

Responsible Leadership in the 21st Century – Transforming Organizations with the Twelve Alignments

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An increasing number of corporations have started their transformation from a single bottom line to a triple bottom line approach: not only are they aiming at generating profit, but take the needs of people and our planet into account. Corporations (re-)assume responsibility as contributors to the societies they operate in. They start to re-align themselves towards Social Responsibility thus laying the foundation of sustainable growth.

Whereas there seems to be consensus regarding the generic necessity of transformation towards assuming social responsibility, executives seem to be reluctant to move forward. Inertia is strong.

Following a trans-disciplinary approach including insights of ancient Asian philosophy, neurosciences, quantum physics and biology, this article first provides explanations for the state of paralysis many corporations seem to be stuck in. Although they know better, they keep on pursuing a pure profit maximization strategy. Second, it introduces a framework with which to address the transformation to assume social responsibility, named the Twelve Alignments. Third, it discusses the concept of 'Individual Social Responsibility' (ISR) which is at the core of any successful transformation towards alignment. Individual Social Responsibility comprises the personal transformation executives have to undergo in order to successfully drive their organization's transformation.

The logic of this article can be summarized as follows:

1. The triple bottom line is the managerial paradigm of the 21st century.
2. It is the basis of the corporation's purpose to anchor it in true societal needs.
3. Social Responsibility takes people's needs into account, be it as customers or organizational members. Therefore, it has to be reflected in the organization's strategy and its projects, the organizational structure and coordination mechanisms, and the organizational culture and the prevailing communication behavior. All parts of the organization need to be aligned.

4. Incorporating Social Responsibility requires Individual Social Responsibility at the side of each executive. They have to be clear about their personal purpose, their organization's purpose, their values and their communication behavior. This degree of clarity requires awareness of one's mental and emotional misalignments.

5. Individual Social Responsibility is reflected in the executives' leadership style: they are passionate about leading themselves, a process referred to as self-leadership or inner leadership. Passion is positively contagious and leads to motivated and committed co-workers as well as an increasing number of enthusiastic customers.

6. Individual Social Responsibility is the foundation of a purpose-driven organization that assumes Social Responsibility. It is the prerequisite for an organization's transformation to continue to be successful in the 21st century.

Keywords: Transformation, Leadership, Sustainability, Twelve Alignments, Corporate Social Responsibility, Individual Social Responsibility, Triple Bottom Line, Self-leadership, Inner Leadership, Consciousness, Self-awareness, Authenticity, Personal Development, Purpose

1. The challenge: organizational transformation towards social responsibility

Following a statement ascribed to Albert Einstein, that "(T)he world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them" (Anonymous, 2014, 1940's: para.10), an increasing number of executives agree that the price for profit maximization is higher than what we can pay. The reductionist approach to the one measure 'money' is easy to handle, but too costly after all, even if the cost is 'outsourced' to the entire global community. Against the background of climate change, corporate fraud scandals, and exponentially augmenting burnout rates, many corporations are at the edge of starting their transformation from a single bottom line to a triple bottom line approach (Elkington, 1997): Recognizing the negative 'side effects' of a mono-dimensional approach, top managers are looking for paths to go beyond their focus on material needs, to further include the needs of our natural environment as well as fundamental human needs of meaning, belonging and appreciation. Corporations (re-)assume responsibility as contributors to the societies they operate in, bringing societal and environmental sustainability on top of and in line with economic considerations (Elkington, 1997). This reorientation is accelerated by the current pandemic. There is evidence that younger generations across the societies of industrialized countries and to some extent in emerging markets are pushing for more transparency regarding the products they consume (Aburdene, 2005). Especially the younger generation expects responsibility towards the eco-system and our societies. Their decisions about where to work and what to buy are increasingly driven by self-awareness regarding values. They expect corporations they can trust and do not accept being 'greenwashed' or spied upon.

Although there seems to be consensus regarding the generic necessity of transformation towards assuming social responsibility, executives seem to be reluctant to move forward. Inertia is strong. Why?

1. Scope of transformation

The triple bottom line approach stands in stark contrast to the history and tradition of many corporations. For decades, executives have been measured against profit maximization. The ideal of a good executive typically was a person who reduced cost – at any cost. The re-orientation towards the triple bottom line means for many executives a substantial mindset expansion. This requires openness and willingness.

2. Complexity

Executives seem to be overwhelmed by the requirements of an environment that is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, diversity and dynamics. There are unpredictable technological breakthroughs, digitization is highly disruptive, and deep changes in values especially among the younger generations lead to different consumers' and employees' needs. Decision makers are looking for orientation as the past proven methods and approaches seem to be less reliable. Executives need a simple vehicle to navigate through the complexities of this environment: the framework of the Twelve Alignments. It helps to manage the complex interrelatedness between individual organizational members, teams, the organization as such and the society or societies the organization operates in. It provides orientation and facilitates systemic thinking and acting.

3. New leadership qualities

A transformation of this scope requires courage, openness, resilience, appreciation, focus and action-orientation. This is a bundle of qualities that cannot be trained short-term. It is a longer process to develop them. A process that requires awareness building. Executives have to obtain inner clarity: What do they really want? What do they stand for? And is this aligned to what the organization is invested in? It takes strong willingness, discipline, honesty, and perseverance to obtain the level of inner clarity that is needed to steer an organization through transformation and to safeguard or restore its social responsibility.



Figure 1: The must-dos for organizational transformation

In the light of these challenges, it is not surprising that some executives are tempted to only pretend to transform their corporation. They opt for taking a

shortcut and try to build a corporate façade, a façade that simulates a corporation with social responsibility. In the era of digitization, however, the true essence of an organization becomes obvious and transparent sooner rather than later. Hence, there is no alternative to real transformation, starting with the inner transformation of organizational leaders, ideally the top managers – typically the C-suite. They have to take responsibility for their own personal development. They have to strive for inner alignment and clarity. This is what is meant by Individual Social Responsibility (ISR). Individual Social Responsibility cannot be delegated to any organizational member. Executives have to assume it. They have to invest time and money to go through the transformation process themselves. This is a major reason for the fact that many corporations seem to be stuck in paralysis. Their leaders are not yet willing to tackle their own transformation.

This does not mean that corporations can only transform themselves from the top. Any organizational member can take the lead for his or herself and assume Individual Social Responsibility. Leading by example is an effective way to initiate change with the potential to encourage others to follow – eventually, the C-Suite may follow suit.

2. Understanding the scope of transformation

Today`s industrialized societies are based on the philosophy of René Descartes and Francis Bacon, and the physics of Isaac Newton. Especially after World War Two these societies have witnessed progress in terms of growth and technological developments. They have also seen an accelerating trend that mainly big publicly listed companies enjoyed more and more power whilst rejecting responsibility for their business environment, in the widest sense the society they operate in and the planet they operate on. Corporations multiplied their profits decade after decade. Just to mention a few examples, this phenomenon could be observed in North America in the pharmaceutical industry, in Japan in the nuclear power industry, and in Europe in the automotive industry. Successful lobbying campaigns under the umbrella of so-called free trade agreements such as TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) or TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) targeted at international governments led to further expansion of power of (big) business. As Saul (1992: 389) puts it provocatively: "The multinational, with its anational managers, is an attempt to escape any responsibility, thus retaining the power to treat each community according to the corporation`s interests." The underlying business principles were an integral part of the overall world view of the 20th century: A mechanistic world with the separation and compartmentalization of spheres, specialization, standardization, determinism and reductionism. It is no wonder that the ideal of an organization against such a philosophical background was a 'well-oiled machine' based on hierarchies and extensive rulebooks that were regarded as precise, dependable, and universally applicable. Most of the organizations were modeled by the military and incorporated its structure and principles. Over time, there have been organizational theory developments, for instance towards project-based and network-based organizations, but the fundamentals with deeply held mental models remained largely unchanged: The dominance of the mind and intellect, especially the left-part of the brain associated with 'masculine values' such as ambition, aggression, competitiveness, assertiveness and individualism (Billing & Alverson, 2000). Abstraction and method became the ruling principles resulting in a growing detachment between managers and their organizations. Executives found it entirely legitimate to pursue self-interest, mainly consisting of an increase in power and money, for themselves and their shareholders.

