

# INSPIRE

GETTING TO THE HEART OF PURPOSE

THE LATEST IN LEADERSHIP THINKING  
FROM MØLLER INSTITUTE

ISSUE 01 | MAY 2020

**DELIVERING  
PURPOSE**  
FROM WHY TO HOW

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**QUIET EGO  
LEADERSHIP**  
DOES MINDFULNESS MATTER?

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**5 RULES FOR EMBEDDING  
PURPOSE IN YOUR  
ORGANISATION**  
IS PURPOSE AN IRRELEVANT  
OBSTACLE TO SUCCESS?



## REHUMANISING LEADERSHIP

Transform your organisation to operate from the axes  
of purpose and empathy to create meaningful impact.



# WELCOME

Leadership – there are some who confuse charisma with substance, dogma for vision and simplicity for solutions. Many assume that being in charge equals leadership and as a result have come to trust those who have leadership roles in society less and less – the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer shows that no sector (Government, business, NGOs or media) is believed to be both ethical and competent.

What is the fallout from this? Is anyone who outwardly aspires to leadership immediately treated as either untrustworthy, incompetent or unethical? Do we truly understand why we seek to lead and the genuine impact we can create?

What then happens when genuine leadership is required? In moments of crisis, such as the one we face with the global pandemic of COVID-19, how does this distorted relationship between leaders and the rest of society play out? In our rush to be consoled and reassured do we paper over doubts about how we are led in exchange for some semblance of certainty?

Of many lessons that can be drawn from the situation we are in today, the power of a clear and significant purpose has shone through. People have endured financial, emotional and physical limitations in support of one shared goal – protecting greater society from infection. Such a simple (yet complex) purpose has shown that despite our different perceptions, beliefs and behaviours, a community can be rallied behind something that is valuable to achieve.

At the Møller Institute we believe in developing leaders who recognise the power of the impact they can have, and understand the responsibility of using that impact in beneficial ways for those around them.

Purpose is a powerful tool for leaders to use, but one that must be used with genuine intent. It cannot simply be used to manipulate those they lead, but must be aligned with an outcome which all those who follow can wholeheartedly be part of.

In this issue of *Inspire* we take an in-depth look at purpose, its value and how it can become part of our organisation's conversations and strategies. By linking how we lead with why we lead, we can develop our shared understanding of leadership and achieve something greater, ensuring that the impact we create is significant, understood and sustainable.

## CONTRIBUTORS

A massive thank you to our incredible network of Associates and contributors who have made this issue of *Inspire* possible. All articles have been written by Møller Institute Associates, our network of contributors, clients and colleagues. We are immensely proud of the convening power we can deliver to clients as a result of the connectivity, experience and wisdom of our teaching team of Associates and contributors. Full details of all our Associates can be found on our website.

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We make a living by what we get,  
but we make a life by what we give.

- Sir Winston Churchill





# 5 RULES

## FOR EMBEDDING PURPOSE IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Richard Hill, Møller Institute Client Director and Associate

Like culture, purpose exists within every organisation – the question is: are we consciously engaging with it or is it at best irrelevant or at worst an obstacle to our success? Each individual inside an organisation has a purpose, but have you as a leader been able to ensure that these granular purposes pull together in a corporate direction?

First of all, perhaps it is useful to consider what organisational purpose is. Confusion between mission, vision, values and purpose reigns in the boardroom, meaning that they are often used interchangeably and end up generating a word soup which is hard to make useful.

A **mission** tells us what it is we do – the business we're in, the work we do and the clients we serve.

A **vision** tells us where we are heading and what we look to be in the future.

**Values** describe our culture and the way we choose to do things and what we believe to be important.

So how about purpose? A **purpose** is how we articulate why we should care about

making our collective efforts a success. It aligns with the mission but drives more deeply into our individual and collective sense of ourselves. It positions us in the context of the world beyond us and illustrates the difference that we can make to those who are not us.

A purpose helps us transcend the transactional aspects of our roles and motivates us by connecting our rational perspectives with our underlying values. More than anything it gives us a reason for acting, connecting and collaborating.

Defining a purpose might be the easy part: it can be more satisfying to create than a mission or vision due to its connection with something bigger than ourselves. There are key elements that it needs to include:

- ✓ It needs to be inspiring and worth the time and energy of those it involves
- ✓ It must take a stand and hold a position reflecting clear principles
- ✓ It should be heartfelt and built for the long-term – not transitory or constructed from platitudes
- ✓ It has to provide guidance as to the choices we make – clarity not vagueness is essential

The harder challenge is to make this purpose live in our organisation. Research undertaken by Dr Gill Hickman and Professor Georgia Sorenson illustrates five critical areas of attention that any leader needs to engage with to make their chosen organisational purpose thrive.

### 1. Selection and on-boarding of new entrants to the organisation

The adage of "recruiting for attitude, training for skills" is a fundamental truth when looking at embedding purpose. Not only should you pay attention to bringing in people who understand and value the purpose of your organisation, the very manner in which they begin their relationship with you is critical. The on-boarding process must reflect, reiterate and reinforce what you hold to be true – any conflict between espoused and experienced articulations will create cracks of cynicism and doubt which are hard to repair.

### 2. Fostering collectivity

The structure of an organisation is dependent on individuals fulfilling their roles, but the purpose of an organisation thrives when employees are encouraged to look beyond their own domain. Efforts by leadership to drive individuals to consider the bigger picture that their role contributes to, and development of a broad understanding leads to a greater embedding of purpose in day-to-day perspectives.

### 3. Providing meaningful work

Work that has "meaning" for an individual does not simply mean "worthy" – rather it is the alignment between someone's role and their belief system. Meaningful work is by definition purposeful because it imbues a fundamental reason for participating, a route to ownership and a commitment to completion and fulfilment. Routes to alignment may not be obvious – ways of achieving it could include focusing on social aspects such as the shared experience, articulating organisational impact or management tasks such as moving from transactional quantification of an employee's outputs to another form of measurement. When the meaning behind individual work is linked to the collective purpose, this strengthens the application of organisational purpose in practice.

### 4. Building strong social bonds and relationships

Strong workplace bonds fuel employee performance, and in return purpose-led workplaces build stronger bonds. In line with the notion of collective performance above, purpose becomes important when we feel closeness to each other but also gives us a reason to build allegiance and social glue. This circularity creates a conscious understanding of purpose and its relevance, creating the conditions for its perpetuation and greater impact on outcomes and outputs.

### 5. Intentional facilitation of change

Change happens. The constant process of responding to extreme new complexities or simple iterative developments is part of the leadership challenge. Maintaining a sense of intentionality which keeps in mind the espoused purpose of an organisation is essential to ensure that a purpose is embedded and sustained. Grounding the process of change and responses to it in the culture, perspectives and intent of an organisation ensures that the sense of purpose travels with you in the change journey.

Commitment to a purpose is often seen as either a dogma to be policed or too nebulous to be managed. In fact, it is simply the product of a set of leadership decisions and practices which reach across organisation types, sectors and sizes. Embedding purpose across an organisation may feel like a challenge, but as with any leadership task, broken down into its constituent parts it becomes something much more achievable.

With extensive insights across a range of themes, including positive organisational behaviours, innovation and growth, developing emerging talent, public sector leadership, and aligning organisational culture, Richard (pictured left) works on a range of Møller Institute programmes in sectors ranging from financial services to global institutions to public and third sectors.



# PUTTING *Pen to* PURPOSE

Words by Richard Hill, pictures by Lance Bell

Over 40 business leaders and academics gathered at the Møller Institute in December 2018 to hear, amongst other things, how Unilever has driven business performance through strategic integration and alignment of organisational purpose.

Møller Institute and the ILA joined forces to bring together the worlds of business and academia and design and deliver a purposeful symposium to explore how alignment of organisational and personal purpose can drive business growth.

The Symposium brought together a powerful combination of CEOs, C-suite and HRDs from successful global organisations together with world-renowned leadership scholars to answer the question:

**How can we ignite organisational and individual purpose to drive business performance and societal impact?**

As an exclusive for *Inspire* readers we now share nine graphics from the output artwork which were produced by Lance Bell which highlight some of the themes that emerged from the symposium.

