

Leadership & Creation

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Zelmar Michelini 1116
11000 Montevideo, Uruguay
proedit@productoraeditorial.com
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to my mother

Leadership and Creation is an original approach to the role that organizations and their leaders play in modern society, and how they can and should become a key growth pillar for its members . It is aimed for those who wish not to lose the sense of wonder in front of opportunities that life offers every step of the way. The book help to see the world as a fertile ground where dreams and desires can be planted to be harvest in the future that we must build with our own hands and of which, we will be the absolute owners. Businessmen, leaders of all kinds of organizations and those who want to become leaders of their own lives, will find in the work a stimulating source of inspiration.

By paradoxes and extracted biblical stories of the Old Testament, the paper concludes that an essential quality for a true leader , lies in its ability to dream, love and trust the real possibility of being creators of our own future.

INTRODUCTION

"The world and I, we mould each other"

Miguel de Unamuno

Management is a matter of permanent discussion and in constant evolution. The different ways in which man has organized himself and the techniques with which organizations are managed have all changed greatly over time, causing them to evolve along with society as a whole.

In particular, modern society has placed a strong emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency, as a singular characteristic of current times that was not found in earlier societies. This growing requirement has shaken the foundations of organizations, forcing them to keep changing as an essential condition of survival.

As a paradox, in a high-tech world, man is rediscovered as the main figure, the main protagonist, maker and the one responsible for the success in business, as the promoter of constant innovation, in a highly competitive world, where those who can't adapt, just perish.

However, and due to this rather strong dependency that organization have on their own human resources, traditional management techniques have exhibited many deficiencies in this new context and thus, they must give away to the formulation of new interpretations and new techniques, which have a strong emphasis on the leadership of human groups, and welcome the contributions that Psychology and Sociology Sciences can make.

As soon as those new concepts are understood, that salary is not enough to motivate people, that the human relationships destroy hierarchical flowcharts that most organization are based on, that the feelings of people do really matter and that these feelings should never be left out of the office.

Put the worker then, in this new context, and it is evident that the worker cannot be considered as just another resource for an organization, as financial or technological resources are. In particular, human resources have a singular characteristic: they can't be managed. They must be led.

This is one of the reasons why, in current management books, the subject of leadership holds a privileged position and the authors insist upon concepts and on the need for leadership being efficiently applied, among other reasons, because an organization without leaders in the society we live these days is inconceivable.

This book is precisely about this concept. It is about leadership in modern organizations and the role leaders should play in them. This is how we get to the first part of this book's title: "Leadership..."

And I have chosen a particular way of focusing on this theme, using as the main narrative thread, many of the events from the Old Testament regarding the

creation and the outstanding account of the Jewish people, an account under constant debate between slavery and freedom and with a high participation of the leaders of that time: the prophets. Also, I choose the Bible because we can all extract many examples of the relationship between God and his creation, which has several points in common with the one between a leader and his followers.

This is the reason why the title of the books is “Leadership & Creation”

I want to make it absolutely clear that this is not a book about religion. It is, simply and absolutely, a book about leadership, about how to lead the changes in the organization we belong to. Nobody needs to profess any kind of religion to understand and agree with the concepts we will be talking about. Furthermore, the interpretations we will make on the biblical texts will serve as bibliographical references and will never correspond to any of the several interpretations that can be made by any religion.

Every time we mention God in this book, the mention will make reference to the biblical character, and not question what part is real and what part is fiction about the events extracted from the Bible. I also want to mention that we are not considering Almighty God as being absolutely responsible for daily events, since it is man who is responsible for what is happening in the world we all live in. On the contrary, we are going to put man in a protagonist role for his own destiny and thus, for humanity's. But at the same time, we will also recognize a fine narrative thread that brings continuity and marks the direction in which man should take; this thread accompanies man along since the beginning of time until man gets to the plain point of his evolution. It is this phenomenon –just to be specific - that we call “God”.

Although what I wrote in the previous paragraph may sound like a contradiction between two different interpretations on man's leading role in history, this book tries to explain history by putting both protagonists –God and Man- on an earthly plane, where they are both able to learn and dream about a better future.