Researchers, non-governmental organizations, and citizens all over the world are intrigued and concerned by this development. In the 1990s, the call for social responsibility emerged - soon discussed under the overarching theme of Corporate Social Performance (Cochren & Wood, 1984; Wood, 1991; Clarkson, 1995; Orlitzky, 2003; Dentchev, 2004; Wood, 2010).

Yet, many corporations continue to do business as usual although they know better. Intellectual capacity and capability does not seem to suffice to change (corporate) behavior. As stated above: Inertia is strong. After all, corporate social responsibility is still regarded by many decision makers as a set of business tools like many others. It is often seen as a compromise they need to strike to abide by the law and to accommodate stakeholders' requests, a compromise between their self-interest and the interest of their stakeholders (Swanson, 1995).

The main reason for this unwillingness to act socially responsible is the deeply held belief that corporate social responsibility does not contribute to the betterment of the business and therefore is not needed. Business education at most Business Schools and executive rewards have been in synch with this mental model until recently. Against this background, executives have difficulties reconciling two perspectives: on one hand the societal pressure to act socially responsible, on the other hand their life-long conditioning to prioritize profit maximization.

A broader horizon can help decision makers to overcome their inner resistance and align both perspectives.

3. Reducing complexity with systemic thinking

If executives extend their goals and meet more than monetary needs of one selected group, namely their shareholders or owners of the corporation, they have the challenge of managing an entire bundle of needs. They have to navigate through greater complexity. But they also have the opportunity to re-shape their organizations and make them more balanced and sustainably successful.

The navigation through a more complex environment is facilitated by a framework called the 'Twelve Alignments'. Like a compass, the Twelve Alignments support executives to recalibrate their organizations. It provides clarity without over-simplifying reality. It is a consistent method to diagnose the organization, like an X-ray scan, to uncover misalignments. Misalignments are blind spots that cause inefficiencies and hinder the organization to assume social responsibility.

The logic of the Twelve Alignments is centered around three interdependent dimensions:

Mental (blue)

Physical (green)

Emotional (red)

For ease of use, they are color-coded.

To serve as a compass, the dimensions are translated into spheres of organizational relevance. They are best understood if one imagines the organization as an organism, like the human being (Morgan 1997). This organism (organizational level) comprises of smaller units, like departments or project teams (team level), comparable to the limbs and organs of the human being. The smallest unit of the organizational organism is the cell, the individual organizational member (individual level). The entire organization follows the triple bottom line approach, aligning economic rationale with the needs of the planet and societies (global level). The entire organism is dependent on each cell. Therefore, the individual is at level 1, the fundament of the organization.

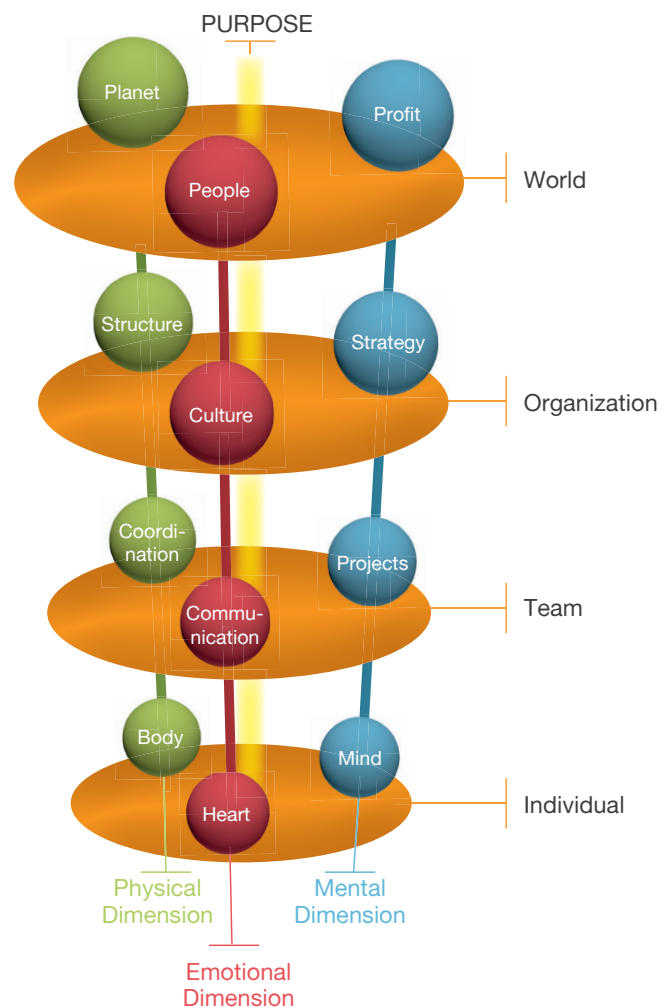


Figure 2: The Twelve Alignments at a glance

The center of the framework is 'Purpose', pulling all dimensions together, like the center of gravity. To re-align the corporation successfully and sustainably, the executives have to fully envisage the organizational purpose and feel passionate about it.

The two major principles that underpin the Twelve Alignments, namely balance and interdependence, are principles of life as such. These principles are fundamental in our natural environment (Hutchins & Storm, 2019).

3.1 Interdependence

The acceptance of interdependence helps executives to overcome their conditioning towards profit maximization. It helps them to abandon the world of separateness in which an organization positions itself against other stakeholders, in which they have to choose one focal area (profit) at the expense of other focal areas (environment, people). The logic of 'both and' instead of 'either – or' transforms social responsibility into a basic attitude any (economic) engagement revolves around.

As a principle of nature, interdependence is omnipresent. Numerous studies in the field of neurosciences, neo-biology and psychology provide evidence for interrelationship between thoughts, emotions and the body (Pert, 1997; Schubert & Amberger, 2016; Storch et al., 2007; Zachariae, 2009). Quantum physics postulate that everything is interconnected with everything (Wheeler, 2000): on the subatomic level, where the quantum realm resides, this phenomenon is called quantum-entanglement. Contrary to common belief, matter is non-local. Non-locality means that sub-atoms are everywhere and nowhere at once. From this high-level perspective, all human beings are not only connected with each other, but also with their environment, our planet.

To make this notion easier to conceive, one can imagine that all human beings have an electro-magnetic field around them. This field is even perceptible using special measurement equipment. Human beings communicate through this field via the exchange of electro-magnetic frequencies. If this classical physics view is extended by quantum physics, so-called quantum fields, i.e. non-local fields, are added to the picture. The consequence is that people all over the planet, regardless of their location, regardless of their personal acquaintance, and regardless of their intent to interact, constantly exchange information (Broers, 2012).

