swarttouw calls "inclusiveness." "To be inclusive with someone" means "to be connected" and not experience yourself as separate.

A manager working with this paradigm will try to focus rather than control energy. He will present his vision and look for ways to address people's creativity and sense of responsibility (as individuals within a larger whole). Resistance is then not something to be avoided or overcome, but a meaningful part of the process of continual change, and a phenomenon that should be regarded as a signal. The important thing is not to get from X to Y, but to keep asking on the way whether Y is still where you want to go, and whether Z would not be more suitable in view of the changing reality ... etc. He will mainly be concerned with *connections*, with the *process*, the release and focalization of *energy*, and with directional leadership. You could call him a "focalizer."[4]

It is not just that our paradigm colors our interpretation of what we see, but that even our perceptions are determined by the paradigm we adopt, because we only want to see what confirms our definition of reality. As a result, our basic principles are not confirmed by what we see, but we ourselves confirm our basic principles by perceiving things in a certain way. This goes for both paradigms described above.

This book is based on paradigm B, which treats organizations as living organisms that have both internal and external tasks to fulfill, tasks that require an organic and respectful approach aimed at healthy growth and healing (becoming whole). Healthy organisms are characterized by rhythm and balance, and have room for expansion and contraction, for exhaling and inhaling. This is true of both individuals and developing organizations.

Healthy organisms are vital and aligned. *Vitality* ensues from attention and care for primary (work) processes. Within the organization this manifests itself in working on relations and connections between people, departments and levels; externally, it entails maintaining the relationship between the company and the client. *Alignment* occurs when people behave as parts of an integrated whole and combine their energy.

In my opinion, success and growth are no longer measured by financial and economic results alone; ultimately, this concerns growth of consciousness. The new consciousness is based on *abundance* and *reciprocity*. In this system, money is a manifestation of life energy. The way people deal with money clearly indicates how they deal with their life energy. Money is at least as important now as in the "old days" but in a different way. Declining profits are a signal something is wrong with the energy, that giving and receiving are out of balance and that reciprocity has been disturbed.

Soul, Values, Mission and Vision

Considering it from the above point of view, an organization is not just an organism; it is a spiritual entity with a soul. An organization's soul is sometimes visible and tangible, in which case we speak of "spirit" or vigor. It radiates life force and is a source of enormous energy. It generates enthusiasm, is infectious and animates all levels of an organization. It inspires. In an organization's soul or core is its *identity*, its *mission* and *talent*. This comprises the reason for its existence.

Soul is very difficult to describe, it must be experienced. A manager's task is to create the circumstances in which people can be inspired.

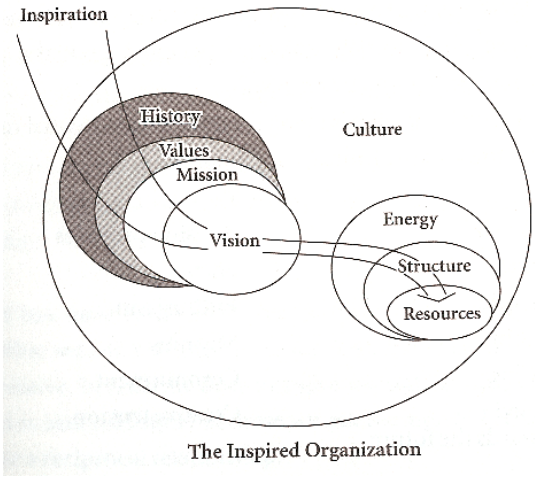
The people, and especially the management, of an inspired organization are aware of:

- History Where we come from
- Values What is the basis of our thinking
- Mission Why do we exist
- Vision Where are we going
- Energy What makes us "move"
- Structure Which channels this energy
- Resources By which we realize goals
- Culture We live in and create

In a healthy, inspired organization, the soul is perceptible in the respect the organization has for its *history* and existing *values*. The soul is visible in the *mission* and the *vision* the organization is working towards and in the way human energy is being mobilized. The *structure* that has been created (to harness this energy) and the way people and *resources* are employed within this structure also contribute to the manifestation of the soul. Finally, an inspired organization will have an appreciable image, both internally and externally, due to its clearly recognizable organizational culture.

Traditionally, many managers have considered structuring or restructuring systems to ensure optimum efficiency in the employment of people and resources as one of their main tasks. In the above model these are the "lowest" and "final" two levels. It strikes me that history is more or less taken into account when organizations are (re)structured, but that there is too little explicit consideration of background, values, mission, vision, energy and culture.

What are values and what are mission and vision? Values, and an organization's mission and vision that are derived from them, provide answers to questions of meaning. Inner values motivate people from inside. For example, if one of your values is to provide quality, this will influence everything you do.



The Inspired Organization

The values in an organization are what finally determine its identity and individuality. If aesthetic beauty is an important value in an organization, product design will play an important role in the process of product development. The design department of such a company will receive more and higher quality attention than that of a company lacking this value.
Its values will compel an organization to make a contribution. What this will be is established in a mission like the one formulated by Harley Davidson: "Our purpose is to create an atmosphere which affords individuals the opportunity to reach their maximum growth potential."

There is something inevitable, something *obligatory* about the mission statements of some organizations, which lends the mission a compulsory air, while the idea is for a mission to ensue from a *free will* to contribute to the larger whole. Such "mission statements" reflect little of this desire to contribute and free choice. If a "miss ion statement" mentions gaining a 26 percent market share, wanting to be market leader or to be technologically "the best" this, in my opinion, has little to do with an organization's mission and talent. The mission has been reduced to formulating quantitative goals or means. At best, it is an "embellished" objective, which means that contact with the organization's soul has been lost; the channel has been blocked so to speak. Eventually, this will manifest itself in a lack of inspiration and vitality in the organization, and sometimes in obsessiveness. If a lot of very hard work is done in these organizations - which is often the case - it is usually done for personal gain; the prevalent mentality tends to be "compete and beat."
A vision is an image of what is being created; it is a potential reality and always directed towards the future.

A vision is	**A vision provides**
Feasible	Focus
Authentic	Enthusiasm
Enriching	Meaning
Inspiring	Commitment
Directed towards the future	Creative tension

Vision mobilizes and focuses energy. Without vision, organizations tend to become fragmented and fall apart. Vision determines the direction of the energy, and by focusing the energy of individuals, it is complemented and reinforced.

If forces (energy) are not focused, organizations tend to waste energy, because they keep having to pay too much attention to mutual adjustment. Organizations without vision end up calling many problems communication problems. By doing this, they consider the cause determined and go back to "business as usual," until a few months later, when the same diagnosis is repeated. The argument explaining why nothing is actually done about it is well-known: people do not want to get bogged down in endless meetings and paperwork. The question is why so much attention and energy is taken up by adjusting to one another. The answer is obvious, to me, anyway: *Without a mission, a vision and focused energy, every question, every daily problem, every situation is a confrontation with the fact that there is no sense of collectivity*.

If things are as they should be, an organization's current vision will be anchored in the past and rooted in norms and values. Many organizational problems can be traced back to differences in values and vision. Any lack of clarity concerning this will sooner or later be manifested in systems, procedures and regulations.

Financial systems clearly reflect the values of an organization. For example, in our own consultancy (Kern Konsult) we pay a great deal of attention to the handling of financial matters. We make a distinction between two aspects when determining the fees for a day's work:
• The first question is: what is proper for a client to pay?
• The second question is: what is proper for us (as a firm) to receive of this?

Propriety has most to do with what is "proper" for the client to pay to receive what we offer. If our fee is too low, the client is sold short. He cannot receive, because he does not give enough. If the rate is too high, the client is also sold short because we ask too much. If the rate is right, you create a reciprocal relationship.

In practice, the fees for a day's work are fairly high, because we think we have a lot to offer. Whether it is "proper" for us to get all that money is a completely different question. For this reason, we devote a third of our profits to financing initiatives that do not directly benefit us. These may be donations, loans, sponsoring initiatives, publication of articles on socially relevant subjects etc. This "initiatives fund" also expresses our belief in abundance. We believe that "shortage consciousness" ("There is never enough") actually creates shortages, whereas "abundance consciousness" creates abundance.

