

# MY MISSION

as Head of Business Institute has always been to help people step into leadership where others are ready to follow them towards new and better goals



# 10

LEADERSHIP  
DOGMAS



# LEADERSHIP MANIFESTO

for the 21st Century

By Lars Ib

**BUSINESS INSTITUTE**

# LEADERSHIP MANIFESTO

We are all different, we each have our unique personality and the present time is very different from the time I started exploring the concept of 'leadership' many years ago. Organizations are also widely different; they have different goals, are driven by different principles and they are in different situations and phases that are constantly changing. Therefore, there is also an endless flow of academic theories and practical models which seek to define how one should lead people and organizations through this whirlpool of diversity from new angles. On that account, there are just as many ways to lead as there are stars in the sky, and they all have a degree of truth – but only a degree. Despite all the available management books, you can still not just look up a page in a book and lead people only by what you have read.

Nevertheless, in this myriad of diversity and leadership chaos, there are conditions that recur. Despite our differences, we are all human beings. The Merchant of Venice would probably have been a great bank executive even in 2019, despite new technology and the fast pace of change. Likewise, Henry Ford and Elon Musk look alike, even though they are separated by a century.

*How do you connect the natural human ability to prove oneself and lead other people with the increasing amount of theoretical insight within the scope of reality that modern businesses and organizations need to work within?*

This has been a primary question throughout my whole career. My main mission, as Head of Business Institute, has never been to help people get a job as well-paid executives, but to actually help them step into leadership where others are ready to follow them towards new and better goals.

*The ignorant man affirms, the learned man doubts, the wise man reflects*



# There are two major reasons why I chose to write this leadership manifesto at this time:



Firstly, for more than 30 years, I have been following almost everything that has been said and written about 'management and leadership'. I have always made time to listen to what people have said, and today, I see patterns and movements more clearly than I did when I, as a young man, stepped into the professional leadership universe for the first time.



**Secondly**, we are about to enter a new century. We are in the ford of an era, where the planet's private and public organizations are being recreated in a new form. This means new demands for leadership - not necessarily demands that have never been seen before, but demands that have not been prevailing for a very long time.

Therefore, we must take interest in the new leadership frameworks that enable radical renewal and progress in an unfamiliar scope for development while retaining the insight and experience of the past, so that we are not left high and dry when we are to create a new, better world.



# THE PLATFORM & INTEGRITY

This leadership manifesto is not a recipe for how young leaders can make a career for themselves in the new universe. It is an inspiration for how they can create their own personal leadership within some ethical frameworks. The purpose of the manifesto is to help leaders, regardless of age, create a platform they can lead from. To give them a solid base under their feet – a foundation they unquestionably know is the right one. However, this does not mean that they will never be in doubt. True leaders will always be in doubt as to whether they are doing the right thing. Throughout their careers, they will face dilemmas in which they will have to choose between multiple paths – and whatever path they chose, it will be at a cost for both themselves and others.



However, leaders must never question their own integrity. Integrity is based on a personal set of values that one must be able to implement. Primarily in relation to oneself. If you cannot lead yourself and be in tune with own values and face own demons, you cannot lead other people either. Leaders must never make themselves victims; they are more at risk than others to be criticized and dismissed, and if that happens, they must be able to leave the job with the words:

*“I am not ashamed of what I did with my leadership or regret my actions, because I kept my integrity during the whole process”.*

Being true to your own values and maintaining your integrity is not a luxury. It's a human right. No human being should sell their soul to promote a leadership career, because then, they will evidently no longer be able to lead themselves, nor be worthy of being followed by other people. Because it is the support of the employees, colleagues and managers that determines if you are exercising leadership – not the title of your business card.



# THE TOOLBOX & THE CRAFT

As already written, we all have a different history, education, personality, cultural background and gender and, as such, we will all have to lead from each of our individual platforms. But this does not mean that we will be competent leaders if we merely lead morally and based on authenticity. It will only make us well-intentioned amateurs, because leadership is not that easy.

The personal platform and the ability to lead yourself is just the beginning. Most leaders need a solid toolbox that enables them to understand their employees, organizations and markets; they must be able to analyze the problems, set new goals, invent new strategies and motivate other people to create results.



This is where we are presented with an overwhelming supply of management literature written by academics and practitioners from every business sector. Every time you learn to master a new theory or model of leadership, you get a new special tool in the bag, and the market for management literature is like a night sky where new supernovas constantly appear. No one has the final solution, but everyone is contributing with inspiration, and, ultimately, the leader is choosing which tools to use by own hand.



# YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP ARCHITECT

Leadership can be considered a professional craft. A métier. Do-it-yourself leaders can certainly experiment and be fortunate in finding their way towards the goal, but there are experts who have been there before them. They are academics and practitioners who have carefully considered it and carried it into effect and have described models that rapidly and carefully bring one to the desired result. This is where leadership becomes professional, because the leader now has control over the process.



Which leadership tools the individual leader chooses and how they are applied depends on the platform the leader in question has. We each pick the stars in the sky that suit our challenges and leadership. There are no generic correct models: the introverts or extroverts, the creative or analytical, the passionate or dull – everyone has their own way of leading, and there are many different ways to succeed.

That is why we all need to be our own leadership architects. We have to individually design our own style to lead people and organizations and find the right tools that work for us. We must discover how we combine the theoretical leadership tools and our own practical leadership. Every leader will have certain features throughout their career, but they will also experience a development along the way. As we develop and expand our personal platform, most of us will change our appearances.

We may get more courage, greater insight and understanding, change our level of ambition and improve our technical proficiencies, all of which means that our behavior as leaders develops throughout our careers. We want to be our own leadership architects throughout our lives, and, as such, we go from being workers who simply create what the drawings describe to becoming artisans who leave our individual mark on the result.



# THE NEW LEADER EXPERIMENT

The business sector has one leg in a completely new time, whose condition can be described by the abbreviation VUCA which stands for: volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The concept was introduced by the US Military after the end of the Cold War, where no one really knew where the world was headed.

Both the public and private business sector is in this situation at the moment. We are experiencing an insane turbulence in a technologically and globally driven world; everything seems to be reassessed, and it is within the blurred lines that future leaders must unfold their leadership. Old business models are being replaced by new ones at a rate we have never seen before, and we are facing new generations of employees in a digitized world that is breaking with everything we have experienced so far.



It is in this universe that the new leader experiment must take place. Upcoming leaders have to break out of the usual framework and experiment with new models. We are moving from an industrial hierarchical management model to a network model in constant change. Being a leader has never been so demanding, but, at the same time, it has never been so exciting.

# ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE OTHERS

In a VUCA world where nothing is what it is used to be, and where no one can see where the development is moving towards, the need for leaders who dare to set new goals and instruct a new direction is increasing. This is where the concept leadership breaks with management. Time is demanding people who dare to take a step away from the rank. It takes courage, because you risk making mistakes and instructing a wrong direction when you step out of your comfort zone. But this is the only way forward.

The leader is responsible for creating movement. The moment you feel comfortable in a situation, you have to move forward to where you feel uncomfortable again, or else the leadership role will unnoticeably become a management role. You have to find your inner adventurer, if you want to master the future. You have to explore your life, career and business. The possibilities are limitless, life is great, and the difficulties you cannot foresee are most likely to be dealt with when you meet them.





# THE STUBBORNNESS

A good leader is stubborn. It is not the same as being foolhardy, and it is not the same as not listening to other people's objections. But, if you, after consideration, have made a decision that you want to take your organization in a specific direction and towards a specific goal, you must not give up when it starts to hurt. If you believe your decision is right, you must stubbornly stick to it. Life has taught me that people who stubbornly strive after a clear and attractive goal are usually the ones who reach it.

Stubbornness means that the leader does not lose courage. And a leader must have courage, not just to move outside of one's comfort zone, but also to have the courage to believe that one will find a solution, even when there is not one in sight. The crew of Apollo 13 returned to Earth alive, primarily because the flight controller Jerry Bostick approached the group of technicians who was at their wits' end and said:

*"Don't panic, these are our options, and failure is not one of them."*

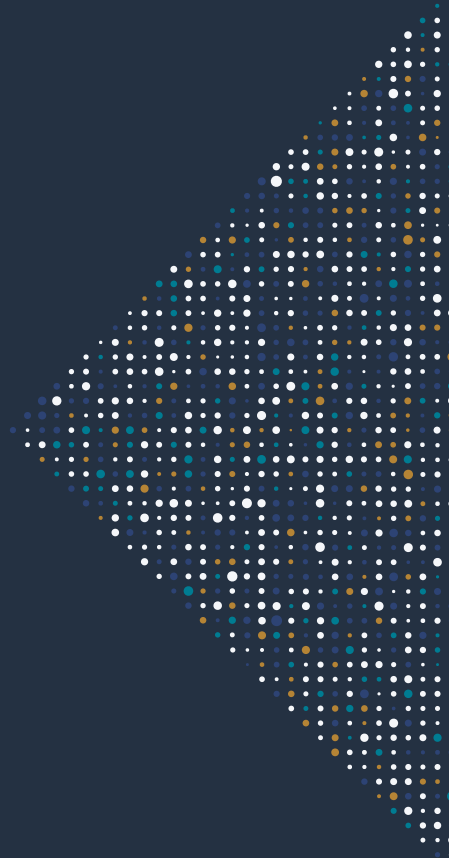
One of the keywords of the present time is innovation, and innovation is about finding a new solution that we currently are not familiar with. But we know it is there, and even when everyone else has given up, the competent leader will continue to believe that things will succeed, and that person will never stop believing.



