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## It's all about L.O.V.E.: Living Our Values Everyday

This paper is the third in a three-part series on dealing with conflicts of values in organisations. "The values whisperer" (VKW Metena Policy Document No. 60) deals with how values come into being in a company. In "Values dilemmas. Steps towards a sound decision" (VKW Metena Policy Document No. 62), we present a step-by-step approach for reaching a solution to moral dilemmas in the company policy.

A dilemma is always a challenge in finding an answer to the question of "What is the right thing to do?" in a situation where the one "good" excludes the other, and every answer has a price. Precisely because the price can be so high for you or for others, managers and staff count certain dilemma issues among the most difficult choices they come up against in their careers.

But conflicts of values are not always about what is right or wrong. The answer reveals itself. The moral challenge sometimes lies more in: am I actually also able to do this? This is what this third part is about. What hinders or helps me to act according to what I consider good or right? And what does this mean for values-driven organisations that want to foster moral competence and integrity in their work environment?

### 1. Personal confrontations with conflicts of values

#### Example 1

*Diederik is delighted about his promotion to "internal controller" in the regional unit of a large chemical group. The new responsibility is a big challenge. The group finance director is favourably disposed towards him, and he also expects to be involved in the new "compensation and benefit programme" soon. An important customer places a substantial order at the end of the first quarter, but only requires delivery in the middle of the next quarter. The group finance director nonetheless asks accounts to book this order as a realised sale at the time of the contract. In this way, the group - contrary to what was feared - can achieve the imposed turnover objective and secure its hoped-for bonus. Diederik is surprised: this is not transparent financial reporting.*

#### Example 2

*The safety requirements of a car assembly company stipulate that children are not allowed on the company site. A Russian lorry driver arrives for a delivery. It is a holiday in his home country and the man has brought his five-year-old son with him. The driver must stay within a 10 metre radius of his lorry while unloading and reloading goods, which will take a full two hours. The reception is unmanned today. There are no other arrangements to look after the child. Sandra is the safety officer and looks for a solution. She consults the plant manager. He does not see any problem: take the child to nearby McDonald's restaurant just outside the industrial sites. A completely*

alien environment for the boy, who does not speak the language either. Sandra sees the worried look in the eyes of the man. She also has a child of this age herself and does not understand how her boss could propose such a thing.

### Example 3

Anja is a customer service manager in a telecoms company. In her job, she tries to do her best for the company and for the broad group of customers. One day in a management meeting she was lambasted. Her CEO belittled her with a few unfounded comments on the receivables in a certain market segment. Anja was upset about this, but did not refute the criticism. She quickly left the room after the meeting. After a very restless night, she decides to see her boss in his office. She fears that she is running a risk by doing so. Going against her boss could mean the end of her appointment.

We see the main character in these stories facing a similar confrontation: the "environment" expects a solution to a problem, in a way that conflicts with what feels right for him or her. Nobody is spared these types of experiences in their professional history. Whatever position you take, high or low in the organisation, one day your work environment will bring you face to face with events that put your personal values under pressure.

Broadly speaking, we can identify three types of story here. In the first example, Diederik is urged by somebody - the person who he reports to and who he depends on - to do something that he feels is not right with respect to others (the company, the shareholders, etc.). In the second example, you, like Sandra, are witness to something that somebody does to another person (the child) and wonder if, and how, you can or should intervene. In the example of Anja, you feel wronged by another person and mull over the question as to how you can stand up for yourself. Each time you are involved in a conflict of values from a different perspective: as a player, as a witness or as a victim.

## 2. Emotions as moral compasses

It is unlikely that this type of situation leaves you unaffected. It happens when something of value to you is violated. Your feelings tell you that something is not right. Emotions are our moral compasses. They appeal to an ethical gut feeling. You feel moral indignation, which can be coupled with inner discontent, mental commotion and not infrequently, acute stress.

## 3. He who has not sinned...

How do you deal with this? Look back at conflicts of values from your own work history and how you responded to them. In which of the following three categories do you see yourself the most?

The **idealist**, who always aims to realise what he actually believes in when it comes to choices.

The **pragmatist**, who is just as committed, but also ensures that she does not put herself in a detrimental position when making choices.

The **opportunist**, who gives priority to personal interests, generally in the form of material gain.

Or do you see something of yourself in the three types? Probably, depending on the situation, the options, the external pressure, the interests at play, etc. A little of all three will have an influence.

