

The Leader ship Journey

**A Guide for Leaders and
Future Leaders with
Sustainable Impact**

**Sonja Wekema
Marjon Margés**

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Preface

Leadership development is an essential, joint journey for leaders in organisations. A deep understanding and demonstration of the vision and strategy facilitates authentic behaviour and a common language amongst leaders.

This book offers practical concepts and tools to get started on this journey. It will equip you to be prepared for the future in an ever-changing context. Intercultural competence is one of the key skills for leaders to manage the challenges of everyday work, especially in the diverse globalised market and cross-cultural leadership context.

A step-by-step process

Building a successful leadership culture involves four principles:

- **An intention-based design**
- **Support by a framework**
- **Leader-driven intervention**
- **Introducing and sustaining a common language**

The Other Perspective works with respective organisations, leaders, and participants to co-create and facilitate leadership journeys. This collaboration aligns with medium-term business objectives of improvement, desired change, and skills development.

Guiding principles include the organisational mission, vision, and strategies, which encompass targets and performance indicators. The central aim is to translate organisational values into action, enabling leaders to trust their inner compass and demonstrate compassionate, action-oriented leadership. Fostering connections across business units, generations, and cultures becomes even more crucial for linking strategies to the execution.

The foundation of The Leadership Journey draws from diverse sources of knowledge and experience. The comprehensive toolkit, including stakeholder management, working in the matrix, leading without (direct) authority, feedback & feed forward, self-reflection, accountability, and actionable leadership, serves to support shared values, and leadership principles.

Exploring together

Leadership development is an ongoing journey of learning, connecting, and growing. It is about gaining new insights, discussing what works and what doesn't, and building better habits. This process brings leaders and teams closer and ensures that valuable lessons are noted and shared with everyone involved. It's a collaborative effort to enhance the shared understanding of leadership.

Leadership does not exist in isolation. It is also shaped by external factors, such as the Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) requirements derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These encourage companies and organisations to make a positive impact on the environment and society. It also influences how they brand themselves and plan their strategies. Effective communication, tailored to the context and demonstrating an understanding of stakeholders' interests, emerges as one of the most important skills for leaders to achieve this.

In leadership, you are not alone but exploring together, learning, and adapting in an ever-changing world.

Leaders develop leaders

Leaders develop leaders, it's an old saying. We believe that our role is to facilitate this process, aligning with organisational strategies, requirements, and priorities. We closely monitor content and leverage technical infrastructure and plant the seeds to let personal networks grow. As partners, on your side.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted our programmes for online delivery, optimising learning experiences, incorporating external speakers. We encourage organisations to tap into the wisdom of their internal leaders, drawing on their expertise and experience to fulfil the leadership development role for their people.

Why this book

Future focused skills such as adaptability & flexibility, collaboration & teamwork, emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, creativity & innovation, and digital literacy do not develop solely by courses and training alone. These skills flourish when leaders demonstrate them in their day-to-day interactions with stakeholders. A psychologically safe environment supports individual growth within a collective setting, ensuring relevance and effectiveness as a leader.

Personal growth stimulates leaders in understanding their teams' and organisation's needs, navigating complexities with confidence and inspiration. This book offers valuable insights and strategies to become an effective leader, focusing on:

- You as a person
- You as a leader
- You and your context
- Getting ready for the future
- Trust your compass

in the language that you and your colleagues learn creating the future with the actions of today.

The journey continues

The Leadership Journey is like any journey; it never ends. Trust on your personal compass as you continue your journey into the future.

Enjoy the ride!

