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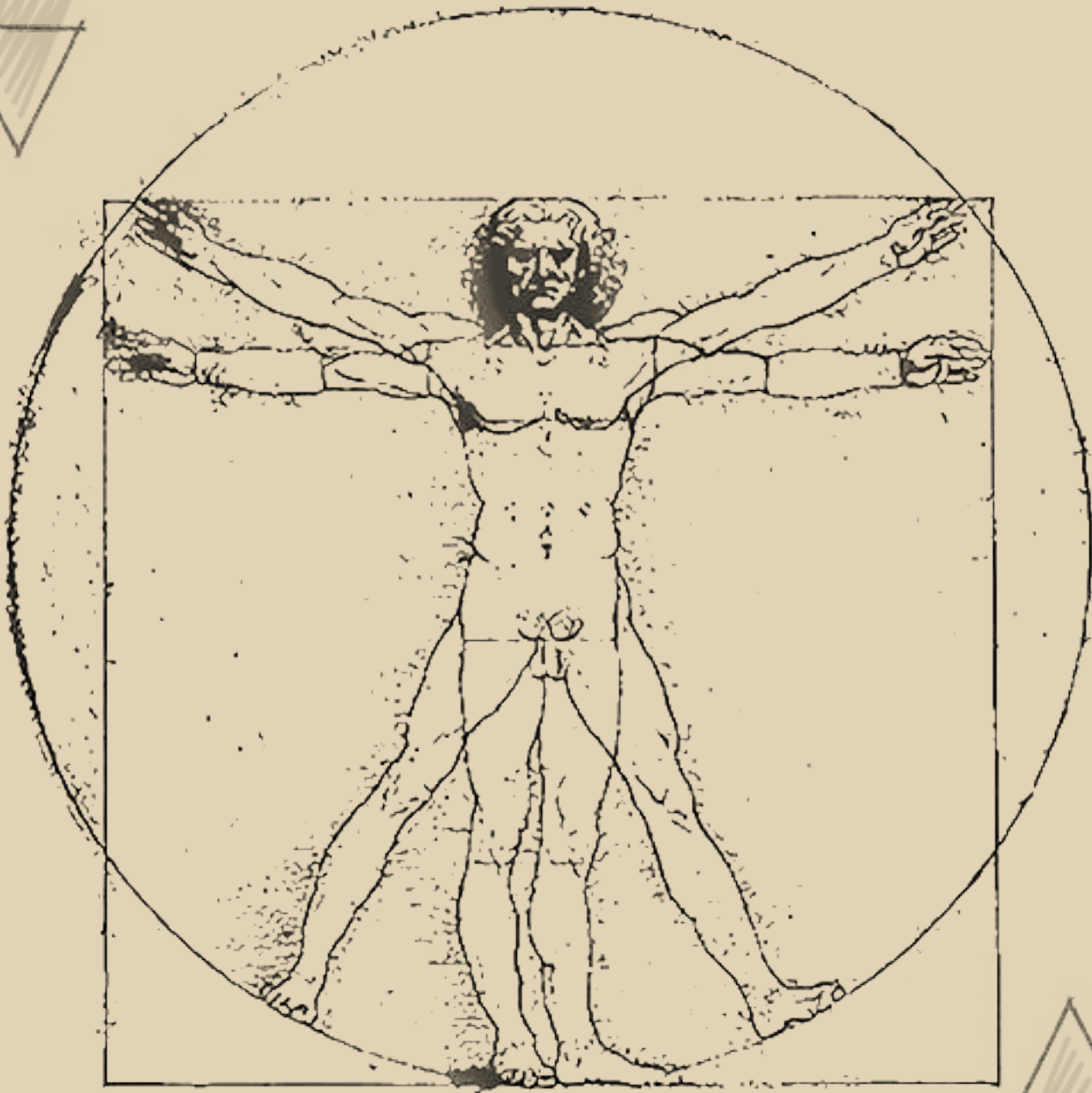
**SPECIAL  
EDITION**

**BUSINESS**

**COACHING**

**SEVEN POSTULATES  
OF RENAISSANCE  
LEADERSHIP**





# EDITORIAL

The editorial team of the “Business coaching” magazine is constantly trying to improve the content, design, but also format of the magazine as well. As we grew along with our readers, there was a need for articles to be published more often and with topics that we did not cover in the paper edition.

The latest format that we’ve published is the “special edition” format of the magazine. This magazine is smaller in format, but we tried to keep it large in content and design. Why this format? We wanted to collect and share with you all the articles published by the authors only in the online edition as an added value to your knowledge. The thematic edition of the magazine always focuses on a single topic, and this time it is Leadership.

Leadership is just a drop in the sea of knowledge, but still big and intriguing to constantly explore. This time we share one very interest-

ing angle of how leadership could be seen. An unusual connection to Leonardo gives us a broader perspective of how a personal change in leadership can influence other members of the team.

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# ABOUT **AUTHOR**



„Mirjana believes that we are all born to be happy. She also likes to believe that coaching process with executives has great impact on their own, but also on wellbeing of all people around them and by that helps turning this world a happier and better place to live in. Emotional intelligence of a leader is the starting point of the process - She invites the leaders to start from there. She strongly supports business - life integration, which is the main reason for assuring that all systems in which client belongs are being taken care of during the process.“

# RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP

Throughout the years, while working with leaders, I had the opportunity to meet various challenges. In addition to the personal challenges that each leader brings into the process of coaching, a common practice area are the expectations of the environment as well as business development trends. From year to year, ways of leadership development change due to alignment with the needs of the environment, new ways of doing business, taking into account research on the key performance factors of individual leaders, psychological profiles of “new generations” etc. Qualities such as *authenticity*, *vulnerability*, *being in the moment* are more present, but also “old ones” remained: the call for profit, results, success. Today’s leaders do not have an easy job!

Since I want to support my clients, I turned to literature. No less than Leonardo da Vinci. Inspired by his postulates, in the past few years I have developed and have been practicing a program called **“Renaissance Leadership”**.

The assumption on which the program is based is **“Your brain is much better than you**

**think.”** In fact, all the leaders are confronted with the question “Am I good enough?”. It happens to some people at the very beginning, when they are not sure if they are ready to take a high(er) position. Some leaders, in the moments when the systemic / strategic changes happen in the organization, start to question their capacities, experience, position. Whenever there is a fall in self-confidence, it is good to regain faith in yourself, your potentials, and focus on finding personal strengths, creating solutions and ways, rather than feeding non-helpful beliefs.

The Seven Principles on which the Renaissance leadership is based are:

- curiosity (*curiosita*)
- prefer the experience over the theory (*demonstrazione*)
- continuous sensing of senses (*sensazione*)
- accepting uncertainty (*sfumato*)
- balance between science and art (*arte / scienza*)
- balance of mind-emotion-body (*corporalite*)
- systemic thinking (*connessione*)

## CURIOSITY

We are all born curious. From birth (and probably even earlier) babies experiment with everything from their environment. When they speak, the torch of the question “how?” and “why?” is moving. Great minds continue to ask questions throughout their lives. They grow, expand, perspect, face their own ignorance, ready to learn and understand. Leonardo is, besides his influence in art, known for his indelible mark in research and medicine. One of his principles, when dissecting the body (in order to gain better understanding of the human body for his paintings) was to dissect each part of the body from at least three different angles. As he said, this is the only way to get a full, big picture. Great minds raise big questions. The questions that we ask ourselves throughout our lives are a reflection of our life’s goal and affect the quality of our lives.