But we know what it means to be human: a person who does not always act ethically, which also means that nobody acts unethically all the time, either. In spite of obstacles that should sometimes not be underestimated, every one of us can describe circumstances in which we nevertheless acted according to our values. But equally, we remember situations in which we did not.

In her groundbreaking and very enlightening work "Giving Voice to Values",

Mary C. Gentle, professor at Harvard Business School, examined this perspective of "more or less ethical action". She conducted extensive research and came to this conclusion: (most) people in their lives and work prefer to express their personal values in their words and actions.

If this is true - and her results confirm it - then, in our opinion, we get a very innovative perspective to develop as a values-driven company.

## 4. What is good or right, feels the best...

Against the background of hard business reality - often not devoid of self-interest, calculation and untrustworthiness - the thesis that people prefer to express their personal values sounds incredible, yes, perhaps even naive.

However, the fact that they want this does not mean that they actually do so. Nor that they are able to find the right means to do so. All too often the pressure of circumstances leads people to take other options than those that feel good or right for them. But however you decide to respond, what you believe is good or right feels the best.

This is not so surprising. For all of us, out of a mound of a hundred values, there are a couple that are absolutely on top and form our inner compass. These values are a part of you. Perhaps it is honesty, fairness, or enthusiasm. These few anchor points make you who you are as a person. Personal values are core convictions that have taken shape over the years. You do not work out overnight the values that your life revolves around, as an organisation or company does. Perhaps you have not even found the right word for them. But you nonetheless know, if you think about it, what you stand for.

Even more so: values are such a part of us that they even have their physiological repercussions in the form of neurological

connections in the prefrontal cortex of our brains. Due to the link with the limbic system, which is the centre of emotions, there is a flow of possible positive experiences when we do things that are in line with what our values tell us. This has supportive and inspiring effects. And it also works in the reverse: if we are put under pressure to do things that conflict with our personal values, then the emotional applause dies down to make way for negative feelings such as anger, disappointment or guilt. Our emotions as moral compasses.

## 5. I want to, but the other person doesn't

When a question of values arises in the company, remarkably enough, we all too often stand by how we want to act ethically, but there are others who do not do so. The result is that then we decide that our efforts will be fruitless, and that we will even pay a price for them. What do you do? To accept, complain or leave seem the only options.

However, let's assume that in principle people prefer to find the proper way to act according to their values, then a new reality occurs. The fact that others do not want to do so is a conviction that keeps us from responding in a genuine way. This obstacle fades away if we place our position in a different setting.

Whether everybody wants this, is not so important then. It just comes down to the fact that enough people want to do so. It is a question of critical mass that forms the foundation of a positive culture, in which you do not stand alone.

Wanting is one thing. Whether it also succeeds is another. We all know that we could do it more, and more effectively. Every one of us has the potential to increase the capacity, effectiveness and probability of expressing our own values, by recognising that we have the choice to do so, by practicing this and by actually doing it. Moral competence is like a

muscle that we can strengthen through training.

The conviction that people want to express their values, reinforces the belief that it is also possible. This makes it more probable that a person will actually do so. Success is not guaranteed, but it is worth the effort.

The better you know yourself and the better prepared you are, the better you will be able to express your values.

## 6. Personal values versus organisational values

Most considerations on business ethics deal with greed, power and abuse. We will not discuss the darker side of our human species here, although we do not deny it either. We look at those moments and situations in which employees know what is right and have the will to act accordingly, but experience personal pressure - from colleagues, bosses, customers - to do otherwise. It is not the temptation to exclusively follow self-interests that receives our attention, but that side of people that searches to do the right thing.

*Our vision:*

*When managers and employees feel sufficiently strengthened and supported to speak sincerely and act fairly according to their personal values, they will contribute in their own unique way to the organisational culture that the company needs to fulfil its mission. It is this match between personal and organisational values that creates inspiration and enthusiasm.*

But do personal and organisational values always fit together so easily? More than we would suspect at first glance, as we can see in reality. Suppose that your company defines its desired culture as three core values: cooperation, customer focus and entrepreneurship. If honesty, emancipation, trust or passion are dominant values for you, then you will make

your contribution to the path that the company chooses in your own way on the basis of these references.