Coming from the field of biology, Sheldrake (2008) discovered the phenomenon of information exchange between animal populations that could not be explained

by conventional science. He discovered so-called morphic fields through which behavior and experience was shared across locational boundaries. Quantum fields could be an explanation of this information exchange resulting in similar behaviors of populations over large distances. In later studies these phenomena were also observed with human populations.

Against these insights, we need to revise deeply held beliefs that individuals are separated from each other and separated from nature.

Ahead of his time, Albert Einstein seemed to be aware of these relations: "A human being is part of a whole, called by us "Universe", a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness." (Einstein, 1950: para. 1) Let us dissolve this optical delusion and see which insights this new perspective generates with respect to social responsibility. The true intentions of a corporation eventually transcend through. Due to non-locality and quantum-entanglement, information is passed on to customers and other external stakeholders, whether intended or not. Real intentions spread across the world through the morphic fields inside and outside the boundaries of a corporation. Hence, it is a waste of money and time for any corporation to try to pretend to be socially responsible while continuing to operate as a single bottom line business externalizing environmental and social cost.

The sole focus on monetary needs of a subgroup of people does not take into account the universal principle of interdependence. Ignoring a universal principle results in reduced effectiveness and is not sustainable.

With the adoption of the Twelve Alignments framework, executives integrate the principle of interdependence into their leadership, ensuring the organization's alignment with its environment and the people it serves.

3.2 Balance

Balance is another fundamental principle of nature. All organisms naturally strive to establish and re-establish inner balance. Organisms develop to be in synch with nature. They integrate the requirements of nature and temporarily adapt to maintain balance.

Like the principle of interdependence and holistic systemic thinking, modern societies have only recently rediscovered the principle and value of balance. Integrating balance into the mindset requires the departure from deeply entrenched mental models that are mono-dimensional. In our societies, we tend to over-simplify life by focusing on one dimension only. Typically, this is the mental dimension. In the context of corporations, this means financial resources or profit, or in other words: the single bottom line. A balanced corporation can be compared to a balanced human being. It is in harmony with its environment, taking input from it and giving value to it, in other words: the triple bottom line, balancing off financial, environmental and societal needs.

Balance is not only an integral part of nature, but also the fundament of ancient philosophies across the globe. Ancient wisdom of all great civilizations recommend an integrative and balanced approach towards the relation between human beings and their environment. An example is Feng Shui in the Chinese tradition. The various Indian yoga traditions aim at establishing balance between the mind, body, and heart in order to attain higher spheres of consciousness.

In modern business, the concept of 'Balanced Score Card' advocates balance as a critical factor for long-term success (Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

Balance means acknowledging and integrating all relevant organizational determinants. The individual, be it customers or organizational members, is the smallest entity that has to be taken into consideration. Departing from the ideal of the homo economicus that is purely driven by rationale and solely focusing on the maximization of its interest, we have to consider a broader range of determinants influencing human behavior. We have to look at a broader range of needs. In a global study with participants from more than 150 countries, Rath and Harter (2010) identified five families of needs that have to be balanced off to contribute to an individual's wellbeing: First, it is the satisfaction with the content of the individual's work, so-called career wellbeing or purpose.

Second, it is about having fulfilling relationships and love, so-called social wellbeing. Third, there is financial wellbeing. Fourth, the individual needs good health and sufficient energy to accomplish tasks on a daily basis, so-called physical wellbeing. And fifth, it is important to meet needs related to engagement in the society or community, to have the opportunity to give back and interact, so-called community wellbeing.



It certainly goes beyond the purpose of the corporation to contribute to the overall wellbeing of the world's population. Depending on the industry the corporation is invested in, it aims at meeting a focused array of its customers' needs.

The organization can do this best in a balanced way, meeting the needs of customers and the needs of co-workers: Meeting customers' needs leads to financial success, meeting co-workers needs is the driver of engagement, creativity and innovation resulting in products and services that excel customers' expectations. Taking care of both stakeholder groups' needs ensures sustainable success.

All needs mentioned above can be related to the three dimensions:

1. Mental dimension: e.g. financial needs
2. Physical dimension: e.g. health-related needs
3. Emotional dimension: e.g. relationship needs.

3.3 Alignment of the three dimensions on four levels

Let us go back to the organism-analogy to see how the abstract principle balance is further translated into leadership action. The mental, physical and emotional dimensions are broken down to relevant organizational areas on four different levels. On each level, they build a triad that has to be in balance. In theory, all levels are equally important. In practice, the triad on the individual level of the top executive, the founder or owner is most relevant. His or her inner alignment or misalignment has a big impact on the overall organization, whether this is acknowledged or not.

Hence, any transformation process is more effective if it includes the alignment of the top decision maker(s). As stated above, though, the active involvement of the C-suite is not a prerequisite for entering into the transformation process that targets the uncovering of misalignments.

Typically, there are numerous blind spots in the respective triads that are discovered during the transformation process and brought into alignment step by step.

Level	Dimensional Triad	Bio-Analogy
Global	Profit, Planet, People	External resources (input and output)
Organizational	Strategy, Structure, Culture	Organism such as a human being
Team	Projects, Coordination, Communication	Smaller and bigger elements of the organism, such as limbs, organs, bones, blood, hormones
Individual	Mind, Body, Heart	Cell

Table 1: Levels, dimensions and the organism

Table 1 provides an overview of the four alignment levels, their respective dimensions, and how this could compare to an organism. The bio-analogy aims at a better understanding of the rather abstract phenomena in organizations. It does not claim to be comprehensive. Let us briefly discuss the four levels from the highest to the lowest level. Please note that high and low are merely descriptions for the position of the levels in the graphic and do not imply any hierarchy.

1. Global level

Organizations need to be aligned with their environment if they want to exist and grow long term. They contribute to a healthy global community if they go beyond material needs, reflected in 'profits' (blue), and include the needs of the environment, 'planet' (green), as well as fundamental human needs of self-expression, meaning, belonging and appreciation, reflected in 'people' (red). Any economic endeavor in the 21st century must be based on this triad if it is to bear fruit in the long term. If corporations continue with their single focus on profit,

they will lose credibility. In the long run, they will even cease to exist, depending on the corporation's financial bolster and which industry it serves. The decline may show in shrinking sales, or in a gradual shortage of talent, as young professionals do not feel attracted by an organization that acts in a socially irresponsible way. Organizations that cling to sole profit maximization get out of tune with their global environment and are going to die out. This could be compared to an organism that gradually suffocates due to lack of oxygen, or that starves due to a lack of input in form of engaged co-workers that are willing to contribute with their efforts and ideas.

2. Organizational level

As outlined above, the corporation's strategy has to be consistent with the triple bottom line approach if it is meant to thrive in the 21st century. The corporate strategy entails the plan how to generate profit whilst serving the society without any harm to the natural environment. 'Strategy' (blue) crafting typically consists

of market analyses and assessments. Based on thoughts and analyses, it reflects the mind. 'Structure' (green) stands for the organizational architecture, the technological systems and the processes and policies of the organization. It can be seen in analogy to the human body, with its visible and invisible parts. 'Culture' (red) is comparable to the human heart with feelings. It relates to how things are done in an organization, and how the organizational values are reflected in day-to-day practice.

If the main spheres of a human being lack synchronization, the person becomes ill. If he or she continuously pursues something ('strategy') he or she does not like ('culture'), the person develops symptoms of illness, either reflected in his or her body or in the psyche ('structure'; 'culture'). What leads to sickness in the human being leads to underperformance and ultimately failure in the organization.