In this kind of synergy between God and the Man, the latter inherits the same capability from his creator: the capability to create, the capability to bring to the real world things that didn't exist before, things that were only in his imagination, in his dreams, which he yearned for. Man discovered his own right to create his own future and in this way, he transforms himself into a creator god, who drives his own destiny in a free and responsible way. He becomes a formal builder, a person who is in absolute control at the moment of deciding what to sow and when to harvest.

I believe that along this road of the construction or creation of a world which is in constant motion, the organizations, under which men are gathered, play a privileged role as it is from where men usually project and commence their future plans. These organizations are the drivers of modern societies. What we call non-profit organizations is also included in this responsibility. So, I hope you will agree with me that it is precisely because the leaders of these organizations are also its

members, they are all highly responsible for the transformation and changes made in our society.

But as we said, during the construction and transformation of the world, they both had a human component and a divine one as well. So the style of leadership of God may also be the clue which we can also learn from. The “mistakes” made by God and the evolution of the means he used as a leader, will be commented, analyzed and put into the modern day context of organizations.

The need we have for transforming organizations is not only a consequence of current and intense market competition, nor is it because of globalization or the high speed in which the world we all know is spinning. It is also the way, in which man can transform himself, and become clearly consciousness about the consequences that his actions have. Man and the world have evolved as one. And they mould each other.

Arthur Schopenhauer says: *“If every desire were satisfied as soon as it arose how would men occupy their lives, how would they pass the time? Imagine this race transported to a Utopia where everything grows of its own accord and turkeys fly around ready-roasted, where lovers find one another without any delay and keep one another without any difficulty; in such a place some men would die of boredom or hang themselves, some would fight and kill one another, and thus they would create for themselves more suffering than nature inflicts on them as it is.”*

Every time we mention God in this book, it must be considered in this context. We can call him nature, love, original force, evolution or whatever you want, the name doesn't matter. It is important to understand that there are several reasons for being in this world, which go beyond our own existence.

To discover these reasons is all that really matters.

Chapter 1

THE BEGINNING

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. God called the dry land Earth and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit." And it was so. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night." And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." And it was so. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." And it was so.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning.

Genesis 1:1-31

My decision at the beginning this chapter to include the narrative of the world's creation from the Book of Genesis is not a coincidence. I'm sure all of you are familiar with the text and maybe for this reason you haven't given it special attention. Anyway, I consider this narrative to be a useful tool to show you some aspects about the relationship between man and the society we all live in these days.

I can't think of anything better to let us understand the functioning and interaction of the human being in its social contexts, that go back to the beginning of mankind itself. And I mean its very beginning. Although we realize that the narrative in the Bible doesn't follow a certain historical timeline and we understand that it shouldn't be literally translated, it provides me with literary support to carry out my analysis.

I'm not a Bible erudite and it is not my intention to go deep into its analysis, which is being widely discussed among scientific and religious men all around the world. It is simply a beautiful narrative, with plenty of images and adorned with a constant rhythm between sundown and sunrises that transformed it into an attractive tool with which to start my comments. I invite you to scan it together and –with a touch of humour and far from taking it literally- take a look at some of its events, and try to reach a conclusion about man and his relationship with society.

Let's start by looking at the narrative: it is written with a well-planned sequence of events, where one is linked to the next. Nothing is left to chance, everything is intertwined and thus, God's big creation is built. At each stage of the creation, God delighted himself with his own work, he enjoyed it, watched over it and always concluded that it was a job "well done". Every single action of God was coordinated with the next one and, as a big puzzle, God didn't put the next piece next to another until he was sure that he was on the right road. Like a painter, he stopped after each brushstroke of his work of art, observed it from a distance... took a brake, had a rest and then... back to work.

God had nearly finished his masterpiece when he decided to introduce a new character: man, who had a singular characteristic: man looked like God himself.

And, similar to what occurred to Van Gogh while he was painting, it seemed that he was painting his own portrait, some difficulties arose which were not predicted. It wasn't the same to paint a bird as to try to paint a self-portrait. Let's see how this problem is handled in the narrative.