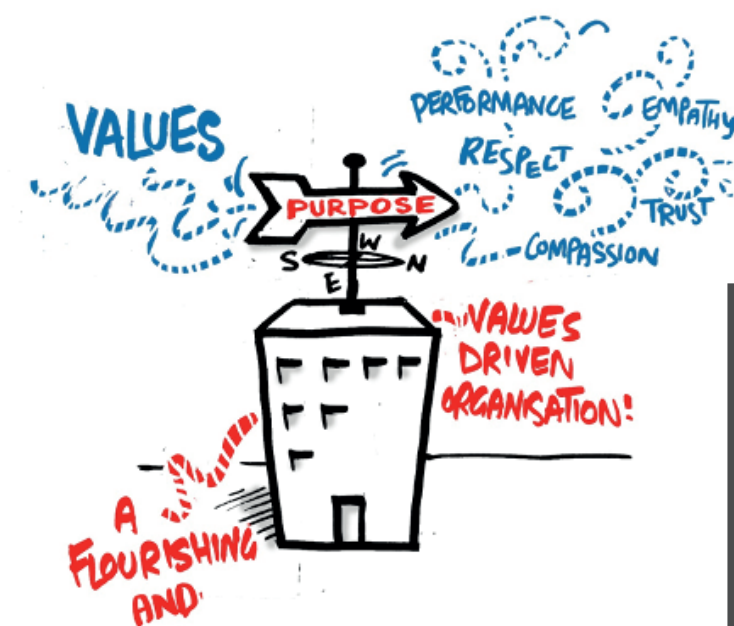
[Download full White Paper here](#)

As an advocate for a purpose-led approach you will be asked to prove its value through measurements, benchmarks and ROI. As with all culture, people and behaviour aspects of an organisation there are tangible and intangible aspects to be measured. Don't be driven by what can be counted to the detriment of what cannot be – in the long-term, what counts may not be what you can count.



Purpose is not a PR tool, a corporate band-aid or an exercise in window-dressing. Purpose can only be of value when it truly reflects what an organisation is and what it aspires to be. For purposefulness to matter to others, it must matter to you – you must care about it.

We use Lance and other visual scribes as part of our programme delivery to support leaders learn more effectively by helping them visualise their thinking, capture decisions and insights and bring ideas to life in a memorable and inspiring way.



A true purpose is at the heart of any values-driven organisation. Without knowing why we are acting we will not know how to act. An attempt to build a corporate culture without the compass of purpose leaves it hanging in the wind and susceptible to being blown off-course.





Purpose matters but it is not the only answer. It is a powerful tool but only in coordination with a full leadership and management skillset. An organisation that knows "why" but cannot "do" is as valueless as one that "does" but doesn't know "why".

Purpose leads to more than an output, it builds foundations for the future through engaging others with a deeper dimension of success. Those who engage with your sense of purpose become your advocates, you become their trusted partner, and together you find your connections with those who hold the same things to be true become broader, creating more opportunity.



Purpose is your secret leadership tool. It delivers invisible leadership so that the organisation around you chooses to achieve and does this willingly, with autonomy and with enthusiasm. It creates a dimension in which empowerment and ownership of the business becomes a norm rather than an exception.

In a world of tech innovation and the potential for fractured social dynamics in the workplace, purpose creates a uniquely human way of engaging with what we create. As new working generations look for validation and accomplishment in their employment, purpose is the way you can connect with them and they can connect with your organisation.



Being a champion for purpose opens you up to challenge. Those who are ruled by measurements and quantities will question its value, those who are ruled by values and ideology will perceive cynicism and manipulation in finding a middle ground. The need to be "right" will become a common argument during the process, because you are tapping into fundamental perceptions of self and worldview. Persevere and find the space between and you will tap into a powerful enabling force.

# QUIET EGO LEADERSHIP

Michael Chaskalson, Møller Institute Associate



Loud egos. The problems they cause are ubiquitous and increasingly evident on the world stage.

In the workplace, noisy, unruly egos give rise to team dysfunction, disengagement and conflict. Leaders with unquiet egos reduce the level of psychological safety in their teams.

There is emerging evidence<sup>1</sup> that teams and organisations where psychological safety is low have correspondingly lower levels of staff retention. They are less likely to generate or capture the power of diverse and innovative thought and they bring in less revenue per head.

In these complex, uncertain and disrupted times, when innovation and collaboration are key, leaders with quieter egos will manage others more effectively.

The term 'Quiet Ego' was coined by Wayment & Bauer in 2008<sup>2</sup>. For them, the quiet ego is not to be confused with the fragile, squashed or unwillingly silenced ego. The quiet ego is deeply resilient. It is a sense of self that has no need to assert itself but emerges from an attunement to the rhythms of one's own and others' inner dynamics. Noisier egos, by contrast, feed on the world of external appearances on which they depend for reassurance.

The quiet ego recognises its strengths and weaknesses in ways that enable personal growth. It is marked by a sense of compassion for others and for itself. It is not in thrall to social image. Instead, it realizes that the self is ultimately a construction – a story that enables a sense of unity and purpose in life but also casts the shadow of illusions that may be constructive or destructive. Noisier egos expend considerable energy in identifying and defending their constructed selves as if they were not a construction – asserting themselves into the world.

As the ego quieters it becomes more self-aware and less defensive. Recognising the interdependent nature of self and others, the quiet ego becomes naturally more compassionate. This interdependent self is not a lost self. It is strong, resilient, and self-assured.

A quietened ego is a highly desirable leadership attribute. But how does one achieve it? There are ideas and practices which can spark, support and enable a transformative journey – a lifetime's work that nonetheless can show rapid and early beneficial outcomes.

Drawing with modification on Wayment and Bauer, I suggest there are four factors which can be fostered as crucial elements of leadership development. Mindfulness; a sense of the interdependence of all things; compassion; and a commitment to continuous personal growth.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a quality of present moment attention that is marked by three intertwined characteristics: Allowing, Inquiry and Meta-awareness (AIM)<sup>3</sup>.

**Allowing** consists in a deep reality-oriented willingness to allow what is the case to be the case. It is the non-judgemental

acceptance of things as they are and it is the basis upon which one can freely choose to act or not on what one perceives.

**Inquiry** stands for a vivid and open-hearted engagement with the ever-changing content of present moment experience.

**Meta-awareness** is the ability at times to choose simply to observe what you are thinking, feeling, and sensing. Like stepping out of a fast-flowing, sometimes turbulent, stream onto the riverbank, you see what's actually going on in the moment. You see your thoughts, feelings, sensations and impulses for what they are – and you do not mistake thoughts about things for things as actually they are.

As a means of quietening the ego these three capacities ignite a curiosity and willingness to accept what one discovers about oneself or others and to hold that lightly. The reduced levels of defensiveness that follow from this enable deeper

understandings, better decision-making, greater resilience, richer and more generative conversations.

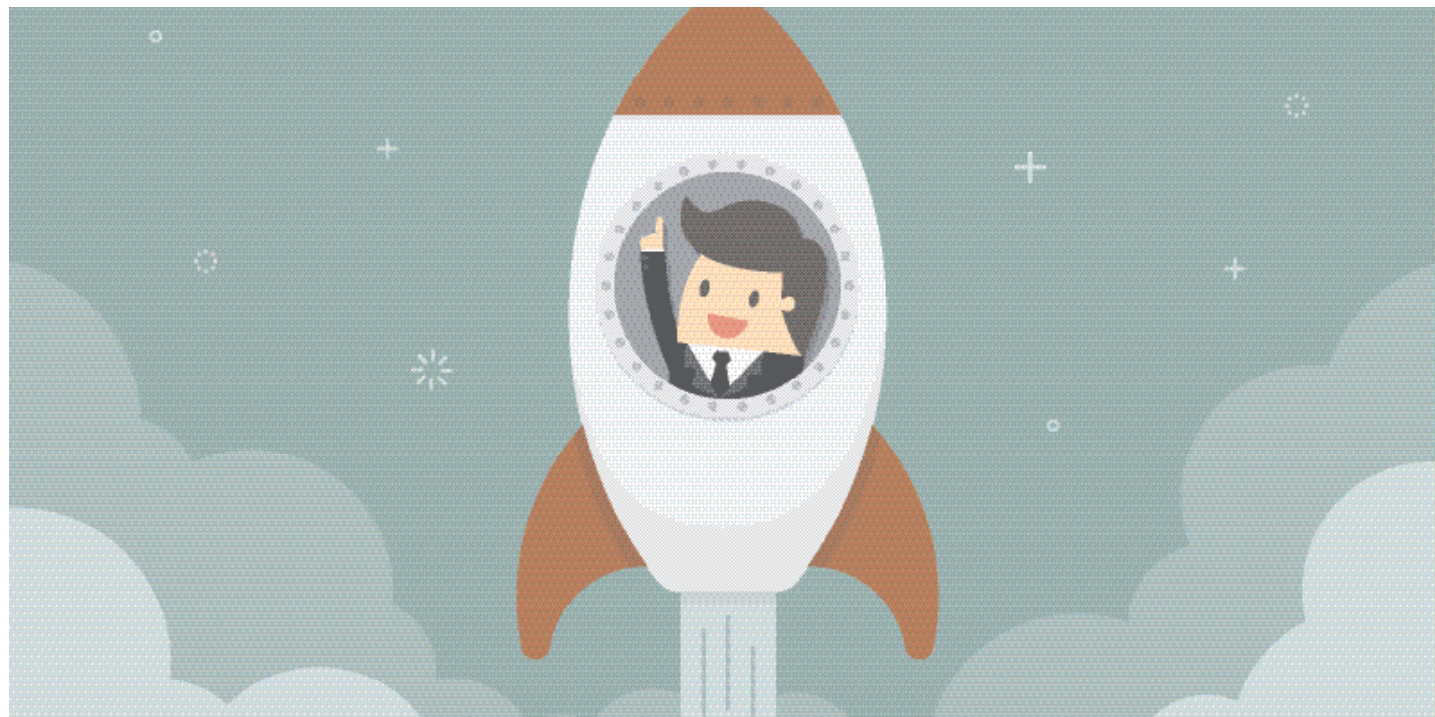
## A sense of the interdependence of all things