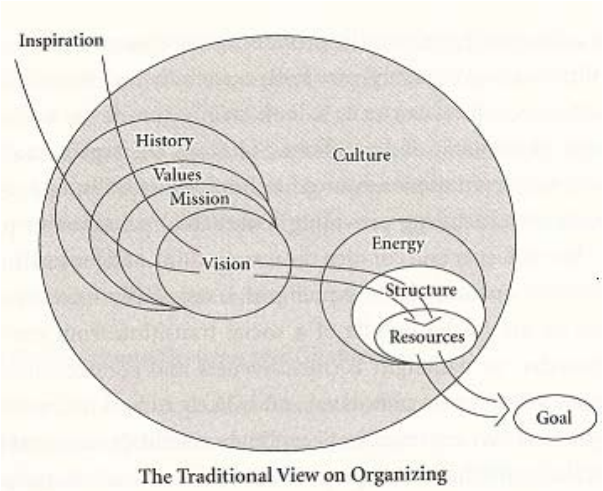
In practical terms this implies that on the one hand, we do not negotiate about fees, and on the other that a job is stopped because of the fee we request. Money is an expression of life energy and the way people treat money is a reflection of the values within the organization.

Just as a third goes into the initiatives fund, a third also goes to our employees in profit sharing, as an expression of our principles of entrepreneurship and personal responsibility.

Energy and Structure

Energy is the fuel we need to finally take action, that moves us. In other words: energy *fills* and *forms* a structure. Before structuring an organization, it is important to consider the way in which its management wants to release and focus the energy present in the organization. These choices determine subsequent structuring possibilities. Underlying a hierarchical top-down structure is an implicit assumption about the way energy is to be released, namely from the top down. The choice of a network structure is based on a different principle regarding the harnessing of energy, by stimulating, rewarding and respecting personal initiative and responsibility.

The model of the inspired organization introduced above, which is an extension of Robert Terry's[5] Diamond Model, shows that the structure determines how people and resources are (or can be) employed. Vice versa, the opportunities for structuring are to some extent restricted by the people and resources available, while the chosen structure limits the possibilities of releasing energy etc.



The Traditional View on Organizing

I believe it is time to adjust our thinking on the nature of organizations and organizing. According to traditional organizational theory, to organize is to manage people and resources for realizing a certain goal.[6] Actually, this is only a small part of the model of the inspired organization.

In my opinion, organizing is establishing, creating and keeping clean the energy channels through which energy can flow and inspire people to realize the organization's vision.

Examining the concept of organization from this point of view, I consider myself, as organization consultant, also a chimney sweep, acupuncturist, midwife, guide and (process) architect.

Management from Inside

Unifying management means "management from inside," which implies that a manager cannot stay on the sidelines. It is no longer a matter of management techniques or skill, it is all about developing consciousness, which is an inner process: unfolding the layers in which our consciousness is wrapped.

The traditional paradigm will not really be much support in this process of developing consciousness, because it approaches thinking and doing mainly as outward-directed activities that are directed at making things manageable, getting them under control, wanting to change or fight them or make them grow (both materially and financially). This outward-directedness causes us to look mainly outside the self for causes of events, phenomena and problems. Solutions are largely sought in the application of even more advanced technology or skills, with reorganization and restructuring providing (ostensible) solutions to problems that lie much deeper and concern the way we think and look at things.

Reflection on underlying paradigms is especially important today, because we are in the middle of a social transition from paradigm A (separateness) to paradigm B (inclusiveness and connectedness). This transition will not pass unnoticed and is likely to lead to drastic (structural) changes in many organizations. Environmental problems and technological developments will play a major role in these changes, because computer networks and satellite TV are turning the world into one big network of mutually influential connections from which there is no escape for countries, organizations, groups, and individuals. Mutual dependence and interconnectedness have by now become so encompassing, that it is impossible for parts of the network to behave like isolated cells. If they do, they become cancer cells multiplying at the expense of the whole organism and causing tumors. They will eventually be rejected and die. This goes for all levels: world, nation, organization, group and individual.

If mankind as a whole persists in the separation of each individual from another, of its separation from the environment and the earth, I feel that the final result is predictable. The earth will "reject" mankind, or, as Gregory Bates dramatically puts it:

> If this [Me-versus- You model] is your estimate of your relationship to nature and you have advanced technology, your likelihood of survival will be that of a snowball in hell. You will either die of toxic by-products of your own hate, or simply, over-population and overgrazing.

The purpose of this book is to provide some insights and tools that can contribute to the new management as it is currently developing. It in no way pretends to be complete, or even finished. It is a reflection of the discoveries I have made and the experience and insights I have gained over the past years.

2] Core Qualities

> What you perceive in others you are strengthening in yourself.
>
> *Course in Miracles*

IN SOME CULTURES it is easy to point out to yourself and to others what needs to be improved, what you are doing wrong, how things should be handled differently etc. This is something you learned at your mother's knee. As children coming home from school after your first test you said, full of enthusiasm: "Daddy, look! I only made two mistakes! “We did not mention the fact that we had twenty-eight correct answers, because that was not what was counted. You are supposed to make as few errors as possible. That is what you are judged by. No wonder we can immediately say what is wrong with others and ourselves. We have been very well trained in this.

In management it is important to consider what is right and going well.

This is nothing new. For years, management literature has been written about the importance of showing appreciation for work well-done and giving people a pat on the back now and then. *The One Minute Manager*[1] explains how this can be done in one minute: by making eye contact with each other, touching people, etc. It is remarkable that motivation in such cases is considered as something brought about from outside by the manager. Motivation is nearly always in terms of others, about how to motivate others. Managers are regarded as "motivation machines" that can be taught - or rather programmed in - the best way to achieve this. It is hardly ever about the manager's desire and need for contact with himself and others.

According to the new paradigm, managers are particularly responsible for their own motivation and inspiration. They do not primarily try to motivate others, because they know that their best contribution is to get to know and inspire themselves and let themselves be inspired. The more a manager discovers about himself, the better he will be able to understand others and perform his role as coach or "facilitator", because he learned from personal experience what is necessary for further growth and development. His main responsibility is to take care of his own development. Among other things, self-knowledge means that a manager knows his strengths and core qualities. Besides awareness of his positive qualities, he should also have some insight into the distortions of his positive qualities. Learning to recognize qualities as such is not just useful for himself; groups, departments and organizations have core qualities too, and insight into them can be very illuminating.

Core Qualities

Core qualities are attributes that form part of a person's essence (core); people are steeped in these qualities, which place all their - more or less striking - characteristics in a certain light. A person is "colored" by his or her core qualities. It is their strong point, the characteristic that immediately comes to mind when we think of this person. Examples of core qualities are determination, consideration (for others), precision, courage, receptivity, orderliness, empathy,

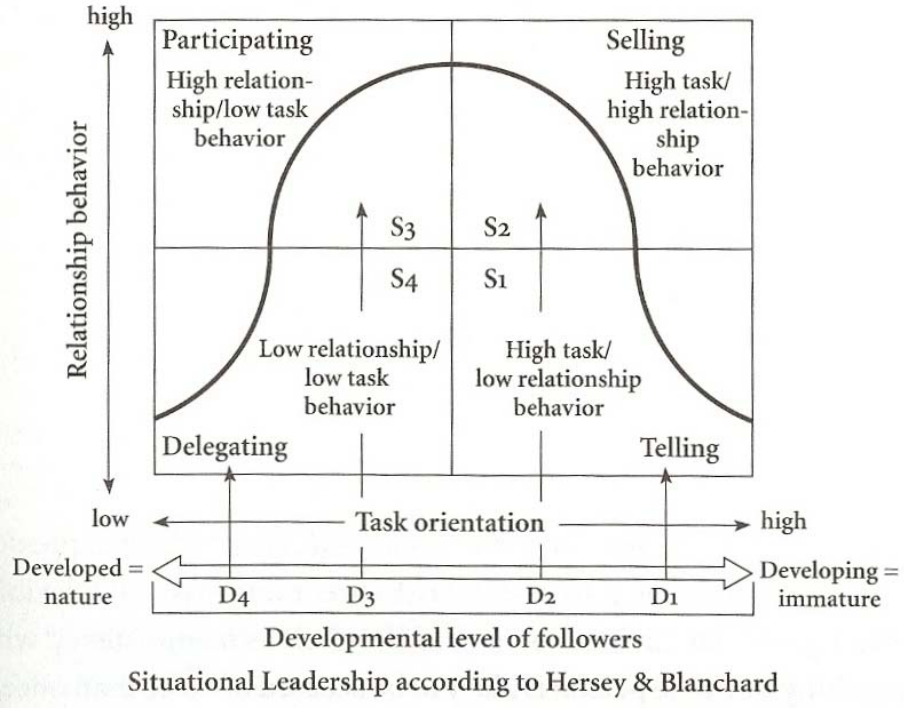
flexibility, etc. Core qualities are expressions of the Self that generate inspiration.[2] They are not so much characteristics as possibilities that can be "tuned in to." Just as radio sound quality is partly determined by fine-tuning it to the right wavelength, so a manager becomes more inspiring when he is tuned in to his own core qualities. And just as the capacity of the amplifier affects the final sound quality, so, too, does the creative capacity of a manager partly determine the impact he has on his surroundings.

