The background of the image shows a close-up of a desk. On the left, there is a dark-colored notebook with a visible purple elastic band. To the right, a portion of a grey pencil with an orange eraser is visible. The central focus is a black rectangular box containing white text.

Takis Athanassiou | Leadership  
Initiative

# Leadership & Business

Connecting the Dots of  
being, leading, working,  
designing and focusing on  
what's important

# Table of Contents

1. Leadership
2. Leadership is ...
3. A Raw Model for Leadership
4. What Exactly Strategy Is? (And What It Is Not!)
5. Leading In A Season Of Change
6. 7 Laws for Leadership Development
7. 4 Words For Leadership And Personal Development
8. 2 Quadrants To Lead Your Decisions
9. How To Change the World
10. ... and Business

11. Start up on Empty

12. Business Startups - An Approach

13. A New Economic Model  
- Some Thoughts

14. Business Development  
As A Sudoku Puzzle

15. What Exactly An LADRT  
Is, And What It Can Do  
For My Business?

16. Towards a Culture of  
Change

17. What connecting  
Leadership to Business?

# Leadership

"What leadership is?" and "Why it is so important today?" are just 2 of the questions keep running in the mind of people want make a positive change in their life!

Here are some approaches to help you clarify what you want to do with leadership and how!



# In this section you will read:

## Leadership is

What exactly, Leadership is? This is a question with a lot of levels and not a singular answer.

## A Raw Model for Leadership

Today, we experience a shift in the traditional structures of life, business and work, alike to the situation and events described in the film Modern times by Charlie Chaplin (unemployment, the introduction of new technologies in production, job seeking, financial shortage, etc). This shifting in the events and circumstances brings along and an analogous change in the way we used to define the things around us.

## What Exactly Strategy Is? (And What It Is Not!)

Have you ever consider, what strategy is? We hear all the time about strategy by many official and unofficial channels.

## Leading In A Season Of Change

I was talking, with an old friend of mine, about the possibility of effective changing within our modern social and business

## 7 Laws for Leadership Development

Leadership is a discipline, you can find in many places! You should be vigilant to understand and comprehend the leadership's expression and development when it is practiced.

## 4 Words For Leadership And Personal Development

Leadership and personal development are concepts, closely related. The one cannot exist, without the other, and vice versa.

## 2 Quadrants To Lead Your Decisions

I found myself, lately, to consider more and more, the ways and practices for "good" decisions.

## How To Change the World

I was browsing on the Amazon the other day to find some books I would like to buy and I stumble upon a book with description about shapeshifters!

# Leadership is ...

## What exactly leadership is?

What exactly, Leadership is? This is a question with a lot of levels and not a singular answer. Webster defines Leadership in a descriptive way, i.e

1. *the office or position of a leader*
2. *capacity to lead*
3. *the act or an instance of leading*

(Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/leadership>)

But those definitions are not grasped the other connotations, carried out by the word. At least as it used today.

## Personal Approach

As I have mentioned *elsewhere*, I think that there are a lot of ideas and "don't"s, a Leader (*or an everyday person, for that matter*) should employ in his/hers everyday life and business. *Self-determination*, of course, *things* he/she should or shouldn't indulge in, etc.

For me, though, leadership is the skill, art, science, discipline of someone to:

*self-directed in indented, principle-based, goals, influencing at the same time, in a positive manner, his/hers relationships or circles (personal, friends, work, business, etc.)*

Therefore I'd like to see the term as a wrapper or a "**catch-all term**", that indicates a cluster of different varied principles, such as:

- Vision development

- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Personal development and effectiveness
- Execution discipline
- Trust
- Intention
- Commitment
- Productivity
- (Self) Management
- decision Making
- Communication
- Skill development
- Technical proficiency

All of that, and even more perhaps, constitute aspects of what Leadership is, and everyone participates in a larger picture, we can define it, from outside, as Leadership. Instead of define (**ergo** limit it in context, content, and depth) leadership, though, I would like to furnish a different approach, aloof from the "formal" path.

*Leadership is the intended actions of a responsible and accountable person, in order to define, design, develop, orchestrated and carried through his life (personal and professional life) in a mode that enhance his/her life and those of around him/her.*

**What do you think? This description can help you in broadening your actions and thoughts, towards your goals?**

## References:

- Concepts of Leadership
- Leadership (*from Wikipedia*)
- Leadership Is a Conversation
- 12 Ways to Know If You Are a Leader
- 8 Leadership Lessons from a Symphony Conductor



# A Raw Model for Leadership

Today, we experience a shift in the traditional structures of life, business and work, alike to the situation and events described in the film *Modern times* by *Charlie Chaplin* (*unemployment, the introduction of new technologies in production, job seeking, financial shortage, etc*). This shifting in the events and circumstances brings along and an analogous change in the way we used to define the things around us.

New conditions require new definitions of concepts, ideas, approaches and, of course, a new definition of leadership, a one that would integrate all the many facets and roles, reserved by the society for modern man and woman.

This new definition of leadership should balance, encompass and engage in a consistent course of action, all the different aspects of someone being or aspiring to be an effective and influence agent of a group of people. of a community or of a society (*i.e. a leader or someone aspiring to be a one*).

Today, we live in times of change (*interesting times as the old Chinese proverb says*), and changing, it seems to be the only constant we have to deal with, in the future. Both in our personal as in our professional life.

This, usually, means that a lot of things have to be abandoned, if we wish to have the courage to stand up, today, as leaders, warriors, scholars, trainers, workers, employees, educators, directors, consultants, entrepreneurs, business person, etc.

There are a few models in the international literature, attempt to define *leadership* in our modern society, some of which have been *discussed* elsewhere. But one of the most promising, according to my opinion, model, trying to include the different aspects and roles of a leader in the present conditions of market and society, comes from the area of *e-Learning* and

This model has been presented before, in this [blog](#), with the title: "[The 11 hats of an online learning coordinator](#)".

In that post, I tried to present the basic characteristics and roles of a coordinator in the online process of learning. But reviewing the same characteristics and roles I find striking resemblances and similarities with the roles, a leader should he or she embodied in our modern digital economy.

In short, today, a leader (*not only in the strict sense, but as well as someone who wish to take control of his/hers personal and professional life*) should be:

- **content and context facilitator:** a leader should be able to give content and context to any given situation, support friends, colleagues, co-workers to understand more easily and handle effectively the emerging and pressing situations in personal and professional life.
- **metacognition facilitator:** a leader should encourage the reflection, by all the involved parties, of the processes involved in any given situation, providing goals, outcomes, skill development paths, aiming at the best comprehension of the events and the situations and drawing valid conclusions to be served as guides for future actions.
- **process facilitator:** a leader provides always operational support towards the others, aid them in the development and implementation of the required process and systems, removing the obstacles may arise in the course of action and align the outcomes with the strategy, goals, and values of the organization, of the company, or of the society.
- **advisor/counselor:** a leader always provides advice, mentoring, facilitation, coaching, and support to anyone wishes to benefit by him or her contribution.
- **assessor (formative and summative):** a leader is responsible for offering the necessary feedback to his/hers followers, circles of influence, to motivate them towards desired directions, to support them in their activities, to evaluate them on their progress, etc.
- **technologist:** a leader usually have to be a valuable resource of knowledge related to the proper use of the required technologies and tools might help an operation or an activity.

- **resource provider:** a leader should be responsible for providing all the necessary resources deemed as necessary for all the participants in a formal or informal procedure, trying to leverage the lack of required skills to the demands of the new situation for all the people involved in a process.
- **manager/administrator:** a leader is usually responsible for the management or administration of one or more procedures, projects, activities in the framework of an organization or in his/her life. In this level, he or she should be able to monitoring, evaluating, checking and re-adjust the flow of the implementation of a given procedure or project, and re-adjusted it, if deemed necessary.
- **designer:** a leader usually is the designer and the source of various leadership initiatives, schemes, strategies, etc that should be started or proceed in the framework of a situation. In this role, he or she provide help, experience, goals, and activities towards others involved in this situation.
- **co-leader:** a leader or someone aspires to be one, usually, is a part of a group of leaders, following their steps, monitoring the problems, dealing with the situations and the problems may arise and proposing proper win-win solutions for the best resolution of any given situation.
- **researcher:** a leader, usually, is a pro-active participant and researcher in the leadership development process, trying to merge in the learning process, knowledge, skills, attitudes and leadership experience that would support more efficiently the developing of leadership skills and experience to the people involved in that learning process. In such way prepare the future leaders of a community, organization, company, etc.

# What Exactly Strategy Is? (And What It Is Not!)

Have you ever consider, what strategy is? We hear all the time about strategy by many official and unofficial channels.

**Strategy** is one of those basic concepts (as **Leadership**, **Productivity**, **Personal Development**, etc is) for personal, social and business development, people usually, use it wrong, and often for the wrong reasons. But why there is such a confusion about what strategy is, since it is such important components in our modern way of thinking? And why it is so difficult to define what strategy is?

"What exactly strategy is?"and "What it is not!"