Interdependence is the capacity to understand other people's perspectives in a way that allows one to identify with them. It is the ability to see past differences to the more unifying aspects of our common humanity.

More than that – interdependence points to a sense that each of us interdepends not only on others but with the whole of nature. The quieter ego intuitively senses this interconnectedness. It feels itself embedded in a vital flow of life all around and it values its connection with others.

The quietened ego seeks naturally to act in ways that are ecologically, socially and ethically responsible.





## Compassion

Compassion is the accepting, empathic wish to foster the well-being of a person or group. It is the deep impulse to act that gives rise to compassionate action<sup>4</sup>. It can be directed to oneself as much as to others. The compassionate balancing of one's own and other's needs is an attribute of the quiet ego.

Compassion and interdependence are strongly co-related.

Quiet ego leaders seek to maximise the wellbeing of their people, teams, organisations, customers and other stakeholders. They do not shrink from the inevitable complexity and apparent contradictions that such impulses give rise to.

## Personal growth and development

In an unfolding process of personal development, as the ego grows so it quietyens. Self-preoccupation diminishes. But that does not mean the quietened ego is crowded out by the needs and demands of others. Instead, this process of growth enables the ego to be progressively transformed from selfish, to group focused, to interdependent.

Quiet ego development leads people to experience their sense of identity and happiness as grounded not only in satisfaction or pleasure but also in long-term psychosocial growth, social responsibility and virtue, and the pleasure of connection with other people and humanity<sup>5</sup>.

Leaders whose egos are quieter and who genuinely exhibit these characteristics will inspire a wholehearted followership. They will play a skilful part in enabling higher levels of psychological safety, creativity and well-being in their teams and organisations, subsequently increasing team and organisational performance.

Quiet ego leadership is a teachable skill. Evidence from a variety of sources suggest that both mindfulness and compassion can readily be increased by training<sup>6</sup>. A sense of the interdependence of things can emerge from conceptual conviction and the impulse to grow and further develop can be sparked and sustained by mentors, coaches and teachers.

In the face of the current climate emergency and with diminishing trust in our leaders, the world needs quiet ego leadership as never before. Now is the time to begin.

**Resilience and wellbeing are a vital part of any leaders' business strategy and feature heavily in our *Explorer Mindset* programme which Michael teaches on, sharing his experience of over forty years of personal practice of mindfulness and related disciplines.**

1. For example, Google's Project Aristotle: <https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/> and <https://hbr.org/2018/04/the-two-traits-of-the-best-problem-solving-teams>

2. Heidi A. Wayment and Jack J. Bauer, (2008) *Transcending Self-Interest: Psychological Explorations of the Quiet Ego*, American Psychological Association (APA): Washington DC.

3. <https://hbr.org/2016/12/how-to-bring-mindfulness-to-your-companys-leadership> and Chaskalson M & Reitz M (2018) *Mind Time: How ten mindful minutes can enhance your work, health and happiness*, HarperNonFiction: London.

4. See Bradley, A. (2019) *The Human Moment: The Positive Power of Compassion in the Workplace*, LID Publishing: London.

5. This aligns with the Aristotelean idea of Eudaimonic Wellbeing. See Reynolds, A., Houlder, D., Goddard, J. & Lewis, D., (2020) *Reason and Passion in the Humanised Workplace* in *What Philosophy Can Teach You About Being a Better Leader*, Kogan Page: London.

6. Goleman, D & Davidson, RJ (2018) *The Science of Meditation: How to Change Your Brain, Mind and Body*, Penguin Life: London.

The Explorer Mindset

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# NEWS

A round-up of news and updates from the Møller Institute

The people and place for your leadership and professional development



*A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.*<sup>1</sup> 



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It's not just great thoughts that feed our minds as we grow as leaders, a diet that nourishes our brain and body is also an essential part of ensuring we stay on top of our game.

Alex Bigot and his team of chefs at the Møller Institute recognise the impact of food on attention span, levels of fatigue, memory, recall and imagination and have created a series of recipes to share with anyone interested in recreating the dishes they might experience at the Møller Institute. With locally sourced ingredients and sustainable produce high on the agenda for Alex and the team, the recipes they use are guaranteed to excite the senses as well as provide a rounded and healthy platform for learning and leadership.

To understand a bit more about the science behind the food, and the mind/gut connection, take a look at this video by Møller Institute Associate, Amy Brann. Amy supports leaders on Møller Institute programmes by sharing reliably simple applications of neuroscience that lead to game changing insights and results.

[Watch Amy's Food Video](#)



## GREEN TOURISM GOLD AWARD

The Møller Institute has been awarded Gold Accreditation by Green Tourism. In order to be accredited by Green Tourism businesses must satisfy specific criteria which cover all aspects of sustainability, from energy and water efficiency, waste management and biodiversity to social and ethical choices. Mark Campbell, Møller Institute Operations Manager explained, "To have the Institute accredited gold by Green Tourism is an outstanding achievement. As an institute we are committed to providing the most environmentally friendly and sustainable facilities for our guests. As a business we strive to minimise our carbon footprint through setting sustainable initiatives and goals. Our teaching team also develop mindsets and decision making skills of leaders in the face of competing and conflicting sustainability challenges. As a member of Green Tourism we want to make others aware and educate the importance of being a sustainable business."



The meeting rooms at Møller Institute overlook manicured Churchill College playing fields. The team, and our clients are very fortunate to be immersed in the beautiful campus of Churchill College, whose grounds and gardens are one of Cambridge's best-kept secrets. Covering a 42-acre site, the original design was drawn up in the early 1960s by the landscape architect Sheila Haywood, who used planting for foliage and form - creating landscapes with borders surrounding buildings rather than traditional gardens. The grounds and gardens have evolved over the years but they still retain the integrity of the original planting.

John Moore, Head of Grounds & Gardens and Paula Laycock, former Registrar have just published a book about the development of the College's grounds and gardens from the 1960s to the present day.

1. Gertrude Jekyll (2011) 'Wood and Garden: Notes and Thoughts, Practical and Critical, of a Working Amateur' Cambridge University Press

## MØLLER INSTITUTE VIRTUAL TOUR



In early summer 2019, Michelle Thomas, Client Development Manager, met a gentleman who had sold his house in the UK to a couple based in Singapore who never actually visited his house - they viewed it on a 360° video he'd created. What a compelling story.

A few weeks after this meeting, on a long summer's day between sunrise at 05:00 and sunset at 21:30, Ollie Kilvert and Leon Palmer, Møller Institute Marketing Manager, filmed our beloved Danish-designed building in perfect high-definition quality to create what is a stunning 360° video to allow clients to experience some of the Møller Magic from afar.