What we first see is a change in the inner rhythm of the narrative at the time of man's creation. The common expression of "good" that appears constantly in the rest of the narrative is not present. The narrative says that God observed "all" his creation and saw it was "very good".

The question we should ask ourselves is why didn't God specifically express an opinion on whether man had also been well done? Or maybe he did?

Maybe he didn't because man was created in his own image and likeness and therefore it was obvious that it should be good. Maybe he didn't because man was created in the last step of creation, so he just looked down at his work as a whole and expressed his opinion on the entire result. We can also think that the "very" was added because of man, that was better than the rest.

This could also be considered as a modest gesture. Since man was similar to him, it could sound as bragging about his own image in a kind of narcissist attitude. But we could also think that God didn't like the result of man's creation and decided to keep silent about it until he had contemplated it for a while.

Remember that this comparison with the narrative from Genesis is absolutely essential and should not be considered as a valid interpretation –I confessed at the beginning about the humour in my vision- but the fact is that just a few lines ahead in the text, right after Creation... man started becoming a problem for God: think about the famous snake, the temptation of the apple, the anger of God and the first assassination recorded in history: Abel by the hand of his brother, Cain.

There seems to be a problem, isn't there? Yes. The self-portrait was in fact a serious problem God must face.

Maybe it was because the soil he used to handcraft man was not the right one, too dry maybe? Or maybe it was because God was so tired on the sixth day of the creation process that he didn't have enough strength to blow the breath of life. Despite those possible reasons, the single fact is that man arose as a little imperfect creature and it seemed that God could not trust him. "Nobody is perfect" we are accustomed to say or hear when a mistake is made and apart from being a bad excuse, this statement also expresses the absolute truth: Mankind was born imperfect and it seems mankind also lives imperfectly.

A possible conclusion is that this could possibly constitute the original sin... to be imperfect by inheritance.

Genesis is not the single text in which we can base our beliefs or reflections. Different cultures have performed their own interpretations about the issue of the creation and it has been narrated in a wide variety of texts. In the Babylonian culture, the creation is an event organized and directed by two deities as decrypted from a text named Enuma Elish. According to it, deities came from two opposite entities: Apsu (the unsalted water) and Tiamat (the salty water).

After a fight between ancient and young gods, the universe was created with the corpses of those defeated. The creation of man in the Enuma Elish is narrated this way: Marduk (the leader of the young and winner among the fight of gods) wished to make state-of-the-art gods by "mixing" blood and creating bones ..."and I will create a savage that will be named Man who will be in charge of serving the gods so that they can rest". The poem ends by pointing out that "Although the creature was created and put at the service of the Gods, it became incomprehensible"

Let's share a few comments regarding both narratives; pointing out again that this revision is just a tool and not an interpretation of them.

The Babylonian text and the Bible's narrative both recognized some kind of a problem regarding man creation. Textually, the Enema Elish talks about man as the "savage" and ends recognizing the failure or lack-of-meaning of such a creation. The Bible talks about the will of God in creating a perfect being and his failure in doing so.

The imperfection of mankind seems to be a fact which must be considered first in order to fully understand the behaviour of man himself throughout history. And if you transfer this imperfection to our every-day-living nowadays, we, the businessman – mainly managers and supervisor- are very conscious of that original sin. We appreciate it daily, among the people that work for us and obviously, if we are humble enough, in ourselves too.

There is a central concept in both narratives that refers to the protagonist role of man in history, the Babylonian poem emphasises it by saying that man should serve Gods so that they may rest. The Bible mentions the power given to man over God's creation. And the truth seems to be that God really went to get some rest on the seventh day with no intention of looking after his masterpiece anymore. And the same can be said about Ea, the Babylonian guy who wrote the local history at Mesopotamia.

So finally, here is the core of the matter that I want to reach: was man created by a God or by a group of gods in order to continue the task he or they began? If so, then we become responsible for our own destiny. We hold the world in our hands. And we have the world in our hands for the purpose of doing... what?