## On Strategy

**Strategy** is a concept that most people find it an essential component (*or tool*) in the arsenal of every modern person (*either for business, professional or for personal use*) but rarely get into the trouble of define it or use it correctly.

For this reason a lot of the people discuss about political, social, cultural, personal, **life** or **business strategies** for getting this or that, but the most of the times they define it in a problematic way and as a result, use it wrongly.

Let's clear up, a little, the fog, surround the word **strategy** and see where can we go from here.

So first things first. Lets see, what strategy is not.

## What Strategy Is and Isn't, What Strategy is Not

For the most of the people, the word **strategy**, is an alternative of ***long-term planning*** and most of the companies or organisations use it in this context.

But long-term planning is quite different from **strategic planning** (*as we will see!*). So strategy is not equal to planning. Maybe strategy involves planning, but it does not equals to that.

Pursue this analogy, **strategy** it seems to be neither just:

- tactics,
- tool,
- method,
- design,
- scheme,
- approach,
- framework
- way of thinking
- ...

Still strategy encompass all (*and much more of*) the above. So what exactly **strategy** is. Let's see how we can define it.

## Definition of Strategy

Merriam-Webster dictionary, defines **strategy** as:

*a (1) : the science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war (2) : the science and art of military command exercised to meet the enemy in combat under advantageous conditions  
b : a variety of or instance of the use of strategy  
2 a : a careful plan or method : a clever stratagem  
b : the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal  
3: an adaptation or complex of adaptations (as of behavior, metabolism, or structure) that serves or appears to serve an*

But this is a very general definition, hardly suitable for applying **strategy** principles (or *strategic thinking*) in our daily activities (*something highly favorable, since, the implementation and use of strategic concepts in our life, would produce better results, in almost every situation, either professional or personal*).

Why we need a more functional definitions of strategy? Because we need a definition that would define its application and prescribe its usage in a simple, elegant and functional way, that everyone can follow and better his/her life (in all levels!). And exactly that is the goal!

**So**

## What Strategy is?

As we discussed, **strategy** can be a lot of the things (*and have a lot of meanings for different people*). But we have to agree on what it is, in order to have a common ground for discussing about strategy and implementing it in the same way.

International literature (as various definitions of strategy) suggests, that there are 7 basic components that defines strategy. Namely:

1. A measurable objective or goal to be reached (*situation to be reached, item to be gained, skill to be acquired, products to be sell or produced, etc*)
2. A scope of reference (*a content and a context*) for the pursue of the objective pursued (*a way of do's and don'ts for the achievement of the objective*). An ethical, moral, culture, system, business, economic, financial, etc framework of activities, out of which the reach of the set objective, can be considered as inappropriate, as unsuccessful, as not economic feasible, etc)
3. A time frame for the achievement of the objective.
4. A certain mindset, dictates the accomplishment of the set objective in a systematic and coherent way.
5. A desire, will or intention, of a logical entity (*a person, company, organization, community, etc*) to reach that objective in a certain

systematic manner.

6. A way of reaching or getting the intended objective. A plan, schema, methodology, stratagem that can be designed, devised, or implemented for the pursue of the objective set.
7. A set (*or sum*) of predesignate intentional activities, organized and orchestrated in a manner that would considered able to accomplish the objective according to the plan used .

Based on the above, a functional definition of what strategy is, can be read as:

*A designed set of intentional activities, undertaken by a logical entity with a certain mindset, and organized within a scheme, which aims at achieving a measurable objective within a given scope of reference and time frame*

And this, perhaps is a more functional definition of what strategy is?

## Reference on the topic of "What Strategy Is?"

- The Art of War, by Sun Tzu
- A Book Of Five Rings, by Miyamoto Musashi
- The Prince, by Niccolò Machiavelli
- On War, by Carl von Clausewitz
- I Have a Strategy (No You Don't): The Illustrated Guide to Strategy by Howell J. Malham Jr

# Leading In A Season Of Change

I was talking, with an old friend of mine, about the possibility of effective changing within our modern social and business systems.

My friend argued that it is quite impossible to make large changes in the already established structures (*social, political, business, etc.*), but I had (*and I still have*) a quite different opinion. I think that you can effectively and intentionally control your life, in most cases, at least!

## To Have A Vision

To have a vision for how the things should be, is not an easy task, you should undertake without a prior thought! Our time is a time of constant transition and change. People, relationships, lifestyles, ideas, approaches, products, services, tools, companies, organizations, causes, goals are in a constant change! This is why you need a lot of work to define a viable vision of the world "should be" and communicate it clearly to other people for embracing it!

Our world is a complex place to live in! It has many small and intrinsic mechanisms and systems to guarantee its smooth operations and a lot of safe valves to assure the continuation and preservation of its present status.

But, still is a system! And as in all systems, the operation of one small component can affect and influence the operation of the entire mechanism. One such disruptive operation is the leadership, aiming at providing a solid base of reference and guidance towards new (*possible and, even, feasible*) aspects of reality!

## What I Think



Our modern world saw the rise of the systems, and witnesses the alienation of people from the things concern them! The rise of the higher order and complex systems in our societies, the globalization and internationalization of the business operations, the shift from the small to medium sized companies to international corporation and the shift again to small ones (*mainly, due to the disruptive influence of the technology*), created a complete difference scenery in our societies and economies!

These trends left the modern person in a position that he or she thought that the things became too much complex for him/her, to have an influence at the world around him/her. But this is not true. Now, more than previous time periods, modern man is in the position to influence directly other people and trends by the creative usage of modern technologies.

It is the only time in our modern history, that today persons are not only consumers but producers, as well. This duality, provides a solid substrate for the people to claim, manifest and assert their individuality (*either as consumers or as producers of products, services, ideas, approach, etc.*) and lead their lives in their own unique way!

## To Be You

In this unique crossroad of our history, your individuality is not only a must-have trait but also an asset to use it and "*market it*" towards your benefit! Through your individuality, uniqueness, style, character, and personality, channel it via your vision, passion and hard word (*and aided by modern tools can be used disruptively in many operations!*) you can not only educate yourself, but you can also influence a lot of people around you!

Today, by being **YOU**, you can leverage the impact of the large systems in your life by employing disruptive operations and technologies, that can guarantee a more human-centric approach to the whole systemic operations! Leadership can be used to leverage the uncontrollable influence of the abstract systems and provide a "**human face**" to the otherwise, faceless modern operations that alienate the people from the things interested them!

## Leading In A Season Of Change

Leadership, though, is not a snapshot, nor a static image. Is the result of

many, even infinitesimal, operations, personal commitments and negotiations with the reality and always the result of a dynamic balance! Is not so much a science, as an art of the feasible, and only via its bound to the reality can yield the results required (*and expected*) by it!

But one of its major components (*along to vision, followed values and principles, and the planning methods employed*) is the cluster of things, can be all grouped under the collective title "**personal leadership**". Today, Personal leadership is not an academic term but an intrinsic skill of the modern toolbox, possessed by the person of today!

It consists of many key elements, as:

- Vision on how the things can be better, not only for him/herself but also for large numbers of people
- Specific goals, values, principles to be accepted by you, and followed diligently, along with corresponding metrics, to monitor your course towards their achievement
- Acknowledgment of your strengths and limitations
- **Accountability** and personal responsibility
- Development of essential skills (*listening, clear communication, specific networking in relation to your objectives, monitoring of processes, time and energy management, health and fitness, among other things*)
- Investment to yourself by means of education, training, skill and personal development, etc.
- Acquirement or/and development of assets, systems, tools and approaches to support your personal and professional work

Personal leadership is also a key component for a guide you effectively in leading in a season of change! **Know thyself**, old philosophers have been said! And this is truer today than ever before!

Only when personal leadership couple with the concepts of being responsible of your life, of the life of people you associate with and of the results you bring during your life (*in a personal and professional level*), you would be a good candidate for "**Leading In A Season Of Change**".

# 7 Laws for Leadership Development

Leadership is a discipline, you can find in many places! You should be vigilant to understand and comprehend the leadership's expression and development when it is practiced.

## Kurt Hahn - The seven laws of Salem



1. Give the children opportunities for self-discovery.
2. Make the children meet with triumph and defeat.
3. Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause.
4. Provide periods of silence
5. Train the imagination.
6. Make games important but not predominant.
7. Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege.

In my line of work, I found myself, often, to search within various subjects and areas, to comprehend some pieces of information, required for certain tasks. Training, **pedagogy**, and education are some of those areas.

Searching for certain principles, the other day, I came across to the site of one of the best schools of Athens (*Greece*), the *Anavryta (Anavryta Experimental Lyceum)*, reading about the "*Seven Laws of Salem*" and their contribution to the development of the children.

Reading these principles, I could not stop wondering, how many similarities they have with analogous principles, required for developing leadership skills.

## What Does Salem mean for You?

Most people, when they look up or see the word **Salem**, think about Salem, Massachusetts in the USA and its history. But this is not the case.

The "*Seven Laws of Salem*" mentioned here, related to the city of Salem in Germany and to the *Schule Schloss Salem (School of Salem Castle, Salem Castle School)* where *Kurt Hahn*, around 1930, developed 7 basic principles for character development in children.