If we talk about leaders, we would like to believe that leaders are great minds – that they have the potential to see, understand and lead.

Therefore, it is important in the development process of leaders to encourage and develop the skill of setting up major questions, asking for answers and deep thinking.

Some of them are:

- When am I the most natural?
  - How can I offer the best support to others?
  - What kind of mission would I want to accomplish?
  - What are my most inspiring examples?
- and so on.

Issues that encourage development and business advancement are “what if ...” questions. They have the task to stimulate the imagination and shake the perspective. Great leaders dare to go to the best options of their success and success in their business. Therefore, **by asking “what if” questions, leaders trigger improvement and progress.** One of the questions that successful entrepreneurs ask themselves at the very beginning is: “What if I could find some way to get paid and do what I love?”

## EXPERIENCE IN FRONT OF THEORY

We all had an opportunity to learn from different teachers. The question is: what makes one teacher great? Above all, it is the ability to help a learner learn by him/herself. When we talk about great leaders, it is important to talk about how willing they are to share their knowledge and experience, but also to inspire their closest associates to spread

and develop their knowledge and talents through personal experience.

The Renaissance leadership propagates learning by reviewing dogmas, assumptions, postulates, and their own beliefs and limitations. When it comes to developing a leader, the important questions are: "When was the last time you changed your deeply rooted belief? What kind of feeling did you have then? ". The release effect achieved by working with leaders in this way consequently leads to the creation of an environment in which associates can grow and develop under the mentorship and leadership of a leader open for discussion, co-creation and provoking limiting beliefs. **The atmosphere in which the error is considered a learning tool raises the level of awareness and development.** The acquisition of experiences can make a crucial difference between the successful teams and those which are not. Many leaders, recalling their mistakes, agreed that the mistakes they regret the most are those which allowed analysts, lawyers or academic authorities to refute their decisions made on basis of their experience.

## CONTINUOUS REFINEMENT OF SENSES

Our senses are the keys which help us open the door of experience. *Saper vedere* is one

of da Vinci's principles and means "to be able to watch". He was able to say that "Our whole knowledge comes from our perceptions."

The process of leader development, most often, begins with an assessment of the potential and readiness of the (future) leader to assume such a responsible role. Under the responsibility, I mean the responsibility for business, but also the responsibility for the people he/she leads, environment and to him/herself. Therefore, the assessment process is followed by the self-assessment process. A key parameter for eventual slowing down the promotion process is large deviation of self-assessment and objective assessment. This indicates a lack of awareness of their strengths, but also of the area for development. The lack of awareness that others see is often the cause of bad atmosphere, underdeveloped trust and ineffective relationships in the team. To be the leader, it is important to be aware of oneself, open for feedback and constant work on reducing your own weaknesses and empowering existing strengths.

On the other hand, this principle also applies to the stimulation of senses in the working environment. **The role of a leader is to develop associates by providing an en-**



## **-vironment that stimulates development.**

Therefore, it is not enough to devote time alone, but also to ensure that collaborators can work in an inspiring environment that stimulates all senses. The introduction of colors, lights, works of art, plants - in many ways a leader can contribute to performance and, more importantly - employee satisfaction.

## **ACCEPTING UNCERTAINTY**

From time to time everyone faces uncertainty. The liberation of creative potential happens if the person is ready to keep mind open before the uncertainty occurs. In the '80s of last century, the American Association of Managers published a study in which they concluded that the most successful leaders are characterized by "very high tolerance towards ambiguity and intuitive decision-making." In addition to this, Professor Weston Eygor in his book "The Intuitive Decision Logic" pointed out that the lack of attention for his own intuition was the primary cause of the worst business decisions. **At the beginning of the 21st century, we are struggling with the amount of information that threatens to shut us down and intuition is more important than ever.** Working with leaders, I confronted powerful blockades and barriers that have been set during their careers and made long-lasting and of-

ten painful processes. Coaching is a great way to awaken and refresh intuition, as well as to empower the leaders to trust it.

## **THE BALANCE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ART**

Although our education, at least in theory, fuels the idea of a balanced Renaissance education, we are suffering in practice from the desire to ignore the nonverbal. This leads us to the fact that modern society discriminates people who have a predominantly developed right side of the brain (hemisphere). Namely, in most cases the left hemisphere is developed for logical reasoning, while the right one is in charge of imaginative and picturesque. Even during schooling, we nurture and reward logical reasoning, while creative, imaginatively is degraded and neglected. If we recall Leonardo da Vinci at the same time as an artist and a scientist, it is quite clear that there is no proper restriction in the form of "incapable of logical thinking" or "unable to develop creative capacities". Seriousness and logic help us to penetrate into the essence of things and playfulness allows us to create new, original combinations.

The leader's ability to recognize his or her own qualities, but also to strengthen his or her team members, is crucial in achieving

and sustaining success. Understanding the style of working and learning helps us divide tasks and jobs in accordance with preferences and style that suits each team member, depending on the development of the hemispheres. It further represents the key to the efficiency and quality the tasks are performed, as well as employee satisfaction. Of course, with continuous stimulation of developed hemispheres in order to develop and expand the perspective.

**Understanding of our own preferences and continuous work on the development of the less developed one is actually an inexhaustible source of new ways, ideas for development and improvement of business in general.**

## **BALANCE MIND-EMOTION-BODY**

More and more often in my work with clients I hear the sentence: "If he cannot take care of his own body, how about so many millions of dollars and people?". This references leaders whose physical appearance reflects anxiety. So, it's not just about obesity, but actually about all those whose body depicts an unhealthy way of life. **It is not necessary to wear expensive suits, but radiate health and fitness.** The state of body affects the state of mind. If the body

is stiff and rigid, or decrepit and sloppy, the mind will follow such process. If we pay attention to the language, we will also look at the phrases that show understanding of this relationship: "She does not want to change the attitude", "He has taken such a position", where we talk about the way of thinking on certain topic, not the body itself.

Additionally, the word "corporation" comes from the word corpus - body. Most corporate bodies (cultures), unfortunately, are rigid and dominated by unconscious habits and patterns. Some old habits are useless patterns of thinking and limiting beliefs from the past, that hinder growth and development. It is therefore very important to understand this inextricable relationship and work on the liberation of the body, in order to relax the mind as well, through gradual process. Working with clients, one of the important steps of personal development and empowerment is the introduction of physical activity for the purpose of empowering and relaxing the body. Flexible, stable and healthy body is a prerequisite for the same kind of business.

## SYSTEMIC THINKING

“The stone that strikes the surface of the water causes the circles around it to expand, until they disappear,” said Leonardo da Vinci. Contemporary psychology emphasizes the importance of understanding the “dynamics of the system” in order to boldly understand itself, one’s role and forces in relation to it. Any change in one part of the system causes greater or minor changes in all parts of the system. The stronger the initial impulse or closer to the body affected by it, the more powerful the influence. However, very often leaders are not aware of the strengths of the influence (unconsciously) in their environment. “Loud thinking” of a leader in the subconscious mind of employees is a command. Not because his leadership style is authoritative, but because his signature is written by as “the director, the manager, the leader”. The unconscious mind deals with this information along with the proposal that came in order to determine its significance. On the other hand, leaders are not fully aware of the interdependence of their business and environment. On conscious level, leaders know that many environmental parameters should be taken into account when important business decisions are made. Unfortunately, the large number of leaders does not pay attention to those aspects. Some leaders make

decisions without paying any attention to distant consequences. A very small number do pay attention and make business decisions and initiatives carefully, planning the actions that will be taken as a result of these decisions. Every business decision affects directly employees, but also the whole organization, and therefore the entire environment and people in the immediate vicinity of the employees. **Systemic thinking is one of the key virtues of a leader and as such, it is often the subject of leadership coaching processes.** On the other hand, the team itself is a system. When there is a crisis in the functioning of a team, it is good to ask those questions which help understand the roles of each person in the team, to see what the dynamics is and what patterns of interaction already exist. Deciding which patterns are useful and which are not is a start of balancing the system. The final step is to understand what is needed to be introduced or given up of, so the system can be balanced, again. The whole team can be presented as a living organism and you can analyze its state of health.