Symptoms can be: customers that are not satisfied, decreasing quality levels, innovation blockage, high fluctuation of organizational members, vacancies cannot be filled, mistakes are re-occurring, schedules cannot be met, people shouting at each other due to high stress levels etc. In short: The organization gets sick like a human being and cannot unfold its full potential.

It is important to pay attention to the entire picture, to the entire organism, in order to restore health. This is facilitated by the Twelve Alignment framework.

3. Team level

The individual typically works in groups or teams. On a team level (red), emotions mainly transcend via verbal or non-verbal communication. The communication behavior of each individual determines the atmosphere in the team. To provide a few examples: Who shares which information and how? Who talks with whom and how? Communication can be regarded as the soft 'how'. The physical dimension is reflected in the coordination mechanisms (green) such as meetings, rules and processes providing the frame for effective collaboration. Coordination can be regarded as the hard 'how'. The mental dimension (blue) shows in the projects or the tasks the team is working on, the 'what'. Do all projects make sense related to the overall strategy? If not, are they terminated? If not, why not? The sum of the projects should result into the corporate strategy. Misalignments show if a project is not related to the strategy on level 3.

4. Individual level

On the level of the individual, the mental dimension is related to the mind with its thoughts (blue), the emotional dimension is related to the heart (red) with its feelings, and the physical dimension is related to the

body (green) and health.

Any transformation process implies change. The departure from a profit maximization paradigm towards the paradigm of acting socially responsible means deep rooted change for any individual including the executives.

It requires comprehensive unlearning, i.e. letting go of cherished beliefs, such as: 'Work is fight.' 'Only the company with the lowest cost will survive.' 'Business is aggressive.' These beliefs or mental models were regarded as the truth in the societies and businesses of the 20th century. We need to open up to new 'truths' in order to go beyond the limitations brought by the mono-dimensional focus of profit maximization.

It also requires new skills to manage one's emotions. Anxiety is the companion of change. Most human beings have concerns about uncertainty. Individuals are afraid of the unknown future. The process of facing one's fears can be painful and challenging.

The body typically is a good indicator for those challenges showing signs of stress and even illness during the alignment process.

Each individual is unique, and some are more resilient than others. In general, though, we have to anticipate major issues of misalignments with the majority of co-workers.

Figure 4 epitomizes the four levels in concentric circles symbolizing their interdependence. Each circle is filled with a mix of blue, green, and red pointing at the need for balance of the dimensional triads.

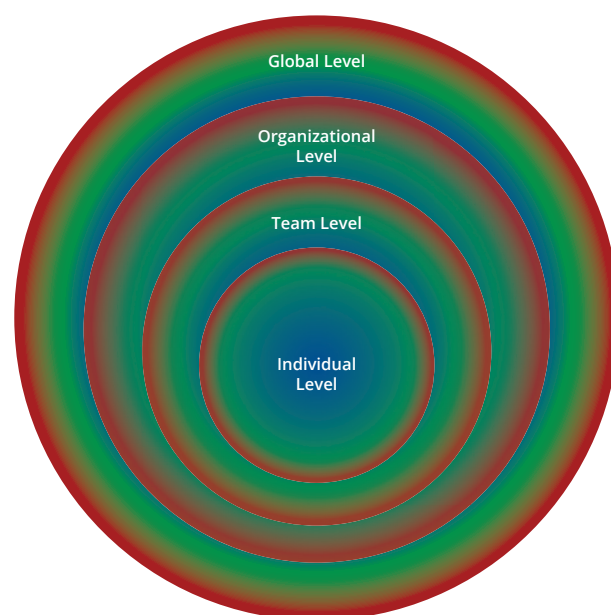


Figure 4: Circles of balance and interdependence

As pictured in figure 4, all levels are embedded in each other thus exerting mutual influence. This is also true for levels that are furthest away from each other, although it might not be directly obvious. A case in point are corporate executives. Let us take a brief look at the impact they may have on the global environment, whether they are aware of it or not.

Negative impact: If the executives' mindset is targeting at self-interest that is inconsistent with a socially responsible strategy, customers and other external stakeholders will pick up on these inconsistencies, consciously or unconsciously. Inconsistency means lack of credibility and trust, leading to the corporation's fading legitimacy. This will also be reflected in the corporation's declining brand value. In the long run, the external stakeholders, mainly the customers, will abandon this corporation. Thus, financial and other resources will be destroyed, employment opportunities are lost.

3.4 Purpose and alignment

Let us dive deeper into the center of the Twelve Alignments, the purpose. It is the core for orientation, the source of motivation, the basis for decisions, and the reference point for adjustments (Craig & Snook, 2014; Malnight, Buche & Dhanaraj, 2019). The purpose can be regarded as a verbalized form of self-expression, the essence of what the organization is aiming to do. The purpose answers the question: Why does the organization exist at all? What needs does it serve? What would be missing if the organization did not exist? To provide a better understanding, here are some purpose examples of different organizations:

If it is a company that deals with the development of apps, it could be: 'Making the lives of our customers easier'. For travelers, this could be an app providing them with changes on flight, train or bus schedules.

For a company trading with all kinds of IT-equipment, the mission could be: Providing our corporate customers with plug and play hardware hassle-free, in a fast and reliable way, with all new equipment being compatible with the existing solutions. The purpose could be: 'We make your (corporate) life easier'.

For a non-governmental organization in the environmental sector, the purpose could be: 'We increase the impact of civic movement leaders.' The corresponding mission could be: provide civic movement leaders who are promoting environmental protection campaigns with IT-logistics, training packages and other services in order to make their campaigns successful.

Positive impact: An executive with a clear purpose and a balanced mind-body-heart triad has a positive impact on balancing the macro-environment via his or her leadership. Those executives have the power to energize the entire organization with their purpose, to attract committed co-workers and to meet their customers' true needs. This creates value, be it brand value or be it opportunities to work in an organization with an energizing purpose and a good working climate. Creating positive employment opportunities and meeting true customer needs contributes to a better global environment.

Needless to say that a balanced macro-environment in terms of a healthy environment and peaceful societies is conducive to any individual, with or without inner alignment.

Strategy with its mission statement is rooted in analysis. Organizational purpose is not only based on the mind, but also on the heart. People should be able to understand and feel the purpose.