Character, though, is a basic ingredient to the discipline of leadership, and, by analogy, these principles can contribute to a great degree in the leadership development.

These principles, mainly focused on the development of character of children, as a solid base for the development of values, something that has direct impact on the leadership development (*this connection can also be found in the book "Leadership The Outward Bound Way: Becoming a Better Leader in the Workplace, in the Wilderness, and in Your Community*

*", by John Raynolds, Rob Chatfield, Jimmy Carter (Foreword), Outward Bound USA (Corporate Author) and others, in which they are referred as Seven Principles in Character Development and the authors explain their effect on Leadership).*

The **7 laws of Salem** can today, formulate a raw model and basic guiding principles for current leaders.

## The 7 Laws of Salem for Leadership Development

A leader, a mentor, an organization, a company, a society, to cultivate a culture of leadership and excellence, should:

1. **Give the leaders opportunities for self-discovery.** The first mandate in **Delphic maxims** and the basic ingredient in the Greek Philosophy is to "**Know thyself**". A leader should be given the opportunity to know him/herself, to acknowledge its strengths and weakness, to clarify, his/hers goals and values, to know who he/she is, and where he/she going to go.
2. **Make the leaders meet with triumph and defeat.** A leader should **encompass** both in his/hers actions, his/hers victories as building blocks for the continuation of his/her path and his/hers failures as valuable experience and learning challenges on what is not working.
3. **Give the leaders the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause.** Someone who is expecting to lead, should he or she be prepared to follow and serve others, as well. More so, when he or she is devoted him/herself to a greater common good, according to his/hers conception. Valuable lessons in this area can be drawn be the basic philosophy and principles of **Servant leadership** (*more information can be found in this guide*).
4. **Provide periods of silence.** A leader should be able to **free space for his/hers thought**, to have time for self-discovery and reflection, to evaluate his/hers goals, path, means, values, to re-evaluate and continue, adjust or amend, his/hers course of action.
5. **Train the imagination.** Imagination and envisioning are the two of the most basic resources for every leader. It is important for everyone, and especially for would be or aspiring leaders, to exercise their imagination in every direction, brainstorming various ideas and approaches, envisioning different alternative paths towards a goal, and selecting the best ones, not only for themselves but for others, as well. It is important for a leader to **think big**  
  
, to form solid social connections, to employ win-win situations and to visualize the required results in order to find the best ways in achieve them.
6. **Make games important but not predominant.** It is important for a leader to allocate time for distraction, for non-compulsory or obliged activities, for "games" that distract his/hers attention from the **now and urgent** and provide room for new insights, ideas, directions, otherwise, could not be reached. Games (*and there are many "Finite and Infinite Games*

", a very important *distinction* for leadership), providing an excellent base for the easy and effortless cultivation of various social skills in a simulated environment (*such as co-operation, conflict, win, loose, teamwork, etc.*) while some other games provide an excellent opportunity for the development of strategic thinking (*such is Chess, game of Go, etc.*) The key ingredient, here, though, is the controlled allocation of time, for such activities, in order not to become dominant factors in someone's life.

7. **Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege.** A culture, an organization, a company, a leader, should provide equal opportunities, options and chances to everyone to gain or benefited by the knowledge, skills, resources provided, in a certain environment. No one should be treated differently, because of decent, status, authority, race, or any other discriminating factor. A culture, a network or an environment of cultivation of leadership skills, aspiring for the grooming of a new generation of able, competent and value-based leaders, should provide equal opportunities to everyone for proving his or hers capabilities.

# 4 Words For Leadership And Personal Development

Leadership and personal development are concepts, closely related. The one cannot exist, without the other, and *vice versa*.

There are many correlations, between these concepts, but one is particularly important. I'm referring to an old Arabian proverb, stating that:

*"Four things come not back -- the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity" ~ Arabian Proverb*

These 4 elements are exactly the leadership traits, that in my opinion, among others, should characterize a leader and a person in our time.

## Leadership and Personal Development

The leadership traits and personal features underlining from the above proverb, denote some general *guidelines* for someone, aspiring to influence, in a positive way, others.

More specifically, according to the proverb, a leader (*or a conscious person, or a concerned citizen, or ... anyone, actually*) should or ought to:

1. Take care of the words he/she utters,
2. Use his/hers tools & resources with scarcity, intentionality, and deliberation,
3. Contemplate his/her past life, drawing experience for action, for now, and the future,
4. Utilize, according to his/hers principles the opportunities arise, keeping in mind that every *crisis* fosters two elements, namely "danger" and "opportunity".

# Traits for Leadership and Personal Development

All these four leadership traits, can support effectively the personal development of everyone and formulate an environment for everyone to evolve, cope with everyday challenges and brighten his/her environment and that of the others. And, if intentionally, incorporated into someone life would form daily habits, effective codes of conduct, changes in the society as a whole.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit" ~ Aristotle*

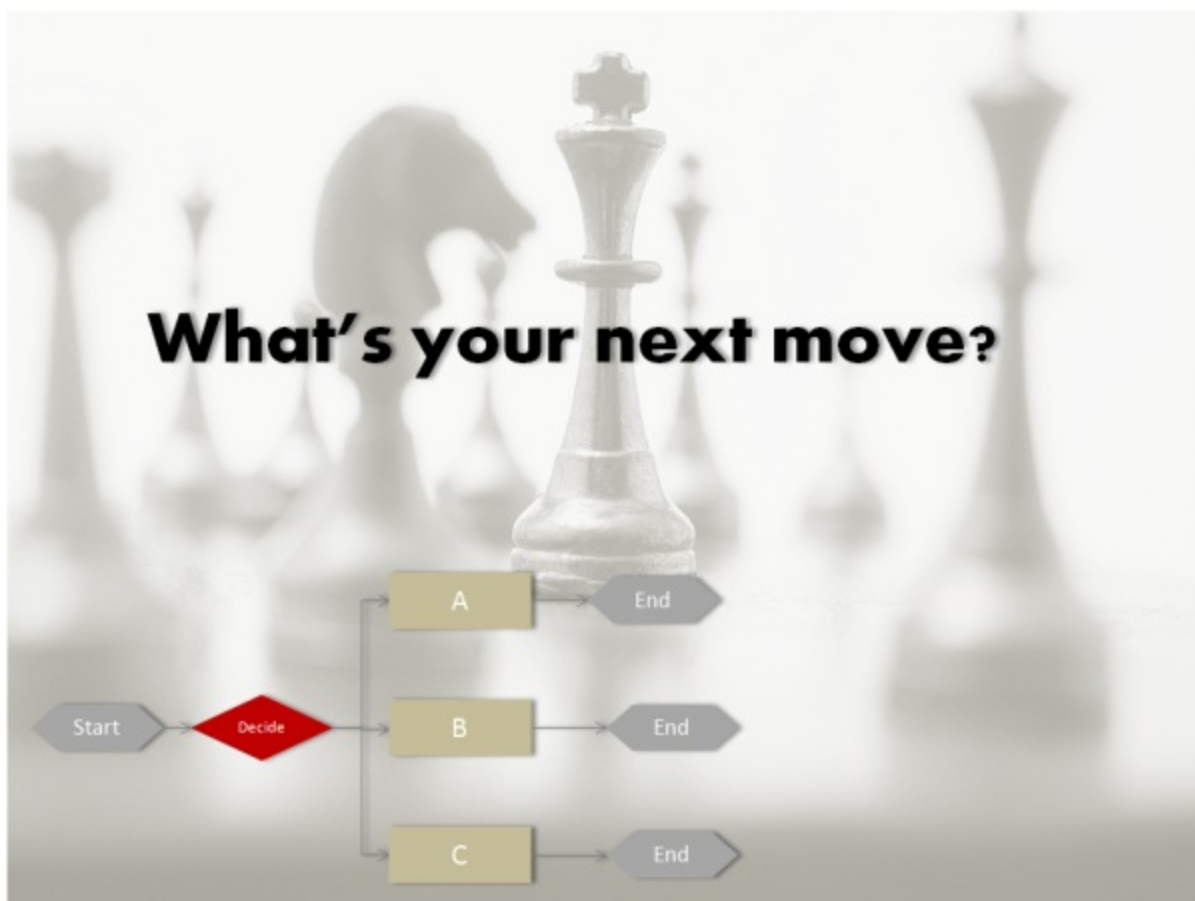


# 2 Quadrants To Lead Your Decisions

I found myself, lately, to consider more and more, the ways and practices for "**good**" decisions.

The decisions we made influence not only our actions but as well and those of the people we interact with and eventually influence (in a positive or negative way) their life.

Potentially, "**bad**" decisions can influence negatively, not only our life but, that of others as well. Good decisions on the other part can multiply the positive effects for us and many more other individuals (*even people we don't know about!!!*).



But, mind you, that decision is not just a course of action. It is a first and

foremost selection. A selection of A versus B or even C. A selection of a whole cluster of mutually influencing events you wish to come true in your life. And, the most of the time, not every bit of the wishful events come together. Sometimes, tend to come with lateral events that are not desired or wish for.