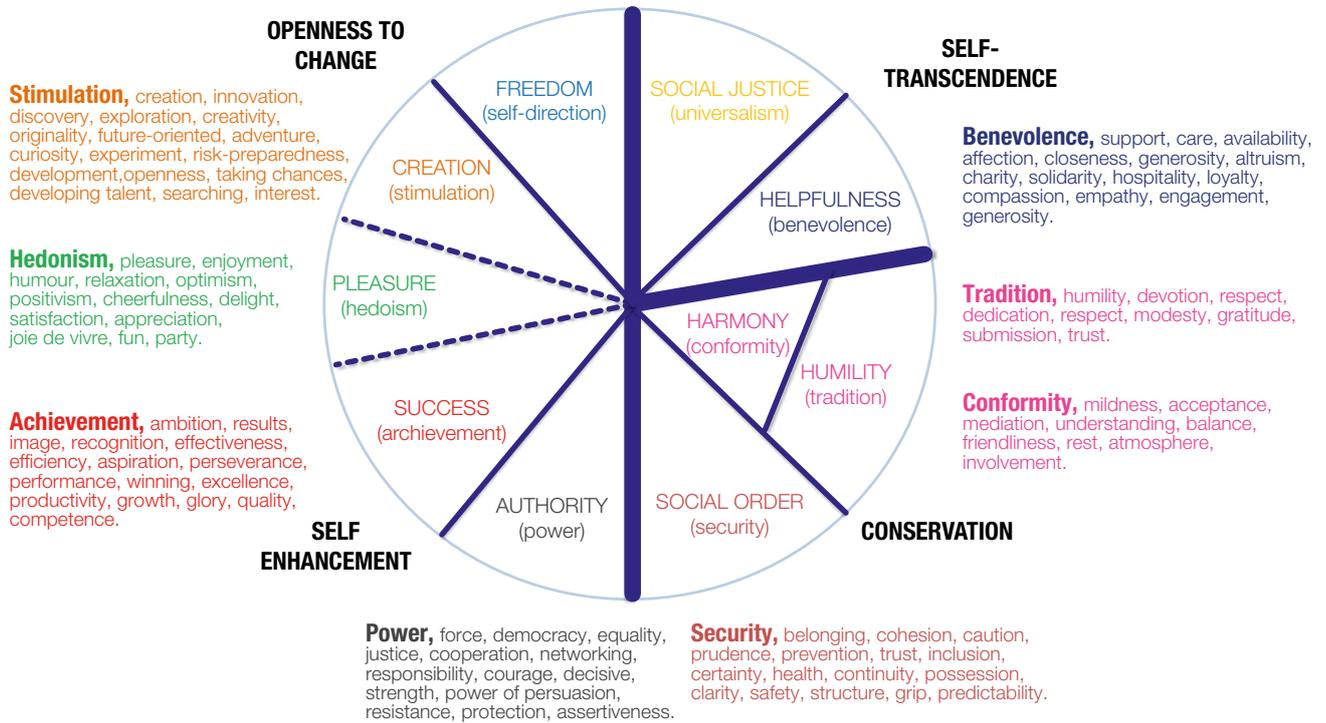
The Israeli researcher, A. Schwartz, developed a very recognisable spectrum of values that has gained international recognition on account of its universality and scientific foundation. He developed a model on the basis of two dimensions: self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, and openness to change versus conservation. This led him to ten value clusters. The values that we often see recurring in Western companies can easily be placed in this model (see diagram on page 4).

First of all, it can be seen that we can place ourselves in this spectrum. Your individual values system is always a mix of the different value clusters in which the one will be more prominent than the other. As if they are all light bulbs in a chandelier that are on, but do not all burn as brightly. One burns the brightest, another hardly at all. Furthermore, we also see that values fit together and in their own way give colour to a whole. An organisational culture gets its own colour palette from the unique mix of personal values systems. Culture is a kind of values porridge, made to taste by everybody's contribution. Not everybody's impact is as great; that much is obvious. But everyone adds something to it. Finally: conflicts generally do not specifically relate to these values, but are about their interpretation in the form of standards or rules. Nonetheless, should there be an incompatibility on a values level, then there is a deeper problem, and whether there can then still be cooperation is open to doubt.

Thus, we are not writing a manual for moral crusaders who think that they know how others should behave. In companies, integrity is all too often a set of prescribed rules and codes of conduct that require adherence. What we propose has borrowed something from Eastern martial arts. In it, you do not learn to run counter to your opponent, but to make an accommodating move.

**Self-direction**, autonomy, self-determination, self-driven, giving meaning, privacy, inspiration, authenticity, depth, awareness, freedom of choice, awareness of values, independence.