# BELIEVE IN HARD WORK

My cultural DNA as a person from northern Jutland has a distinct influence on the design of this manifesto, and in the light on my conviction that you, as a leader, must never give up, my belief is in the work. I believe that the way to go in life is through hard work – every day, every week and every year. Diligence is not a guarantee for success, but it increases the likelihood of success.

Some will argue that people are lazy by nature at that we get stressed from work. I disagree with that. Meaningful work is valuable and satisfying, and, as a leader, you have to be at the head of the hard and meaningful work.





# THE LEADER THAT CREATES PURPOSE

All things considered, leadership is a question of creating purpose for yourself, the employees, the owners and the society you are a part of at any time. The leadership that creates purpose must be balanced against often very tangible requirements for value creation. Owners must get return from capital, employees must be paid for their work, customers must get value from the services and products they purchase, and the organization must function sustainably in a world that is currently under high pressure.

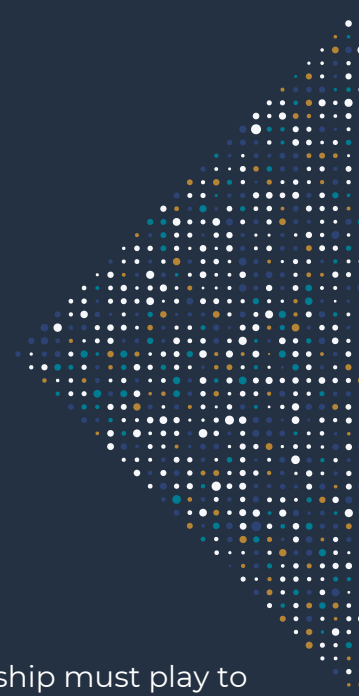
Usually, the leader must function in a complex of dilemmas, but my experience tells me that competent leadership, acted with authenticity, can get seemingly contradictory interests to meet and become meaningful to all parties.

The concept of purpose is central to future leadership where technology seems to be taking over many of the tasks previously undertaken by humans - because everyone can handle even the most difficult tasks, as long as they are meaningful to us. The same applies for cohesion between the company's strategy, organization and the external environment: everything must fit together so that it appears to be meaningful.