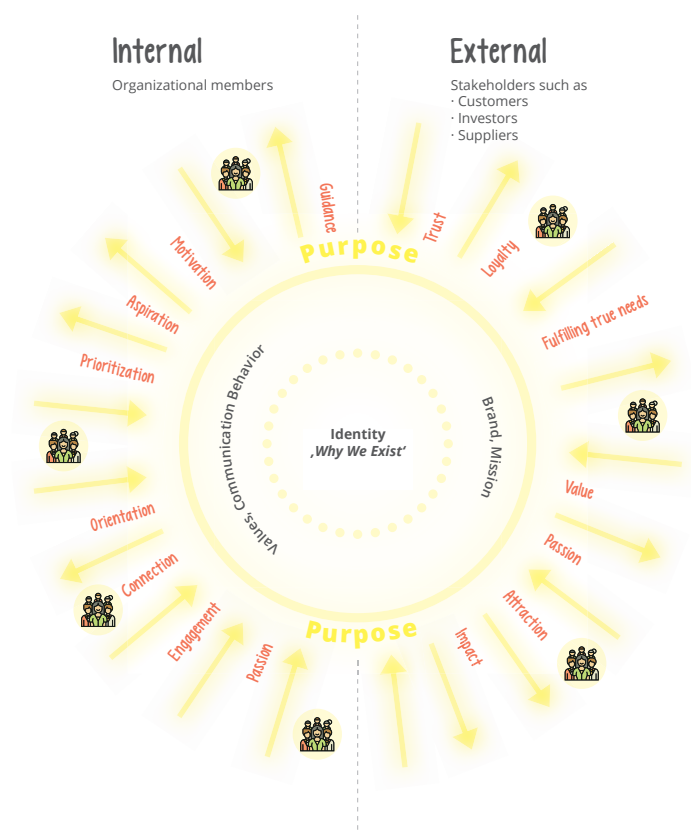


Figure 5: Organizational purpose – internal and external side

As depicted in figure 5, the organization's purpose radiates towards the inside and outside the organization. Internally, it is part of what people believe in, what their values are, and how they act in their daily communication. It is strongly linked to the emotional dimension. Towards the outside, it is part of the corporation's brand. What does this brand promise? The brand, too, is strongly linked to the emotional dimension. We can easily see this with buying decisions. Although an Apple product tends to be sold at premium prices, customers are prepared to spend more just for the brand and the feeling it conveys. In Apple's case it is: Think different – Challenge the status quo and offer individuals simpler alternatives (Sinek, 2011).

The purpose can be seen as a modern steering and navigation vehicle that is more effective than any traditional control system because it combines the mental with the emotional dimension. We all know: Emotion brings motion, i.e. committed co-workers and enthusiastic customers.

The role of the purpose consists of:

1. Redefining the playing field (mental dimension)
2. Shaping the value proposition (mental dimension)
3. Unifying all organizational members (mental and emotional dimension)
4. Guiding the development and growth of the organization (mental dimension)

5. Building trust in the organization (emotional dimension)
6. Broadening the organization's impact (all dimensions)
7. Building the basis for a sustainably successful transformation process (all dimensions)
8. Helping with continuous calibration and recalibration in times of disruptive change (all dimensions)

Despite of its pivotal function, numerous organizations have lost track of their purpose. For decades, they focused on profit and lost touch with their essence, their core. The strong focus on the mental dimension caused major misalignments. Is it the purpose of the corporation to maximize profits? If so, is profit an end in itself, or does it serve a higher goal? If so, which one? Whom does the organization serve at the end of the day?

For a smooth and successful re-alignment process, it is absolutely crucial that all members of an organization have clarity on their organization's purpose. This requires awareness. Especially the executives need to have clarity about their own purpose that should be in line with their organization's purpose. If the core is fuzzy or invisible, the corporation runs the risk of fostering misalignments.

3.5 Purpose and transformation

Purpose is at the center of alignment. Following this logic, figure 5 pictures organizational purpose as the sun with radiation beams inside and outside the organization. Figure 1 presents the purpose as a beam in the center of the 'corporate galaxy' with its planets revolving around it.

Let us further explore purpose looking at it from a cross-sectional perspective. Inside the 'purpose beam', we can see sub-purposes of the organization's different units such as teams. The sub-purposes are more specific than the overall purpose because they relate to the teams' tasks.

Here comes an example of the purpose of an IT-team in a medium-sized organization: 'Decode – Develop – Drive'

The purpose of the IT-Team relates to the corporation's purpose: 'Connect – Care – Inspire'

How? The IT team sees their purpose in translating their users' needs into IT-language and code, and vice versa to build the bridge between complicated IT features and the users' layman understanding. This is how

they connect and care for their internal and external customers. By developing specific IT solutions, the IT team contributes to 'Inspire' internal and external customers, as the IT architecture is an integral part of the strategy, structure and services of the organization. Drive stands for the team's roles as change driver.

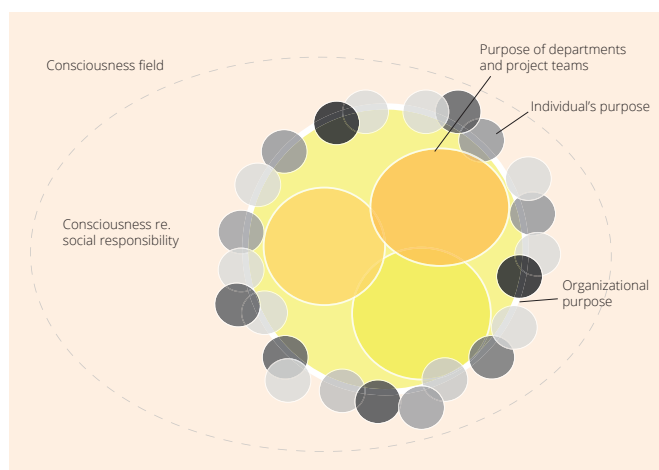


Figure 6: Purpose in a cross-section perspective

This example shows how an organizational purpose can be translated into a team purpose. The process always includes each team member's individual purpose. We see the individual co-workers' purposes at the edge of the organizational purpose as depicted in figure 6.

An individual's purpose basically is the set of values he or she stands for, along with the person's talents and aspirations. It is not what an individual should do. It refers to the essence of the individual, what he or she really is. The individual purpose can best be explored with the following questions (Collins, 2012):

What am I burning for? What can I really do well? What do I get paid for?

In combination, this gives direction towards what the individual considers meaningful doing, or more polemically: his or her inner call. Depending on the fit between individual and organization, there is a smaller or bigger overlap between the individual's and the organization's purpose. If the purpose is unclear or unknown, on the side of the individual and the organization, misalignments are the rule of the day. This shows in high burn-out rates of co-workers, and a steady increase in pressure for strategy implementation.

If the purpose is clear, and recruitment is based on it, we tend to see an overlap between organizational, team, and individual purpose. Co-workers feel a purpose fit and are much more willing to fully engage in their tasks, increasing the overall productivity and effectiveness of the organization.

The purpose cannot unfold its alignment effect if we create and apply it out of the mental dimension. On the contrary: If we look at the 'naked' words, such as 'Care' or 'Connect', they seem to be interchangeable among organizations. They can be perceived as 'another poster at the office wall' – nice decoration without meaning.

To avoid this boomerang effect that even can cause frustration and resignation rather than alignment, purpose needs to integrate the emotional dimension. What is the process?

We can imagine charging the 'purpose sun' with energy. The energy consists of consciousness. Consciousness functions like the amplifier of the organization's purpose. It increases its radiation power. Hence, figure 6 shows the purpose embedded in a field of consciousness.

What is meant by consciousness? For the sake of simplicity, consciousness shall be defined as the entirety of thoughts and feelings a human being has and is aware of. For the entire collective of human beings, consciousness can be seen as a quantum field that entails physical frequencies of different kinds. Those frequencies convey various kinds of information such as thoughts. All individuals are connected to this

collective field as outlined in the previous section. As an example, figure 6 refers to the 'focal field' of social responsibility. It means that numerous individuals share the awareness of interdependence and feel the need for aligned organizations.

On an individual level, consciousness requires constant attentiveness and mindfulness regarding one's thoughts (mental dimension), feelings related to those thoughts (emotional dimension), and how they are translated via bio-chemical processes into physical reactions (physical dimension).

Ideally, consciousness makes the person fully aware of all three dimensions at any given point of time. In other words, consciousness enables an individual's inner alignment and brings clarity regarding his or her individual purpose. It helps the individual to fully focus on his or her purpose thus bundling energy, energy that can be used to charge the purpose the organization is affiliated with.

Who is mainly in charge with charging the purpose?