**Universalism**, holism, wholeness, understanding of unity, broad-mindedness, long term focus, social justice, unity with nature, sustainability, global awareness, world peace, love, beauty, wisdom.



**Stimulation**, creation, innovation, discovery, exploration, creativity, originality, future-oriented, adventure, curiosity, experiment, risk-preparedness, development, openness, taking chances, developing talent, searching, interest.

**Hedonism**, pleasure, enjoyment, humour, relaxation, optimism, positivism, cheerfulness, delight, satisfaction, appreciation, joie de vivre, fun, party.

**Achievement**, ambition, results, image, recognition, effectiveness, efficiency, aspiration, perseverance, performance, winning, excellence, productivity, growth, glory, quality, competence.

**Benevolence**, support, care, availability, affection, closeness, generosity, altruism, charity, solidarity, hospitality, loyalty, compassion, empathy, engagement, generosity.

**Tradition**, humility, devotion, respect, dedication, respect, modesty, gratitude, submission, trust.

**Conformity**, mildness, acceptance, mediation, understanding, balance, friendliness, rest, atmosphere, involvement.

**Power**, force, democracy, equality, justice, cooperation, networking, responsibility, courage, decisive, strength, power of persuasion, resistance, protection, assertiveness.

**Security**, belonging, cohesion, caution, prudence, prevention, trust, inclusion, certainty, health, continuity, possession, clarity, safety, structure, grip, predictability.

**Graphic**

Values clusters, based on A. Schwartz

You learn to make use of a positive momentum. What it comes down to is to discovering where employees want to give expression to their values in words and actions. Then it is a question of giving strength reinforcing confidence, and providing skills and resources, if applicable, in order to do this. The focus is on how and where can I foster this authenticity in my company? How do we empower our people to align themselves with the common values and allow them to be faithful to themselves.

In this perspective, a values-driven company is a working community in which a sufficient number of people can express their personal values in words and actions, and can contribute thereby to the realisation of the desired collective culture and ambition. Coherent values management ensures that employees are given the necessary space and appropriate support for this in such an organisation.

**7. In a work context, can you really act according to your own values?**

Is it really so simple? Some will argue that it is an illusion to think that you can act entirely according to your own values in the work context. Despite courage and effort, you are never in a position to go against the hostile culture that is the reality of so many companies, especially if you experience this hostility and opposition from those who are in managerial positions or have considerable influence. And thus, so the critics continue, there is fear of the price that you will have to pay for your personal integrity: from social exclusion to negative consequences for your career, from financial to personal difficulties, etc. Some indicate that it can cost you a great deal just to ask uncomfortable questions...

Others fear being branded as disloyal or naive. It is not an illusion that this will exclude you from the "inner circle" of im-

portant forums where strategic decisions are made; mortgaging your future opportunities.

Again, from a different angle, you can hear that it is not so much about you acting ethically, but above all about you creating the impression of doing so. This ensures that many people are not dealing with their behaviour firstly, but with the justification of it.

Another obstacle is the not to be underestimated difficulty of knowing your own core values, and when a certain issue conflicts with them. This requires awareness, self-knowledge and reflection, something that not everybody scores well on.

These are pertinent arguments. It is about finding ways to deal with them. Notwithstanding these obstacles, we see that many people that are still able to effectively speak and act according to their values. They act in a values-driven way,

not in spite of these impediments, but from a thorough understanding of them. Acting with integrity involves some risk management every now and then. That does not mean avoiding risks, but anticipating them, attempting to reduce them, and managing them appropriately. There are managers and employees who speak clearly and openly about their values in a mutual dialogue. They believe that they can provide new points of view that can lead to better decisions.

What do we learn from people who are able to give expression to their values with less fear and more success? What helps them? What do they aim for? How do they set about this? What do they avoid?

## 8. What gives the strength to act genuinely?

### 8.1. View success in a broader context

Why are you doing it? What is your professional aspiration? What is your career objective? The impact of a conflict of values can be completely different depending on the answer to this question.

Seeing your professional objective in terms of rising up in the company, making an impression on those above you, maximising income, can really narrow your degrees of freedom to act genuinely in the event of a conflict of values. You make yourself dependent on those who judge or reward you. Aside from meeting what they expect of you as well as possible, there are not so many alternatives left.