So, the reflection is: okay, if we know we have got the original sin, if we know it was inherited from Adam and Eve and if we know that we must live with it forever, so, what can be done to counteract it enough in order to transform the society we live in now into something more similar to the Garden of Eden that God created a long time ago, in the beginning?

It is obvious that I don't have an answer for those questions and even if I did, it would mean an attempt to re-create society in all its aspects. And it would also be too ambitious for me.

If we look at the history of mankind, the job of giving answers has been done by thinkers and scientists who study human behaviour and societies created by humans.

There are also experts who write laws intended to drive or to order the acts of these human beings into corridors of codes perceived as proper by those societies and most of its members.

Others investigate the origin or the source of certain "incorrect" behaviour as a way of avoiding them. And also, other experts dedicate their lives to alleviate the consequences of such human imperfection as social workers fighting

poverty do, as human rights activists do, and as organizations of mutual help and others do.

For those of us who consider corporations as a site with much more meaning and purpose than the simple act of making profit, we are also worried about such a vision; the situations that are generated by these imperfections of the human being. And many times, this is the origin of the quality standards, the entrepreneurial policies, the different schools of management and the concepts of leadership.

One way or another, all of them are tools created to counteract man's imperfection and ensure that the things that depend on him don't assume such imperfections either. Man has known his imperfection from the beginning of time as well as the detriments it causes.

One of the first known codes in history is the Hammurabi's Code, written by the Babylonian king of that name nearly 2,000 years before Christ. This code, formed by 282 laws, unifies the several codes that existed in all the cities of the Empire. This Code was found at the beginning of the 90's in Iraq, carved in stone.

In this antique document, the intention to channel the behaviour of man is clearly perceived, including a deep concern for the quality of the things created by man, as, for example, disciplinary procedures for those who were employed to build houses and whose constructions were below the quality standards.

In the vision coming out from this code, we can state that man was born imperfect and is responsible for the destiny of our world. And if man does not accept his own condition, his imperfection will have an impact on everything he performs in life. So, it is indispensable to recognize these limitations and find ways to live with them by cutting back their effects and consequences, as a way to transform our society into a better place to live.

Note:

Although this chapter is based on the imperfections of man remember, that this matter does not constitute my personal vision in the discussion about whether evil in the world is due to the inborn evilness in man's heart or if it appears as a consequence of the unfair structures inside from which man is born nowadays and from which they inherit certain behavioural patterns.

I prefer Unamuno's epigraph in the Introduction of this book, where it is said that the world and man were made and evolved as one, and at the same time and due to this, many psychological and sociological facts –considered as one- converge on models and societies which we have today and we'll have in the future.

Chapter 2

MAN AND SOCIETY

“And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth”

Genesis 1:27-28

This sentence clearly defined “the mission” that God assigned to the human being. This mission is the purpose for which man has been created, the mission to be accomplished for forthcoming generations in future and forever.

Pay special attention to how this purpose is emphasized here, regarding what we shared in the previous chapter about man being the main character of the entire creation.

Let’s imagine God as a manufacturer of men, having a hi-tech factory in which through an automatic process, men run on a non-ending assembly line. One adjustment to the arms here and to the legs there, finishing touches of heads, irrigation systems tested, proper ways of energy distribution and all of the parts that compose the “hardware” finally become assembled and the entire body is completed.

“Then God breathed the breath of life into his nose”. Genesis 2:7

What other meaning could this sentence have other than the description of the very moment in which the “software” is first installed in our creature? Software, for sure, that brings the pre-loaded “mission” we talked about.

So the fact of reproducing ourselves and dominate the world is something already recorded in our hard disk. We can’t avoid following these instructions. Furthermore, far beyond the individual behaviour of each little creature assembled at God’s factory, we all have the need to accomplish this mission in common.

Due to the software provided by God we, men, all know we have special things to do in this life. We are constantly projecting ourselves, making our best effort to reach goals and accomplish objectives and it does not matter whether they are emotional, material or spiritual. We are permanently trying to reach our goals.

