

The Power of “Being”

These days, most executives have heard everything! Familiar with most theories of leadership and management, they are tired of repackaged models and workshops. Executives are usually highly capable people with a great willingness to develop, outstanding commitment to their roles and an extreme performance orientation. They are accustomed to hard work, but how often do they take the time to do nothing and just reflect? Or step back to realign their life and work for more success? The power of "being" is highly underrated compared to the power of "doing."

When helping an executive understand the power of “being,” the first challenge is to slow them down to appreciate the power of doing nothing. Rather than acquiring yet another competence, executive development may focus on being more aware, on seeing the vision clearly, and on finding a way to align one's work life to their joy, meaning and strength in a much wider sense.

There are five important steps that executives can take to develop to new heights:

1. Act out of the right paradigm.

On the road to success, there will always be paradigm shifts. They usually make themselves felt when our recipe for success does not work anymore. As a student, we needed to get good marks. As a professional, having good marks is no longer important. It is more vital to get along with colleagues, bosses and clients. Having mastered this, we'll find that once promoted, being liked does not count as much but creating value and results does. As projects and objectives get bigger, we need to be game changers, influence people and create an ideal environment for

them to high-perform. Executives must be aware of the shift from the professional to the managerial paradigm!

2. Balance altruism and ego.

Recently, the Harvard Review published an article which proved that only altruistic people who are successful will be admired. Egoists, on the other hand, will be envied, which can cause their demise in the long run. We get ahead by being competitive and suddenly need to behave altruistically. The best leaders will strike a fine balance between ensuring their success and helping others win. Unless others profit from our successes, they will not have a reason to support us in the long run. Recognition and gratitude go a long way to create inclusion, support and admiration.

3. Detect the key success factors of what you do and deliver on those.

We all know the suggestion "work smarter not harder". But how can one do this? Often executives cannot work any harder – they're already at their limit. Reflecting on what really makes the difference in a job helps. Asking about what is expected from us helps too. Once we know and understand the expectations and intents of our job and once we know how results and achievements are observed and measured, defining our key success factors gets easier. Focusing on these criteria allows us to spend time on what counts and lets us dump the rest.

4. Polish the 6 silos of competence.

There are only six competence clusters that matter in our work life: self management, expertise, social skills, operative management, leadership and vision/strategy. Self-management is the basis of all and achieving it is demanding. One of the most important ingredients is setting and maintaining boundaries in our lives. Managing expectations of ourselves and others, assessing ourselves correctly, putting in enough effort without overdoing it, and giving of ourselves without exploiting ourselves are all critical. In short: optimizing for the long run



rather than maximizing for the short run in order to create sustainable success and satisfaction is vital.

5. Ensure balance for sustainable happiness and success.

To be happy and successful in the long run, it is essential to make space for all interests and beliefs. Balancing all areas that are important to us is a must. Health, family, friends, interests, our place in society, learning and developing, rest, being there for others, being creative.....the list is endless and all these items need time. If we focus on what makes us happy, on what makes sense, and on what makes us strong, we come close to our own optimal life balance.

Through reflection and the power of “being” rather than “doing,” executives can develop not just in their heads, but more so in their hearts.