A total of 513 shots were pieced together to create a doll's house view complete with floor plans and everything needed to visualise the surroundings and plan your next off site strategy day, meeting, conference or event. You can start the tour from any point in the building enabling you to walk through reception, any of the 21 meeting rooms, the Lecture Theatre, Tower Lounge Bar, Restaurant, multi-media studio, outdoor learning areas and experience the view over Churchill College and Cambridge from the Møller Tower as the sun sets.

For more images - see pages 20 and 21.

[To start your tour, click here](#)

To create a tour to improve your businesses visibility, we can highly recommend Ollie Kilvert of The 360 View, [www.the360view.co.uk](http://www.the360view.co.uk)



# Getting PERSONAL

**‘What am I FOR?’ – How discovering and living by our purpose dramatically improves our lives**

**Ruth Berry, Møller Institute Partner and Co-Programme Director of Explorer Mindset, Senior Leadership Development Programme**

“What’s it FOR?” This is a question we ask about many things... The Royal Family, perhaps, or a hand knitted loo roll cover?

There are many things we just don’t get. We keep asking because humans are naturally curious about the reason why somebody came up with something in the first place. Why did somebody decide that was what we all needed?

When we don’t understand we search for the ‘why’.

But when it comes to turning the attention to ourselves, the question of our ‘purpose’ is often harder to answer – It’s just not something all of us find easy or comfortable to discuss.

Some people of course have a very clear sense of their purpose in life. I don’t think Greta would take too long to tell us what hers is – but in raising that question to participants on our executive education programmes at the Møller Institute, it often

seems to flummox people, or worse still, to cause them to look temporarily panicked, a real ‘rabbit in headlight’ moment as they face that most difficult, yet fundamentally important question, what is your purpose in life?

**Why is it so hard for us to answer this question?**

I believe it’s difficult because it’s not something that we are in habit of focusing on regularly.

To pause and consider it too often is potentially a dangerous game – for some this recent period might have allowed us the opportunity to pause and reflect on our personal purpose. But what if having considered it we were to find that we had somehow stumbled onto the ‘wrong track’?

What if, in doing so, life whispered to us that choices we had made, investments in time, education and a career that had once seemed so promising, are in reality playing out as a trapped, energy -sapping existence? Scary.

For anyone who has a life purpose around their loved ones, really reflecting on how long we spend working can be a sobering exercise, on which we prefer not to dwell for too long.

But I believe that it is so essential to ask ourselves the purpose question ‘what am I for?’

I spend a lot of my life talking about purpose.

I can’t help it. I’m obsessed. Fascinated. Driven by a maniacal determination to get almost everyone I meet to think about, and then tell me what their purpose is. Why? It is actually none of my business, of course, but it is theirs.

**The identification of one’s purpose is, I believe, fundamental to personal success and happiness.**

Because once you find it, you can start to live your life by it, and stop being dragged into so many other things which are possibly interesting, even enjoyable, but they’re not contributing to the core reason why you’re actually here.



## Why does having a purpose matter?

At the Møller Institute, we talk a lot about creation of energy:

- ✓ Energy in teams;
- ✓ Energy to innovate;
- ✓ Energy to stay resilient;
- ✓ Energy to grow.

I know that my energy levels, and that of others around me, increases exponentially when it is in service of a real solid purpose, which is chosen and I believe in.

## Energy Follows Purpose

Think about the last time you really believed in or wanted something? You might recall your surprisingly limitless, powerful energy to achieve it?

Imagine accessing that energy for everything you do? That’s what identification of one’s purpose can do.

Another reason purpose works is because in this frenzied, fragmented world, creaking under technology overload, we need to find a way to **pause and focus**.

In my work we practice this fantastic little habit of individually setting a purpose, which we then briefly share together, **before every single interaction we undertake, and we write it down.**

I would now never ever start even a call with one other person without writing down my purpose.

We share ours, but we also consider what we think the purpose might be of those with whom we are communicating or teaching.

The results of this one discipline are amazing.

The interaction seems magically to go where we all hoped, and our collective purpose and progress is achieved.

Make this a disciplined habit. It is incredibly powerful.

A final reason why purpose matters, whether it’s for us as individuals, in our role, in our life or as a team or organisation is that it helps us to be more **discerning**.

It enables us to **decide what we will not do**.

Choices about how we use our time are limitless.. We have the internet, after all, which can occupy even the most industrious of us for hours.

So, my view is that in our leadership and in life, purpose packs a real punch.

It creates energy, pause, focus, discernment and it allows us to happily answer the question ‘**What am I for?**’

**Ruth’s work as a facilitator and a coach with Møller Institute clients focuses on personal effectiveness, leading change management and personal leadership awareness and development.**



How making a connection with your mind and body can help you identify and follow your purpose.



**Rachel Thomason, Møller Institute,  
Programme Manager**

If you're reading this issue of Inspire, then it's likely that you have an interest in purpose and leadership in one way or another. You might be convinced your organisation will function or does function better with purpose; you may have spent time discovering your own purpose and want to live by it more deeply.

But what if you don't know what your life purpose is? What if you feel completely overwhelmed by trying to even identify it? How do you know you've found it and it's 'right'?

My own self-development journey has given me more presence, grounding and compassion than I ever expected to find so early in my life. As a result, I feel privileged to have identified my own purpose: to help people fulfil their personal and professional potential. It's now something that constantly drives my direction and decisions because I feel so connected to it.

In this context of deep uncertainty and dramatic change to our daily routines, we have a unique opportunity to shift our priorities and invest our time in different ways. Take an exercise class, spend more quality time with family, learn a new recipe – but what

if this disruption also allows you to focus on getting to know yourself a bit better? After all, if we don't understand ourselves and what makes us tick, how can we ever find our purpose?

Two factors led me to be able to connect with my purpose: the first is my career path, having so far chosen roles focused around people development, and the second is yoga.

Last year, I went to Bali for a full month and completed my 200-hour yoga training to become a yoga teacher, something I knew I wanted to do right after my beginners course six years ago. My training and experience with yoga has given me space for self-exploration and developing my self-awareness.

Yoga is defined in sanskrit as *chitta vritti nirodhah* - quietening the fluctuations of the mind. So essentially, calming the internal mind chatter and moving into the present moment, the here and now.

Yoga gives people, particularly in Western societies, the excuse they need to move, breathe, to slow down and pause to spend time on themselves. The presence

we experience by connecting our minds and bodies through yoga poses helps us to dial down our over-thinking and dial up our feeling. When we do this, we give ourselves space to start understanding our minds and so can discover what we are truly passionate about and how this could translate into our life purpose.

I'm not saying everyone should do yoga to find their purpose (although it is pretty great!) but there are others aspects to yoga that can really help to create self-awareness so you can begin engage with your purpose.

Something that might surprise you is that the physical poses we usually see as 'yoga' is just one of eight 'limbs' of yoga defined by yoga philosophy<sup>1</sup>. Breathing and meditation are another two of the eight elements - both incredibly important tools in our toolbox when it comes to mindfulness and grounding ourselves in the present moment during our daily lives.

So if you are willing to spend time on developing yourself and the physical side of yoga doesn't appeal to you, then the mindfulness that yoga can encourage through the meditative and breathing

practices can also help develop a better self-understanding of your values and your mind processes.

Yoga teaches us to be comfortable with the uncomfortable through physically-demanding poses, and mentally-challenging stillness. But whatever helps you to make that mind-body connection by moving from thinking and into feeling will progress your self-awareness and help you to unlock and live by your purpose.

One of five Programme Managers at Møller Institute Rachel is responsible for designing and delivering Møller Institute open enrolment coaching programmes. Rachel is committed to expanding the reach and impact of coaching across organisations and as a qualified Yoga Teacher helps leaders reconnect with themselves to find a sense of balance and compassion.

1. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali



# NEWS

A round-up of news and updates from the Møller Institute

The people and place for your leadership and professional development

## LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMES CONTINUE REMOTELY



Back in October 2019, we delivered Module 2 of an exciting leadership development programme entitled "Transform ME, Transform US" which we have co-created with the European subsidiary of a global food and drinks manufacturer. At the end of that module, the CEO of the business asked the 85 participants to write emails to their "future selves" focusing on three areas of commitment to be reviewed in six months' time. The module and our work with them in Cambridge, had a major impact on organisational performance in the immediate short term transformational journey of the business, according to the CEO.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, recognising an important need for organisations to help fight the harsh impact of the effects of this global situation, we have continued to support our clients. This includes, where necessary, re-designing elements of their leadership programmes and events to allow for real-time remote access for participants, and provide relevant online learning materials and inputs. With this particular programme we did just this.