Core qualities can be recognized as a person's special qualities, about which they themselves will say: "But everyone can do that!" Everyone cannot and what is more, if the underlying core quality were to be removed, the person would be unrecognizable. That is because all other, less prominent qualities are infused with this core quality. The core quality is always potentially present. It cannot be switched on and off at will, although it can be concealed. The main distinction between qualities and skills is that qualities come from inside and skills are acquired from outside. Skills can be learned; qualities can be developed.

The clearer the image we have of our core qualities, the more consciously we can apply them to our work. Someone whose core quality is, for example, perseverance, knows he or she will function particularly well in situations that require staying power, and that he/she will always be able to "hang in there" both at work and at home. Whether this principle will actually be applied in private life is another matter entirely.

Training and educational courses can teach managers certain skills that will enable them to function more effectively in different situations. For example, Situational Leadership according to Hersey and Blanchard[3] teaches how different situations demand different leadership styles. The following styles are distinguishable: Telling, Selling, Participating and Delegating.

This means that the manager must be both flexible and effective in his continuous redefinition of the appropriate leadership style. His flexibility allows him to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, while his effectiveness helps him always to choose the right style. It should be obvious that knowledge of the different leadership styles can be a valuable contribution to quicker insight into the requirements of every situation.



Situational Leadership according to Hersey & Blanchard

The question remaining is: How should this be done? How do I ensure that my style of leadership is flexible and effective? What is the best way to instruct, the most effective way to convince? And so on.

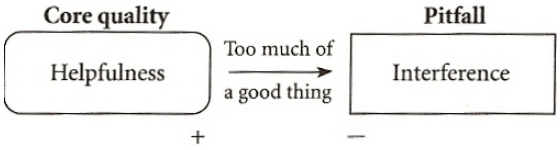
These questions can only be answered on the basis of self-knowledge, in other words, from an awareness of one's own specific core qualities. A leader whose core quality is perseverance will color the "telling" style of leadership with tenacity, while someone whose core quality is thoughtfulness will tint this style quite differently.

The more insight you have into your own core qualities and those of others, the easier it will be to integrate the different leadership styles into your own personality.

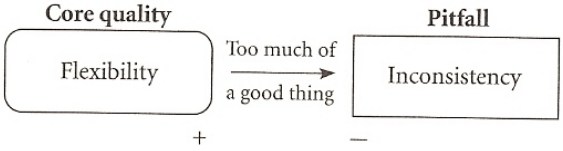
The better a style is adapted to the core quality, or in other words, the more fully the leadership style can be imbued with the core quality, the more credible and inspirational it will be. The effectiveness of a leadership style is primarily determined by the extent to which the person is himself and behaves authentically.

Core Quality and the Pitfall

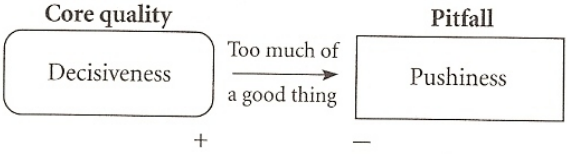
Just as there is no light without darkness, there is also a light and a dark side to every core quality. The dark side is also called distortion, which is not the opposite of the core quality as active is the opposite of passive and strong the opposite of weak. Distortion is rather the result of an overdeveloped core quality. The core quality "helpfulness" for example, can become "interference" if overdeveloped and turned into a weakness instead of a strength.



This is popularly called "too much of a good thing," which expresses it perfectly. Someone who is too careful risks becoming fussy, and flexibility can easily go too far and be experienced by others as inconsistency, which is something a flexible person is likely to be accused of more than once.



The distortion of someone's core quality is also his or her "pitfall." This pitfall is a label the person is often given by others. For example, a person whose core quality is decisiveness is reproached for being pushy.



Whether or not this is right, the pitfall just goes with the core quality; they are inextricably bound. Core quality and pitfall go together like light and darkness. Facing the dark side of our core quality can be painful, especially if it appears that we are less perfect than our "idealized self image" suggests. Learning to handle our core qualities and their distortions and becoming more aware of our positive inner potential is a process that, with the right intention, can be both instructive and fascinating.

From Pitfall to Core Qualities

Just as the distortion can be determined on the basis of the core quality, we can also return to the core quality from the distortion, although this is usually more difficult, especially if the distortion bothers people. It may be hard to imagine a positive core quality behind this distortion. Besides, we are not used to looking for positive things. For example, of what positive attribute is sentimentality the pitfall? It could be empathy, but there are also other possibilities.

If you do not know your core quality/qualities, there is only one way to discover it/them, and that is by asking yourself what people often reproach you for, in the sense of: "Don't be such a ... " or "Don't be so ... " Then ask yourself of what positive quality this is an excess, and there you have one of your core qualities.

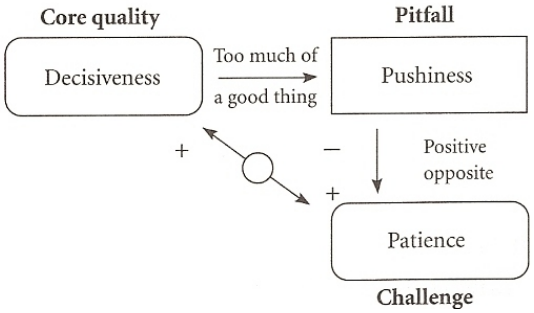
Managers are confronted just as much with their employees' distortions as with their core qualities. Learning to spot the core qualities behind the distortions makes it easier to "see through" unpleasant behavior. The core quality of an "arrogant" person may be that he or she makes an impact. Obstinacy may hide the core quality of determination, just as Mr. X's obstinacy may be a distortion of his perseverance.

In confronting someone with his or her distortion, it is important to have a positive attitude to the person as a whole. Confrontation is only useful if it focuses on behavior. No one is ever a pushy, lazy or clingy person; rather, it is pushy, lazy or clingy behavior that bothers us. By separating person and behavior, it becomes easier to find the core quality behind negative behavior. If the one who initiates the confrontation has no desire to learn or confirm the other's core qualities, the confrontation will usually be ineffective and counterproductive. The confrontation will then be directed against, and not for the relation. It becomes only a matter of avoiding or destroying something instead of creating, shaping or realizing things! Confrontation only works in conjunction with the intention to make or restore contact.

Core Quality and the Challenge

Besides a pitfall, a person's core quality also comes with a "challenge." The challenge is the positive quality diametrically opposed to the pitfall. For example, the pitfall of pushiness may offer "patience" as a challenge.

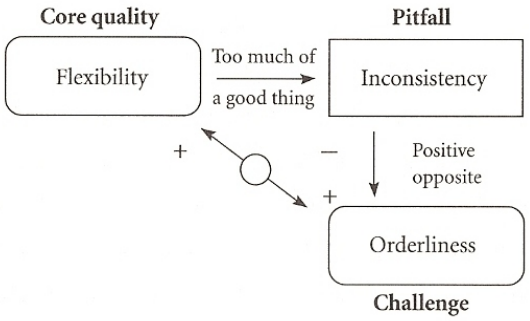
As the figure shows, the core quality and the challenge are complementary qualities. Striking the right balance between decisiveness and patience is what matters. Too much decisiveness can turn into pushiness, and to prevent the pitfall it is advisable to develop the challenge.



Creating balance means thinking in terms of "*and-and*" instead of "*either -or*." The secret is to be both decisive and patient at the same time. It is not a matter of becoming less decisive out of fear of being pushy, but to develop a patient

decisiveness. Someone who is patiently decisive no longer runs a risk of being pushy, which is a logical consequence of his or her being "whole" in this respect. The problem is often to be able to see how the two qualities can be combined. It seems to be either a matter of decisiveness or patience. The person in question considers these qualities more as opposites than complements.