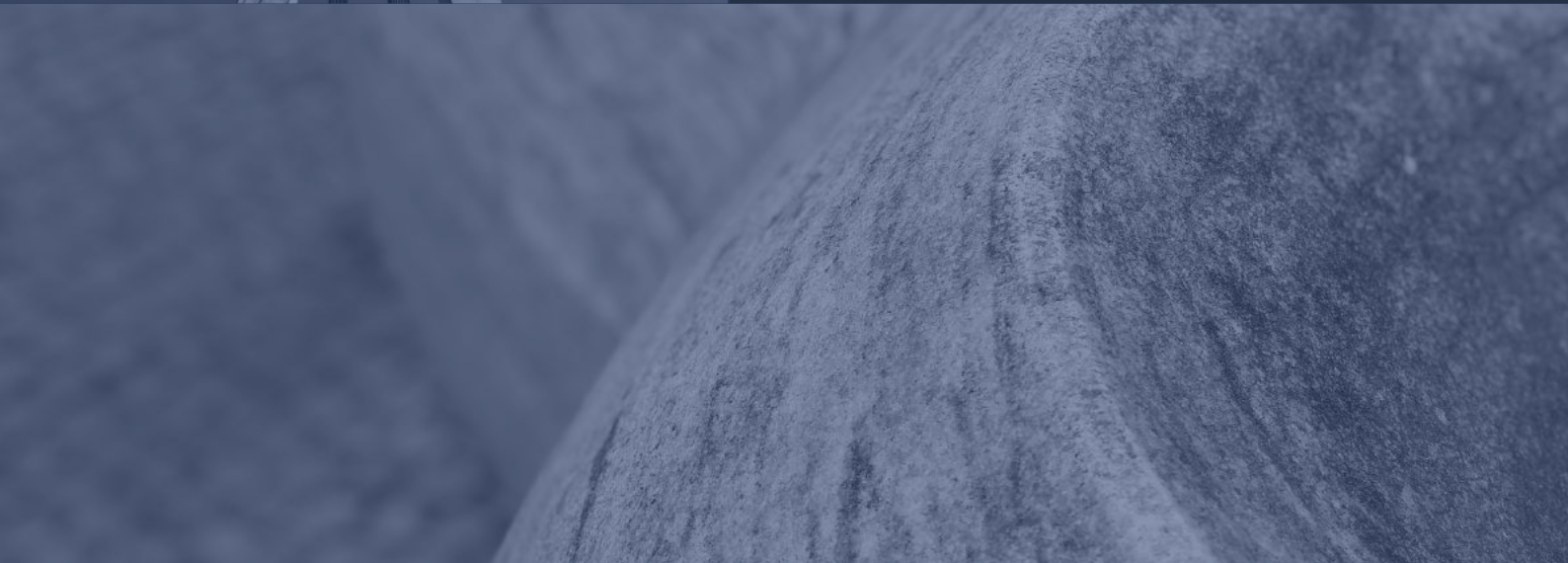
# MAKE THE COMPLICATED SIMPLE

An important ingredient in creating purpose in the organization is to create simplicity. We tend to complicate things, and our external environment is doing anything it can to increase the confusion. Experts and interest groups are constantly entering the picture with gigabytes of information, and they constantly hold the magnifying glass over the isolated issues and themes they believe are the most important.



This is where the leadership must play to one's strengths. It is positive if a leader can zoom in on specialized areas and understand them, but the crucial quality for leadership is defined by whether the person in question is able to zoom out of the details and form a clear overview of the situation.

An important role for the leader is to be able to explain the context of things. Finding the heart of the matter, identifying the key issues and setting new, clearer goals in spite of the noise, indicates that the leader can make competent decisions and get support for them.



# THE LOVE FOR OTHER PEOPLE

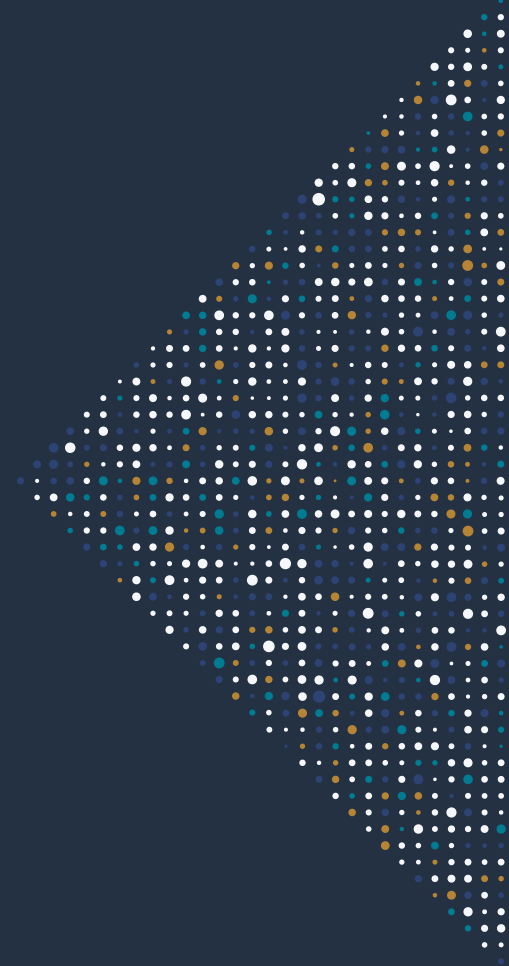
I believe in caring for other people. A leader that does not care about other people and do not treat them the same way the leader himself wants to be treated, is not showing real leadership. No one will follow someone that does not respect one.

But it does not mean that you should let your empathy and caring for other people fade over your leadership. As a leader, you have several goals in addition to the altruistic ones. It is not enough to hold the team together, you also have to create results. You are responsible for implementing business goals and balancing them against a number of other interests, and, ultimately, you must be able to make requirements that go against others; in some cases even dismiss people, if they do not live up to their obligations.



## TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

There is a degree of recklessness in every leadership. You have not become a leader just to manage by a code of practice and go towards goals that are given from above. Ultimately, you become a leader because you are driven towards a result and respect your own will. Admiral Nelson allegedly put the binoculars to his blind eye when he was asked to stop the Battle, and my experience through a half-century tells me that sometimes, it is better to ask for forgiveness than permission. Regardless of which level you are at as a leader, you have an obligation to get results and at times, results are more important than following the right guidelines you have obtained from the job.