## What's Your Next Move?

Cause and effect. Nothing can be selected, isolated, by its surroundings, even if you have planned it thoroughly and meticulously. For this, you should lay down good foundations.

One of the best foundation to base your decision, in my opinion, is a concept taught by **Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)**, stating that for each decision you should produce at least 3 different alternatives and course of actions. One alternative is one-way road and a compulsory one (i.e you don't have any option), two alternative decisions

One alternative is one way road and a compulsory one (*i.e you don't have any option*), two alternative decisions constitute a **dilemma**, but three and more alternatives can constitute a real decision process, aiming at required results and providing you all the freedom you need of selecting and implementing the best one (*for you*).

Beyond that approach, there is a plethora of tools to lead you in good decisions and ones you can employ, for guiding you in the decision process. Some of that are difficult to cope with, some are too technical and some are cumbersome to incorporate it

Some of that are difficult to cope with, some are too technical and some are cumbersome to incorporate it into your life. All, though, have their value. Two of the best tools you can use in order to enhance your decisions and your life are the **Four Stages of Competence Model** and the **Covey's Time Management Matrix**.

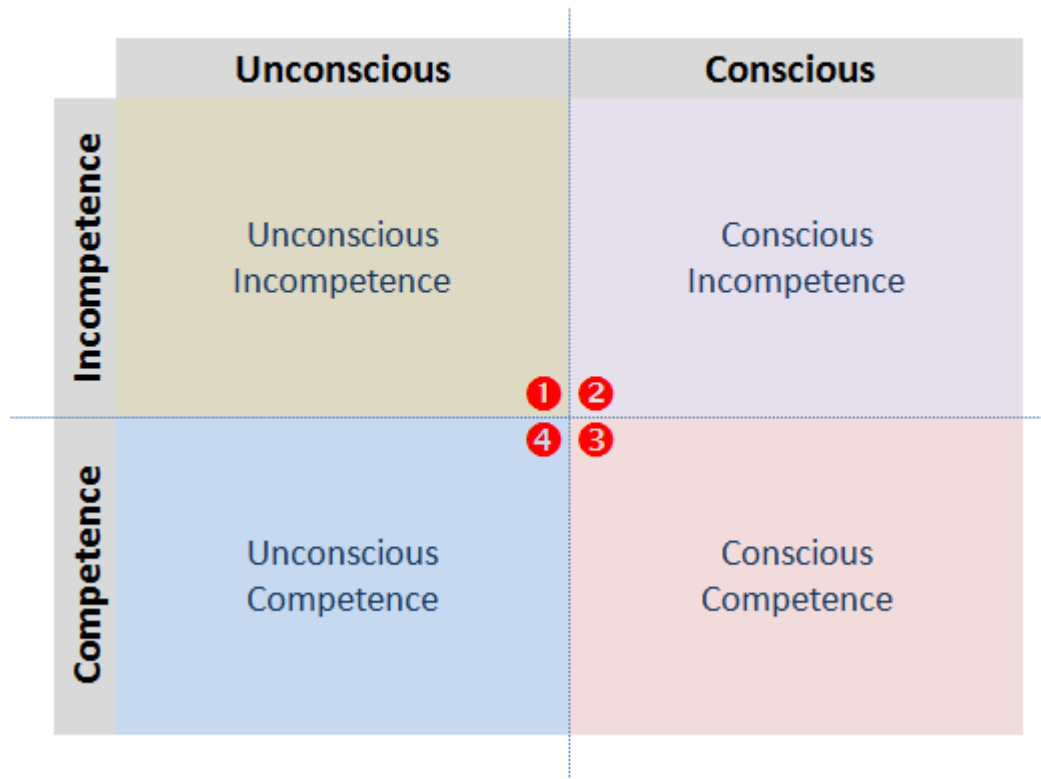
## Four Stages of Competence Model (Quadrant) - A Decision Tool

The **Four Stages of Competence Model** refers to the self-learning and skills development, covering "*the process of progressing from incompetence to*

*competence'* .

As a descriptive tool is valuable in describing the process for the mastery of a new skill or knowledge and as a decision tool can support and direct our thoughts and actions towards the objective of **unconscious competence**, in which we can practice or implement our new knowledge and skills, effortlessly.

### Four stages of competence



Following this line of thought, as individuals, we should incorporate our new skills, attitudes, principles goals, objectives in our life in a manner that these can become characteristic attributes of our everyday workflow, and leave us more time and space for focusing on our goals.

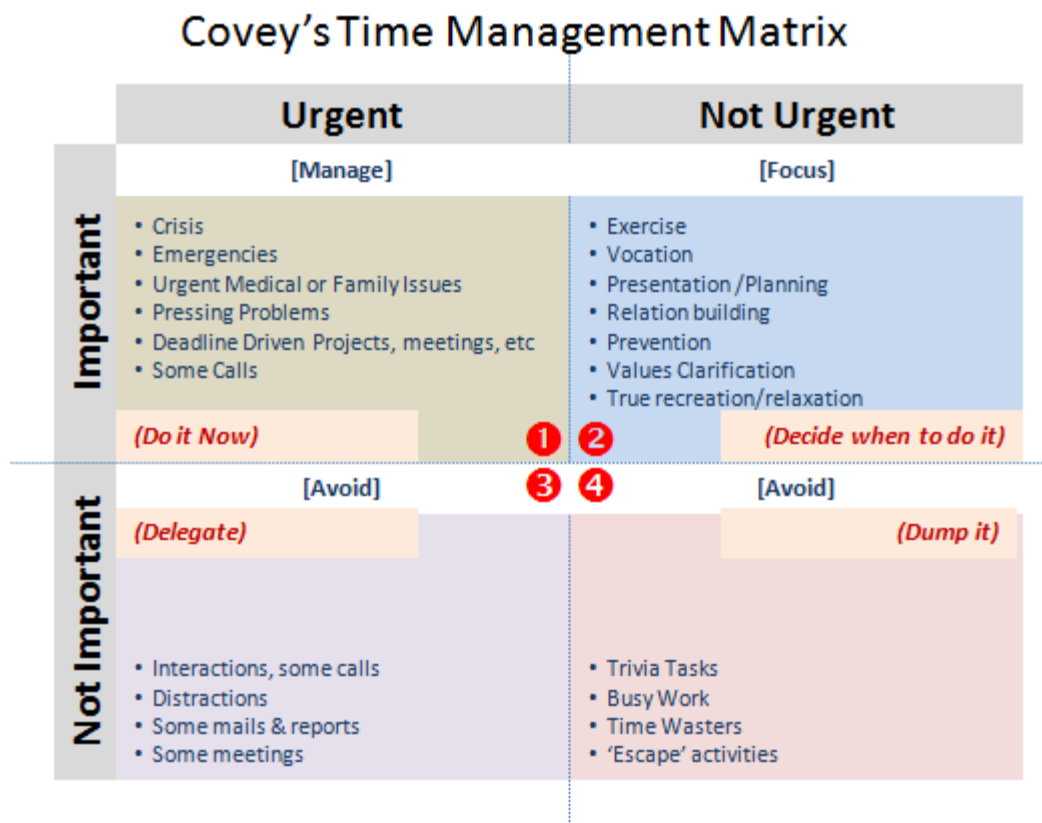
In this sense, the aforementioned model becomes a valuable asset in our way of thinking about self-development and leadership, while provides a structure.

In this sense, the aforementioned model become a valuable asset in our way of thinking about self-development and leadership, while provides a structure of, though, that can influence many others (*thus, proves itself as a valuable component of true leadership, along with our principles, objectives, etc.*)

# Covey's Time Management Matrix (Quadrant) - Take Better Decisions

I think, though, that this ability or skill can not be empty of content, and should be matched, with an equal most potent, principle, that briefly can be summarized as "**do the important things**" first, and eloquently have been demonstrating by Covey's Time Management Matrix. Stephen Covey along with A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca Merrill in their book "First Things First

" present a more efficient quadrant for deciding what the important things are for us and what we do with them.