Man has discovered that it was not always possible to go further or achieve something on his own effort alone. It was then man understood it was possible to achieve these things if he simply cooperated with other individuals who shared the same objectives. Man also understands that even when success is achieved with loneliness, it is easier to achieve through teamwork.

This is the starting point of economical concepts such as efficiency and effectiveness. Most people want to achieve their goals with a reasonable effort. And for this, they get in touch with others and thus, all together become the core of the organization as a social way of reaching the objectives that all members have in common. In this organization each member works together under certain rules performing specific tasks or activities assigned to them.

We live in a society based on organization. We are born into organizations, we are educated in organizations and we graduate from organizations and then, we work in organizations. Although an organization in modern times plays a privileged role, organizations are not a modern age invention. In ancient Egypt,

organizations were created to build pyramids. In China, thousands of years ago, organizations were employed to design irrigation systems.

We all know that these organizations interact with society according to their own different tasks or purposes for which they were created, and in the middle of a particular context. The truth is that we are not always aware that organizations - as well as societies- are run by the men assembled at God's factory.

Therefore we have a factory assembling non-perfect men, with a software that tells them to reach an objective which is not clear at all and which can be considered or understood in many different ways. What a problem this is, isn't it...? But think about some other aspects or activities men have tried doing: music to dominate feelings, religions to explain historical events and the mystery of life itself, science to control nature, and war as a tool of power and absolute dominium.

In this scheme of men and organizations, which role must they play in business nowadays? Maybe it is important to mention that any social organization has the same purpose: to be at the service of man, according to the inner command we are born with. We absolutely can't avoid such a purpose in any way. Because it was pre-loaded in us before we were conceived. And so, it is our most primitive and basic instinct.

Henry Ford, in his book "Progress", pointed out that *"what makes industry grow is not money but the service it gives oriented to the application of a useful idea and a non-stop promotion of it, without any rest, until it becomes beneficial for all mankind....."*

In 1784 James Watt patented the first steam engine. Such an invention introduced a significant change in our civilization since man can count for the first time with a force that is not muscular. Man was evolving in the right direction: to master the creation and put nature at the service of all mankind.

The steam engine meant a significant step in the pursuit of this goal. Additionally, it gave man the chance to exceed his own natural limitations. And in short, man was capable of dominating air travel too.

Henry Ford added in the book mentioned above: *"Machinery is in the world to free men and not to enslave them"*. So, we can assume that a business is a social organization that accompanies man in the pursuit of the pre-assigned mission and that along with others, gives continuity to the task God once began and keeps on improving, step by step.

This is amazing!!! We discovered that man, imperfectly created, is an indispensable part in the continuation of God's task. I wonder now, and based on this way of looking at man, if God really did make a mistake by creating him imperfect or if -on the other hand- he did it intentionally for the purpose of forcing mankind to be united along the path of a continuous quality control program.

Man and organizations. Who serves who?

To answer this question we only have to take a look into the organizations we have in our society these days to discover, as very often is the case, organizations that are not at the service of man but the opposite: they have put man in a position from where the organization is able to get benefits out of him.

I have no doubt about the answer a member of the board formed under the old regime would give if I asked him whether the company he runs is at the service of man or vice versa.

The matter is that, organizations usually regard their members as “resources” they count on in order to reach their objectives. And as long as they are just “resources”, when they cease to provide what is expected from them, they are simply discarded.

I’m not questioning this way of acting: it’s ok to say that if a piece of the machinery does not function properly it must be removed since the common benefit takes precedence over an individual’s and a deficient part may imply a big risk for the task of others.

But we must also consider the other point of view: man, individually, also has goals to achieve, and for which he joins or forms groups. Man has a family, has children, works and spreads into organizations. From this point of view it would seem that the organization is at the service of the individual, and if the organization doesn’t serve the individual to develop himself, then the individual should change it.

As we said before, man is first ordered by God to dominate nature and in fulfilling this order, man decided to form groups to become more effective and efficient.

But, don’t forget to consider that goals and objectives are a personal matter and therefore, the organization is the medium used by man to grow and develop himself.