But you can formulate the meaning of your work in a broader way. For example, you want to be part of a company that offers valuable products or services to customers, that creates useful jobs in a healthy environment, that offers reliable opportunities to investors, etc. Then you see that there is more room to manoeuvre in the event of conflicts of values. You will

be able to refer to a broader set of positive principles and objectives in order to give direction to your approach.

Let's hear what the British management author Charles Handy has to say about the broadening that we are talking about here. "On both sides of the ocean it is agreed that it is first about meeting the expectations of the owners of the company: the shareholders. When management is unable to meet their financial requirements, then the price will fall. Perhaps a hostile takeover looms, or new financing remains forthcoming. But elevating the needs of the shareholders to the ultimate objective is to make it a necessary and sufficient condition. We have to eat to live. Food is necessary for life. But if we only live to eat, and make food our only life objective, then we get fat. The objective of business is not to make profit, end of story. Yes, to make profit so that the company can continue to exist, and somewhat differently, can do something better."

For all clarity, there is nothing wrong with financial success that is achieved in a fair manner. The point here is that when a company describes its objectives (and *raison d'être*) more widely, it will be easier for employees to find ways to speak and act in line with their own values.

In brief, there is more that counts than just the next promotion or acquisition. With a sufficient sense of reality, we must recognise that this probably does not hold true for everybody. But when this is the view of a sufficient number, then the chance is high that you will find the necessary supporters when values come under pressure.

This holds true for people and for organisations. By broadening your professional aspirations, you actually give a

different interpretation to what success means for you. This is not obvious in an economy and society where "higher, further and more" are the dominant parameters for success. We do not want to claim here that a broader interpretation of what "success" means makes it easier to deal with conflicts of values. After all, you are committed and the path that you choose will occasionally go against the "mainstream". It is always easier to willingly follow the top or the crowd. What we mean is that a clearer, personal and experienced formulation of your mission and values as a company and as a person will give you the inspiration and reference to make and defend your values-driven choices.

For a values-driven company, this means that it can invite its employees to go through this consideration.

### 8.2. Beyond the ego

But even with all that, we are not there yet. To understand why we do or do not behave genuinely, we must briefly look at the source of our behaviour. A part of what we observe in our surrounding reality is passed through a filter as information in our inner world. This inner world is a warehouse, full of old, stored stories. We compare new information against them. In this way, something gains meaning:

warm, cold, beautiful, ugly, safe, dangerous, etc. Not the truth, but our own truth forms itself. Then a choice of behaviour follows. You go for the option that you believe delivers the best returns. It is not the

events in our environment, but rather our own associations and evaluations that determine our behaviour. Behaviour is always a choice, i.e. you choose what yields the most for you at that time. This process plays out in major and minor de-

**Authenticity means that you want to raise yourself and your environment to a higher level. The creation motive is then more dominant than the fear.**

cisions, sometimes after consideration, but most often subconsciously and at lightning speed.

What brings us something can have a dual nature. The gain can be the realisation of a desired result, or the avoidance of an undesired result. Both are a gain, but with a different intention. If you want to avoid an unfavourable result, then we say that the fear motive is dominant. If we attempt to bring something into being, to create or add something, then we speak of the creation motive. Fear is away from something, creation is towards something. Thus we arrive at what is of importance for our account of values.

Authenticity means that you want to raise yourself and your environment to a higher level. They are efforts that come from your real self. The creation motive is then dominant. The benefit is your creation, in combination with a feeling of happiness. You have the feeling that you have “made a difference”. The basis for this genuine behaviour is your values, which you have thought about so thoroughly that they have become your inner compass.

However significant, in reality we nevertheless see that very many people do not dare give the best of themselves, and that they do not dare to be genuine. The most important reason is the fear of being hurt by others. The creation motive can only be dominant if the environment provides sufficient security. Security means confidence. Insecurity means that you do not know for certain whether you can maintain the right position in the group if you stay true to yourself.

Then the fear motive is dominant. Your concern then goes in a different direction: avoidance of losing control, slipping up, being isolated, or in the most serious case, being cast out of the group. A very specific mechanism comes into play. We

deploy a kind of watchman, who protects our deeper vulnerable self. These watchmen are our ego-selves.

With egos, it is not about “who you are”. It is not genuine. Actually, it is a “trick”. You just put on a mask. And if it works, you do it more often, so often that you retain it as your real self, and your real self gets buried somewhere underneath. The purpose of an ego is to position yourself in the group. The benefit is that you attempt to safeguard yourself. The intention is that you are alright, that you matter. That you can stay, let’s say. You enforce your recognition, as it were. And if it works, there is a feeling of relief. Temporarily. As when it comes to egos, “something of yourself is found”. It seems that you are concentrating on the other person, but in reality you are primarily occupied with yourself.