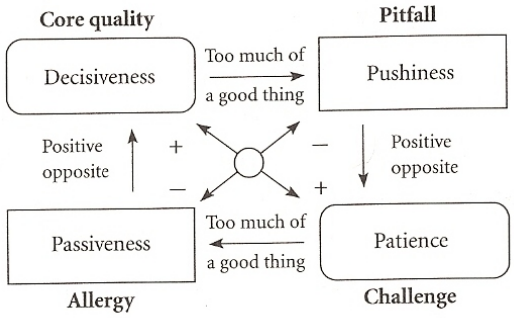
The pitfall of inconsistency may go with the challenges "orderliness" or "structure". Very likely, this person has great trouble imagining flexibility and orderliness as compatible instead of mutually exclusive concepts. "Yes, but then I'd become inflexible ... " is a fairly standard reaction to suggestions along those lines. Inconsistency is no longer a problem for someone who is flexible in an orderly way.



Pitfalls and challenges are usually the sources of conflicts a person has with his or her environment. Conflicts, irritation and mutual tension are often born of blindness to one's own qualities (and their distortions) and those of others.

Core Quality and the Allergy

As previously mentioned, potential conflicts with the environment can often be deduced from a person's core qualities. The problem is that the average person appears to be allergic to an excess of his or her challenge, particularly if personified in someone else.



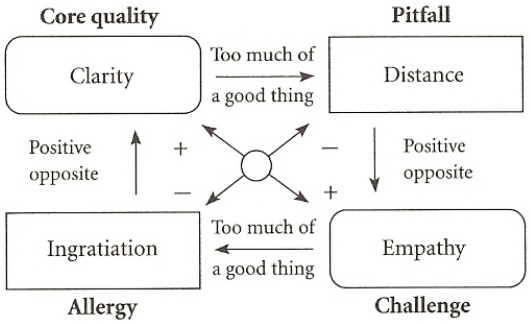
Decisive people will often blow their top if confronted with passivity in another. They are allergic to passivity, because it is an excess of their challenge (patience), and they often do not know how to handle it.

The more another confronts you with your own allergy, the greater your chance of falling into your pitfall. If your core quality is decisiveness, you run the risk of becoming even pushier, while reproaching the other person for being passive, etc. This can become a vicious circle which will be very hard to get out of without outside help. You risk reinforcing each other and ending up in a hopeless conflict.

In other words: look out for your pitfall when you spot your allergy in another. It is not their pitfall, but their allergy, that makes people most vulnerable, because this is what drives them into their pitfall.

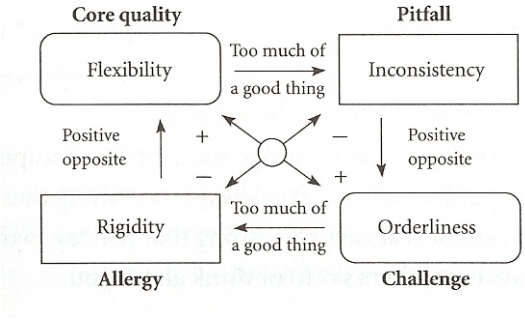
When I let one of my friends read the first version of this book, he sent me a core quadrant he had been making about me over a glass of wine as a reaction to this chapter on core qualities. He found the chapter very clear but somewhat distant. He believed it should contain more examples, to enable the reader to better relate to it.

He (rightly) concluded that I would probably have problems with this, since he had come to know me as someone who cannot stand ingratiation. Both to please the reader and not to avoid my challenge, I decided to add this example. And while I am typing this on my laptop, I keep feeling that I do not want to do this. Looking back over the last pages it seems I have said everything very nicely. So adding another quadrant-particularly one about myself-does seem ingratiating. Oh well, whoever said working on your challenge was easy ... ?



Formulating the allergy completes the core quadrant. Now what happens if two similar characters meet? It is not hard to imagine that two decisive persons may not have an easy time together. There is a very great risk such a meeting will turn into a confrontation between two very pushy types, which will be won by the stronger. The difference in confrontations between similar and contrasting characters is that, although a decisive person may have problems with someone who resembles him, he will respect the other. This is not the case for his opposite. If a "decisive" person encounters a "patient" person, he will soon label the patient person as "passive" and consequently look down on him or her. Disdain is characteristic of situations in which people are confronted with their allergies. Looking down on someone makes you vulnerable, because before you know it you will have fallen into your pitfall and cease to be effective.

The core quadrant makes it clear that a flexible person will have great difficulty recognizing "orderliness" in someone else as a positive quality and will tend to disqualify it by labeling it as "rigidity" because he or she cannot imagine orderliness and flexibility complementary to one another, neither in himself nor in others. Likewise, orderly people will find it difficult to appreciate flexibility in someone else, because they will immediately want to label it as "inconsistent or chaotic."



The core quadrant is not just a tool for discovering your own and others' core quality and challenge, it also demonstrates that it may very well be that a manager can learn most from the people he dislikes most (is allergic to) or, in other words:

Something you are allergic to in someone else is probably an excess of a quality you yourself need most. A manager can learn most (about himself) from those with whom he has the greatest problems interacting.

How to Approach the Core Quadrant

Core quadrants can be constructed from any of the four angles and checked in various ways. In some cultures people find the approach via the core quality the most difficult, partly due to the fact, already mentioned, that in some cultures it is unusual to say something positive about yourself. In such a culture it is much

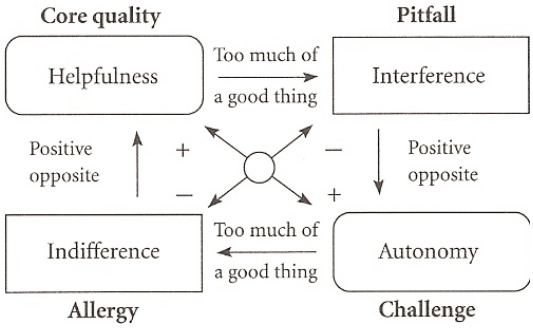
easier to criticize both yourself and others. This makes the second approach to the core quadrant easier. Most people can tell you exactly what they are regularly accused of, or what labels they are given, rightly or not, by other people.
To find your pitfall, you only have to ask yourself what your partner pins on you regularly. The core quadrant can be completed using this approach.

The core quadrant can also be constructed further from a third approach: via the challenge. What quality would help you become a more balanced and more complete person? For many people, this question is not easy to answer either. It may be easier to ask yourself what quality you usually admire in others. This tends to be your challenge.

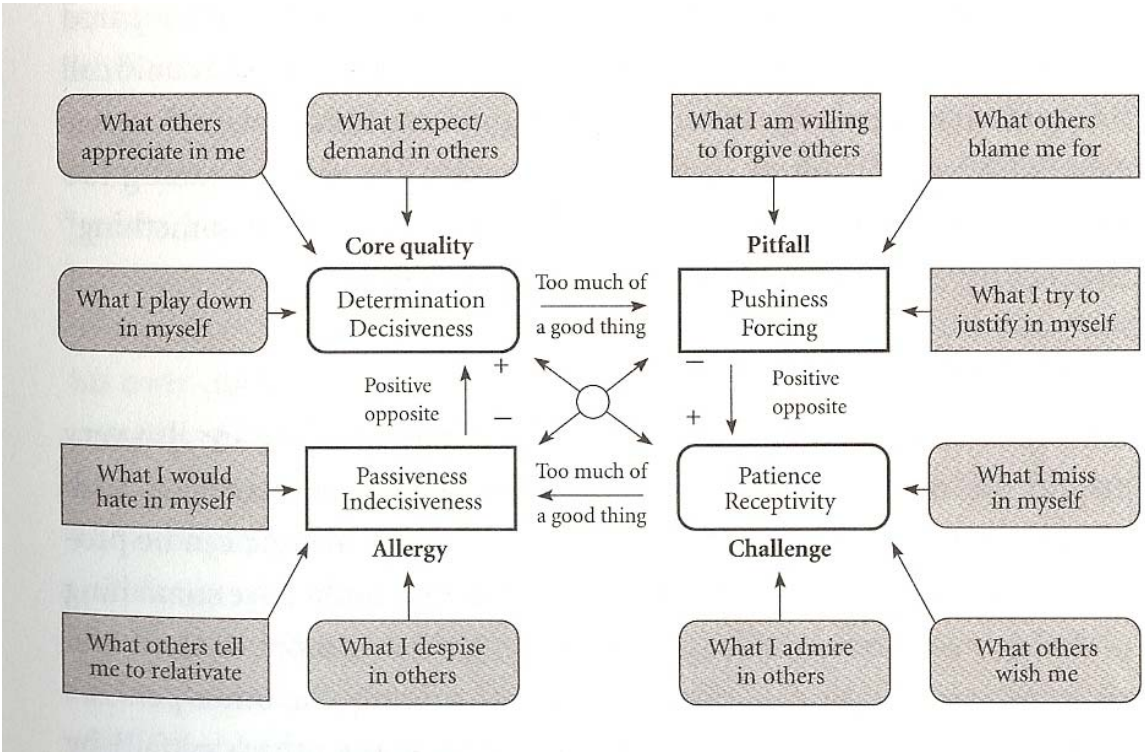
The fourth and simplest possibility for working out the core quadrant is through the allergy approach. Most people have no trouble pointing out what they cannot stand (in others). The last "angle" of the quadrant to be filled in can be double-checked, because its quality or distortion must correspond to the other three angles. Thus "indifference" must be considered as both an excess of "autonomy" and the (negative) opposite of "helpful" and the other extreme of "interference".