To go further and make this issue a little more clear, I’ll refer to Abraham Maslow, who has done an excellent job on the hierarchy of needs of humans. Briefly, Maslow distinguished two different types of human behaviour: those whose attitude is motivated by the need to achieve basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced development needs.

In other words, there are people whose energies are focused on reaching security, belonging, love, respect. For these people, those needs are similar to the need for water or vitamins of our body. On the other hand, there are people who, once all these needs are fulfilled, they seek to fulfil what Maslow called “self-actualization” which also causes them to want to fulfil other kinds of needs, described as “development needs”. In this last case the people are focused on a constant evolution of their potentialities, capabilities and talents as they

discover their mission or commitment, and the knowledge of their own self or nature, of their own creative impetus.

The first kind of needs –which can only be fulfilled from an outside source- implies a wide dependency on the human being's surroundings and thus, people seem unable to influence their own destiny; and become fearful of their environment.

On the other hand, a guy motivated by development needs is much more independent of his surroundings or environment, and much less a spectator than a participant and much more autonomous and a leader.

Considering this point of view we can state – and bearing in mind the initial question about the relationship between man and organizations- that those men motivated by deficiency needs become somewhat like slaves of the organization which will use them as “resources” and will use them to fulfil the organization's goals. And, obviously, the organization will discharge them when they don't fulfil its expectations.

Conversely, guys who are motive by their own growth or self-development use the organization as a means to pursue their own destiny. In this case, individuals choose the organization that best fits their purposes.

In conclusion: if our organization fails to create the best environment for the individual development of each of our employees, then our organization will become mediocre, and hardly achieve ambitious long term commitments.

The Role of Managers

In this context, what role should managers play in our organization? I mean, not the standard description we can find in any library but the expectation of the role in an organization involved in the betterment of its employees.

We defined that an organization doesn't only have profit as the final objective even when it is evident that profit is a necessary condition for its existence and understands that such a success is directly connected with the personal success of each employee.

To establish or to define these objectives or goals –the vision- as well as the connection that should exist between the corporate vision and the individual mission is the basis for the work of any good manager in charge of directing its company to attain a goal successfully.

But, should this responsibility only be for the director or should it be shared between workers and managers? Don't forget the organization should first be a place for growth and personal development for all of its members. After all, it is impossible to build an organization without first having well-defined objectives.

So, now we finally have our manager, with a vision of the organization, more or less defined, with a group of members with clearly defined tasks, and capable of satisfying clients, shareholders and employees.

And even when the manager and his co-workers have been able to clearly define the “what”, the “how” depends on absolutely all the levels of the organization.

We could have been good enough when we drew plans, beautiful graphic designs focusing on the vision and the mission of our organization. We could have hired advisors, developed market researches, and invested in good advertising. But if the lady at the reception desk of the hotel (our organization!) had been in a bad mood and had given our guest bad assistance, all these strategies would have been good for nothing!!!!

Human resources are the key and this is nothing new. Therefore one of the basic tasks of any manager is to make transform a group of non-perfect resources, since they were made by God, into a group equipped with the right tools to compensate the original manufacturing defects.

In the 70s, a major change was produced in the way of marketing goods... Up to that moment business were facing a fantastic age in which excess demand made the selling of goods an easy-going adventure. Those were times in which manufacturers only needed to worry about making affordable products for the market. A clear example of this was Henry Ford, who said that anyone could buy a T-Model Ford of any colour provided it was black.

As always, this didn't last forever and starting in 1975 along with the oil crisis, a period started in which companies no longer sold all their goods and clients no longer queued for them. An unknown situation had to be faced in which the client became the master who dictated his own requirements. And then, segmentation, targeting, new product development and high level services became indispensable. This meant a huge change in inner structures and above all, in the way of thinking of managing director positions.

I think there is no need to mention that there were many organizations which didn't transform or adapt themselves to remain competitive in these new market conditions and many of them didn't make it. Others made internal changes to their structures to face the new paradigm and in so doing, created horizontal structures in an attempt to get closer to the client. The role of the manager changed dramatically and marked the beginning of what we call “leadership”.