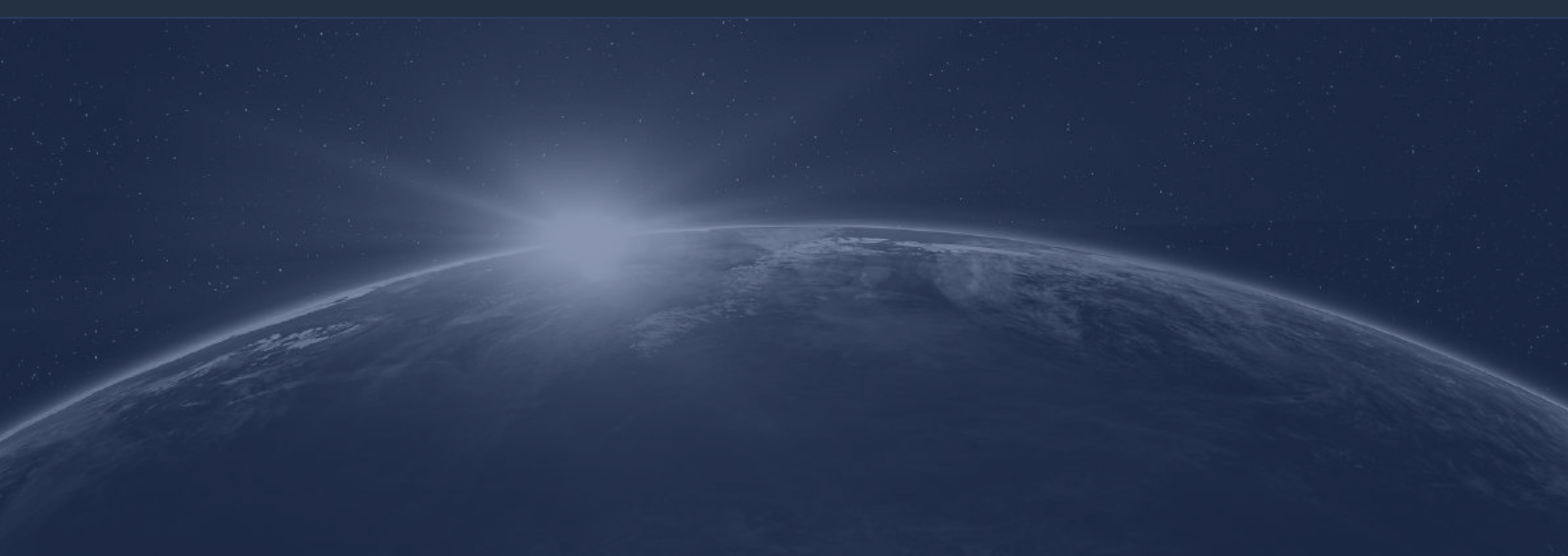


# THE FAITH IN A BETTER WORLD

Since Frederick Taylor's theory of 'scientific management' broke through in modern industry more than a century ago, the concept of leadership has evolved to become a technical discipline driven by the demand for economic growth. In the 20th century, people and ethics have kept a more secluded role in the definition of the business world's leadership. We have been focusing on the how but not on the why.

In this leadership manifesto, I want to break away from this industrialization of the leadership.

I believe that future leaders have to start with the purpose – with a why! There is always a human purpose of genuine leadership that lies above the financial results that leadership brings. Immanuel Kant claims that people are always a goal on their own and never just a remedy for others to reach theirs. I agree with that.



The older I become, the clearer it is to me that we all have an obligation to make the world a better place. Economy and business must not be separated from people, and, therefore, I wish that future leaders accept the obligation and pleasure to lead from some of the guidelines my manifesto is describing. 21st century leadership must not remain a technical discipline driven by money and power. It must be a developmental philosophy filled with care and human understanding, so leaders who take responsibility for giving direction to others can be proud of their work and feel that they have chosen one of the most meaningful métiers I know.

# THE DEVELOPMENTAL PHILOSOPHY CAN BE SIMPLY EXPRESSED THROUGH THE 10 DOGMAS MENTIONED BELOW:

1. Separate leadership from management
2. Maintain personal integrity
3. You need to develop your craft
4. Go on adventures and experiment
5. Set goals and create movement
6. Be stubborn and hardworking
7. Results are more important than rules
8. Create meaning and simplicity
9. Be humane
10. Believe in a better world

The dogmas above set the framework for proper leadership behavior in a chaotic and changeable world and they can follow the careers of even the youngest leaders. It is my hope that Danish leaders will ask themselves the question: "Do I follow the 10 rules?", and for every affirmative answer, the energy and the results will grow.