Sonja Wekema & Marjon Margés
The Other Perspective

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LEAVE YOUR BAGGAGE BEHIND

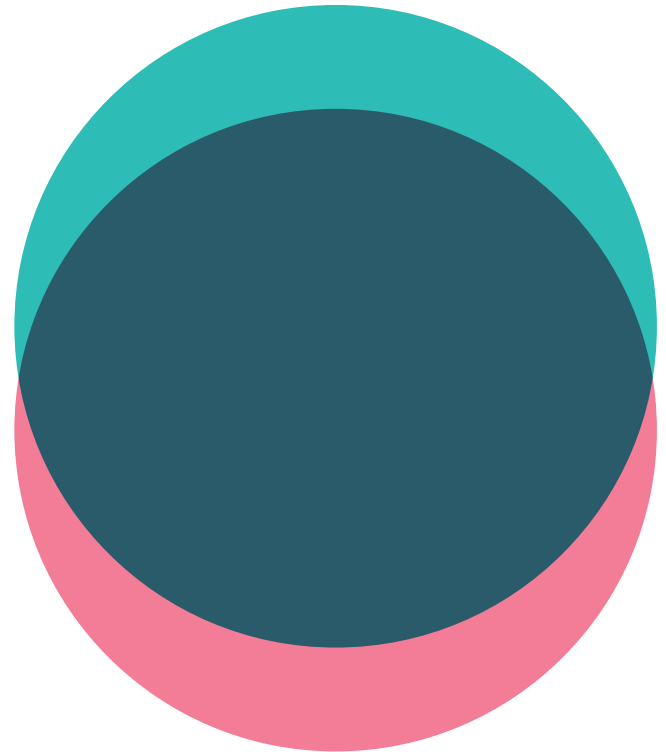


The Leadership Journey



You as a leader

It all starts
with you



**“Knowing
yourself is
the beginning
of all wisdom.”**

– Aristotle

To be an effective leader, it is essential to first understand yourself. That is why this chapter is all about you - your strengths, your blind spots, and your preferences. By taking a deep dive into your own personality and leadership style, you will be better equipped to lead others.

The Hourglass Model

Every journey starts with YOU.

The hourglass model is one of the models we use for continuous self-reflection and growing awareness. It is simple, straightforward, yet an in-depth way to reflect on oneself or with a team.

It connects your inner world with your outer reality as your time is limited and precious.

YOU

It is important to reflect on your own strengths and areas of development. You can take targeted steps to improve and grow yourself, in further developing competences, emotional intelligence or communication skills.

CONTEXT

As a leader, you are faced with a constantly changing environment, some of which you can influence and some of which you cannot.

IMPACT

As a leader, you can make a big impact on your team, organisation and environment. Self-reflection allows you to see how you can maximise this impact, and what steps you can take to increase it.



Hourglass reflection questions

You can use reflection questions to find out what your personal development question is. Reflect on the three elements of the hourglass model and use your own curiosity, intuition, and imagination.



YOU Who am I?

- Why do I do what you do?
- Why is this issue important to me?
- What habits or assumptions are hindering me and others?
- What are my pitfalls?
- What skills do I need to develop further to have a bigger influence?
- What is my effect on other people?
- Which strengths will help me make an impact?

CONTEXT Which external developments affect me?

- What is bothering me?
- What can I influence?
- What can I not influence?
- Who are my stakeholders?

IMPACT What impact do I want to make?

- How do I want to do my work better?
- Why am I doing this work?
- Where do I want to have a bigger impact?
- What's the urgency of the impact I need to make?
- How do I want to be seen?

Why self-reflection matters

Self-reflection is a substantial element in personal growth and development. Unfortunately, self-reflection as part of business is often taken over by the delusion of the day. Considered an 'extra task' that takes us away from our actual work. We live and work in a wicked world with conflicting interests, complexities, and dilemmas. Leaders have to navigate themselves and their teams towards success.

The hourglass model offers clarity about the context and helps to find out where the focus should be. Using the model as a team creates a shared language and invites other perspectives on the same context and situation, hence shows the different perceptions, especially in intercultural organisations. Using it to reflect on yourself grows awareness on how you can grow your impact as a leader.

Look in the mirror

Know who you are, what you stand for, find out what you do not know, what your pitfalls are and who you want to be. When you stand strong in your own centre, with confidence, it is easier to reflect on others and the world around you objectively. Furthermore, you will not let yourself be carried away by the delusion of the day and focus more easily on actions that make an impact. Simply said: be grounded in self-awareness as a leader to make a greater impact.

Know what you can influence

Many things come our way from the outside world: uncertainties, ridiculous requests, noise, unclear priorities, chaos, unnecessary meetings, unknown stakeholders, economic changes. Some we can, others we cannot influence. We all look at the context from our own roles, assumptions, and perspectives.



As a leader, it is important to know not only what you see, but also what the people around you see. What bothers them? What to do to influence that? Inviting different perspectives on the same context is extremely valuable. It will quickly show how we look at the same situation, yet all see something else. Your individual and team actions should be focused on what lies within your circle of influence and focus your energy on topics you can influence.

Move what matters

As a leader you can move the things that matter. What is the gap between the impact you have right now and the impact you desire to make? What is needed to change, in your behaviour and what is that like for others? Ask yourself these questions in relation to your awareness of yourself and the context you operate in with honesty and curiosity, without judgement.