So how –in a World of non-perfect men- could we establish or define the role of managers?

Just one way: it is fundamental.

Managers do play a fundamental role in the construction of a different world; above all if we use our privileged “seat” as a place from where we can stimulate the growth in everyone around us. But it is also true that in our history, each of

us have played a singular and specific role in this process. As we mentioned at the beginning of this book, God soon understood that his factory of men had some problems and made many efforts to rectify his masterpiece. Let's take a look at those efforts.

It is well known that we should learn from our mistakes as well as learn from the mistakes of others too, in order to become more effective and to be right. Well, I'm inviting you to learn from God's mistakes as a way to take the short road. I'm inviting you to walk together with me along the road of our own life and in our working environment try to complete what was started by him.

As we previously said, managers have the responsibility to create and spread the vision across their organization. Managers are also responsible for organizing indispensable activities in order to fulfil the vision, to create what is desired. So, what must a leader create...?

A leader must create a future.

And to create a future means reuniting the needs and aspirations of each member along with the needs and aspirations of the organization.

A leader must create a future that allows overcoming original imperfections.

A leader must create a future in which results improve the quality of life of men and also meaningful and fair full-value processes and basic rights for all individuals and so on, underlying how we want the future to be.

So, we and God are both using the verb "to create". Not a mere coincidence, I think.

So, I'll keep this word "create" as the main role of a leader.

Let's talk about it.

Chapter 3

TO CREATE

“... and we can link one another when it is necessary to do, and understanding one another and to love and console each other and live in harmony. And some times, in the silent darkness, we can still do more. We can feel like gods at times, and extend our hand in a gesture of command and create things that didn't exist before and that once created they still live inside us.”

Hermann Hesse

A few years ago I took a photography course, basic level. It was one of the things I always wanted to do but that moment “never came” or “something more important” suddenly appeared. Obviously the quotes give a false sense in the reasoning, as I think, at least for me, that photography does mean something important. And we always can find time to undertake important activities.

But this is not the point. So, the course I took started with the basic concepts and continued up to artistic techniques and at the end, covered the rules and practices of photo paper and lab work,

Nearly at the end of the course I created my own home-lab developing in black and white. Much of you surely known at least the basic rules and techniques but I can assure you all that the sensation from seeing an image appearing on a white photographic paper in the developing tray is really marvellous.

And even when technology has taught us that almost everything is possible, I still haven't lost my capacity to be astonished. And the process of the gradual appearance of the image still astonishes me today after having experienced it so many times. I think it is because the image is something that I was creating myself.

It is something that didn't exist before and now hangs on the wall at home.

I suggest that maybe the capacity to create has made the largest impact on civilization. Art, science, technology and many other activities carried out by man was based on this single capacity.

Man is creator by nature and by inheritance. And the future we can expect is just the future we are able to create.

Back to the photography course and basically talking about artistic photography, the most outstanding quality the photographer must develop is that of creativity which means the capability to look in a different way or from a different angle, from its inner way in order to take a picture showing that special thing yet undiscovered by others.

This is an important issue to talk about. Creativity is associated or linked to what is unusual, to the capability of invention, to the ability of doing things in a different manner. This is something we also try to introduce in our organizations, because through a creative process we can achieve more and better efficiency and effectiveness.

But what I want to stress more in this chapter is not efficiency and effectiveness but the capability of creation. This word is not related to innovation but with causality. Who creates is who causes something to start that didn't exist. To create implies to bring out to the world real things that are found only in our imagination or our wishes. The concept of “creation” has nothing to do with creativity, something always desirable that not always happens. The picture I'm

processing at the lab could have been taken with a very creative shot or could have also just been this: a shot. But in both cases, I am creating.

And again, there are some moments in which a creation process is taken by the hand of creativity. But there are others in which they are not.

Sometimes, the dynamics that society sets us in our lives makes us lose some of our sense of wonder and we begin to look down on daily facts. But at least for me it is amazing the fact that we create things. It produces the same feelings in me that Hesse expressed... *"we feel like gods, making and remaking a constant genesis of the human existence"*.