On 8 April we sent the email commitments back to participants, six months on, for reflection in an unimagined Covid-19 reality. We provided in the moment support, by facilitating a masterclass for 90 leaders led by Møller Institute Senior Associate, Sudhanshu Palsule in dialogue together with the organisation's CEO. This intervention focused on how the participants could show up as leaders to their teams and stakeholders as being "in this together" and to pay attention to the important opportunities presented for them and their organisation in the mid-term future. It also helped them in particular to acknowledge their own fragile state of "not knowing" all the answers, whilst at the same time finding the leadership strength and resilience to demonstrate realistic hope to all those they serve and lead during this exceptionally challenging environment.

Drawing on some of the concepts and learning from Module 2, Sudhanshu challenged and stimulated participants to reflect on their growth and adaptability as leaders in an even more volatile, ambiguous and highly inter-connected external world.

### We asked the group to revisit their thoughts on:

**Purpose:** What does the organisation's purpose mean for them now on a day-to-day basis?

**Identity:** How can they make their purpose a reality especially in the choices they make in terms of responding to this crisis?

**Behaviour:** How can they have more open, collaborative and courageous conversations with those they lead and all their stakeholders?

This was the first of a series of webinars and other interventions being delivered between April and June for this organisation. Designed to help support the group as leaders during this particularly complex environment, areas of focus include psychological safety, super-resilience, getting prepared for new realities, mindfulness and empathic leadership.

## A NEW STYLE OF MEETING SPACE

Before lockdown, we responded to customer feedback around an increased need for breakout space and installed three innovative new meeting pods in the Study Centre.

The pods, whose walls are adorned with motivational quotes from leaders ranging from Michelle Obama to Sir Winston Churchill, offer clients a flexible, collaborative work space without the need of a private syndicate room. Light flows freely into each pod through double-glazed glass screens which also reflect and minimise the noise from the adjacent vibrant networking area. The pods include adjustable height tables, seating for six, individual lighting and full tech-connectivity.



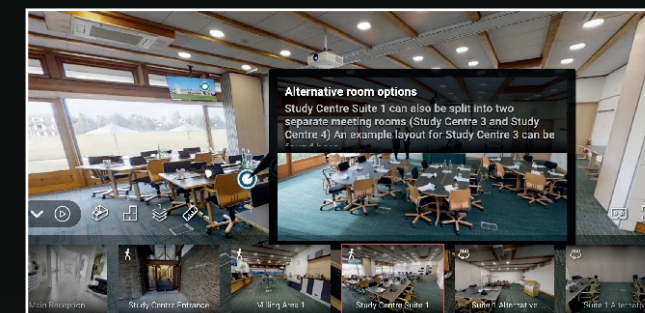
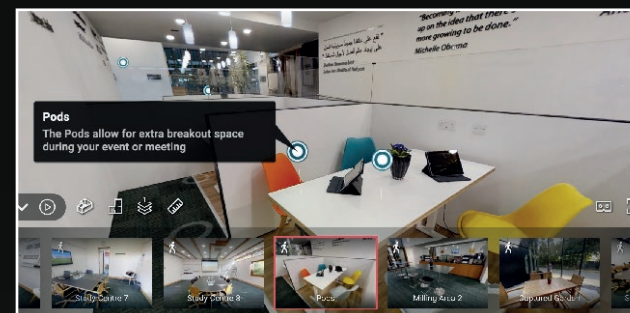
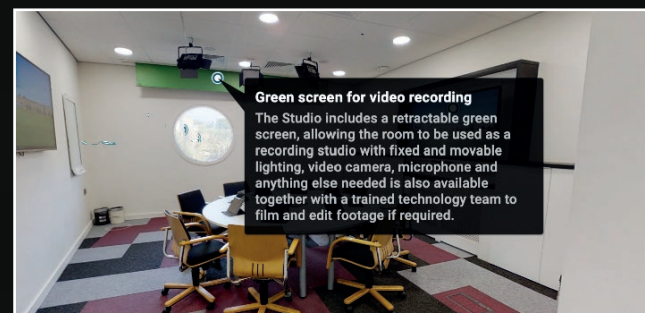
## ONE INSTITUTE, ONE TEAM, ONE NEW WEBSITE

Having been granted Institute status the Møller Institute completed in December 2019 its transition from two identities – Møller Centre 'Conference and events' and Møller Institute 'Executive Education' to one distinct Møller Institute brand for the entire business, reflecting its premium position in the leadership development, meetings and conferencing space. The Møller Institute encompasses all that we do with our clients in the fields of leadership development, executive education, and delivery of premium residential meetings and conferencing experiences. The Møller team deliver exceptional customer service in a collaborative learning environment designed to inspire. The change of name to Møller Institute reflects the significance and global impact of our work and more clearly represents the vision of our founder Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller, to bring together the worlds of business and academia for professional and executive education.

For more information see [www.mollerinstitute.com](http://www.mollerinstitute.com)



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Take a 360 virtual tour of the Møller Institute anytime, anywhere.

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# IDENTIFYING

## STEP GOALS IN SUPPORT OF YOUR GOAL

Coaching is a significant part of leadership, and each issue of *Inspire* will feature one of 50 practical coaching tips from Keith Nelson, Møller Institute, Director of Coaching, adapted from his book *Your Total Coach*. In this issue Keith shares his insights into understanding and identifying how we can break down our goals into manageable steps as part of coaching and leadership practice. Every one of these steps can then be used to achieve our purpose.

**Alice:** "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

**The Cat:** "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

**Alice:** "I don't much care where."

**The Cat:** "Then it doesn't much matter which way you go."

**Alice:** "...so long as I get somewhere."

**The Cat:** "Oh, you're sure to do that, if only you walk long enough."

(*Alice In Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll)

Goals are one of the fundamental building blocks for coaching. Coaching's origins can be found in sport, which provides a wealth of examples of goal-setting. The tennis player hires a coach to win a Grand Slam. Football teams employ coaches to win championships. Follow sport and it becomes quickly apparent that there are interdependent end goals and step goals. No tennis player ever won a Grand Slam tournament by losing in the first round. The end goal is the long-term target. The short-term step goals are milestones to help achieve the target. The two are inextricably linked.

If the end goal is to start a new lifestyle and involves moving from town to country, then possible step goals are visiting potential locations to move to – and putting the existing home up for sale. If the end goal is to work full time as a professional coach, the step goals might include gaining qualifications and experience. If the end goal is to be appointed managing director within three years, then elevation to a board position is a step goal.

Having both step and end goals is important. Without step goals, the end goal may just remain a daydream. (Milton H Erickson said that a goal without a date is just a dream.) Equally, if there is no end goal, then actions can remain focused on the short-term steps and progress forwards is painfully slow.

The coach adds value by offering dual or even multiple perspectives – by simultaneously working with step and end goals. As the work progresses, the coach and client can monitor and review progress against the stated end goals.

Life does not take place in a vacuum and, as the coaching progresses, new goals may emerge that supplant former ones. An organisational restructure, redundancy, divorce, illness or economic downturn are just a few of life's events that might require re-evaluation of both end and step goals. As an example, redundancy might bring the end goal considerably nearer. Illness might take it further into the future.

Flexibility and the skills to work with what emerges are both important in the role of the leader as coach. It's important to bear in mind all the step goals because these are not linear and will overlap.



### To keep your goals golden, remember and embed these following tips:

- ✓ Keep a multiple perspective focused upon both step goals and the end goal.
- ✓ Be prepared to review goals as the emergent situation requires.
- ✓ Monitor and review against progress to achieve the goals.

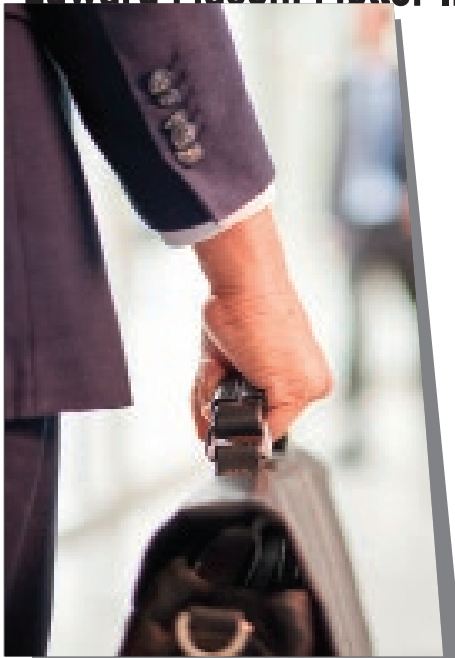
# Coaching Dive Deeper

Are you ready to immerse yourself in developing your coaching skills and capabilities to practice as an accredited business coach?