Perception and awareness

Perception and awareness are critical skills for any leader. In this section, you will learn how to recognise your own biases and assumptions, and how to see situations from multiple perspectives. By improving your perception and awareness, you will be better equipped to make informed decisions and communicate effectively with your team.

Every individual has their own way of looking at the world. But not everyone is aware of his or her own perception. Perception and awareness are two vital qualities that every leader should possess. As a leader, you need to have a clear perception of the situation at hand and be aware of the consequences of your actions. These qualities can make a significant difference in your ability to lead effectively and achieve success in your organisation.

Perception is the ability to understand and interpret information correctly. It involves being able to see beyond the surface level of a situation and recognise its underlying meaning. A leader with a strong perception can identify patterns, trends, and potential challenges before they become problems. This allows the leader to take proactive measures to address them before they escalate and cause significant damage.



Awareness enables to recognise and understand one's surroundings. It involves being cognisant of people, events and circumstances that are taking place. Such a leader can read the emotions and needs of team members, clients, and other stakeholders. They can adjust their approach accordingly and create a more positive and productive work environment.

Here are some ways in which these qualities can benefit leaders:

- **Better decision making:** Leaders who have a strong perception and awareness can make better decisions. They can assess a situation accurately, weigh the pros and cons and make a decision that aligns with their goals and values.
- **Improved communication:** Effective communication is essential for any leader. A leader with good perception and awareness can communicate clearly and effectively, tailor the messages to their audience and anticipate how words and actions will be received.
- **Greater empathy:** Leaders who are aware of their surroundings and have a good perception can be more empathic. They can understand the needs and concerns of their team members, clients and other stakeholders and take steps to address them. This can help build trust and strengthen relationships.
- **Enhanced problem-solving:** When a leader has a clear perception of a situation and is aware of their surroundings, they can be more effective at problem solving. They can identify the root cause of a problem, brainstorm solutions and implement a course of action that addresses the issue.



Sonja Wekema

Sonja Wekema is the Founder and Managing Partner of the international network organisation The Other Perspective, and Co-Founder of The Board Whisperers. With over 20 years of experience in the business world, including management consulting and senior leadership roles in various Fortune 500 companies, Sonja is an expert in culture transformation and leadership development in intercultural organisations.

Her mission is to inspire leaders in organisations to adopt new perspectives and ideas, thereby increasing their impact in a sustainable way. In 2017, Sonja transitioned to entrepreneurship, establishing The Other Perspective to support her mission.

Sonja is an external PhD candidate at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and holds degrees in Communications and Executive & Team Coaching. She is accredited as an executive coach by Ashridge (London, UK) and EMCC and certified in various assessment tools (from e.g. Insights Discovery, Hogan Assessments). As an author, speaker (including TEDx) and amateur photographer, Sonja stays active beyond her professional pursuits. She is also a proud mother of two sons.

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Marjon Margés

Marjon Margés is an expert in the field of business strategy and organisational transformations, including leadership development and implementation. She brings a wealth of experience as office automation programme & project manager in Dutch central government, as strategic marketing & sales director and global business lead in high tech industry and semiconductor manufacturing.

Based in Silicon Valley (CA/USA) and Hong Kong, she was part of the dynamics of working in an intercultural context with global companies. Since 2011 is Marjon a senior consultant/entrepreneur and advised many leading companies and organisations. She is associated with experts in complementary fields of knowledge and background.

Marjon studied organisational sociology at Leiden University (NL) and holds a master in Strategic Marketing at NIMA/EFQ7 and INSEAD (F) in International Management. She has an extended family with (step) children and grandchildren, is active as a writer of biographies and historical books, likes gardening and creates quilting projects.

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**“Even the
greatest
creations
start from
small
seeds.”**



**THE OTHER
PERSPECTIVE**

theotherperspective.com

The Leadership Journey, your ultimate guide for sustainable leadership.

Written by leadership experts Sonja Wekema and Marjon Margés, this book is packed with valuable insights and practical tips to help you make a lasting impact.

The Leadership Journey takes you on a step-by-step process from self-reflection to stakeholder management, from effective communication to sustainable development goals in an intercultural context.

With each chapter, you will discover valuable tools, data, and illustrations, along with meaningful stories, quotes, and reflection questions.

More than just a book, The Leadership Journey is a roadmap to success that equips you with the essential skills and knowledge needed to navigate the business ecosystem.

Don't wait any longer. Start your journey today and discover the power of compassionate, action-oriented leadership.



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