More specifically:

*In the book, Covey describes a framework for prioritizing work that is aimed at long-term goals, at the expense of tasks that appear to be urgent, but are in fact less important. This is his 2x2 matrix: classifying tasks as urgent and non-urgent on one axis, and important or non-important on the other axis. His quadrant 2 has the items that are non-urgent but important. These are the ones he believes we are likely to neglect; but, should focus on to achieve effectiveness.*

*Important items are identified by focusing on a few key priorities and roles which will vary from person to person, then identifying small goals for each role each week, in order to maintain a holistic life balance. One tool for this is a worksheet that lists up to seven key roles, with three weekly goals per role, to be evaluated and scheduled into each week before other appointments occupy all available time with things that seem urgent but are not important. This concept is illustrated with a story that encourages people to "**place the big rocks first.**" (from Wikipedia, verbatim)*

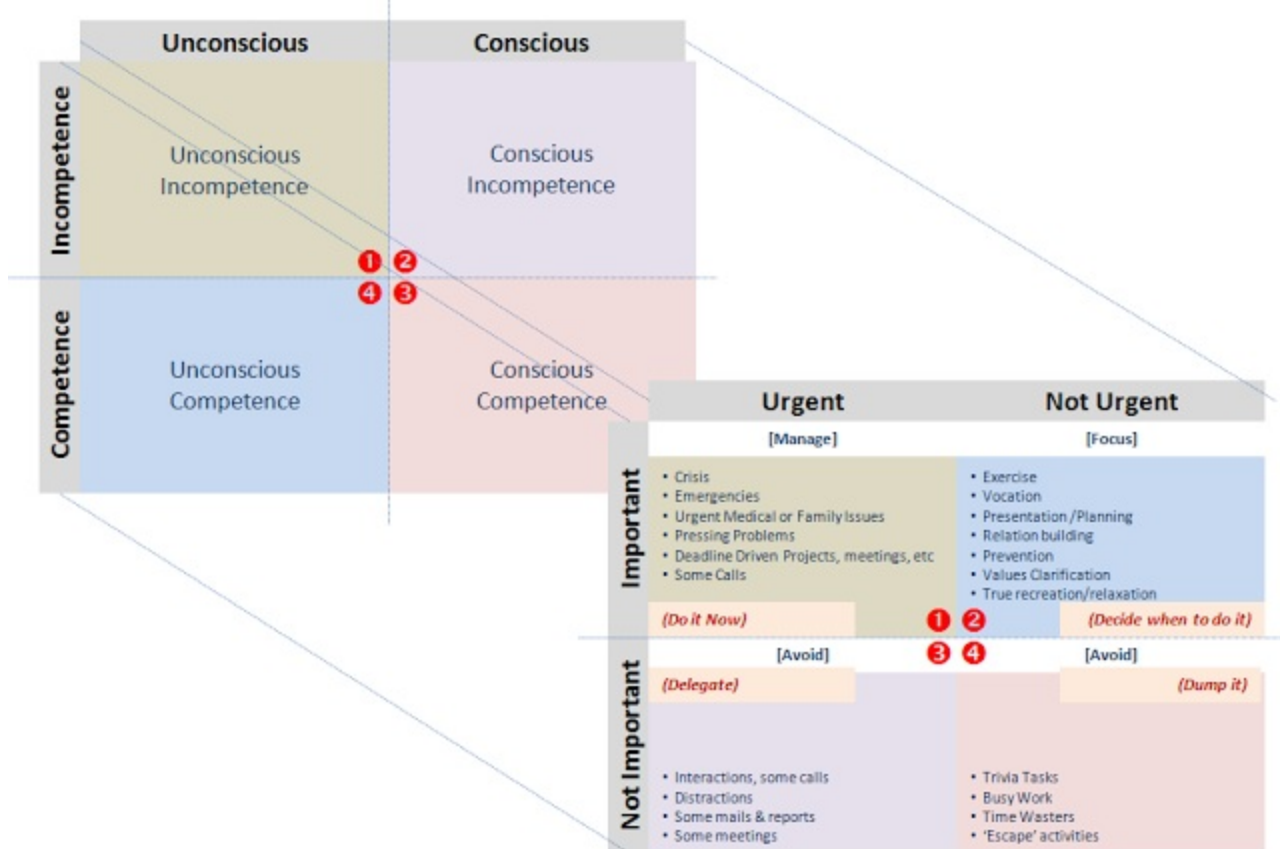
The most of the times we employ "**rules of the thump**" or "mechanical" (filtered by habits and adopted attitudes) practices, that not often furnished the intended results.

This quadrant, though, not only attempts to provide a viable solution to this problem but provides a valuable tool, and a practical approach, that can be easily followed, practiced and incorporated into your everyday activities, providing content as well and context, on the how we aim at achieving our goals and what matters most, for us.

## Coupling the Quadrants

Both quadrants can be essential tools and aids in a decision process, and can provide a base of reference not only for the decision process itself but as well for the foundations of the decisions.

If they can tied together in the framework of an everyday practice can provide you a base for an essential upgrading decision-making process that would benefit, in more than one ways, your life.



# How To Change the World

I was browsing on the [Amazon](#) the other day to find some books I would like to buy and I stumble upon a book with description about [shapeshifters](#)!

It is a word came out of old stories and myths in various cultures and an one signifies the adaptability of some living creatures! It is also a much wanted feature in many comic books and in many heroic sagas, when the hero is in trouble!

But the feature, does not make me too much impression, as its connotations!

The shapeshifting relates to someone who can take various shapes. But its opposite is much more interesting. How it is call someone who change the world around him, according to his/her vision?

In Amazon, I was searching for a particular book, by [George Bernard Shaw](#) with the title: [Man And Superman](#). You see I have found a quotation that makes me a lot of impression and I want to read the whole piece in order to understand it better.

The quotations was:

*The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man. George Bernard Shaw, Man and Superman (1903) "Maxims for Revolutionists"*

This juxtaposition between the reasonable and unreasonable person caught my eye!

It is not easy to be either of that, either reasonable nor unreasonable the most of the times! And that presents a unique challenge!

Either you take the things as they are, or you change the things according to your needs, desires, aspirations, etc. This is the point, made by Bernard Shaw!

The most of the time it is not easy to accept reality as it is. You have to do something in order you be more consistent to your dreams and goals. And this starts all the problem of the human existence. The inertia. Most of the times you do not like to do anything to change your world, your relations, your business, yourself, even though you know that somethings are not working (*as supposed to*).

In order you change anything though, you need to change yourself!

Usually, you shape the world according the who you are. And with world I mean youself, your relationships, your friends, your business, your community, your ....

You live your life, according to some values, rules, beliefs, **life strategies**, direction, goals, strengths and limitations, etc. You do what's works in order to better your current position and life and that of the ones associate with you! But that is not always easy.

Sometimes you need to change many chunks of your cultural and business experience in order to reach to a small tangible result. This is something leadership have to say about it and sometimes you need to lead in order to manage and handle things!

Simple as that! Because no one else has the problem you recognize as such and only you know the solution!

Think about it. And then answer. Are you a shapeshifter, or not? Do you take the world as it is or do you want to change it? Do you know how to change the world? Please **write**, how you can do that!



# ... and Business

Business is not what used to be! That's why we need to find new ways to do the things we used to do and better approaches to proximate the people have value to out business.

Partners, associates, clients, become part of a larger ecosystem bring together relationships, products/services, brands, creativity, innovation and value to a business mixture can determine the success or the failure in the market.



In this section you will read:

## Start up on Empty

Startups are not always easy. Most of the times bring a lot of problems and frustration. And questions.

## Business Startups - An Approach

In today's competitive market, business, you have to change, to become effective.

## A New Economic Model - Some Thoughts

Europe nowadays, and Greece, in particular, faces a complex economic

challenge, sporting a lot of problems in everyday life.

## Business Development As A Sudoku Puzzle

In today's business, you have to be flexible in order to cope with the demands of your clients and your business. In addition to that, you usually need a different kind of mentality.

## What Exactly An LADRT Is, And What It Can Do For My Business?

The development of a new business is a major function for the companies.

## Towards a Culture of Change

The one thing that is constant in our life is change.

# Start up on Empty

Startups are not always **easy**. Most of the times bring a lot of problems and frustration. And questions.

A lot and lot of questions. With doubts and sometimes guilds of what would have happened. This is the normal process.

A circle of excitement, at first, before the kick in the rational side of yourself, of what is best (for you, your family, your life, etc).

But this is normal. The most of the times, during a new **beginning**, you find yourself in a roller coaster moving circularly between excitement, depress, despair, energy, enthusiasm. And then, again, the circle begins all over again.

Why we have to make new startups. Is it our **choice** or something imposed by outside conditions? The answer is different for every person, but, at the bottom line, it can be summed up in only one, little statement. "***Because you have to***". Either we realize it or not, we made new startups all the time.

- The moment we pick up a new idea, product, service, book, paper for "*broadening our horizon*"
- The moment we commit time and effort to a friend, a marriage, a relationship
- The moment we keep our word towards a friend, a colleague, a partner
- The moment we start a new hobby, learning a new skill, leave an old habit, adopt a new attitude
- The moment we wish to change career, work, life, house, car
- The moment we dream for our self, our family, and our society
- The moment we criticize something against another thing
- The moment we put up new life, business, personal, health, financial, social goals in front of our horizon
- The moment we uphold our value, self-respect, personality, character

and not drifting aside

- The moment we avoid exploiting someone weaker from us
- The moment we select new partnerships, associates, collaborators, groups, and teams
- The moment we form new **win-win strategies** for our self and our clients
- The moment we start consider our clients as colleagues and collaborators rather than income resources
- The moment we commit to the creation of a new business, a quality service or product, a value-added network, a value enhanced community

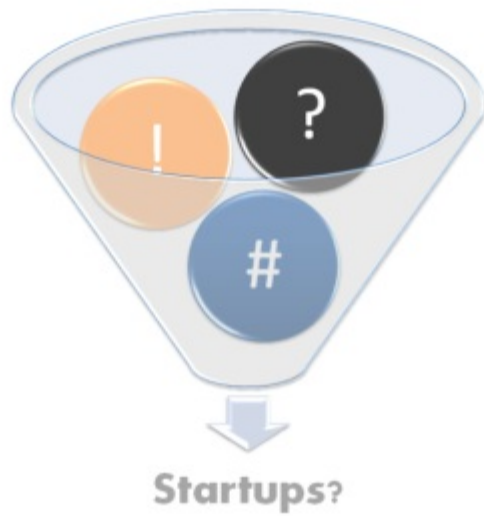
All the time and everywhere we do new startups. Whether we realize it or not, all that "moments" **direct** our attention to new fields and prepare a new behavior that **change old habits** (in our behavior, thoughts, ideas, approaches). Sometimes these startups are **intentional**. Other times are not and are **enforced** to us by external conditions (a job loss, the death of a loved person, a sickness, a life or death problem, etc).