In fact, you can approach or judge each of the components of the quadrant in three different ways. It is always something that you say to or think about yourself; it is always something that you say to or think about others; it is always that others say to or think about you.

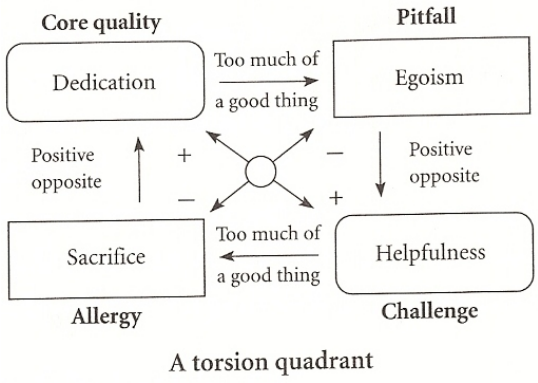
Thus there are 12 ways of checking the correctness of your core quadrant. These 12 checks can help you fill in your quadrant. If you are unable to fill it in, then you could be dealing with either a mask quadrant or a behavioral quadrant (see later in this chapter).



A complete overview of the different options to enter a core quadrant is found in the following diagram.



Sometimes things can go wrong when making a core quadrant. The result seems wrong, illogical. Generally this is caused by people mistakenly thinking that the name of the pitfall with the effect of the pitfall. The pitfall for dedication would then be described as something like "egotism," because people see that anybody who is too dedicated (= fanatical) will have the inclination to shut himself off and think of nobody but himself. Egotism is not the pitfall, but result of the pitfall.



A torsion quadrant

The challenge is then described as "helpful" and the allergy just won't fit anymore, or becomes something like "sacrifice" which isn't the right allergy for dedication, because dedicated people are often all too prepared to make sacrifices. In other words, it just doesn't make sense. You could call this a torsion quadrant, because it contains something twisted. Some people find it difficult to distinguish between "the word meaning too much of something" and "the effect of having too much of something" and they have great difficulties with making a quadrant.

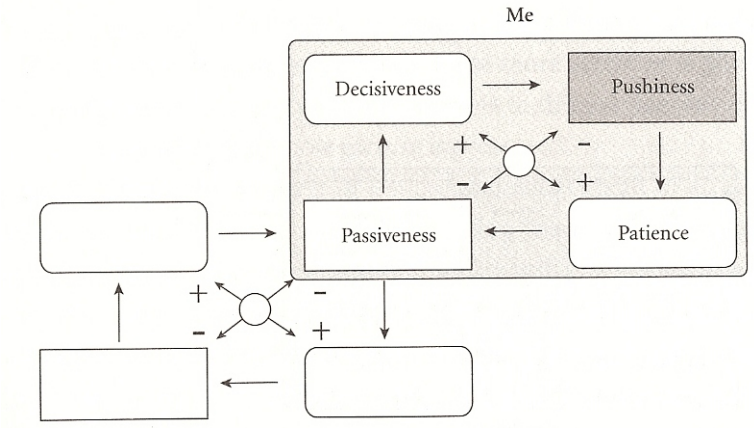
The Double Quadrant

Core quadrants are very useful for self-examination. They are also very helpful for managers when preparing for performance reviews with employees. Confronting someone to whom you are allergic can be productive in two ways. By realizing that your allergy could have something to do with your own challenge, you become calmer, more tolerant and your self-knowledge increases. And you can identify the other person's core quality through your own allergy (which is the other's pitfall) by means of a double core quadrant.

Let's say a manager is aggravated by someone he thinks is passive.

Precisely because he is allergic to this, he first decides to reflect and determine what this says about himself. He draws a core quadrant of himself on the basis of his allergy, for example the following:

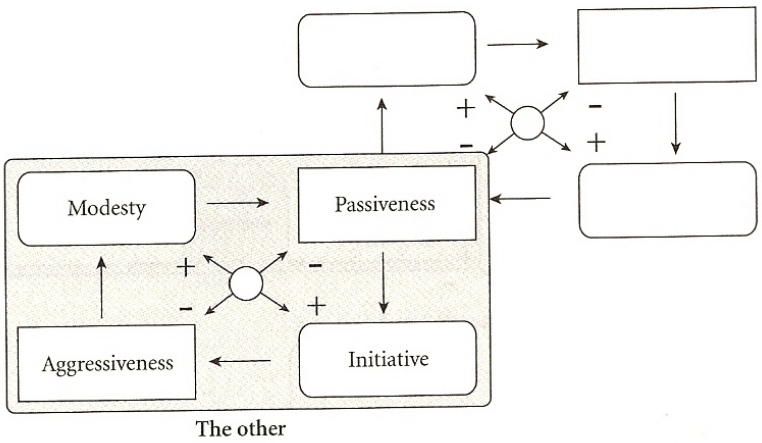
If he recognizes himself distinctly in this quadrant and concludes that it says more about himself than about the other person, this awareness may result in his being less irritated with the person. He has used this incident to get to know himself better and to discover what he still needs to work on in his own development process.



On the other hand, he may decide that, although this quadrant may say something about him, he also wants to discuss the situation with the other person. He will then draw a second core quadrant, assuming that the point he wants discuss is the other person's pitfall. This second quadrant could, of course, simply be a mirror image of his own, which would mean that his own challenge is the other's core quality. But it could just as well be something else, because more than one quadrant can be made for a single quality. These will mainly be differences in nuance, which, however, are just as important.

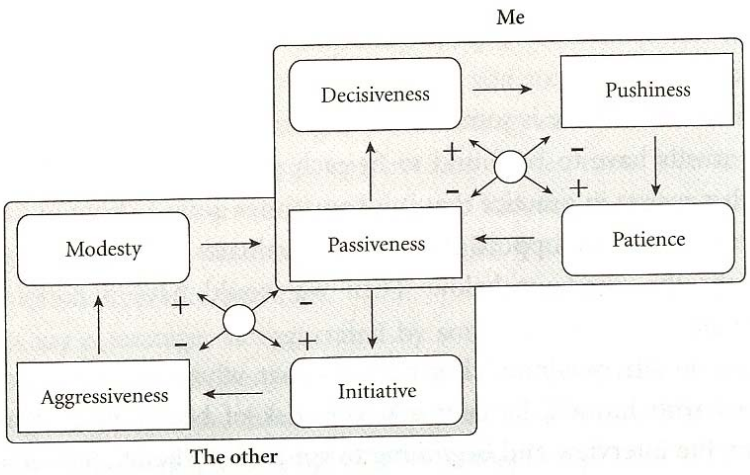
It is not as if there is some kind of dictionary of core quadrants. The right words have to be found to fit each person: they have to "click;' .. and that means in practice that it is sometimes quite a chore to find the right words. Let us suppose our manager evaluates the other person and develops the quadrant below. Then we would have a double core quadrant.

This double quadrant clearly shows that when the manager loses contact with himself, he runs a sizable risk of becoming "impatient" during the interview and beginning to get pushy. The other person will interpret this as "aggressiveness" (his allergy), which activates the other's pitfall and greatly increases the chance that things will get worse and the interview lead nowhere.