We have all built up our range of ego-selves. The harmony seeker, for example, who wants to be regarded as pleasant by her environment, or the perfectionist, for whom inadequacy is a threat. The helper who wants to feel needed, or the winner who wants recognition for delivering top performances. The hard man, who does not want to show his vulnerability, or the

victim, who hides from responsibility. And even more of these nice things.

Egos are often successful. That is why we deploy them so often. But can we do without

them? An important question, as egos also have big disadvantages. The greatest disadvantage relates to their intention: to be seen as something by others. If you achieve what you aim for, then it produces a good feeling. However, the question now is who actually determines your success: you or others? Indeed, you are only satisfied if the other person gives the desired reaction. This is a situation of considerable dependency! Moreover, you lose a part of yourself through the constant use of your egos. You think that

it is you, but it is not your real self. You are not creating. You are always repositioning yourself. It is tiring. Also, it generally comes across to others. It does not generate any credibility, which makes it all the more difficult for people to connect with you. Because who connects with someone who is not credible?

The good news is that in less secure environments such as in many companies, people can develop to a level in which the creation motive is more dominant, in which it is about raising themselves and their environment to a higher level. In which they find ways, more often and more effectively, to speak and act according to their personal heart: their mission and values.

Whoever wants to develop greater authenticity will have to scrutinise their own fear motives because something that you don’t want says a great deal about what you do want. How do you do that? By examining yourself to see what you fear. Failing? Not being thought of as the best? Being rejected? It is important to be aware that fears are usually present, that they have their meaning, and that you must be able to nuance them. Not all fears are to be eliminated directly. That is not necessary. In this respect, your egos will always have a place, alongside your real self. By understanding your fears, you will also accept them more and their forceful influence will decrease in strength as a matter of course.

For values-driven managers and companies, this means that the person opens himself to this development path. By gaining personal strength, it turns out that the person needs to deploy his egos less, which are always available, and that through less ego, the person takes the step towards more genuineness. The most powerful engine to this end is the exemplary behaviour of the managers themselves.

Companies that choose this path create an opportunity to draw on the potential of employees on a fundamental level, to

**The creation motive can only be dominant if the environment provides sufficient security.**

gradually realise their values, and thereby those of the company. The benefit is an effective and enjoyable organisation.

### 8.3. Finding sources of strength

We have discussed two dimensions that can give people the strength and courage to act more frequently and more successfully on the basis of their personal values. They place their concrete actions in a wider context: that of their personal mission. In other words: they know what it comes down to for them personally. The extension of this is that their desires prevail over their fears. Their creation motive is more dominant than their fear motive. They are not out to be “regarded as being something”, but as “making a difference”, i.e. raising themselves and their environment to a higher level. They derive meaning from this, more than how rich, clever, strong or pleasant others find them. Beyond their ego arises authenticity.

But how do they do this in practice? We can borrow a number of views and approaches from genuine managers (we choose a wide approach to the concept of manager: they are people who have a hierarchical management position as well as everyday staff who exhibit personal leadership) that will help you to find your own strength in value-loaded situations. Let's identify the personal sources of strength.

#### 1. The principle of normalisation

By this principle we mean that it is not unusual for conflicts of values to arise. On the contrary, they are inherent to doing business. The confrontation with an ethically-loaded issue can have a crippling effect. As if something unthinkable or exceptional is happening to you. Ethical questions are just like other business challenges. By “placing them in a different context” as “part of the job”, we can reduce the overwhelming nature and surprising effect of them. This enables the question to be faced in a less alarming or emotive mode.

#### 2. Understanding of the interests of others

A second source of strength lies in the ability to understand the motivations, fears and needs of others. We saw that, in their behaviour, people always make an assessment of what brings them the most. This does not mean that self-interest always reigns supreme. The benefit can also lie in the contribution that a person can make for others or the general good. It is only with manifest self-interest that you lose sight of the effects on others or the greater whole. Acting ethically means that the three are taken into consideration: yourself, the other person, and the greater whole. In this study, it is useful to separate the concept of values and interests. Values are principles that a person believes in. Interests relate to what is needed in order to achieve an objective. We already saw in the previous point that it is normal that they come into conflict with one another at certain times. Being able to give expression to your own values begins with the art of listening, empathising with the values and interests of others. Being open to this creates the necessary space to bring your own interests to the fore in contacts.