But the point here is that each startup brings a new set of rules and conditions, for which, the most of the times, we have not prepared for.

Since, the change became more of a constant to our personal and business life, rather than an exception, it is imperative:

1. To acknowledge its existence in everyday life
2. To embrace it, and
3. To **channel it** in more desirable conditions

It is not easy of course! It needs a lot of a preparation, commitment, creativity, out-of-the-box thinking and a proactive state of mind. And there are not quick fixes or patches, there are not magic solutions. There are different approaches for different people.



My, **temporary** (*until to be reviewed!!!*) approach, says:

- **Observe, monitoring** and **watch** the trends as they formed, think about where the output may result to, and **design** your appropriate responses, by **adopting** new habits within your thought framework, values, and long-term goals, **employing** baby steps towards short-range mini-goals and **review** the process in order, if have to, to change it
- **Educate yourself** in the new ideas, business, lifestyles, social trends, tools, **select** the most appropriate and **implement** them in your everyday life
- **Cultivate** a proactive state of mine and life rather than a reactive one, in order to be ready to cope effectively with the changes, may arise
- **Startup on empty** every time you monitoring a change in patterns that may affect you. i.e:
  - **Vision** your objectives, leads, prospects and perspectives within the new conditions, how these might match your long-term goals and how the new conditions might be exploited in favor of your desired or intended future outcomes.
  - **Align** the new desired behaviors against your long-term life goals, and make appropriate adjustments
  - **Evaluate** your strengths and weakness, their effect in the new conditions, **enhance** the most suitable traits that would help you in the new conditions and either **try to remedy** your weaknesses by eliminate them (if you can) or **use them** as base of reference for the things you have to work with yourself
  - **Plan** from the start and **create** a pro-active and flexible course of

action and a strategy towards the new objectives, creating accordingly **S.M.A.R.T.** goals, "*life tasks*" and timetables.

- **Abandon** old ideas, beliefs, attitudes, that may become a problem
  - "**Declutter**" your mind, ideas, attitudes, tools, office and home environment, habits and beliefs are not longer of serve and **organize** what worth keeping in a new context and content, appropriate for your "*new model of living and doing business*"
  - **Set** short terms landmarks against which you could check your progress and timetables for their accomplishment
  - **Check** always their validity against your goals and vision
- **Review** the results, monitor your reaction towards these results and **amend** accordingly if needed

Just an approach, off course!

# Business Startups - An Approach

In today's competitive market, business, you **have to change**, to become effective.

The same thing happens and for the human capital. Today the old patterns have changed, the work shifting out from its traditional boundaries, covering more levels of everyday living, the old ways have been either abandoning or changing and new opportunities arise, for the ones want to exploit better the new rules of the game.

This situation seems to belong to a global trend usually experienced either as a necessity or as a popular demand.

**Business**, in modern society, is out of tune (*to say the least!!!*). The market conditions leave behind a highly skilled human capital, without many alternatives in the traditional paths, searching for new opportunities.

The shifting of old correlations leaves societies with many gaps in the market and business while the new demands of the consumers provide more pressure in an already saturated market. These "gaps" though, leave room for new models of doing work, business, living.

The new working profile includes:

- Vision
- Passion
- New **niche markets**
- Small initial capital and funding for new companies
- Flexible legislative framework
- Small business formations (1 to 10 people, most of the times)
- Rising of demand for electronic services and innovative products
- Developing of new schemes for doing things in more efficient ways



- New ways for synergies and collaboration
- Innovation
- Social media presence
- Aggregation of ability, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in small groups or, even, in people
- High demand for steep curves of learning and new tools for just-in-time **business & learning**
- **Convolution** of business and social activities
- etc

As the highly expertise unemployment rises, the **new models of work**, develop an enormous momentum. These models signify the shifting towards:

- Electronically connected and geographically dispersed groups
- Electronically based products and services
- Dependence on specialized social or business networks for finding clientage, contacts, associates, exploitation or development of new markets, etc.
- Heavy use of new technologies and methodologies based upon them
- Rise of novel ways of marketing or selling
- Formation of specialized, loose int their organization, "tribes", often around persons, products, companies, ideas, methodologies, etc
- New forms of employment or even a tendency towards self-employment
- Tele-working practices
- Flexible hours of working
- Passion for excellence
- Balance between personal and professional life
- Emphasis on personality and character
- Advance learning ways and tools accompanied by constant learning procedures and routines
- Focus in the acquirement of new, highly specialized, knowledge and skills
- An urge for education/training and quick dissemination of the acquired knowledge and results
- Integration of various roles in less, in the traditional sense, working profiles or even to individuals (i.e. a businessman who is also, business developer, marketer, promoter, product developer, promotion specialist, designer, publisher, etc)

- Outsourcing of various tasks and delegation of traditional business procedures in 3rd parties (other peer groups, small companies, specialized networks, or other).
- New strategic alliances, formations, and coalitions, often from different business paths.

With the advance of these models or trends, came and new channels for communication and distribution as well as new **PoP** (**Points of Presence**), used in many different and novel ways. This include:

- Blogs
- Sites
- On-line specialized shops
- Social media
- etc.

along with the traditional channels, resources, and means.

Today we witness the rise of the "**really small business owners**" (*many modern companies have only 1 to 5 persons, running all the traditional company functions*). The new workers usually have a blog as a base of communication and presence, are administrators photographers, design their own graphics and visual communications, handle the management and market, the contacts with associated 3rd parties, the promotion, and public relationships, etc.

This trend presents, today a new area of employment and it seems large enough, to host many people. It also presents a new challenge or opportunity for many have the talent and the skills to exploit these "new frontiers".

# A New Economic Model - Some Thoughts

## Current Situation

Europe nowadays, and Greece, in particular, faces a complex economic challenge, sporting a lot of problems in everyday life.

This “**crisis**” is the result both of structural problems, embedded in European Economies, and of a colossal lack of **leadership** on behalf of most Governmental bodies.

For this reason, a **new approach** should be taken, a one that would implement a new “**out-of-the-box**” premises, for reinvigorate the economy as well as establish a **new set of rules** that would bring economic development and promote spill-over effects in various sectors of the economy.

These premises prescribe a new model of “**doing**” business in Europe and lay out a basic set of rules that would bring spill-over effects across all the economy. This approach, we define it as a **New Economic Model**, using the term loosely, as a general tag to be used for unlocking certain today business restrictions and limitations.

This new model of economics aims at bringing a new **paradigm shift** (in the epistemology sense) and new rules of contact and engagements that would permit to the everyday civilian to move easily from the old economic model to the proposed one.

## The New Economic Model - Business Approach

In order a new economic model to be structured and implemented, various elements should be synergized, cooperate and employed. Among them are:

- *Emphasis on human factor not only as an economic unit and a client but as well as an involving living actor, partner, and collaborator of the economic structure and ecosystem*
- *Shift from strictly economic terms to parameters such as ecology, culture, self-development, "clean" technologies, constant economic, personal development, lifelong learning, etc*
- *Breaking of the rule of the "more profit" clause in favor of the rules of sustainability, development, integration and provision/development of more **value-added services** based and customized to the individual needs of the people/participants/cooperators*
- *Development of social networks, providing and exchanging more and innovative value added services*
- *New Business premises taking account more the cooperative model rather than the competitive one for the formation of win-win business networks and cooperation.*

## Basic Premises of the Proposed New Economic Model

Even though it is difficult to describe with strict terms a New Economic Business Model envisioned here, some directions can be described, and namely those that already today gaining some momentum.

Based on that assumption, I think that the new model of economy should be structured, based on premises such as:

- Multiplication of virtual enterprises, serving both domestic and international needs
- Small initial investment in hardware and internet services in order to be provided virtual spaces that would host small and medium shops and enterprises
- Heavy usage of free services and cloud computing for everyday operation
- Very small prize lists, permitting a free and inexpensive focus in business, semi-business, social (like blogging, communication, networking) or such, virtual-based, activities and attracting more "clients/cooperators"
- Community-based provision of services in a model of free hardware provision or per month - small fee - payment (s) for those cannot afford the rent or buying the necessary hardware. Some community provision models, also, should be taken into account.