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[www.mollerinstitute.com/coaching](http://www.mollerinstitute.com/coaching)

# WHY A CLEAR PURPOSE MATTERS?

Edward Mason. Møller Institute



How exciting to be on a yacht that sets sail with no idea of where it's going – just heading out of the harbour to see where the winds and currents take it. Self-isolation on the seven seas, the exhilaration of the unknown; the adrenalin of trying to avoid hidden rocks; the thrill of going ashore in unknown territory - possibly hostile, possibly friendly. The challenge of not knowing whether you have enough fresh water and food to last until the next landfall.

How exciting: and how terrifying. And, if we translate the metaphoric boat to being a business, how risky for your crew and your shareholders. They might be learning a lot: they might even be, if you're lucky, adrenaline junkies who enjoy the ride. But for most people, a sense of direction, of purpose, is vital to teamwork and team morale. It is also more likely to result in 'success'.

Why are so many businesses happy to follow the wind and tide? Why don't they have a clearer sense of purpose? The emphasis of the question is on 'clearer': most have a sense of direction but it just isn't clear. When we talk to any of the senior people in a business individually they will give us a reasonably clear picture of where they think their business needs to be in three years: the issue is that each of these pictures is different, and if you could overlay them on each other, they would make a Venn Diagram, with surprisingly little 'intersection' or common ground.

“

## A SENSE OF DIRECTION, OF PURPOSE, IS VITAL TO TEAMWORK AND TEAM MORALE

This is very dangerous for the crew, who will be taking their orders from their specific director if there is no aligned purpose that they are aware of: the marketing crew might be showing the world their interpretation, a voyage to Italy, whilst the HR crew might be recruiting people who speak Albanian.

In the short term, it is often perceived as not mattering: a small degree of difference in the journey from London by the year-end means the difference between Dover and Folkestone: we can live with that!

So it doesn't get done in the short-term: it's easier not to rock the boat. But it needs doing if you are serious about getting somewhere worthwhile. You need a Purpose, and you need it to be something that everyone – the officers and the crew - knows about, understands and is excited by, so they can do what they do in the knowledge that it all adds up to something. It's remarkable how much a team with a Purpose can achieve, and actually enjoy it too: and how much hard work can add up to very little in a team without one.

Many Møller Institute leadership programmes are designed to help leaders engineer their strategies and their ability to communicate these strategies clearly and effectively. Edward is one of the Associates who works on these programmes to develop excellent communications skills.



The boring management mantra 'To fail to plan is to plan to fail' was countered by John Lennon with 'Life is what happens while you're making plans'. Both are right. You need a plan and then you need to modify it, taking into account changing currents and winds, but also the knowledge you accumulate as you make your journey and the destination comes into clear view.

One final observation: the Sirens. These seductive opportunities will be there and will draw your attention, but the path to reaching them is fraught with hidden rocks. It's only when you know what you are and where you're going that you'll know how to decide which can help you achieve your aims and which will leave you stranded.



# BOOK REVIEWS

Tim Hill, Møller Institute, Head of Marketing

Each issue of *Inspire* will review books written by our team of Associates and contributors



## REHUMANISING LEADERSHIP – PUTTING PURPOSE BACK INTO BUSINESS

**Sudhanshu Palsule and Michael Chavez**

As we went into lockdown, I cheekily scrambled for a copy of Sudhanshu's newly released book off a colleague's desk. An unopened box of books purchased as gifts for the now postponed *Explorer Mindset* programme seemed fair game, too tempting as an essential item under the circumstances, so I sneaked one in my bag as I left the building. What a result though, this book proved to be a truly memorable and moving read set against the daily backdrop of the world's response to the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic.

Written last year, and launched in February 2020, I was hooked from the moment Sudhanshu and co-author Michael Chavez explained in the opening chapter that we need to change our views on life because of four key factors - the challenge of complexity; the millennial stand; dealing with ambiguity and the need for adaptability. The book helped me to contextualise the ambiguity and complexity of our interconnected world, which was playing out in front of my eyes. I have always been cynical of talk that millennials are different, finding it hugely patronising, but Sudhanshu and Michael explain logically and clearly why millennials value purpose and authenticity way above anything else, and that because of technology this generation are already in the driving seat. As for adaptability, it was clear from the Covid-19 crisis which organisations were adaptable, nimble and quick to respond to their customers and stakeholders.

The book includes a very practical and well-structured tool-kit to find your purpose, 'excavate' your organisation's purpose and organisational and team purpose. Sudhanshu and Michael's words gave me context to the linear command and control world I have grown up in, explained the reasons why change is happening, and gave me both hope and belief that by understanding, championing and implementing purpose into our lives, and our organisations the world can be a better place.

## MAKE YOUR BRAIN WORK

**Amy Brann**

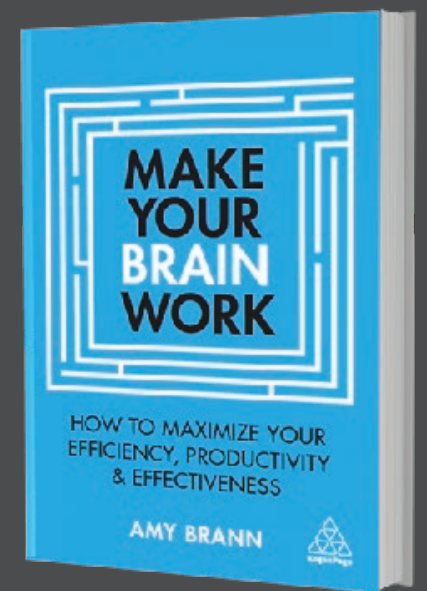
During lockdown, like many others, my brain has been working overtime. I know that some colleagues (those without the distractions of children to home school) have noticed that in the homeworking environment they are working far more efficiently and productively than in a noisy distracting office. Many have deliberately and carefully created the right environment for them, knowing what makes their brain tick. I messed with my brain by starting daily Joe Wicks fitness workouts, and in week two of lockdown I found an equivalent brain workout and since then have attempted to use it to train my brain to become fitter, more efficient, effective and productive.

The brain workout is courtesy of Møller Associate Amy Brann who has launched a revised and updated version of her 2010 book "Make Your Brain Work". The book, and an accompanying series of videos she has created, share clear, practical tips and include relevant case studies with action points in 15 critical areas that present challenges at work - and for home-working. Useful areas for me included time management, meetings (applicable to online meetings too), developing resilience and creativity and managing your work-life balance. The book is written in a really logical, easy to follow style and is based on insights from scientific research, and incorporates very practical stories around key characters.

Everything is explained in layman's terms and Amy's enthusiasm for helping the reader understand the application of brain science to business means that you don't have to be a brain surgeon to understand and implement her key principles and techniques. All are easy to grasp and follow immediately, and, like my new habit of a daily Joe Wicks fitness workout shows, new habits can be created quickly and the results are positive. This brain workout definitely made my brain work.

Amy invites all *Inspire* readers to join her Neuroscience at Work Community and check out videos and whitepapers to support you in making your brain work and supporting your employees.

[Access Neuroscience at Work Community](#)

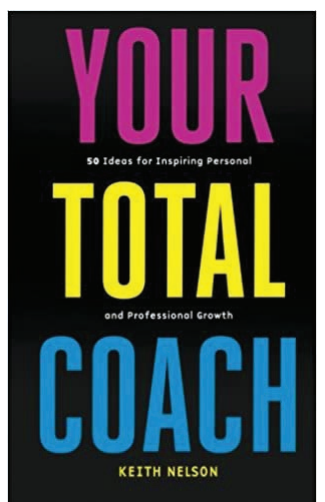


## YOUR TOTAL COACH: 50 IDEAS FOR INSPIRING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

**Keith Nelson**

Not a new book, but new to me, and judging by Amazon reviews an essential part of any coaches tool kit. Everyone I meet these days seems to be a coach of some sort - maybe this is a Cambridge thing - life coaches, executive coaches, career coaches, pastoral support coaches - but whatever, I need to find out more. Møller Institute has recently launched two Executive Coaching Open Programmes and I have recently experienced the power of peer-to-peer coaching from two colleagues so I figured that this book could set me off on a coaching journey to help other colleagues improve their performance. I was looking

for, and found, a concise book that was easy to pick up and put down because it is chunked neatly into three tiers - successful coaching; advanced coaching and transformational coaching with 50 tips in all. The ideas and techniques covered range from basic coaching ideas to advanced psychological techniques, and it did, for me, what it promised on the cover, inspire personal and professional growth - colleagues beware...