# The First Postulate of RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP: CURIOSITY

Great minds keep asking questions throughout their lives. Doing so they grow, they develop, they broaden their perspective, they face their own ignorance ready to learn and understand.



From year to year, the ways in which leaders develop change – they align with the needs of the environment, ways of doing business, take into account research on key success factors of individual leaders, the psychological profiles of “new generations”. Increasingly and louder, there is talk about authenticity, vulnerability, being in the moment, but voices that call for profit, result, success are not silenced. It’s not easy for today’s leaders!

Out of a desire to be first and foremost helpful to my clients, I turned to literature. Neither more nor less than Leonardo da Vinci. Inspired by his postulate over the last few years, I have been practicing a program called “Renaissance Leadership.” It is based on seven basic postulates. The first of these is CURIOSITY.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

### *Changing perspective*

Leonardo da Vinci is often said to be “undoubtedly the most savvy man to ever live.” He uncompromisingly sought answers to new and emerging questions and did not accept yes as a response. Everything he observed and studied was from three different angles. Whether it was dissecting animals or painting a human body. The reason for

this, as he said himself, is that if you want to know the subject of your interest, you need to consider it from above, from below and from the sides; to defile it and to look for the beginning of each part.

When it comes to leaders, it is precisely the change in perspective that contributes to conscious leadership. And this is precisely one of the skills that is most difficult to embrace and make perfect. Sometimes it happens because of strong beliefs, rich experience, overdeveloped ego, a sense of insecurity and a need for control and the like.

### *Rigorosity*

In addition to changing perspective, rigor is also very important for curiosity. This actually means that it is important for each study to be strict with oneself and view their conclusions as someone else’s. One way is to prepare yourself to explain your points of view and attitudes, as if you want to present them to someone and convince them. Leonardo would often place a mirror and look at his drawings from a “reverse” perspective, because at the time he had the impression that they had been drawn by another hand and could view their quality more objectively.



## *Freedom*

Leonardo used to say that the search for knowledge gives him freedom. Looking from another perspective, freedom can also be understood as a precondition for knowledge and curiosity, in general. If leaders nurture an ancient, open-ended mind frame, they expand their universe and enhance all abilities. Only free leaders, open-minded, curious, can be the true support and guidance for their people.

## **CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING**

Curiosity is important to leaders for many reasons. One of the more important ones is the ability to solve problems creatively. Unfortunately, our school system does not support the development of curiosity and the skill of asking questions. Indeed! In order to develop curiosity, it is important that we learn to ask questions, without the burden of "having to find the right answer" or "that must be the right question." Sometimes there is not only one correct answer, and it is not enough to ask a single question. The best questions arise when a question that has already been asked is rephrased and the search begins without the pressure of having to find that one, best answer. A change of perspective can help a lot here.

For example: "How to get water?" "How to get water to us?" has led to the development of agricultural irrigation systems. Freedom to ask questions and seek for answers is the key to developing curiosity.

## **CONTINUOUS LEARNING**

Another important reason for developing curiosity in leaders is continuous learning. If one of the basic roles of a leader is to develop people from the team, it implies that the leader himself must work on his own development in order to be a good example and to monitor (or lead) the development of people. Leonardo has often said that, as iron rusts from not being used, stagnant water is polluted and intellect decays if not used. One way to encourage continuous learning (at work) is through out-of-work activities. Good leaders have (at least) one hobby that they passionately work on and are very good at. When a hobby becomes an integral part of a leader's life, it means that they have already adopted the habit of asking and answering questions:

- what are my goals?
- what do I need?
- where do I find a good teacher?
- how do I overcome obstacles?

Through the hobby, leaders have a broader perspective, which is precisely one of the three basic principles of curiosity.

Another way to learn continuously as a tool for developing curiosity is to **learn a foreign language**. We can do this at any age. This activity not only forces you to make mistakes and learn from them, but it also forces you to, unless you can find the right word, find another way to explain / describe what you want. Isn't that just what curiosity is all about?! Take a step further: Commit to your native language. Explore words you don't use often or whose meaning you are not sure about. Make a dictionary of less used words.

## DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

A very important aspect, which is being increasingly addressed in today's business, is emotional intelligence. It is well known that it can develop throughout life and is an awareness of ourselves, of others, of how we build relationships, make decisions, manage our emotions and manage stress. By developing curiosity, the flexibility to change perspectives and ask questions, we emerge from a position where we have become numb and thus become aware of our

strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, we open ourselves to listening and respecting the interviewee's opinions and perspectives and patiently gathering knowledge before making decisions. When we approach situations freely and comprehensively, we make them manageable and prevent stressful situations or we make them easier.

## HOW TO DEVELOP CURIOSITY?

For a start, ask yourself:

- How curious are you?
- When did you seek knowledge only for the pursuit of understanding and substance?
- What did you gain from this effort?

Next, move on to analyzing the people around you.

- How many would you call "the embodiment of curiosity"?
- How are their lives enriched by this?

One of the easiest steps to developing your curiosity is **going to a bookstore**. Why exactly there? It's simple: there you will find **notes, a block, a notebook,...** of the right format and layout, which from now on will become your constant companion.

Carry the block with you everywhere and keep track of your insights and questions, ideas, impressions and observations. Write down everything that inspires you: questions you ask yourself during the day, ideas that come to your mind, thoughts about the people you admire, short lines of conversation you have throughout the day, and others that you remember as interesting, etc. You can use the notes in another way: Give yourself the task of putting together a list of 100 questions that are important to you. It is important that any questions are listed as long as they relate to the answers that are important to you. But write questions quickly, out of your mind, without worrying about spelling and legibility. Do not even pay attention to the fact that some questions are repeated (in other words only). This is exactly what will point you to areas of particular interest to you. When you're done, read all the questions and pay attention to the areas where the questions come from - relationships, work, money, fun...

To finish this exercise, select the ten most important questions. Commit to seeking clarity and understanding. Don't stop at the first answer you find. Find at least three answers for each of your top ten questions.

When you are done with this activity, or at the same time, whatever you think is better, you can start making observations on different topics. You can download some topics from your top 10 questions. Topics can be: emotions, observation, aesthetics, animals, relationships, traffic, etc. Note your observations immediately or collect them and note them in the evening, in peace, in your home. If you want to make the whole game interesting, you can discuss topics with a friend and share your observations.



# The Second Postulate of RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP: ADVANTAGE OF EXPERIENCE OVER THEORY

*What makes a teacher great?  
More than anything else, it is the ability  
to help the student learn alone.*





Many theorists point out that one of the most important roles of a leader is to create new leaders. Whether he or she sets him/herself as a role model or uses teaching, mentoring or coaching skills, the leader unleashes the potential of the associates with their daily actions. By that, the employees are empowered to take actions that will inevitably move them out of their comfort zone and by that drive growth and development. Thus, the second postulate of leadership obscures the leader as a teacher.