- Initial personal investment of time on the basis of a part-time profession in the virtual area (side by side with ordinary jobs) for many people (especially the young ones, who are most literate with technology), and capitalization of the vast accumulated expertise in the operation of virtual organization, projects, etc
- Financial schemes that provide an initial base of economic reference and viability
- Provision of services in a digital economy as hosting, services, etc and development of new, innovating value-added services.
- Establishment of virtual enterprises and shops in virtual spaces leased under several schemes (payment, trial base, limited trial, etc) in order to provide an initial momentum for financial or semi-financial activities to many people.
- Cooperation, business, and social networking for branding and promotion services
- A gradual shift from traditional economy to a virtual one depend on the initial exchange of virtual services and goods and the augmentation of similar trends with the main objective the spillover of the earnings from the virtual transaction to "real" economic transactions
- A well-established set of connections with the real everyday economy (such as traditional services for Home working – delivery, distribution, bank services, groceries, etc.) For example, a home-based operation (*family - virtual SME*) in a village or small town would transfer a part of the earnings in the small town grocery, post office, delivery services, developing thus the local economy. The same scheme can be applied to a larger area as long the lines of contact are well defined and established.
- Public demand for a clear and small regulatory framework from the European Governments, able to lift the obstacles, establish a small taxation and attract more potential “users”.
- Broad dissemination of schemes promoting and propagating the proliferation of necessary skills and aptitudes to a larger amount of people (especially to those not very familiar with the new technologies), perhaps in the form of e-Learning, continuing education schemes, etc.
- Supplementary requirements would be:
  - A different shift in education focusing on soft skills, initiative, decision making, etc
  - A better legal framework for the rapid creation and operation of virtual enterprises
  - A support on the value of teleworking, flexible working schemes,

distance working, etc and clear decisions and commitment from the companies and governments on such models, in order to guarantee the rights (legal, insurance, financial, etc) of the participants.

Of course, these are some thoughts and scenarios for deliberation, based on today's observations and not an exhausted description of all the parameters that may or may not form the new model of doing business, contact economic transactions and ultimately living and working in the new economic environment.

# Business Development As A Sudoku Puzzle

In today's business, you have to be flexible in order to cope with the demands of your clients and your business. In addition to that, you usually need a different kind of **mentality**,

in order to face the challenges presented by the development of new business. In these situations, there is an uncharted area, which the most of the time, it may cost you a lot, in resources, time, money, effort and manpower.

This procedure, seems like the **Sudoku** puzzle, where you were given only a few numbers, and you were expected to solve the puzzle, by the given numbers (*in the classical version of the game*) and the support of the standard rules. Easy, isn't it?

A lot like the business development, you would say? Yes, but not exactly !!! Sudoku may have some similarities with business development. But just that. Only some similarities.

Usually, the development of a new business, requires a detailed analysis and balanced of various factors, with a huge range of **uncertainty** (*unlike Sudoku, where you have only a limited set of numbers or letters*).

In Sudoku, you usually need to:

- Analyze the existing numbers
- Brainstorm or figure out how to find the remain ones
- Select a strategy of solving which, in correlation with the game's rules, would give you, in a valid manner, the missing numbers
- Preparation (*design*) of your way of solving (i.e. you try to solve by missing numbers your are certain of, you would make some educated guesses or something in between )

- Actually, fill in the numbers, starting by the ones that are easily found out (by the rules, the strategy you follow, the surrounding numbers, etc) and proceeding to the more "difficult" ones!
- Error correction (*if it is needed one*)
- Fill in the puzzle!!!

In business development (*as in Sudoku*) you usually have or you were given some or a lot of data and information (*perhaps some market analysis data, customer's trends data, etc*), some rules (*yes, off course there are rules in business development !!! - Check and reference section*) and you were expected to build a very successful (and profitable, needless to say) new business . Simple as that! Or not?

Since there are a lot of "*error variables*" in this equation and a lot of design or other potential flaws to be considered, when you developing a new business scheme, you usually need to pay a close attention to the:

1. Analysis of the hard-core data of the new area(s) you want to exploit
2. **Brainstorming** of the ways a new business can be made in the area, based on the market and the possible clients
3. Select a strategy of implementation of the new business or service
4. Design & preparation of the business or services you want to develop (*with specific timetables, milestones, and deliverable*)
5. Small scale implementation and piloting of you new business, service, software, etc
6. Communication, dissemination of the new business to the potential clients, and feedback by all interested parties
7. Error and flaws correction
8. Effort versus gaining invested or **ROI** (*Return of investment*) analysis, in order to see the profitability, validity and viability of the business, (it is a business, after all ), and finally
9. (*if **ROI** proved successful*), Roll-out of the new business in full-scale.

It is a little much more lengthy procedure, than the one you could use for solving a Sudoku puzzle. Or is it not?

## Reference

- **Business rules approach**
- **Developing with Business Rules**



- Agile Business Rule Development: Process, Architecture, and JRules Examples
- Defining Business Rules ~ What Are They Really?
- Golden Rules of Business Development

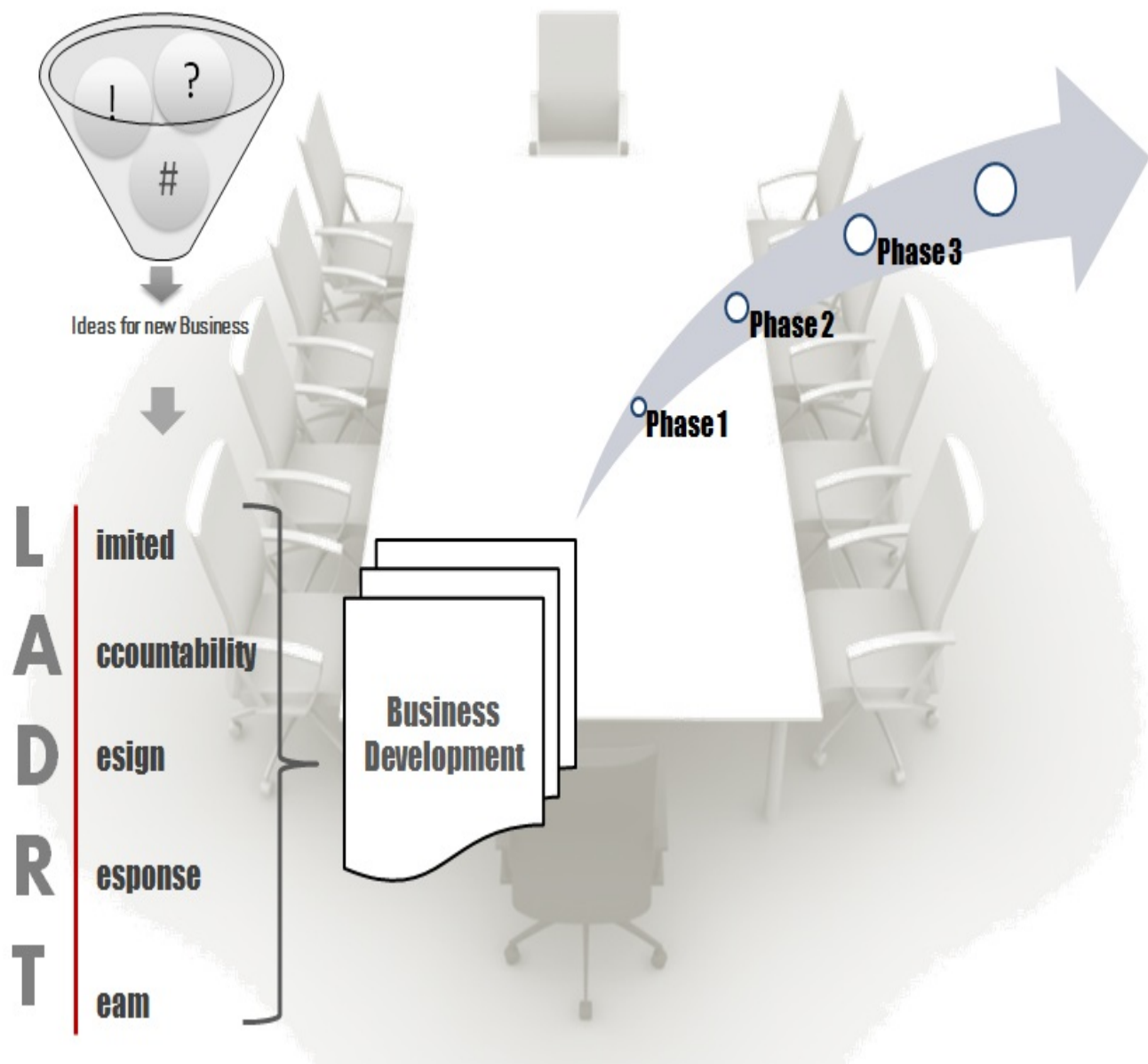
# What Exactly An LADRT Is, And What It Can Do For My Business?

The development of a **new business** is a major function for the companies.

Most of the companies striving today to diversify their products and services and enhance the value and the quality of their products and services, towards, their clientele.

If you are responsible for the creation of a new service, product, software, operation, or any other item of commercial value, you would know how difficult it is the process of developing something new.