It is the organization's executives and all leaders. Their self-awareness about their thoughts and feelings is crucial. Their mindfulness regarding their actions is key. Navigating with their organization's purpose, they use all three dimensions:

To be able to fully align their organizations, executives need first of all knowledge about the purpose as a navigation vehicle for themselves and their organizations. Secondly, they need to have visibility of their own purpose and willingness to share it. Based on inner clarity, executives take the conscious decision to be the leader of an organization. They take responsibility to transform it into a socially responsible organization because they know and feel that this is the way forward. Transforming organizations towards social responsibility increases the organization's vitality. Increased vitality can translate into stronger attractiveness. This, in turn, means more motivated and committed co-workers as well as an increasing number of enthusiastic customers. The same logic applies in the reverse for executives who try to take a shortcut and who only pretend their organization is socially responsible. This attitude is rooted in a mono-dimensional approach towards responsibility as a set of principles, policies, and rules, applied with the intent to maintain organizational legitimacy. To comply with minimal requirements can maintain legitimacy in the short-term. In the long-term, mono-dimensional focus on profit maximization will boomerang. Any inner doubts the executive might have about the effectiveness of the triple bottom line result in increased pressure on co-workers to 'enforce' motivation. In addition, they need to cope with pressure from stakeholders such as investors and customers who call for aligned corporations.

At the end of this section, one might feel overwhelmed by complexity in the light of the Twelve Alignments with its two principles, three dimensions and four levels. Admittedly, it takes a bit of practice to get accustomed to Twelve-Alignments-Thinking (12A-Thinking). Let us therefore summarize the main findings to foster 12A-Thinking:

1. The organizational transformation process towards the triple bottom line is based on two principles: balance and interdependence.
2. These principles are easier to implement if we look at the organization as an organism in analogy to a human being: mind, body, and heart must be aligned.
3. All parts of the human being have to be taken care of. This is true for all levels of the organization: global, organizational, team, individual.
4. The organizational purpose is at the core of the organization and pivotal to alignment. It is like the gravity center for aligning the levels and dimensions.

5. Social responsibility as the essence of any sustainable organization in the 21st century has to be an integral part of the organization's purpose.
6. The purpose should be charged with consciousness to strengthen alignment and long-term effectiveness.
7. The key source of consciousness is the executive's (self)-awareness. The bigger the group of organizational members with developed (self-)awareness, the smoother the alignment process.
8. The first step to develop awareness consist of assuming Individual Social Responsibility. Hence, Individual Social Responsibility is at the core of any transformation process towards social responsibility.

In the following section, we will explore exactly what it means to assume Individual Social Responsibility (ISR).

4. How to become socially responsible

Any individual has the freedom of choice: choosing the attitude we take towards life. For executives, this means they can open up and initiate the transformation of their organization towards a socially responsible corporation, or they continue to manage it based on the incumbent mono-dimensional paradigm. If they maintain their deeply held mental model of profit and/or power maximization, they should be straightforward about it. Solely committed to the purpose of profit or power maximization, those executives should have the courage to claim responsibility for the negative impact their organizations cause and cope with the consequences of their attitude. If executives, shareholders and owners do not buy into the concept of social responsibility, it is a sub-optimal investment to go beyond the minimum legal requirements. If they do not fully believe in it and 'use' social responsibility as a mere method to increase their competitiveness, they will ultimately lose it.

Why? They are misaligned with their environment: With mental models from the 20th century, they operate in global societies that have an increasingly changed perception of life with numerous stakeholders requesting organizations to be socially responsible. Over

time, the companies that stick to the basic assumptions of the 20th century will be marginalized and lose their brand value. They will not be sustainable and ultimately lose their legitimacy.

If executives are committed to transform their corporations towards social responsibility, they also have to take the decision to embark on a personal transformation journey. They will not only intellectually understand, but feel their dependence on the planet, their co-workers and the society with all relevant stakeholders like customers. For them, it will be compelling to become socially responsible because they feel the need. Again: Emotion brings motion.

It goes without saying that this decision is not limited to executives. The more individuals embark on their personal transformation journey towards Individual Social Responsibility, the smoother and faster the overall organizational transformation process becomes. It might even exert pressure on executives to get into motion when they see other individuals assuming Individual Social Responsibility leaving them behind as dinosaurs from another era...

4.1 Replacing old beliefs

Following deeply held beliefs of separation and specialization, executives used to delegate social responsibility to a dedicated sub-unit of the corporation, typically the Corporate Social Responsibility Department, the Human Resource Department or the Public Relations Department. The 'rest' of the corporation typically remained unaffected by social responsibility. They considered it appropriate to have some dedicated teams in the company that can deal with yet another set of external stakeholder expectations, such as the 'greenies' and other 'tree huggers' out there who put pressure on the company to receive money or any other concession. This is a typical form of how the organization interacted with its environment in the past.

The first step to go down the path towards Individual Social Responsibility is the insight that responsibility cannot be delegated. There are experts for technical details who deal with the implementation of relevant projects, but the executives bear the ultimate responsibility for any impact their organizations have on global societies and the planet.

Another cherished belief is the clear dominance of the mind (blue) over physical aspects (green) and feelings (red). In the 20th century, this was the basic assumption underlying all economic endeavors. Corporations were managed on the blue track (mental), with occasional excursions to the green track (physical). The red track (emotional) was totally neglected at high cost: burnouts and bore-outs, non-committed co-workers, high stress levels.

Letting go the assumption of the dominance of the mind resembles an earthquake. It exposes executives to uncertainty and vulnerability. If they show emotions, how will their co-workers react? Will they be taken advantage of? Will they be ridiculed? It takes extreme courage to let go this cherished belief that had accompanied the executives throughout their entire careers.

To start their inner alignment process, executives have to display a great deal of open-mindedness. They need to be willing to identify, question, and let go beliefs and mental models they have learned in (business) school and acted upon their entire lives.

It is comparable to a huge cleanup campaign in their insides. It takes rigid discipline to unearth all those beliefs and gradually replace them with new beliefs that build a

more appropriate fundament for a socially responsibly attitude (Köster, 2015; Köster, 2018).

4.2 Acknowledging and balancing emotions

The science era has unilaterally focused on the left part of the brain. Within the Twelve Alignments framework, we use the expression 'mental dimension' or 'blue track'. Emotions were considered unpredictable, unprofessional, and counter-productive with the exception of the area of marketing where (positive) emotions were deliberately used to influence customers. The active inclusion of the emotional side shifts the focus to the right part of the brain, thus contributing to a balance and cross-fertilization of mind and heart. In the language of the Twelve Alignments, we talk about integrating the 'emotional dimension' or 'red track'.

Ancient Asian philosophies such as Daoism and Confucianism or the Indian Baghavad Gita have postulated the importance of such a balance since thousands of years (Nisbett, 2003; Hawley, 2001; Schmidt, 1996). It is time to incorporate this wisdom into corporations again in order to make them more effective and enjoyable.

The suppression of feelings deprives human beings from an important source of energy and effectiveness.

Mentally and physically, feelings can be seen as 'amplifiers' in a positive or negative direction (Dispenza, 2012). They boost the power of thoughts, and they have the power to counteract thoughts, projects, and strategies. Therefore, it is absolutely vital to acknowledge their existence and to be aware of them.

The executives should take the lead by consciously managing their feelings: taking stock of them, identifying their triggers and connected thoughts, identifying pain points and drama scenarios (Köster, 2018). These activities build a vital part of Individual Social Responsibility with positively contagious effects: Acting in a way that is socially responsible triggers positive feelings in others. Simply put: What goes around, comes around. Positive feelings function as a kind of positive reinforcement or performance amplifier. Co-workers have more energy, teams can better address potential issues and work more smoothly on the development of ideas, products and services.