#### 3. Finding supporters

It is easier for most of us to express our values against expected resistance if we are not alone. Sometimes you find support in the immediate work environment, sometimes in the wider organisational context, sometimes outside it. They can be friends, family, people in similar positions in other organisations, confidantes, a mentor, a coach, an expert, etc. In many cases, the feeling of being alone is the reason why people choose to accept, complain or even leave. It influences the assessment of your vulnerability, the risk that you are running, and so much more.

#### 4. Communicating in your personal style

How do you prefer to communicate and at your best? What words best



fit the situation? In an ethical conflict, we are inclined to think that there are only two options: direct opposition or silence. Another misconception is that standing up for your values comes down to the same as moralising or admonition. The range of styles and ways to express your values is much wider. Depending on the context, the one approach is more suitable than the other. Sometimes a situation can require a directive, assertive intervention. Sometimes an enquiring style is more successful. Also introducing the right information can give you a greater voice. And you can also make strategic choices in the way in which you approach others: the entire group together, or one by one. We can do it alone, or consider involving others who are more skilled than we may be in certain areas. The most important thing is the awareness that a great variety of communication styles is possible, and that when standing up for your values, it comes down to finding your own voice, learning to know your strengths, and using them.

#### 5. Doing what works

A very different source of strength, finally, is your own positive experiences. The basis of our argument was that people prefer to speak and act in line with their personal values, although they do not always do so. But not always does in fact mean sometimes. They were presumably not all successes. But a number were. The strength lies in examining and finding what actually worked. What did it deliver? And how did you go about

it? The result was perhaps not a total reversal of an undesired situation, but a significant step. What did you learn from it? What more could you have done? What could it have provided for others? In other words, where did you find your positive confirmation? Indeed: your capacity to deal with challenging situations is greatly increased if you can tell yourself a positive story about it. This revolves around providing answers to two questions: "Why did this come my way?" and "What good did it do?"

## 9. Conclusion

Today, companies consciously think about the culture they need in order to realise

their mission, their collective ambition. They try to embed it in a set of a few priority values. But people do not act according to a list on the wall. Their behaviour reflects the individual values that are dominant for them in their personal and professional lives. People prefer to express what they believe is good or right in their words and actions. This does not mean that they actually do so. Sometimes they do not dare do so, other times they do not know how to... In values-driven organisations, it comes down to creating conditions that enable employees to make a contribution to the common objective more successfully and genuinely. That is, in line with your personal values, adding your own colour to the multi-coloured palette that is the culture of an organisation. But there are many factors to be recognised that can present

obstacles for people in companies with their often competitive, and even hostile, cultures. Looking at people who have succeeded in speaking and acting according to their own values, we see three characteristic items:

1. They place their choices in the perspective of a greater context.
2. The passion to raise themselves and others to a higher level is their most important motivator.
3. They are able to find their own voice by drawing from personal sources of strength.

For managers in values-driven organisations, this means that they give their staff the space and opportunities to experience and express their values in practice, genuinely and uniquely in their daily actions. When a sufficient number of people find suitable ways to do this, a more effective and enjoyable organisation arises.

### What does this mean for managers in values-driven organisations?

We have said that organisations are more effective and more enjoyable when more people can work in line with their personal values, while focusing on the collective ambition of the company.

Managers in values-driven organisations help their employees to find ways to do this in a way that is suitable and successful for them, and which give them a positive feeling. How can they do this?

#### A few suggestions:

- They are guided by a greater interest (sense of vocation).
- They continually help people to remember what it is all about.
- They make the values of the company clear and visible through their own exemplary behaviour.
- They are well aware of their own fears and how this can lead to ego behaviour.
- They make the creation motivator as dominant as possible: the attention in the company is always targeted at how you can raise yourself and your environment (internal and external) to a higher level.
- They create an atmosphere of security and confidence that invites genuine behaviour.
- They pay personal attention to and show interest in what motivates people.
- They go for a coaching style of leadership.
- They create opportunities for open dialogue on the values of the company.
- They reward argument and encourage alternative visions.
- They believe in the strength of humility because without the commitment of everyone, every objective is unachievable.
- They not only inspire, but on the basis of their values, they also watch over the lower limits of what is not tolerable.

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