## **AUTHENTICITY AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

An important aspect of building knowledge and skills through experience is, in fact, our authenticity. All that makes us unique and different from others. This often involves challenging others' views, established rules or generally accepted beliefs.

In order to be a good teacher, who supports development of his / her associates, leader should, on the first place devote himself / herself to personal development. The most difficult part of personal development is precisely the struggle with personal beliefs. As Leonardo da Vinci used to say, "The greatest deception of a person is one that comes from his/her own understanding of

the world." Learning and developing means questioning one's own understandings, beliefs and assumptions. And that is often the hardest thing to do.

Many associate leadership with the exaggerated ego. The ego is the first barrier to self-examination. A useful practice that a leader can introduce to avoid the trap of stagnation (and thus, in fact, setbacks) is to periodically check the accuracy of the following statements:

- I am an independent person
- I am ready / willing to admit mistakes
- I question the "conventional wisdom"
- I have changed a deep-rooted belief, because of practical experience
- I consider the accident as an opportunity for maturation
- I view error as an opportunity to learn

## **EXAMINING EXPERIENCES**

Many contemporary leaders have created their attitudes and style by reading books and attending various trainings. While working with them, one can hear the well-known phrases and principles advocated by particular schools or popular educators. But if we spend some time working with these leaders, we will notice that there is a big differ-

-ence between what they say and how they really act. The journey from reading about leadership to demonstrating leadership behaviors is a long one and, in many ways, consists of experiences. Very personal, often painful. Only those leaders who have often enough questioned their experiences and asked themselves questions:

- What experiences have had the biggest impact on my life?
- How have these experiences colored my views and observations?
- Can I reconsider some of the conclusions I have drawn from these experiences?

can expect leadership to become their mindset, lifestyle and an authentic part of their personality.

## **RE-EXAMINATION OF THE SOURCE**

Since birth, we have been developing our own attitudes, assumptions and beliefs. They help us cope with new, unfamiliar situations more easily and with less effort. We do this, by (unconsciously) comparing new to known situations and linking them to an appropriate attitude and emotion.

What is often unknown to us, when it comes to attitudes, is the sources we rely on. What

is the base of our views? In order to check the presence of the “experience before theory” principle in our leadership style, but also of personality in general, we can do the following test: Select one area of life and write a few attitudes that you have about that area. After that, ask yourself:

- How did I get to this attitude?
- How strongly do I believe in it?
- Why do I keep it? What would make me change my attitude?
- Which of my views inspire the strongest emotions?
- What sources are most influential in creating my views: media / books / friends / experts / co-workers / personal experience?
- Is there an attitude that is completely created without personal experience? How could I create an experience that proves / disproves this attitude?

## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVE**

It may happen that leaders, in the process of preparing for important meeting or presentation, ask some of their close colleagues to be their “greatest opponents”. This actually means that, by challenging most of what they hear, their colleagues will help them find weaknesses or ambiguities in their own presentation.

You can do the same with your beliefs and attitudes. In this case, it is much more effective if you do the work. Do your best and find the strongest possible counter-argument by looking at your belief from a distance or in the mirror. Sometimes it is enough to ask the question: "Would this belief change if I lived in another country / if I were from a different family / if I was 20 years younger / if I was of the opposite sex ...?"

## **UNLEARNING**

Top leaders will agree that not having a connection with their own experience is the primary cause of their poor decisions. In addition, most of them will tell you in confidence that they made the biggest mistakes precisely in situations where they trusted advisors, experts and lawyer, rather than their intuition and experience. The best leaders know that experience is the heart of wisdom.

But, gathering experiences and attitudes cannot go on indefinitely. In order to progress, grow and develop in addition to the learning process, particular attention should be paid to the process of unlearning - rejecting old beliefs, attitudes and theories that are no longer useful in the time and place we are today.

Imagine putting one brick in the trunk of your car each time you stop to refuel. As strong as the engine is and the car is new, you will hardly be able to reach the desired speed with a trunk full of bricks. Therefore, it is necessary to make the selection from time to time and get rid of the bricks that are more of a burden to us, than a benefit. This is the case with attitudes and beliefs, as well as knowledge. Sometimes what we know can prevent us from viewing the situation openly and blocking us from gaining new experience from it.

## **LEARNING FROM ANTI-ROLE MODEL**

In the process of leading others, the leader serves as a role model. Leadership is a key strength of good leaders. But it does not always happen that our leaders were our role models. Because of this, we can often come across the phrase, "Be the leader you wish you had."

To achieve this, we can use one of the most effective ways to learn from mistakes. But not ours!

What some leaders learned from their worst bosses and executives. Some were autocrats, others micro-managers, some did not tolerate ignorance and inexperience, but

without giving the slightest opportunity to acquire them. All those “bad” leaders taught them how not to do. And for this, they are grateful.

So, for you to be able to apply this effective way of learning, it is enough to write down the names of, for example, three people who made mistakes that you would like to avoid and then ask yourself: how can I learn from their mistakes? It may be that your biggest anti-role models are exactly the biggest role models in other areas. Your objectivity will help you accurately distinguish between what you want to look like and what you want to avoid.

Finally, let's get back to the beginning.

Only now, that you have worked on your authenticity, growth and development, are you ready to offer an arena for learning and gaining your own experiences as and resource to your employees.

Only when you are balanced you can be in a fully supportive position and be a part of the development of your people. You will become a kind leader, who is able to support employees learn on their own, from their own experiences.

Coaching as a leadership style is unrivaled in this segment of leadership. Partnering with employees, fully respecting attitudes and principles, challenging their reality and believing in an employee's potential are some of the principles of coaching as a way of leading. These are just the right prerequisites for encouraging an employee's responsibility for their own development. Just what we needed in order to develop new leaders.





# The Third Postulate of RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP: CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF SENSES

*"Our whole knowledge  
comes from our senses"*  
*Leonardo da Vinci*

Leonardo da Vinci called our senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell) the keys that open the door to experience. His motto was *"Saper vedere"* or "Know how to watch." It is the cornerstone of his artistic, as well as his scientific work. It is also interesting that Leonardo's teacher, who raised him, was called Verokio (in translation, his name means "true eye"). For Leonardo, the eye was "the true window of the soul and the principal means by which reason can comprehend the most endless and comprehensive of the endless works of nature."

If we think about it a little deeper, most of the time, even in Leonard's time, but still



today, inventions are created by observing and applying the laws and phenomena in nature. Did you know that an umbrella is the result of inspiration from the smooth leaves of plants from which raindrops slip easily?

But not just the eyes are enough to handle a situation comprehensively. It is necessary to engage all the senses. They serve the mind and soul to perceive, sense, reflect, make decisions and define necessary actions. Unfortunately, in today's world of fast and multiple communications, an excessive amount of messages and information, it happens that people watch - but do not see, listen - rather than hear, eat - and do not feel the taste. If we devote ourselves to the development of the senses, we not only develop the mind, but add to the richness of experience, which will later grow into our knowledge and skills. And in today's business, having different and deep knowledge and skills is great advantage.