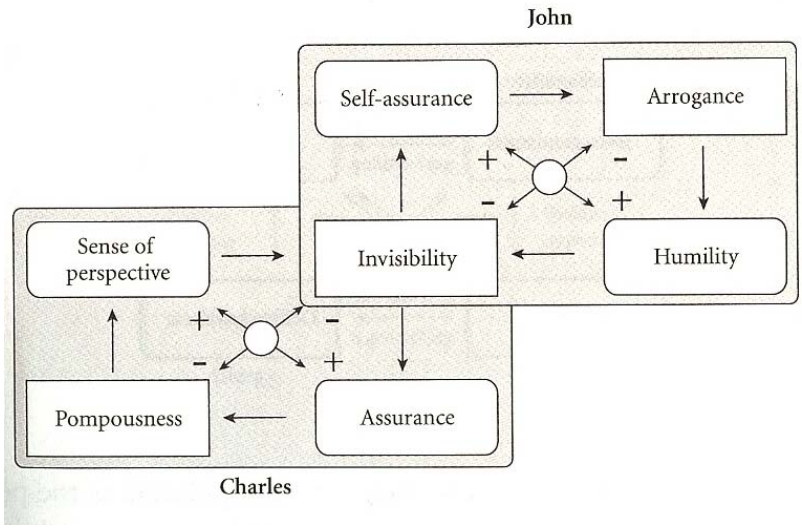
Again, it is clear that we have to start with ourselves if we want to (help) change others. This manager can best help his employee by combining decisiveness and patience in himself. If you formulate a core quadrant with an employee, you leave the other "intact." He is not only called to account for what is wrong, but is also told what is right and how he can develop further.

He gets a direction (challenge) on which to work. It makes quite a lot of difference whether the employee is told to be more active or is given the above quadrant. It is surprising how easy it is to discuss people's distortions with them when the whole picture is presented.



John, a 50-year-old manager of a successful department of 60 people, attended one workshop on core qualities. He was satisfied with the way the group supervisors worked. It was just that he had something against one of the group supervisors (Charles). Although he would not want to miss him for the world, he had been irritated for 8 years by the fact that Charles was always so diffident and was, in John's view, not "visible" enough. He wanted Charles to be more expressive, to come across with more conviction. He had hesitated to discuss this with him, because he was afraid of hurting and demotivating Charles, and he valued him too much for that.

Using his irritation with Charles' "invisibility," John made a core quadrant of himself and recognized his own core quality in it, the ability to project himself.

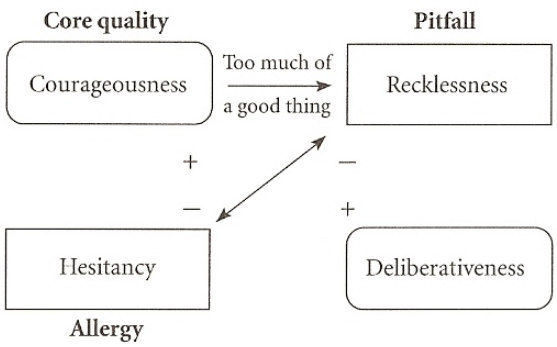


It was wonderful to watch how easily this man projected himself and he stood up for his opinion. It was also obvious that now and then he tended to go too far and became somewhat arrogant, especially if he felt he was dealing with people he considered spineless. His challenge was to develop some humility. In the core quadrant he made of Charles, he called the latter's sense of perspective one of his core qualities. It was why he valued him so much. Besides, John needed this quality in the department to balance his own assertiveness.

When he had worked out the double quadrant, John discovered how Charles and he complemented each other and decided to discuss this with him. When I ran into him a month later he told me how surprised he had been when Charles thanked him for his openness at the end of their conversation: "At least I know now what you really think of me, what you value in me, and what I can work on for my own development. I also understand much better what you are really like".

Core Qualities under Stress

Core quadrants also reveal how someone tends to react to stress and under pressure. At first, people exhibit too much of a good thing when they are under pressure or stress. In other words they will stumble into their pitfall. If pressure increases, they may, in extreme cases, suddenly start behaving in accordance with their allergy.



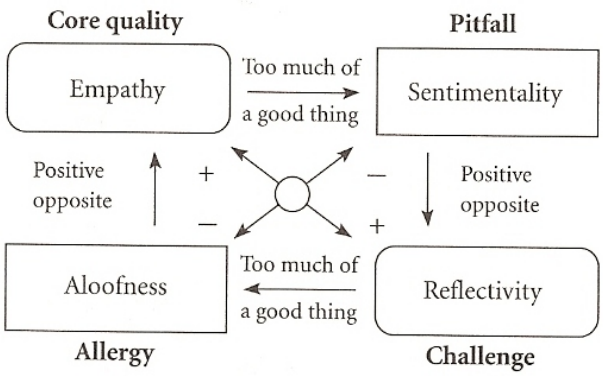
At such times, a person will no longer be recognizable to the people around him, who find his behavior so "unusual"

they cannot understand it. Someone who "normally" displays great courage and decisiveness and is considered energetic in his environment, will first become a little too courageous then, under high stress, become hesitant and indecisive. When this occurs, a "time out" is necessary, or else it may result in a crisis.

The Mask Quadrant

A mask quadrant is a quadrant that superficially resembles a core quadrant, but is actually the exact opposite. A mask is a polished facade intended to produce a certain effect. Masked behavior is characterized by a lack of authenticity. In a way, you could say it is lifeless. Masked behavior is usually taught and maintained by fear, the fear of revealing something you want to keep concealed. The quality a mask quadrant shows as your core quality is not in fact your core quality, but rather a failed attempt to avoid your true pitfall.

On the fourth day of a seminar lasting several days, where managers from various companies were present, the theme was core qualities. In a kind of feedback exercise the participants drew core quadrants of each other and every one was handled in turn. They based their quadrants exclusively on their own experience of the person concerned in the four days of the seminar, since none of them had ever met before. One of the participants was a 54-year-old director in charge of a company employing 500 people. The other participants drew core quadrants representing him as follows:



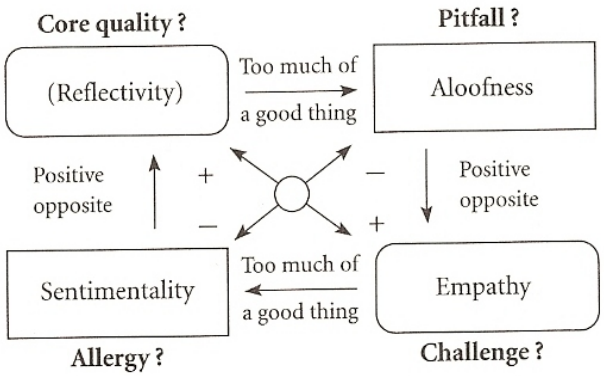
They particularly appreciated his keen interest in other people, and his strong sense of compassion and empathy. They felt that his challenge was become more rational and reflective. They decided he would be allergic aloof people. The person concerned reacted with some surprise:
''If you asked my closest associates about this, you would end up with a quadrant the exact opposite of this one. They often say I am very reserved. I think my family would recognize me in this, though.''

When he was asked to explain, and tell what he himself recognized most, he answered:
"Inside I am really more like you see me. At work, though, I appear to be different ... and I now see why. When I joined the company 30 years ago, my first boss told me after three weeks that I should stop being so sentimental. This was so painful that I decided it would never happen again. From then on, I have behaved in an aloof manner."

This example illustrates how people react to their pitfalls by using their own allergy as a defense. This manager's co-workers would have made a mask quadrant for him that would have been the reverse of his core quadrant. *A mask quadrant is always a (defensive) reaction to an unpleasant experience with an actual pitfall*. The core quality brought out by a core quadrant is the quality to which someone naturally has easy access, such as empathy in the above example.

This is not true in case of a mask quadrant, because the core quality it shows is rather this person's challenge.

If someone tries to avoid his pitfall reactively (because he is against it), he will end up in contact with his allergy. If that happens, there is no chance of growth, only stagnation. The core quality denied, the person concerned becomes "split" and leads a double life. Usually this results in a crisis or disease sooner or later, after which the person will get another chance to pick up the thread (of personal development).