# DELIVERING PURPOSE:

*from why to how*

**Bruce Simpson, Alumnus of Churchill College and  
Senior Partner of McKinsey & Company**

In a 1970s New York Times article, Milton Friedman wrote that the only social responsibility of business was to increase its profits. Friedman's views dominated the last quarter of the 20th Century with most corporations following the doctrine that "the business of business is business."

The consequences of running the corporate world focused only on what is best for the shareholders was viewed from the sidelines by an entire new generation, the Millennials. As this generation started reaching young adulthood in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and entering the workforce, they became more cynical of Friedman's views. Today, the expectations from this cohort on businesses are increasing on all fronts.

As customers, millennials are boycotting products of companies whose values they view as contrary to their own. As investors, millennials are migrating en masse to ESG funds. As employees, millennials are socially-conscious workers who are agitating for decisions and behaviors that they can be proud to stand behind and are increasingly driven to companies who can make clear their positive impact on the world. As citizens, millennials are demanding more from companies and their CEOs than ever before: increased transparency, more substantive contributions to their communities, and an active stance on the issues of the day.

To meet the demands of millennials, companies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need a new playbook. Furthermore the Covid 19 pandemic has accentuated these demands as social needs for health and financial security become acute.

While companies must continue to focus on what they do best—offering innovative, profitable products, and services—they can no longer be bystanders on social and environmental issues, especially when those issues are impacted by their business activities.

To succeed in this new era, companies will need to ask some hard questions about how the leading companies of the future will look and behave. For example: What is our mission and purpose as a company, and how will we make sure that is reflected in our core business? Who are our stakeholders? And how will tensions between shareholders and stakeholders be managed? How can we have the greatest impact on the most important social topics (e.g., sustainability and climate change, the future of work, inclusion and diversity, the application of new technologies, etc.) What is the extent of our responsibilities? How far do our responsibilities extend to suppliers and others in our ecosystem?

At the heart of these questions is Purpose, which defines a company's core reason for being and its resulting impact on the world, and which shapes how a company delivers its business, inspires its people, steers decision-making, and motivates its impact on society.

What we've seen is that most companies have gone through the exercise of thinking about the 'why' of purpose – drafting a statement, publishing a new

website, changing the letterhead. But the real opportunity lays in the 'how' –the mechanics of getting it done. Truly embedding purpose requires thoughtfulness around your strategy, operations, and organisation. It means being clear about the trade-offs involved, thoroughly understanding the activities of your entire value chain, and engaging authentically with your people. And it demands a clear-eyed approach to reporting and measurement, so that you can hold yourself accountable. This process will sometimes require surfacing uncomfortable trade-offs. Navigating these will mean being principled and opening yourself up to scrutiny.

Going forward, Purpose will be a business necessity. However, done right it can become a competitive advantage. The evidence on this is clear. Research by Raj Sisodia suggests that purpose-led companies outperformed the S&P 500 by 14x over the last two decades<sup>1</sup>. But embedding purpose drives results beyond the balance sheet, too. Purpose creates more loyal customers, fostering trust and preserving your customer base at a time when 47% of consumers disappointed with a brand's stance on a social issue stop buying its products – and 17% will never return<sup>2</sup>. It unleashes employee potential – helping you win in the war for

talent, and ensuring that you retain your best people. Today, 64% of Millennials take a company's social and environmental commitments into account when deciding where to work, and 75% would be willing to take a pay cut to work for a responsible company<sup>3</sup>. Purpose also allows you to understand and mitigate risk. A clear-eyed view of your organisation's purpose will allow you to identify your most consequential externalities and pre-empt a crisis by taking proactive action. And if a crisis does strike, pre-existing alignment around the organisation's core reason for being will enable a coordinated, values-driven response that is authentic to your people and compelling to stakeholders from every quarter of society.

Two decades into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is clear that Millennials require more than traditional CSR or philanthropy from businesses. From both outside and inside they will push businesses to make hard trade-offs, where the path forward will not always be clear. However, today's CEOs have an opportunity to use this as a pivotal moment by setting their organisation on a new course for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and building an organisation that the next generation would be proud to be associated with.



Allen Packwood, Director of the Churchill Archives Centre, Cathy Butler, Head of Executive Education and Bruce Simpson

**Bruce recently worked with the Møller Institute team to co-create and deliver a unique and high impact experiential, immersive leadership development programme for the emerging leadership team at Chinese logistics giant Deppon.**

This article was jointly written by Bruce and his colleague Han Zhang.

1. Firms of Endearment
2. Accenture, To Affinity and beyond, Global consumer pulse research (2018)
3. 2016 Cone Communications Millennial Employee Engagement Study



# PURPOSEFUL *Partnerships*

Pulling in different directions?  
The importance of defining  
purpose during uncertain times<sup>1</sup>

**Moray McLaren,  
Møller Institute  
Associate**

Every year I work with frustrated law firm leaders who after lengthy and detailed strategy reviews are disappointed when plans are never implemented - despite having full sign-off by partners.

Could it be that partners are not implementing the strategy as the outcomes are not aligned with their personal interests - you could call it purpose? Put another way, to what extent is strategy in partnerships required to satisfy both "personal" and "firm" agendas?

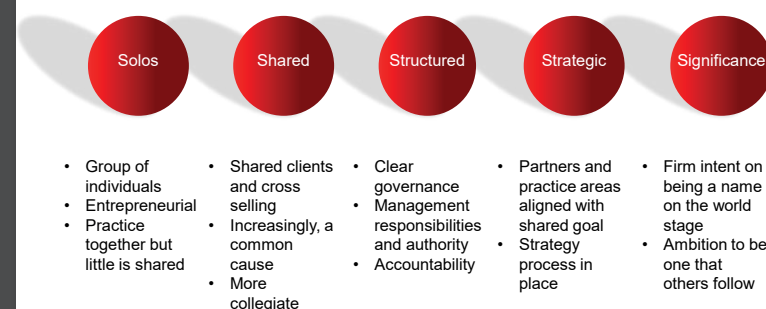
Today we find the legal profession in a difficult place. It is too soon to know what the longer term impact of Covid-19 will be, however, I am certain that the need for finding a common aspiration amongst a group of partners (the delta between the individual and the group interests) remains stronger than ever.

## Personal agendas versus firm objectives

As professionals, we are of course very able to practice alone and it is important to understand our reasons for deciding to be in business together.<sup>2</sup> These normative beliefs define the extent of our collaboration, both the opportunity and / or limitations for building something jointly.

Model 1 identifies the reflection points along an axis where, at one extreme, partners work autonomously and, at the other, the interests of the individuals are subsumed within a shared purpose for the firm. (It might be helpful to consider where you are on this axis and the extent to which that will help you achieve your aims or hold you back.)<sup>3</sup>

## Understanding the shared purpose of partners

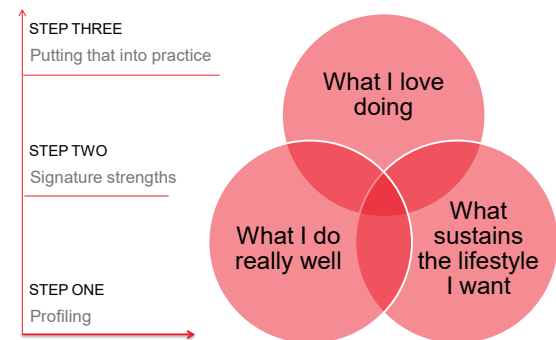


Model 1 © Lexington Consultants

Through our experience of working with over 400 professional service firms, we have extensive knowledge about the unique culture and structure in which professional firms operate. Moray and the Møller Institute team can support partner and leadership groups as they review options for growth and help them put that into practice.