4.3 Developing transformational leadership qualities

The transformation towards social responsibility requires intensive personal development, above all from the executives as they have the greatest influence in and on the organization.

This is also one of the reasons why many executives are reluctant to embark on the alignment process. They know that they need new leadership qualities. And they know that this process requires hard work. Individual Social Responsibility requires a change of mindset, a change of attitude. It implies intensive awareness building. It means the metamorphosis of an executive into a transformational leader.

Transformational leaders have great inner clarity and are able to align their mind, body, and heart. They can lead by example and transfer their own attitude of Individual Social Responsibility to make their entire organization socially responsible.

All individuals involved in this process develop awareness about themselves. In the course of transformation towards organizational alignment, the organization matures in terms of awareness building.

As explained in section three, consciousness can be used to charge the organizational purpose. It is a self-reinforcing process ultimately turning the organization into a strong attractor of customers, talent, media and research attention, reliable suppliers etc.

In other words: If leaders assume Individual Social Responsibility, they contribute to organizational effectiveness including monetary success mid- to long-term. Empirical evidence for this causal relationship is provided by the study of Mackey and Sisodia (2013).

If we look at this interrelation with the Twelve Alignments framework, we clearly see how the individual level has a direct impact on the organizational and global level.

This kind of holistic systemic thinking has a long history. The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius stated more than 2,500 years ago: "The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their

persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts [...]" (Legge, 2001: 357)

Translated into a modern organizational context, authenticity and consistency starting with oneself could be seen as the critical success factor for an effective

organization, an organization that displays virtue, or, that acts socially responsible. Research shows that the most relevant virtues to transform an organization towards alignment are:

Courage, Open-mindedness, Resilience, Appreciation, Focus, Action-Orientation, referred to as CORAFA or CORAFA-leadership (Köster, 2021).

4.4 Main steps towards Individual Social Responsibility

Let us summarize the process an individual undergoes to be socially responsible. As we are all different, there are numerous deviations and adaptations of this spiral process summarized in figure 7.

1. Questioning and dissolving deeply held beliefs

A starting point can be reading this article without discarding its underlying mental models immediately but remaining open and curious about a world that functions differently. Section 4.1 has outlined selected beliefs that have to be overcome in order to become a socially responsible leader.

2. Assuming full responsibility for one's actions

Responsibility cannot be delegated. Executives cannot repudiate the responsibility for the impact of a decision they have taken. The moral standards of the world of the 20th century, though, facilitate this disconnect between decisions and their consequences. They promote compartmentalized thinking. These standards often lead to contradictory behavior. An executive can be very caring for his partner and children, dismissing 10,000 employees in a very inhuman manner without batting an eyelash. Another executive can see his daughter dying from leukemia and continue allowing his company to pour toxic sewerage into a lake in South-America. Obviously, these individuals do not act in a socially responsible way in their roles as executives which stands in stark contrast to their family roles. As a matter of fact, such individuals – still many managers of big corporations - have not yet developed systemic thinking and acting. Their mental models from the science era led them to measure with different yards. Using 12A-Thinking, we clearly see interrelations such as: any negative impact a corporation has on its environment reversely has a negative impact on this corporation – admittedly with a time lag. Hence, there is only one yardstick that is applicable to all situations. It starts with the truth to oneself, the truth that is the basis for unconditional responsibility taking (Senge, 1990).

3. Acknowledging and managing emotions

Leaders need intellectual and emotional capability to act in a socially responsible way. They need to take stock of their emotions, to address their emotional triggers, to fully understand and master them instead of being ruled by their emotions (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 2007). The biggest constraint is a wide portfolio of fears and anxieties. Köster (2018) provides a full tool set on how to explore emotions and how to cope with them.

4. Overcoming ego constraints

The path towards developing awareness is cumbersome. It means overcoming the ego that stands in any individual's way. The ego is a residual of the past era, loaded with strong inertia. It aims at maintaining the 'optical delusion' of separateness. It puts human beings in a competition and 'fighting' mode. In the terms of the Twelve Alignments, it defends the dominance of track blue. The ego with its power maximization tendencies has been fed by the values of the 20th century. It is rather persistent and takes continuous efforts to be balanced off and overcome. This step is closely intertwined with the management of emotions, namely fears. Many executives are afraid of giving up their ego as they confuse it with their true identity, their true self. They are afraid of losing respect and power.

5. Adopting new mental models

If executives transcend the mental models of the science era, they gradually abandon thoughts and feelings that would result in negative impact on others. This is the logical consequence from the insight of interconnectedness. Any damage inflicted on co-workers, customers, or the broader society will return to the source of the damage. This insight commands the moral imperative (without any underlying dogma) to constantly act in a way that oneself would most appreciate.

One option of adopting new mental models and new ways of thinking is the use of the Twelve Alignments as outlined in section three. A first step is to gain clarity about the organization's purpose. Transformational leaders need to clearly capture the purpose and ideally

charge it with their awareness. At this point, though, they might run into a dilemma.

When they (re-)activate their corporation's purpose, they might discover a misalignment between their own values and the *raison d'être* of their corporation. They may wonder if their corporation's purpose is beneficial to its main stakeholders, namely the customers and end users. Heads of corporations with a heavy negative impact on stakeholders such as tobacco companies or armament firms might find it difficult to find an answer that allows them to continue to be at the helm of those corporations. Depending on the state of consciousness, some leaders may resolve this dilemma by switching industries or changing their entire career.

6. Leading by example

If executives manage to align their personal purpose with the purpose of the corporation, they tend to adopt a transformational leadership style characterized by courageous decisions and appreciation of all organizational members. In an organism, all cells are equally important. If a single cell turns sick, the rest of the organism starts to suffer. As a '*primus inter pares*', transformational leaders treat their co-workers in a way they themselves want to be treated. They vitalize the organization with their positive emotions and the power of their thoughts. They inspire through a powerful attractive purpose that is amplified by their awareness. They are aware of the fact that they are invisibly connected with their co-workers and strive to be a role model at any given point of time, whether they are interacting with co-workers or other stakeholders or whether they are on their own.

Depending on their awareness co-workers might just feel appreciated and pass on the good

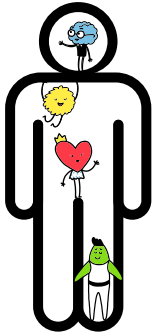
vibrations unconsciously. Others with a more mature consciousness will be able to fully acknowledge the leaders' transformation activities and support the process by charging the organizational purpose with their own consciousness. The more mindful and aware organizational members are, the smoother and faster the entire transformation towards alignment and social responsibility.

During their awareness building journey, leaders have strengthened qualities that are essential for the organization: courage, open-mindedness, resilience, appreciation, focus and action-orientation. They manage to translate those qualities into day-to-day behavior thus influencing the organization's culture. Organizations with transformational leaders typically benefit from their personal attitude, their individual social responsibility that translates into a creative and positive organizational culture. Whether values such as freedom or joy are formalized or not, they prevail and unleash innovative power.

Acting as role models, they aim at aligning the organizational purpose with the strategy (projects), culture (communication behavior) and structure (coordination) of their organization. If all co-workers convey the message 'We do like what we are doing, and we do care for our customers, the environment, and the communities we operate in', the transformational leader has fully transferred his or her Individual Social Responsibility to an aligned organization that act in a socially responsible way.