A "**product**" or service that potentially would influence the course of your company and of your present and future clients.



In order, though, for you to start a procedure such as this, (*and you can follow any exemplary, well documented, professional procedure for the development of new business*) you usually need the support and the assistance, of a **Limited Accountability Design Response Team** (**LADRT**, for short) which would look all the available data, in a "fresh" look and provide new insights, before the "**professional**" look, approaches and views takes ownership of the procedure.

An explanation for an **LADRT** is needed here.

## What An LADRT Is?

An **LADRT** is my own interpretation of a necessary link in the new business creation process, that during my "*corporate days*" I found very useful.

When I and my colleagues we had to start a new service, business, software,

or something else, we usually follow the "typical" steps for the creation of a service, as described by the international literature.

At the time, I recall, that the **ADDIE** model was, one of the mostly used in e-Business and e-Learning fields, because it was reflecting most accurate the requirements involved, and help us predict some future behaviors (*as a proper business model should do!*).

But before the employment of any procedure for the development of a new business area, I was felt and (still I'm feeling) that someone needs and a different kind of input, besides raw data, in order to design and implement a business.

It needs an "amateurish" like enthusiasm about what have to be done (*product, service, or else*), coupled with a higher order birds view of the situation involved and a freedom to suggest all kind of wild, crazy or illogical ideas to be implemented within a given framework.

It needs a group of people to assume this role (*having limited to none accountability, as the process's output concerns, in order to have the freedom to explore all possible angles of a situation*) and carried out a pre-design, pre-brainstorming phase, that would lay down the basis for the design process to be followed, later on.

That's why and the name of that (*suggested hypothetical*) group or team is deriving from its base functions ("**limited accountability**", *i.e. the team is not accountable of the final decisions to be reached and "**design response**" as a first input in the design directions should be pursued later*).

This, of course, was (and when I use it today as a consultant, is) an **ad hoc** team, without membership and formal rules and without limitations.

Simple, you make sure you have included all the representative agents for the business, you want to formalize.

## What An LADRT Can Do For Business

When I call an **LADRT** session (*formally or informally*) and use it as a consultant for further the development of a business, I don't even call it a group or business session, but rather I prefer to label it as discussion with an open agenda (*or something similar*) and I usually function as a member

of the team without special tasks or privileges, except to note down the useful stuff and ideas that may arise.

I make sure from the start that is not a brainstorming session, but is a meeting with strict time boundaries, no formal rules, and only one central topic, that generally follows the following steps:

1. Provision and presentation of the central topic, framework, idea, concept, or other in a written or spoken form. An introductory statement on the why they are there and what they will do, a general and quite abstract initial statement and 2 or 3 explanation sentences about the business to be developed should suffice (*an early, small, elevator pitch of the service to be formed later, if you like*).
2. Free discussion on concept and ideas about the **USABILITY** of the proposed business (I usually encourage the participants to further their ideas towards usually unassociated areas - *a legacy, I guess, by the brainstorming principles, I used to employ*)
3. Their estimation and feelings towards that business or service (It is certain, that they will not use something they don't like and thus this group becomes an initial control group for later evolvement of the business (*if any will exit!!*))
4. Their expectation about a business like that, how much they would pay for its usage, evaluation of other factors of interest, etc
5. Gathering of all related ideas, concepts, etc in a paper, in the form of free association or temporal directions.

The above process provides some valuable design directions for further development of a piece of business, new services, etc, that even if they do not use for immediate implementation, can provide design commitments for later use. Furthermore, this procedure involves a lot of interested parties in the process of developing a new business, while it is in positions to postpone or interrupt the evolution of a lengthy and not profitable procedure, saving time, effort and man power from an organization.

# Towards a Culture of Change

The one thing that is constant in our life is change.

We change constantly. Sometimes in directions we cannot control.

Effortless, without signs the most of the times, we become a different person day by day. The changes in our society are constant and continuing.

And with them, want it or not, we changing as people, persons, roles, professionals, trying to cope to the alterations of our environment.

We naturally move towards a culture of change.

That, though, is **NOT** the problem.

## The Problem With Change

The problem arises when these changes affect us, without have a saying about them.

Most people let things passing by, without notice. They usually rely on the famous **plasticity** of the brain, to cope and adjust to the new situations.

Right or wrong, we cannot have a total control in every stimulus, information, incentives we receive.

At least not all the time. But we can have some control, sometimes, by using specialized filters (to safeguarding some stimuli and information of importance for us) and by training our minds to cope successfully with the external and internal changes the outside environment, may cause to our usual way of living, doing and thinking.

These moments, usually, define our character.

Choosing is the act of selecting an item from all the other that surround us. It is an act of will. And for that has a gravity and an importance that defines the who we are.

Selecting to live in a changing environment is exactly such as the swimming. In the sea, we can have control on the moves we can make, we are responsible for them and we can compensate the changes in the environment (if any).

This is and an analogy of our era. Too much information overload, tasks to be dealt with, constants that suddenly have been changed, little room for reactions or maneuvers, less valid guiding direction for navigating us in a more solid ground.

All the time we have to re-align with the new conditions and compensate with the changes and the effects these bring to our life. Is a mess, isn't. Or not?

There are always guiding rules if chosen to be applied, to be used effectively in our business or in our personal life.

They involved the development of a **culture** that can incorporate, propagate and disseminate the possible changes.

## A Culture of Change In Our Professional Life

For instance, in our professional life, if you want to build, employ and sustain a new culture in an organizational level (*as a leader, as an employ, or simple as a concerned worker [!!!]*) you should be determined to:

1. Analyze the new trends and select your team or a close group of peers, the best alternative trends or mini - cultures to serve best in any future situation as generators of valid ideas, concepts, **memes**, incentives and approaches. Select the most suitable trends for reinforcing, and ignore the ones that, at present, are not look very promising (*perhaps they need more time, in order to reach a mature state, but in any event you cannot focus on that now*). Develop a sense of urgency and an environment in which the new cultural changes can address old problems successfully.
2. Based on this analysis, engage the most appropriate shareholders and key players (*interested parties, leadership teams, management & marketing teams, close communities, the society (perhaps, hopefully !!!)*)

*etc*) in the collaboration development and implementation of a new vision, reflecting the desired future culture and outcomes for all the involving parties, as well as for society as whole. In this level you should positively affect a desired behavioral change, reflecting the new direction, to all the people involved in the procedure (*If they cannot adopt the new changes, it would be made extremely difficult to propagate the model to others, for lack of clarity, trust, and integrity*).

3. Develop a new story line and stories that would embody the vision and would answer all the pains caused by the old situations. Pitch this story in all possible and reachable channels your group can manage. Along with that you should develop, outsource or commission new banners, signs, symbols, logos, etc that would express, embody and present the new situation (*as for instance, creating a new branding, to serve the advancement of the new cultural changes, in a tangible and pictorial way*).
4. Set the strategy and tactics, goals, objectives, values, stages, services, products, etc to serve this vision and the supporting story in the long run (*i.e. the operational stream that would be able to lead towards the new foreseen future*) and design/select the systems, the approaches, the procedures the methodologies and the appropriate tools that would help the implementation of the new vision and sustain its growth towards larger audiences and over expanded time periods. You should make sure that your vision, strategy, goals, and values are aligned with the behavior and objectives you have set in the process. Initiate and develop mechanism, schemes and structures for:
  - Practice and propagate the new culture, case studies, stories, logos, symbols, etc to all possible levels of the organization, society, company, etc. Share, communicate and cultivate any new behavioral change derived by the practicing of the new culture.
  - Build solid structures of support and communities that would engage and empower more people in coping with their problems based on the new premises have been initialized by the adoption of the new cultures.
  - Layout new learning mechanisms that would train and educate the people in the new constantly changing environment and in the ways they can adapt to that
  - Effect more desirable changes, if you can, and abandon old habits, not longer serve.
  - Create new communities or practice and support, societal structures,



companies, organizations directed outwards, aiming at supporting the people to their goals within the new environment

Finally, measure the results and the outcomes and collaboratively refine the proposed model as appropriate.

## Embracing a Culture of Change

At a personal level, embracing a culture of change, is something much more valuable than mere dealing with the change or simply absorbing and compensate its repercussions.

Essentially it means you have:

- To setup some anchor points for future reference (values, directions, etc)
- To act in pro-active manner and remove the reaction habits of older conditions no longer exist
- To evaluate and re-evaluate the changes not only for compensation but for gaining control over them as well
- To assume the responsibility of our actions (in their total effect)
- To own your future
- To Learn new ways and disseminate them via all reachable communication channels, in order to propagate them throughout the society
- To educate more people for living in a new constantly changing environment and in the ways they can use for adapting, adopting and effectively use the new conditions
- To effect more desirable changes, if you can, and abandon old habits not longer serve.
- To finally assume the driver's seat, at least in your life, if not in the life of others

All these, are approaches that can support effectively the adoption of a culture of change either on professional or on personal level.

Whether it could be implemented or not, rely entirely on the possible outcomes we/you want to bring in our.your life and in our/your society.

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