One of the highly valued skills in today's leadership is the skill of (active) listening. Despite the large number of articles and educations, there are not so many people who understand the meaning of the word active in this context. Most will say that it means participating in a conversation by occasionally nodding, saying "m-hm" or "yes", asking mean-

-ingful questions and repeating the spoken words of the interviewee. They believe that in this way they will show that they are listening. Unfortunately, it is not their fault that they have misunderstood the instructions for active listening. As in other areas, speed and overproduction have contributed to the emergence of not professional people in the education industry. Behind the bombastic headlines of "10 Golden Rules for Success" or "7 Things Successful Leaders Do" you get the tools and description of banal behaviors. It would not surprise me to read a book one day with the instruction: "Wear red socks on Wednesdays and blue on Thursdays - you will be a successful leader."

A prerequisite for demonstrating any skill, including active listening, is **presence**. More importantly, being present is also a prerequisite for establishing quality relationships with three parties - yourself, the individual in the team and the whole system. But it's one of the hardest skills in today's fast-paced, business world. Businessmen take vacations, fly in uncomfortable planes for hours, even days across several airports and half a world to look again from an other geographical latitude on their cell phones and tablets, with earphones, in the darkened rooms of all inclusive hotels.

It is unlikely that one will notice the sunset, feel the taste of thyme in the meal or the warmth of the sun on the skin, the smell of salt or the sound of a barge in the open, if the person is not present. And, imagine, how much effort is it needed to listen to the employee talking about the problems he or she encounters in completing the assignment (assigned by a leader) at the moment when the superior wants that leader to send a report on the business in the last month! The leader can nod the head three times and say “m-hm” ten times - neither the leader heard the employee, nor the employee believes the leader has.

The first prerequisite for developing and using the senses in a business environment is an aesthetically inspiring work environment. An environment that provokes, opens and develops the senses. Make every effort to make your space, but also the spaces of the people around you, common areas and even toilets inspiring, interesting. In an environment that is increasingly occupied by millennials, the words *inspirational*, *creative* and *fun* are the preferred descriptions of the space in which they want to work. On the other hand, departments responsible for developing people constantly receive training requirements designed to increase employees' motivation, innovation and creativity.

Those requests were sent by company executives who sit in gray-walled offices and with itison floors. You'd be surprised what a plant, colored chairs or interesting wall posters can do. Fresh fruit and sweet music are a bonus. Some bolder attempts, not to mention.

Any psychologist will confirm to you that the quality of stimulation coming from the outside world is crucial for the development of desired traits. Whether it is a child or an adult. Conscious parents are very aware of this, so they equip their children with rooms so that they actively encourage the development of these traits from a very early age. It is precisely creativity and innovation that are increasingly recognized as crucial in today's business.

Attendance further influences another highly regarded category of assessing the potential and quality of leaders - **emotional intelligence**. Despite the belief that empathy is the pinnacle of emotional intelligence (EI), it is increasingly important to measure and develop its key elements in the business environment. Elements of EI such as: decision making, reality testing, stress management, assertiveness, self-fulfillment and many others greatly influence the performance of the individual, as well as the team led by that individual.

For example: leaders are often angry. Many of them are, in fact: betrayed, humiliated, scared and the like. Likewise, in good times they are “good”. And in fact they are: proud of themselves, happy, excited and the like. Then, when they invest time into a **pause** - at a time when they are alone, they can reach the deepest depths of themselves and understand how they really are and why they feel that way. When they notice through a window that a bird has flown, that the air is dry or that it is too hot in the room, then they will be able to “read” their condition. And the moment they start dealing with their own condition is exactly when they start finding the keys to their experiences. From that moment on, they begin to more intensely and deeply learn from those experiences. Then they start to become the leaders they wanted to be.

As a result of **presence, emotional intelligence and pause**, the leaders will begin to notice changes in their employees’ behaviors, levels of personal and others’ motivation. They will also begin to understand complex situations from different perspectives and thus be open to hear and see different perspectives. Then, they will be present and then will actively listen to the interlocutor. Without counting the repetition of a nod or “m-hm”.

Start with the little things. Bring in the colors to the office. Put your plant, which you will look after. Look into the distance and slowly begin to focus your vision looking for details in the landscape. Listen to and extract different sounds from the noise. Notice how different your skin feels in contact with different materials. Be present during the meal - notice the flavors. Find your little exercises to develop your senses. By developing your senses, you enrich your experiences. And, experiences are the key to development and learning. For everyone, even the leaders.

# **The Fourth Postulate of RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP: SFUMATO** - the desire to accept ambiguity, paradox and uncertainty





More than ever, leaders today need virtue to lead in a world that is complex, unpredictable and insecure. There is even an abbreviation for it: VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity). Until a few months ago, the world as it looks today, was unthinkable to us. Only a month ago, it seemed that the world had stopped. Leaders who managed to lead their people through difficult moments in fast and safe way, through insecurity and even fear, are those who were able to act in an environment of unknown and insufficiently defined states and outcomes.

You may not have known the interesting fact that a large number of top managers of the Fortune 100 companies stated that the biggest mistakes of their business are the decision to obey advisors, lawyers, jurists, experts instead of their intuition.

So, if we were to translate Leonardo's principle of Sfumato into the language of today's leaders, we could freely call it Intuition. The good news is that it is a quality that can be developed. Not as easy as assertive communication or prioritization, but it can! The beginning is to start believing that intuition is your ally and that you want to develop it.

To embark on the journey of developing this important virtue, the key is to spend some time in solitude and relaxation. In the world of multitasking, too short and excessive

deadlines, many leaders believe that time is a luxury for itself. When I ask them when they are resting or when they take a break, the most common answer is that they do it during lunch, together with colleagues, reading the news or playing sports they like. But for the development of Intuition, a different me-time is needed. The time when you are alone with your thoughts. Even better, if you succeed and drive away your thoughts for a few minutes. And then, let them slowly start coming back. In an order that you (consciously) do not influence. Completely relaxed in bed, in the shower, on a walk... If you think about it, you probably came up with the best ideas in such relaxed situations, and not in the office, at work. Take some time at least once, maybe even twice a week, to go for a walk alone, with your thoughts, or at least sit alone.

When we talk about the Sfumato principle, it is important to note that it does not only apply to the leader and his intuition. This principle is essential in leading the team and the process. If we were to try to translate the principle into an instruction, it might sound like, "Believe in your people, believe in yourself, believe in the process."

In large projects, the situation at first often seems too complex, too serious and difficult to achieve. If you believe that your people, and you with them, will know how to

approach solving a complex and unknown task, you will lead them with much more energy and confidence. And your faith is often a key factor in motivating and dedicating your people.

Planning time for the retrospective, evaluation of what has been done and possible changes during the implementation are key in today's way of doing business. The parameters which you used to plan the entire course of action are changing, not only because the situation will be clearer to you in each subsequent phase, but also because the environment is changing. What you were counting on at the beginning, may not necessarily be true during or at the end of the project.

In the times in which we work, at the beginning of the 21st century, information threatens to suffocate us with its scope and diversity. The time you devote to studying, understanding, perceiving, evaluating often becomes your expense, not your investment. The wisdom is to decide: how much planning is good enough? Sometimes it is necessary to plan each step before it starts to be realized. But, fortunately, this is not always the case. Sometimes "good enough" is really enough. Every minute you devote to further

understanding and study begins to be your expense. Calculated risk is something that is most often heard from successful leaders as their basic strength and strategy. And what is that other than Sfumato?