Figure 7 depicts the main stages individuals undergo on their way towards becoming socially responsible leaders. The personal transformation is not a linear process but can be imagined as a curvy path of spirals.

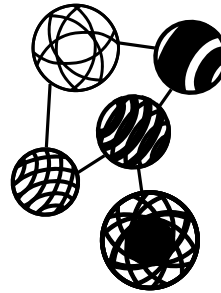
THE PROCESS OF ASSUMING INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



*Getting to know yourself:
mental dimension, physi-
cal dimension, emotional
dimension, awareness*



*Removing barriers:
cleaning-up mental and
emotional patterns to gain
inner clarity and focus on
personal purpose*



*Thinking in systems: com-
bining mental, emotional,
somatic and systemic
intelligence*



*Leading the CORAFA-way
with full social
responsibility*

CONNECT – CLEANUP & CLEAR-UP – INNER CO-CREATION – CORAFA-LEADERSHIP

Figure 7: The process of assuming Individual Social Responsibility

At the beginning of the process, there is the clear commitment to assume Individual Social Responsibility. In the course of the organization's transformation towards alignment, the leader first undergoes his or her transformation to gain personal experiences in order to be able to lead by example. The inner clean-up work can be rather tedious. There are many ups and downs, self-doubts, and the process presumably never ends. Short-term, leaders might not even see any progress except from an increasing personal contentment when they remove inner barriers and gain more clarity about their personal purpose.

Over time, the leader's behavior and holistic systemic thinking triggers organizational alignment. The more individuals feel inspired to assume Individual Social Responsibility, the smoother the organization will transform itself. There might be cases, though, where the transformational power of the leaders does not suffice to transform an entire organization. This applies especially to industries that are misaligned with social responsibility by. At any rate, the more individuals assume Individual Social Responsibility, the better for the organization and the world.

5. Conclusion

The second decade of the 21st century has seen an increasing number of individuals with awakening awareness who expect organizations to behave in line with societal and environmental needs. In line with

this megatrend, we do see a major paradigm shift in business administration and leadership towards the triple bottom line.

5.1 Summary

According to the belief of the 20th century, social responsibility is nice to have but does not improve business results. It rather costs than earns money. Taking a trans-disciplinary approach, this article transcends this deeply held belief and argues: If we assume Individual Social Responsibility, an attitude postulated already by well-known ancient Asian philosophy traditions, we also improve corporate performance.

The line of logic is:

1. The triple bottom line or social responsibility in a wider sense is the managerial paradigm of the 21st century.
2. It needs to be part of the corporation's purpose in order to give the corporation legitimacy and anchor it in true societal needs.
3. Social responsibility takes people's needs into account, be it as customers or organizational members. Following the principles of interdependence and balance, these needs have to be reflected in the organization's strategy and its projects, the organizational structure and coordination mechanisms, and the organizational culture and the prevailing communication behavior. All parts of the organization need to be in line with the triple bottom line approach.
4. The transformation towards social responsibility requires Individual Social Responsibility at the side of the corporations' executives. They have to develop awareness to gain full clarity of their personal purpose, their values and their communication behavior. The executives have to align their mental, emotional and physical dimensions to have the ability to inspire others and the stamina they need to drive the alignment process.

5. Individual Social Responsibility is reflected in the executives' leadership style. Having transcended their ego and being able to work with positive feelings, socially responsible leaders are fully conscious and passionate about their leadership role. Passion is positively contagious and leads to motivated and committed co-workers as well as an increasing number of enthusiastic customers.

6. Individual Social Responsibility is the foundation of organizational social responsibility.

The transformation from a single to a triple bottom line is a deep rooted change. The scope of transformation is huge. It is facilitated by holistic systemic thinking and acting, the 12A-Thinking. The Twelve Alignments framework is based on the principles of balance and interdependence.

As is true for all major change initiatives, the crucial success factor is the intrinsic motivation of the (transformational) leaders. Their willingness and commitment to start their inner alignment process is pivotal to the entire transformation process because it is the leaders' awareness that enables and accelerates the organizational alignment. It is their consciousness that inspires others to assume Individual Social Responsibility and develop their own awareness further.

Mature consciousness levels along with a clear and articulated purpose function as a transformation accelerator. Consciousness bundled in a clear purpose attracts customers and other external stakeholders. They feel drawn to the corporation due to its authenticity. The authenticity, in turn, is the result of continuous alignment activities within the framework of the Twelve Alignments. Customers appreciate the

products and services of this corporation because they emanate trust. Word of mouth and social media will help to attract more stakeholders, mainly customers, and help the company to thrive.

Whether companies act in a socially responsible way or not is ultimately reflected in brand value. If a corporation does not live up to its postulated values, and acts in a way that negatively impacts its main stakeholders over a longer period of time, customers will increasingly exert their right of choice and ignore this corporation. A decrease in brand value will be the

consequence. Corporations need to become aware of the fact that their main stakeholders, employees, customers, suppliers, and investors, are becoming increasingly demanding regarding their expectations towards the role of an organization. It is neither a money printing mechanism nor a power maximization vehicle for executives and owners. It is an organism, a network of people that come together linked by a common purpose. Guided by their consciousness they engage in serving themselves by serving customers and their environment, namely our planet and our societies.

5.2 Implications

The concept of Individual Social Responsibility is based on extended mental models in synch with insights from neurosciences, natural sciences and ancient philosophy. Mental models are shaped and conveyed through education. Hence, Individual Social Responsibility calls for modified business and leadership education on an undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate level. Priority should be on executive training due to the fact that top management needs to take a leading role in assuming Individual Social Responsibility.

Following the trend of extending the conventional syllabus of business administration studies by sustainable management and corporate social responsibility, there needs to be an additional subject on Inner Alignment along with offers of meditation and other techniques enhancing the journey towards

greater awareness with the aim of enabling people to understand and feel Individual Social Responsibility. Some renowned business schools such as the Executive Academy of Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria already offer such elements as part of their overall business administration studies (WU Executive Academy, 2019).

Needless to say that courses on inner leadership have to be electives to respect the free will of any individual. Not everybody is prepared to transcend his or her mental models. Tutors could have a trans-disciplinary background or be a trans-disciplinary team providing students and executives with insights from their respective fields, be it quantum physics, ancient philosophies, business ethics, or consciousness-based leadership approaches.

5.3 Future Research

Future research on Individual Social Responsibility clearly focusses on the broadening of empirical evidence which is extremely limited to date. So far, there seems to be only a small number of organizations with leaders that practice Individual Social Responsibility at an advanced stage.

World-wide 'stock-taking' projects would be highly valuable, starting with a qualitative approach, adding more quantitative elements over time. The nature of the phenomenon calls for longitudinal studies.

Big stock-listed companies with a longer tradition still tend to be in a state of paralysis. Their executives know about the need for transformation but typically are not willed yet to embark on a personal transformation journey.

Younger and smaller corporations tend to have more executives that experiment with Individual Social

Responsibility. There is the difficulty of identifying such organizations that might not even be fully aware of the approach they are taking as it comes more natural to them. Hence, a collaborative effort among world-wide academics similar to the GLOBE study would be an adequate approach to search for 'Individual Social Responsibility at work' on a global scale and discover 'hidden shining examples of Individual Social Responsibility'.

Content-wise the concept of Individual Social Responsibility is strongly linked with the movement and research efforts of conscious capitalism, mindfulness, non-traditional innovation management, sustainable management and to some extent integral theory.

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