A mask quadrant

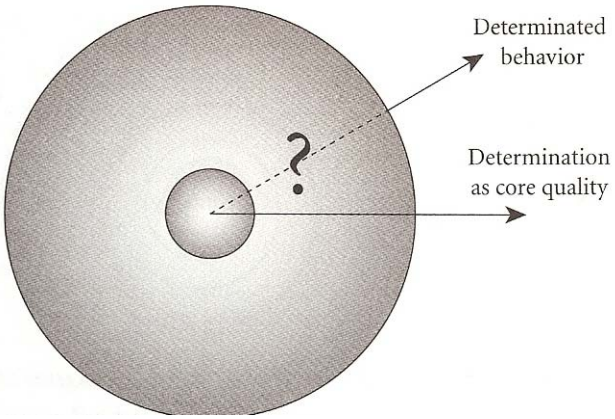
Mask quadrants can sometimes be recognized because of the fact that they do not touch a chord in the person involved. People are nearly always touched when they look at their core quadrant. It moves them. If not, it may be an indication you are dealing with a mask quadrant, in which case you can consider the reverse quadrant.

Behavioral Quadrants versus Core Quadrants

Some people complete a core quadrant but then can only partly recognize themselves in the results. Generally this leads to remarks something like this: "I may be like that in one situation, but in another situation I react completely differently". If someone says this, then we are actually dealing with a behavioral quadrant and not a core quadrant. A characteristic of a core quadrant is that it exists independently of situations, and therefore cannot be effected by a situation.

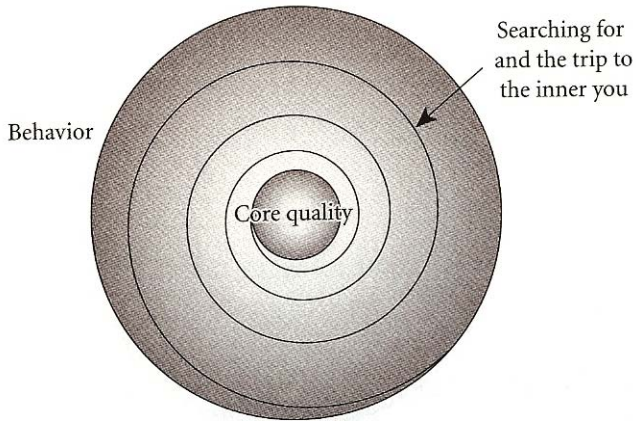
When somebody meets another person or observes them, then he is watching behavior. This could, for example, be determined behavior. Behavior is something that somebody externalizes, what he or she shows to the outside world. If you are able to express determination in your behavior, this does not mean it is necessarily one of your core qualities. Or if you express dedication, that doesn't mean that dedication is one of your core qualities. The question is always whether what you are seeing is the interior or the exterior.

The problem is that our language allows us to talk about patient behavior and about patience as a quality, and about patience as a core quality. Behavioral training can teach you to adapt and change your behavior. It also helps you to express qualities. This doesn't mean that you have developed a core quality. The mask quadrant that we described earlier is a good example of this. A mask quadrant is a behavioral quadrant and not a core quadrant.



In fact you could say that any quadrant you make of somebody else is by definition a behavioral quadrant, since it is based on what you observe. Of course, I can suspect that this behavior is congruent with somebody's interior. If you listen "from your stomach" you are generally pretty sure, even if you can never be completely sure. And so it follows that I am the only one who is able to make a core quadrant of myself, since I am the only able of looking deep into myself. Often our search for the truth begins by analyzing external behavior. During the analysis, it becomes increasingly obvious what is truly yourself and what has been learned on the way or been encouraged by others. It can also happen that during your trip to the inner you, you start changing the names of the core qualities, the pitfalls, the challenges, and the allergies, that what you originally thought was a challenge can no longer be considered as such, and that you discover that alternative words are better.

If you discover a mask quadrant of yourself, then it is as if the whole quadrant suddenly flips over and that your challenge is suddenly revealed as you core quality, and your allergy is suddenly revealed as your pitfall. In other words, you can be faced with unexpected surprises. And that makes for some excitement, wouldn't you say?

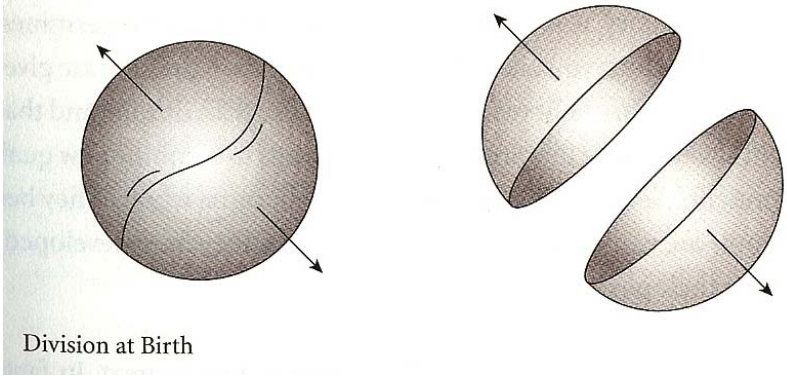


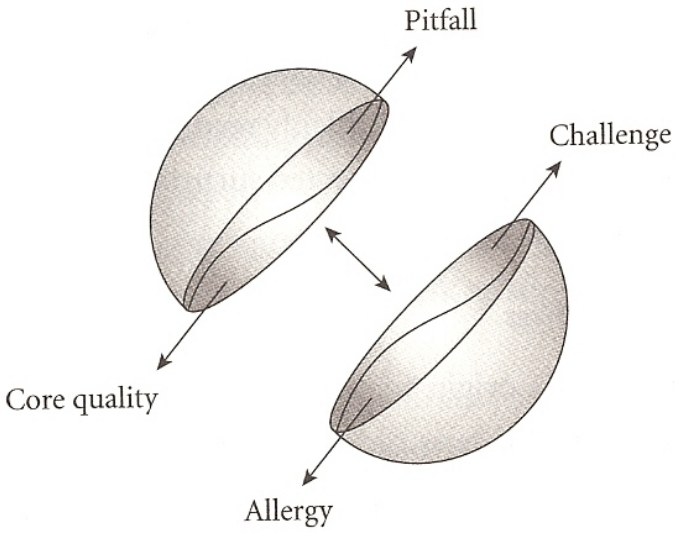
The Origin of Core Qualities

The question concerning the origin of core qualities is very interesting. Where do they come from and how did they originate? The name core quality already indicates their origin. A core quality originates in the core, which is also called the Self. I assume this core contains not just one or two qualities, but all of them. In their core, people are "whole." There, decisiveness and patience are complementary and not contrary to each other. There, flexible order, lucid empathy and cautious courage are normal. A core quality is, as it were, a gateway to a person's core. It gives (relatively easy) access to it. It is that part of a person still connecting him to his true Self.

The origin of core qualities could be seen as follows. At birth, people come into the world of earthly duality and more or less lose touch with their core. From then on, it is no longer "natural" for qualities such as courage and caution to belong together.

Since they are no longer integrated, there is a chance that from then on qualities will develop individually and degenerate into too much of a good thing. This can happen to either of both poles.


Division at Birth



For example, courage can degenerate into recklessness, while caution can turn into cowardice. This is how the four aspects of the core quadrant arise out of the two opposites.

Opinions differ on the reason why one pole later develops into what is now called a core quality, while the other pole becomes a challenge. This difference has to do with one's underlying view of man and the world.

One category of people will ascribe it to childhood circumstances on the assumption that people are formed by their upbringing.

For a second category, the difference is attributable to hereditary factors; they assume that qualities are largely determined by genetics.

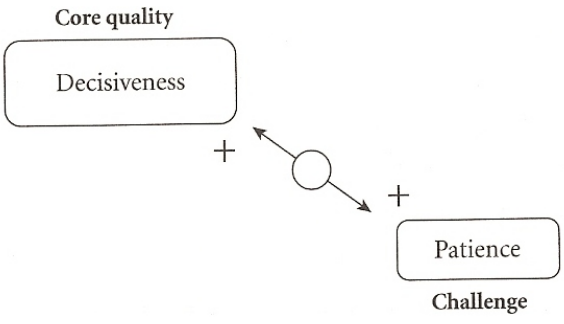
A third category will impute it to the Creator, who determines the qualities with which you are born. They assume that qualities are given.

A fourth category believes that man has more than one life and that the soul will always create the circumstances it needs to combine new qualities in its present life to continue growing and to become whole. They believe that people are responsible for the core qualities they have developed and that this is their purpose in this life.