Humans, as an animal species, tend to be afraid of change. Because, they are also uncertain, insufficiently defined and threaten to upset the balance in which we were before the change occurred. In today's world, one of the few constants is change. Darwin himself said that those species and individuals, who adapted the best to the new living conditions - survived. Be a leader who will ensure the survival of yourself, your team and business, by easily accepting uncertainty and indefiniteness, and with faith in your intuition and lead your people towards achieving goals.

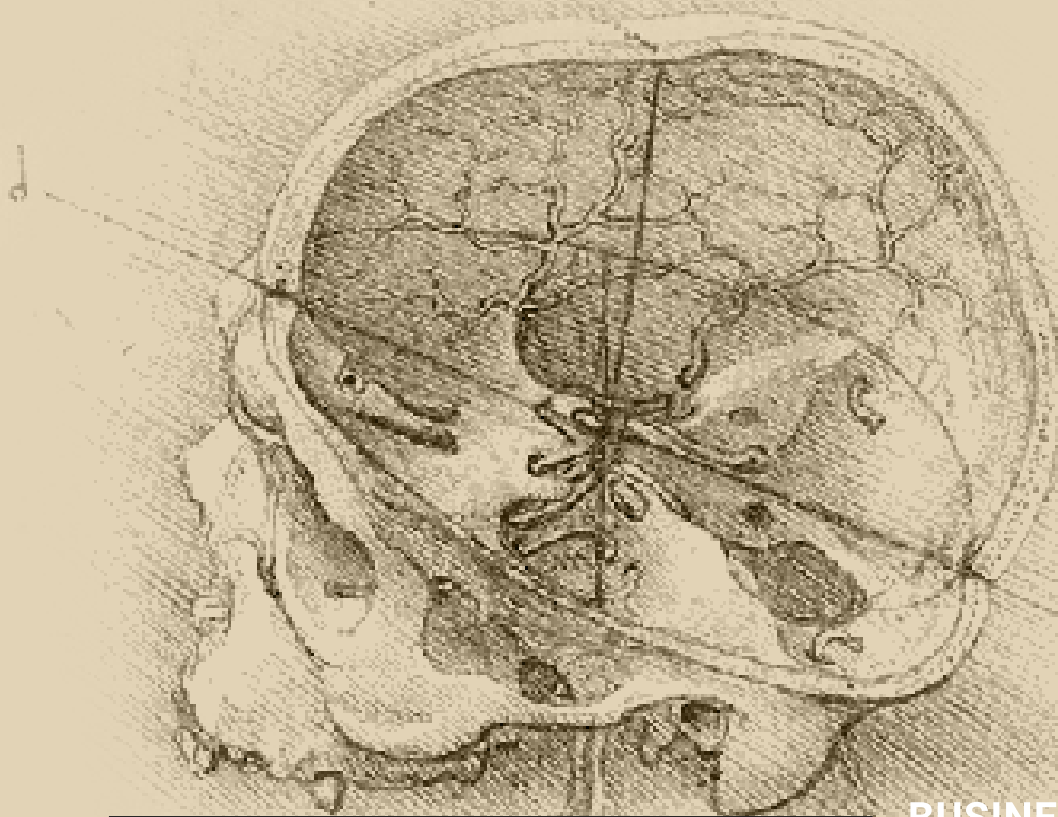
If you want to exercise, here are some ideas:

- Remember the three most significant changes you have noticed in your life. Remember the three things that remained unchanged. From what did you grow and dissipate?
- Remember when you were most proud in your life. Remember when you felt most humble. Invoke feelings of deep pride and deep humility. How are they different? Are there any unexpected similarities?



# The Fifth Postulate of **RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP:**

Arte / Sciennza - The development of a balance between science and art, logic and imagination - thinking with the whole brain



Was Leonardo da Vinci a scientist or an artist? Is it even necessary to know the answer to this question? For him, these two dimensions of life were inseparable. "The artist's ability to express the beauty of human curves lies in his detailed study of human anatomy," Leonardo said.

You must have heard at least once in your life about the left and right hemispheres of the brain, about logic and creativity, about the domination of one side over the other. Have you ever wondered what is your "strong side"? The world we live in, the system of schools and schooling with a stable way of working and repetitive style of acquiring knowledge, ingrained stereotypes about how to work in "serious" companies, the image of a top professional framed, above all, in systematics and analytics, do not give much chance or space for the people who see the world through lenses of creativity and playfulness - through "that other half of the brain."

Modern leadership is almost impossible without strong activation of the entire brain. Without perceiving situations and possibilities through two prisms: ratio and analytics, on the one hand, and creativity and vision, on the other. A world that is unpredictable, uncertain, that accepts ambiguity and is at times complex requires almost constant juggling

between structure and imagination. This is often a very tedious process. Even more because most of the people unconsciously limit their flexibility and ability to see the world from different angle. The reason for this restriction is hidden in the sentence: "That is me and I can not be changed". Many leaders hide behind statements: "I can't do it differently.", "That's my style " or "I could never do otherwise". Growing in this field is an invaluable investment for every person. For leaders, this development path is an obligation, without compromise.

In addition to the skill of engaging one's own, whole brain, the ability to fit differences into a team is a must for leaders. Left-hemispheres (analytics, detail) often view right-hemispheres (creativity, the bigger picture) as superficial, fluttering, insufficiently dedicated and dreamy. In return, the right-hemispheres will "stick" the label of small minds, opponents, brakesman and bores to the left-hemispheres.

If the leader is not aware that both groups of employees are needed to see the whole picture of the situation, project or problem, it can happen that one part of the team will feel less valuable or rejected. In addition, the result will not be at the level that would be achieved if both groups had the same rep-

-resentation and opportunity to contribute to the solution.

It is the leader who establishes an atmosphere of trust and acceptance of diversity. Flexibility in communication, understanding and support of different perspectives is the framework that a leader is obliged to establish, if he or she wants motivated, united and dedicated employees.

One of the most difficult tasks of a leader in this field is to employ in his or her team people who are strong in those areas where the leader is not. Why the hardest? Because it's easier to connect, understand and ultimately trust the people who look like us. These others challenge us, are difficult for us and we have a need to "translate" them to our side of thinking.

One of the powerful tools that leaders, aware of the importance of combining these two approaches, use extensively in their daily business is **Mind Maps**. Whether it's planning, searching for the bigger picture, understanding the functioning of the system, designing a project, parenting - this tool will be useful in many ways. Many have heard of the tool, but do not use it. And it's that simple! If you haven't encountered this tool before, here are just a few key features (you can

search for the detailed manual online):

- mind map resemble a tree and its branches
- in the "center" of the image is a picture or symbol of your theme
- write all the key words related to the topic around the central image; connect the lines for the central symbol
- continue listing the keywords for each term and repeat the action: link to the previous term
- repeat this action as many times as you need to get concrete answers, actions, insights related to the topic
- be creative

Instead of looking at the white paper and "digging" through the brain in order to get the idea listed as number 1, all you need is to prepare the crayons and start. It is important for the mind map to be colorful, dynamic (not symmetrical), to use round shapes, to use printed letters and to play. There are no right or wrong answers, no pre-defined structure and number of terms you have to write down. Everything you write is a product of your analysis and creativity.