Model 2 © Lexington Consultants

## Personal level: Individual motivations



It is clear that working more as sole practitioners than a firm - each partner doing their own thing - is by no means a failure. In my experience, many firms are very comfortable with this approach.<sup>4</sup> But legal markets are currently in turmoil over Covid-19. Without a stronger level of coordination in terms of finding and doing work - with every partner pulling in the same direction - it is becoming harder to remain competitive.

Partnerships that have grown in size without a commitment to the firm are caught with rising costs but without the benefits of stronger central coordination.<sup>5</sup> And dangerously, any steps toward collaboration at this stage by the

leadership can be intensely political - with push back from partners on any move towards central direction and authority.<sup>6</sup>

## Surfacing individual then firm-wide ambition

When working with firms, I find it important to interview partners and understand their personal aspirations first and then what this means in terms of their shared purpose for the firm - we could call this ambition (as illustrated in Model 2 above). The key is to agree strategic outcomes that everyone can support and make happen.<sup>7,8</sup>

Many leaders find themselves in a difficult position - out of the step with partners who have not yet committed to the firm thereby foregoing their right to go about things in their own way. But this does not necessarily mean forgoing personal ambitions. An effective strategic approach should be able to engage all partners throughout - reflecting their personal career ambitions with the best interests of the firm as a whole.

And if partners prefer following their own interests over the firm? Given the current business environment I believe that this option is looking even more challenging than usual.

1. I am very grateful to Kevin Doolan and Mike Mister for their feedback on the draft of this article and to Tim Hill for his helpful guidance.  
2. Professor Stephen Mayson was the first to unpack these issues for law firms in his 1997 book *Making Sense of Law Firms*.  
3. While it is common in strategy to think in terms of an external vision for a partnership, I believe that mission is a stronger proposition. We can all name firms that benefit from having a clarity of mission and, subsequently, those that don't.  
4. Many of the most highly expertise firms have relied more on individual reputation than the firm brand. Here partners are keen to collaborate as colleagues while keeping autonomy over their practice. In my experience, this is changing very quickly, in particular as elite firms approach the disaggregation of legal services within their operating models.

5. Lexington's research shows how a majority of firms experience a drop in profits as they grow. In part this is due to the initial investment required within a larger entity, what I would describe as developing an institutional approach. With higher costs of delivery and changing market conditions, economies of scale is now relevant to law firms (which was not previously the case).  
6. Over time and with growth, firms need to adapt their approach to governance in order to resolve the tensions in what I see often as the transition from centralised decision-making (under founders) to de-centralisation and back again.  
7. Partners at the global law firms are clear that the interests of the firm come first - they will have surrendered their autonomy at the security desk as they enter the building. There are notable exceptions, however, such as the most profitable U.S. firms who have grown

while still valuing their collegial approach. In my work assisting the global law firms with Key Account Management (K.A.M.) the differences between U.K. and U.S.A. partners is quite striking. At its simplest, U.S. lawyers will seek to lead the client relationship (it is of course their personal book of business) while U.K. partners more easily recognise the benefits of embedding client relationships and ensuring they last beyond specific partners. The U.K. partners at global firms will, therefore, see the benefits of K.A.M. while U.S. partners will often push against it. There are many elements to this including, of course, the approach to profit sharing.  
8. Additionally, the academic research is clear that a human need for purpose is central to maintaining personal resilience during uncertain times like these.

# PURPOSE, EMPATHY AND MEANING

The last upgrade that the human brain went through in our evolution as a species was the development of the pre-frontal cortex, approximately 70,000 years ago.

Sudhanshu Palsule, Møller  
Institute Senior Associate and  
Co-Programme Director of *Explorer  
Mindset*, Senior Leadership  
Development Programme

Homo Sapiens began marching to a very different beat of evolution, and human cultures began to take shape through the medium of language and an ability to communicate in increasingly sophisticated ways. Free to think of “what could be”, humankind rose to the top of the food chain and began transforming the environment to make it more amenable for survival. Imagination, or as cognitive scientists term it, “represented reality”, brought with it the complex need for purpose, something that was hitherto unnecessary. The need for purpose has arguably been one of the most powerful vectors of evolution. Not just satisfied with what is, but needing to know the reason why, has been the source of extraordinary development in almost every aspect of existence, from philosophy, science, technology and medicine to literature, art and poetry in every civilization in the world. Purpose became an important tool for human beings to devise more sophisticated ways to thrive in the hostile climate of sub-Saharan Africa. Seeking out purpose emerged as a fitness-enhancing adaptation as it allowed for group cohesiveness. In that sense this is hardwired into our consciousness as an evolutionary mechanism.

The complexities of developing relationships led to the development of another vector, that of empathy. Along with the need for purpose, this marked a major evolutionary breakthrough in the development of the human brain. As neuroscientists put it, the computational requirements of dealing with a hostile environment and the need to interact and communicate with others, sculpted the empathetic function. Empathising with the other is a highly complex evolutionary ability, requiring a sophisticated coordination between our sensory systems (detecting feelings), and emotional systems (mirroring emotions). When



## “ REWRITING THE VERY RULES OF WORK, LIFE AND LEADERSHIP.”

infants cry at the recorded sounds of other infants, or when our tear ducts involuntarily produce tears at the sight of another's suffering, it demonstrates how an ancient adaptive ability to empathise continues to throb inside the brain.

The two vectors of purpose and empathy were responsible for the creation of meaning as a crucial turning point in our development as a species. The quest for meaning would go one to become the most important requirement for the human brain. A lot of people tend to view purpose and meaning as interchangeable words, but in reality they mean entirely different things. Meaning is the result of putting our purpose to work into a larger context, something that is much larger than us. We tend to think of meaning as something to be found and to be held on to; on the contrary it is exactly the opposite. Meaning appears when we find ourselves making a positive difference; when our lives and work become meaningful to the other. That is precisely why, meaning only occurs in the act of relationship, it is not a solitary activity. Interestingly, it only manifests itself in the act of giving rather than taking! And consequently, we feel a loss of meaning when we find ourselves not contributing or being of service.

If meaning is so important to us as a species, why do we not protect it as a resource? Interestingly, the same upgrade in our brains that evolved the need for meaning, also evolved what neuroscientist and philosopher Francisco Varela termed “know-how”: the conditioned autopilot through which we navigate our way through life. Quite unconsciously we are conditioned in our societies to subscribe to the dominant narratives of our age and culture. So, concepts such as survival of the fittest become the cultural template that conditions us to believe in the fang and claw model in which everyone is out to look after themselves. In fact, if you were to examine the dominant mythologies that have shaped our understanding of ourselves and our thinking and behavior over the past few hundred years, these mythologies have put individual interests before anything else. In the process we have become dehumanized to our natural environment, and to the larger communities in which we exist.

We feel rather strongly, that this narrative has reached the end of its usefulness, for two key reasons. One, the very environment that keeps us alive has overshot the limits of sustainability. Global warming is but one example. The devastation of our natural eco-systems through toxic wastes like plastics, and the inability of our environment to support the growing population of the planet, is ripping through not just the very flawed logic of seeing ourselves as separate from nature, it is nothing short of critical for our very survival. Secondly, we now live in a complex and interconnected world, fueled by digital technology and global information flows. Wired up like a gigantic network, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is rendering old mythologies of nation states, and the us versus them mindset that were manifestations of a more tribal world utterly obsolete. Complex problems such as global warming and pandemics simply cannot be solved unless we learn to collaborate and approach the problems from a systems perspective. The gap between a 21<sup>st</sup> century hyper-networked world of interconnections and interdependencies with an unprecedented ability for mass collaboration, and our pre-industrial age mindset has become alarmingly large.

It is time for us to completely transform the very foundations of our worldview. We must build and manage our organizations and societies from a genuinely new 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective that honours our long lineage. The two vectors of purpose and empathy, that we carry embedded in our pre-frontal cortex are our resources for leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Rehumanizing leadership is about transforming our organisations to operate from the axes of purpose and empathy with a view to creating meaningful impact on the external environment of nature, market and society, and the internal workplace of the people that work with us. And that in a disruptive and fast-moving 21<sup>st</sup> century where digital technology, global information flows and a new millennial demographic are rewriting the very rules of work, life and leadership.

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Programme Co-Director of *Explorer Mindset*, our flagship senior leaders programme, Sudhanshu is regarded as one of the leading thinkers in the fields of Complexity and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership. Leaders on *Explorer Mindset* and other Møller programmes learn from Sudhanshu how to re-humanise their leadership in a 21st century context of accelerating change and complex global problems in a deeply divisive world.