The truth of the matter is not really relevant in this context. In fact, the question remains of whether it is relevant at all. The core quadrant can make a useful contribution to a manager's self-knowledge however he views humanity, although it will determine the assessment of its meaning and value.

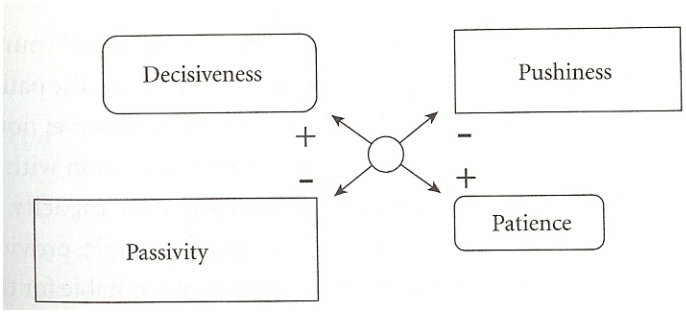
The Development Process in a Core Quadrant

It should be clear from the above that people have more than one core quality; in their core they even have them all. People cannot, of course, be reduced to core quadrants, nor are core qualities static. Different core qualities can emerge during every stage of life. In short, healthy people grow (spiritually). Most important in this respect is to achieve a balance. Imagine someone with access to two qualities in the proportion shown below; the larger the size, the better developed and more easily accessible the quality.

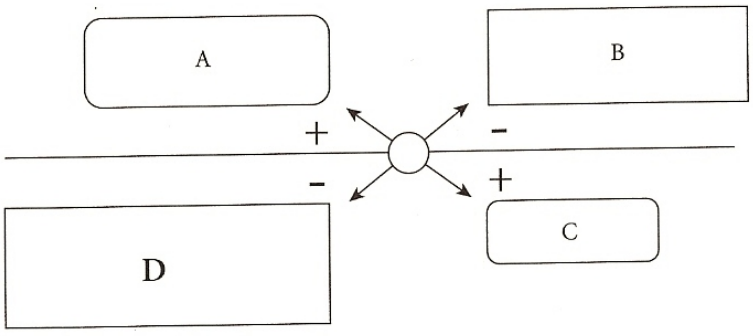


This almost certainly means that in the quadrant as a whole the pitfall and the allergy will be even larger. The allergy will probably be largest of the four, especially if the feeling of disdain is strong.

Proportionately, the core quadrant might look as follows:



This would suggest that the greater the imbalance between core quality challenge, the stronger the allergy and the pitfall become. Or in other words, the weaker the challenge, the bigger the problems. The calculation for the surface area would probably be: Co re Quality (A) + Pitfall (B) = Challenge (C) + Allergy (D).

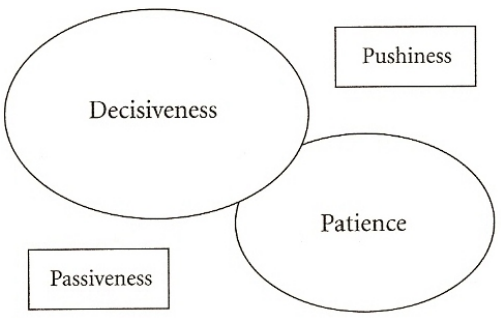


Now what is the best way to learn how to handle this? There are three paths: *fighting, healing or doing nothing*.
If you choose to fight, you combat your pitfall. You end up with your allergy, which means that fighting your pitfall is a very ineffective path. You just tell yourself not to be so pushy. But then the only thing you are doing is telling yourself what not to be, and this is very unproductive. You do not change, because you are only trying to be something other than what you are because you wish to avoid something. This way, the energy is directed against yourself, which is neither pleasant nor effective. The harder you try not to be something in this way, the more you will stand in the way of your actually changing.

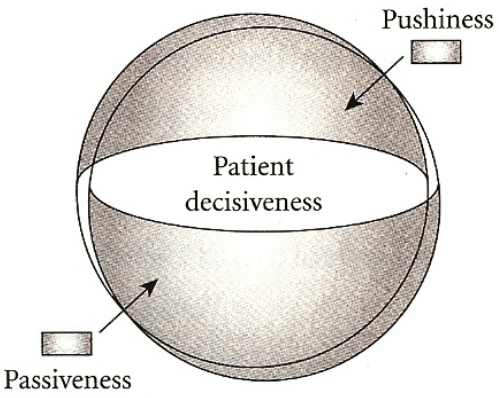
If your goal is change, you will achieve the opposite - stagnation. You will be reactively trying to force something with your will, which is the opposite of creation.

Change is the result of becoming whole by learning to *accept* yourself as you are, including any less attractive qualities. If you choose the path of healing, the most important task will be to learn how to observe; not so much by doing anything, but particularly by inner observation without judging, let alone condemning yourself. To sharpen your capacity for inner perception, it may be useful to go into therapy for a while, provided the goal is to learn to observe. Not every type of therapy is suitable for this. The time has not yet come that managers are valued in their environment for proposing to learn more about themselves (through therapy). Most corporate cultures react fairly allergically to therapy, as if "asking for help" were a sign of weakness.

The way to healing is one of observation, awareness and acceptance of feelings, in that order. Acceptance does not mean resignation - that has nothing to do with self-acceptance. Acceptance refers to your attitude to yourself: you can be as you are to become who you are. As a result, you will change. Your core quadrant will look different after a while.



Decisiveness and patience will be more balanced and come closer together; the pitfall and the allergy will shrink and finally dissolve (in the core). Then that part of a person has been healed, and the creative energy originating in the core is accessible.



The Energy behind the Distortion

A striking feature of all leadership theories is that they tend to ignore the darker side of human nature. What is this force or energy that drives people into their pitfall, that makes obedience degenerate into servility, and self-assurance into arrogance? We find this energy in the zeal and fanaticism of the activist, the politician, the artist, the evangelist, the lover and the manager.[4] We see it in the businessperson's dreams of expansion and the ambitions of one earnestly pursuing a career. We also find it in a stagnant form in the lassitude and wait-and-see attitude prevalent in some organizations, or in the lower echelons' obedient submission to the higher.

This energy is actually pure creative energy from our core. It alienates us from our core by a process of inner division and imbalance, becoming either a raging river sweeping us along and overwhelming us, or it solidifies and we become rigid. A pushy person has been overwhelmed, while the energy has solidified in a passive person. An inconsistent person allows himself to be flooded, while an inflexible person allows himself to become rigid. In both cases, people are victims of what happens to them (due to their inner imbalance), rather than the creators of their own life. They are guided by their energy instead of guiding the energy themselves and using it to create.

Access to this energy is through the core and through remedying (healing) the imbalance. By becoming aware of his own core qualities and everything connected to them, the manager can nourish contact with his core and restore balance within him, so that his creative energy becomes available for creation.

Notes]

Chapter 1- Introduction

1
Peter Russell, "The Global Brain" video-tape based on his book *The Awakening Earth: Our Next Evolutionary Leap*. Ark Paperbacks, 1984.

2
Prof. Dr. C.J. Zwart, "Leiderschap en organisatie op de drempel van de toekomst," Hein Stufkens, Chapter 1 of *Management voor een nieuwe tijd*, (Lemniscaat, 1986).

3 Cees Swarttouw, "Het Transformatieparadigma," Hein Stufkens, Chapter 2 of *Management voor een nieuwe tijd*, (Lemniscaat, 1986).

4 "Introducing the Findhorn Foundation," video-tape (1989) released by the Visual Arts Department, Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Forres IV 36 OTZ, Scotland.

5 Dr. Robert W. Terry, "*Leadership - A preview of a seventh view*," Reflective Leadership Program 1987, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minneapolis.

6 Prof. Ir. C.H. Botter, *Industrie en organisatie*. Kluwer, 1974.

Chapter 2 - Core Qualities

1 Kenneth Blanchard & Spencer Johnson, *The One Minute Manager*. Berkley Publishing Group.

2 Hans Korteweg, Hanneke Korteweg-Frankenhuisen, Jaap Voigt, *De grote Sprong*, Servire 1990.

3 Paul Hersey & Kenneth Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*. Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice- Hall, 1982.

4 Roger Harrison, "Leiderschap en strategische planning in een nieuwe tijd; Chapter 4 of John Adams' book *Transformatie* (Lemniscaat 1986).