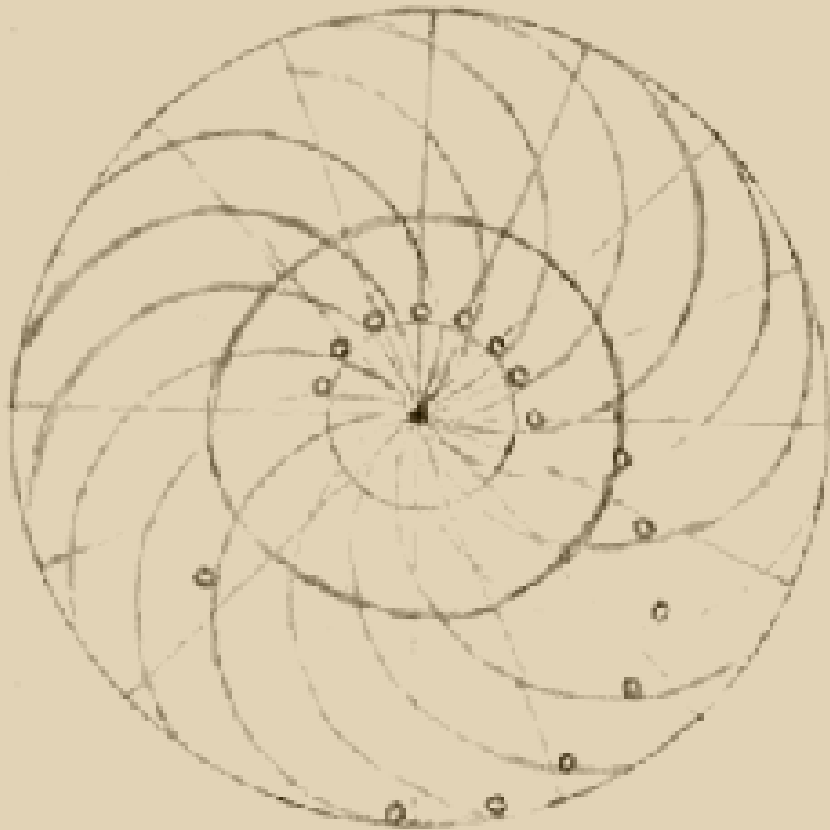
If you are intrigued by the question which (your) hemisphere is stronger, how balanced they are and which needs a little encourage-



-ment, here are some handy statements. Check which ones you would rate as "correct" when it comes to you. I believe that you will be able to interpret the test result yourself:


1. I love details
2. I read books by leaps and bounds
3. I arrive on time
4. My brainstorming is going well
5. I'm doing well in math
6. I am very imaginative
7. I love logic
8. I rely on intuition
9. I love lists
10. I like to scribble

Based on the results, make a development plan. I suggest that you define the plan and action steps through a tool that will speed up the process. Make a mind map of your bi-hemispheric development and - get started!



# The Sixth Postulate of RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP:

## Corporalita - Nurturing grace, ambidexterity, fitness and balance



I remember the time when, in my previous career, I worked in international companies. As if it was a rule, my superiors were foreigners. There were Italians, Germans, Austrians, Frenchmen... Each of them had their own style of leadership, their own strengths and weaknesses. What everyone had in common and what I noticed every day was - neat nails! This may sound ridiculous. Believe me, their tidiness, in fact - the body care and healthy diet they practiced, was so impressive, that it had to be noticed.

As a thought exercise, think: how do you imagine the physical appearance of a genius? Most people, faced with this question, succumb to the stereotypes and imaginations of a skinny, pale man with glasses. But Leonardo, and most geniuses in human history, have been endowed with extraordinary physical energy and ability. Goethe described Leonardo as "Very beautiful and of

extraordinary in physical appearance, reminiscent of the model of human perfection." Leonardo's practice of anatomy can even be linked to his extraordinary physical abilities - he was a skilled rider, swordsman, swimmer... He was a vegetarian and an excellent cook. He believed that exercise and a balanced food intake were the key to health and well-being. In addition to all this, he used his left and right hand with equal ease and quality - which is a consequence of constant exercise! He deeply believed that everyone was responsible for their own health and well-being.

The state of the body, the state of mind and emotions are inextricably linked. You probably remember the situation when, after receiving the good news, you started singing, smiling, walking easily. Then beautiful thoughts began to swarm, then even more beautiful feelings, then an even wider smile... A similar circle, in the opposite direction, begins when we hear bad news or suffer physical pain. Emotions and thoughts are the drivers of the whole process. The body NEVER starts that process - unless we consciously force it. The state of the body affects the state of mind (and emotion). If you expect to be "fit" in thinking, to be focused, strong in decision-making or to be able to understand a complex situation, you will do

it much better if your body, emotions and thoughts are in harmony and - strong.

You have heard of successful business people who run 10km before work or swim for half an hour in the pool. This is not a recommendation to wake up at 05:00 and practice physical activity before work !! This is a recommendation to find enough time during the week to take care of your body - to eat healthily, be physically active and get enough sleep. In this way, you will enable your body, and indirectly your mind, to have the strength to face challenging situations. Sometimes that strength means focus, in other situations flexibility and empathy.

Some of Leonardo da Vinci's advice are:

- Beware of anger, avoid sad moods
- Rest your head, keep your mind happy
- Cover well at night
- Exercise moderately
- Avoid debauchery and pay attention to ishan
- Eat only when you are hungry and take small snacks
- Chew well
- Go to the toilet regularly

How many of these tips do you practice during your day? Do you happen to get home after work and eat your first meal

when the sun has already set? Or sit in the same position for a few hours, without a toilet break.

In the long practice of working with leaders, one of the first action steps I have seen my clients define and make is the introduction of physical activity in the daily / weekly schedule. Body movement leads to amazing results in most areas of life: productivity, focus, satisfaction, motivation, relationships. Hormones and chemical reactions that are triggered during physical activity, as well as the feeling of victory and self-satisfaction after training (especially in situations when training is preceded by an internal struggle with laziness) are valuable for well-being and quality of life in general. Ease of perspective change, optimism and self-esteem become ubiquitous allies.

change, optimism and self-esteem become ubiquitous allies.

How to encourage yourself to start dealing with your body?

- look at yourself in the mirror
- draw your own body

After that, you can start with the following list:

- Practice balance
- learn to juggle
- Introduce regular meals
- Eliminate late meals
- Reduce test intake
- Limit the amount of meat
- go to bed before midnight
- sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillow
- cover yourself adequately
- Go to the toilet regularly
- Go for regular check-ups
- Dress neatly

Feel free to define your own list.

Remember:

if you can't take care of yourself, how will you (as a leader) take care of your people?

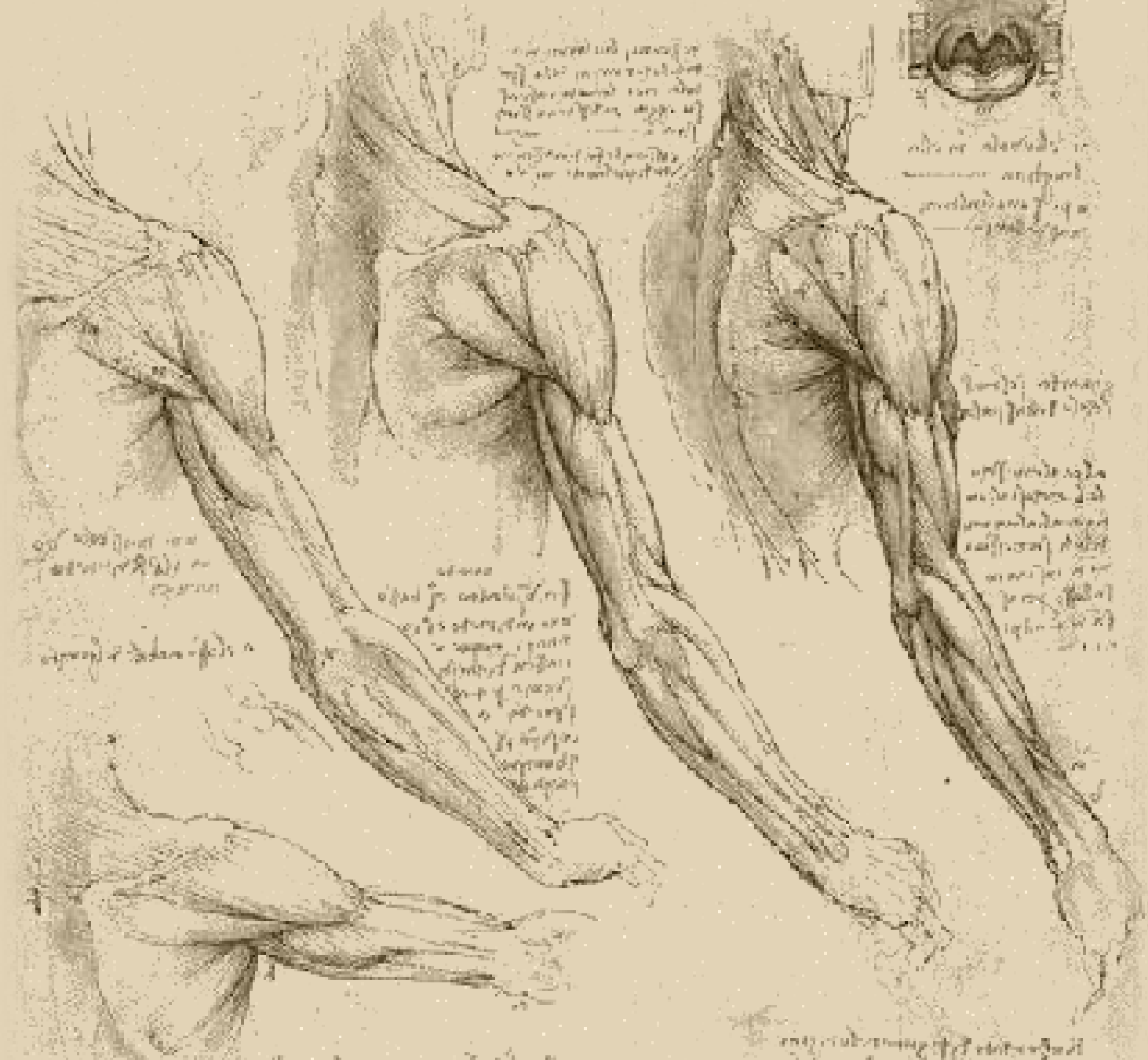


Handwritten Latin text in the upper middle section, likely describing the anatomical structures shown in the adjacent drawings.

Handwritten Latin text in the upper right section, providing further anatomical details.

Handwritten Latin text in the middle right section.

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Handwritten Latin text on the left side, describing the anatomical structures.

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# The Seventh Postulate of **RENAISSANCE LEADERSHIP:**

Conessione - Recognition and respect for the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena -  
Systemic thinking





In recent months, more than ever, we have been hearing about the VUCA world - a world of unpredictability and complexity. There are many examples and comparisons. Most often we hear about a stone which, when thrown into water, produces a series of circles that expand.

In the digital world we live in, everything is connected to everything. Information is transmitted at incredible speeds, dozens of channels and in a variety of forms. On the screens we can see a picture of a dish that was just tasted by someone in another part of the world. It won't be long before we can smell the screen. Management decisions in North America affect the children of workers in Southeast Europe, as well as in the Far East. The price of oil, over the price of flour and sugar, affects the quality of cakes that a mother makes for her child in South Africa. No one and nothing can exist in isolation. The sooner leaders understand this, the more sustainable their leadership will be. And thus more influential.

The principle of "learning organizations" is an attempt to apply the idea of totality and interdependence in organizations as well. Complex systems, such as multinational companies, require nurturing and understanding relationships, recognizing patterns

and adapting to emerging situations. Peter Drucker said: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Procedures, goals, KPIs, targets, decisions, reports... .. all this falls into the water when the system as a whole, is not healthy from the inside. The health of the system is taken care of by the leader.

The best leaders have the ability to see relationships and patterns. To assess which patterns are healthy and useful in the system, as well as to create and adopt unknown, new, and useful patterns. It is often, for the system, much more important to "unlearn" - to throw out behaviors and routines that are useless in the new working conditions, than to learn - to introduce new patterns and behaviors into the system. It is not uncommon for some procedures or rules to be applied without anyone asking themselves: what are these rules for? Which process does it support? What is its purpose? Are we better / more accurate / faster / more creative... thanks to this rule? It happens that some rules, created many years ago, have long ceased to serve their purpose because the way of doing business, the market system has changed. It also happens that, out of fear of failure and inadequacy, or simply out of rigidity, leaders maintain a culture of an orderly system, to the detriment of the health of that same system.

Very effective, though sometimes perceived as “weird” exercises that I do with leaders (both with individuals and top management) relate to looking at the company from the perspective of the body metaphor issue. Leaders are invited to “translate” all sectors, departments, branches and directorates into the language of parts of one body - organs, tissues, cells, fluids.... It is surprising how much this metaphor provokes lively discussion, in-depth insight and, finally, elevation of the system and systematic observation of almost every position in the company. Thus, for some, IT becomes the bloodstream, sales - hands, finances - the heart. The lymph, stomach, brain and eyes get their proper parts in the organization.

After that, the “harder” part follows. Answers to the questions:

- Is the head in balance with the body?
- What quality of food do you take into your body?
- How well do you cook food?
- How is your circulation? And the pressure?
- How is your spine?
- What are your sharpest senses?
- What do you need to make your eyes work better?
- Are there chronic diseases in the system?
- Do you even try to stay in good shape?
- Are there chronic diseases in the system?
- Do you even try to stay in good shape?

When we have the time and mood, I invite them to draw this organism - organization on a large paper and connect all parts of the system with lines of appropriate thickness. As a rule, some links remain out of paper. We draw them together. These are usually the connections that contribute:

- a) strong, supportive cultures based on trust and high engagement
- b) unhealthy behaviors, lack of trust, dissatisfaction and low engagement

Understanding the interdependence and the type of influence that the elements of the system have on each other is the key to cooperation and living a corporate culture. And, thus, the achievement of goals becomes a logical ending.

Leaders who develop the ability to spot patterns that contribute to or threaten success, to anticipate systemic responses to external influences, and to make, often, difficult decisions about systemic changes are those who lead their organizations in a sustainable way. Systemic thinking in companies can be practiced in four pillars

1. company vision
2. company goals
3. company values
4. company purpose

With four pillars, fully defined, the system can stand (seemingly) stable. That stability is short-term and conditioned by external influences. Leaders who view the system, rather than isolated parts of the company, know how to amortize and use those influences for the growth and development of the organization, before perceiving them as a threat. And isn't that the role of a leader? Don't all those, whose names are inscribed in the rectangles of the organizational chart, expect exactly that from the leader: to be able to lead, when the challenges and threats are strongest ?!



Finally, one of Leonardo's wisdoms:

To the ambitious, for whom neither the blessings of life nor the beauty of the world are enough to be satisfied, as penance comes the fact that life is wasted, without possessing the blessings but the beauties of the world.

# Business and People Development