Maybe that's the reason why something as simple as a photography course caused such a sensation of being alive and awake. And this is very, very important. The magic we find in creation is the origin of the empowerment, the grandeur, the inner sensation of vertigo.

What is the limit of this power? What is its usefulness, its sense? Is it something real or just a nice sentence in a self-help book?

The answers to these questions are the key questions I intend to address in this text. But think: after reading the narrative taken from the Book of Genesis: what reason do you think God had for having proceeded in this very way instead of sitting, resting and relaxing? Once again, let's try to find out the answer in man himself, created in God's image and likeness.

So, let's ask man again: "why are there so many different creatures, in so many different social, economical and familiar conditions, why are they all dedicating their energies to create? What lighted the flame of inspiration in Beethoven, in Gaudi or in Pasteur?

I'll try to answer these questions with some of the explanations given by Psychology.

Some reasons to create

Man is born into this world without choosing it. We pass from a relaxed, low-lighted mom's womb to a cold and bleak environment. Further more, through a growing process, the new situations we face effect our emotions: the fear of facing the unknown.

But to be born is the first big jump, where we pass from a clearly stated situation to an insecure one, without a clear destination. In fact, once we take over this world, the single undoubted and unavoidable certainty is death. When man becomes more aware of his individuality, lack of strength when facing nature and his loneliness, man become anxious and only relaxes when he foresees the chance of joining the external world where he can be with other human beings.

One of these ways to link with others and reduce his anxiousness is in the creation of an activity. In any kind of creation, the creator and creation coalesce.

Man's creation represents the bridge between himself and the exterior world. And then, his creation appears as something that does not belong entirely to himself. Man and his creation become one and at the same time this permits man to project himself far beyond his personal and timetable limitations.

As Khalil Gibran said:

*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.*
...
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
...

The same happens to a leader of any organization. The future is created by us for our own development, including a leader's development, of course. And this development, this creation, does not belong completely to us.

Creation lives for itself and is beyond our material and temporal boundaries. Creation maintains this double condition of belonging and not belonging to its creator. Living together and yet having its own life.

And in the same way that our children come through us but not for us, the same happens with the wide creations that transform our culture and our society. Both, culture and society, become detached from its creator to become a possession for all humanity. I'm not talking here about the author's rights or intellectual property but of his own creation that, once finished, it starts to form part of one culture.

History has shown us many examples of eminent scientists and artists who have given their lives to creation. Nothing has ever impacted humanity more than men's capability to create.

Children are an everyday example of the capacity and need we humans have to create. Take a look at a drawing where kids have created their own trees, their own house, their own family and even a drawing of themselves. Or take a look at them playing many games in which they assume roles as doctors, adults or teachers, enhancing their existence beyond their own limitations and reducing their own uncertainty.

There have been cases of human beings that under extreme conditions (as those of concentration camps of nazi hell) have developed the capacity to create as a way of surviving. These men, that according to Maslow's perspective could only focus on their unfulfilled basic needs, finally succeeded to survive thanks to this inner capability to create.

Ok. Well, now we are at the point at which we all agree that the creation capability was inherited from God and that the human being practices it during his entire existence. But, how does he carry out this process? What stages should be foreseen in order to make something non-existing come true?

Let's get to know something about the work done by Robert Fritz over so many years on this capability of men. Fritz –researcher, musician, composer, artist and movie director- made so many studies over twenty five years about the way in which the human being develops the creation process.

In his research, he always found, consciously or unconsciously and in all creation processes, that many steps are required for it to succeed.

Think for an instant about those things we have created: our children, our family, our own working environment. Think about what was the strength behind us that created them all. I am sure about what they all have in common: love. As Igor Stravinsky used to say “Love is what you need, its strength and power, for the act of creation”.

We normally understand that love is like a 'feeling' or mood which is in response to something or someone. For example, when we say that we fall in love, it is because a person has caused that feeling or mood in us. The same happens when we appreciate a work of art, music or a good meal. We first experience the situation and then feel love.

But, in the creation process exactly the opposite happens: love appears first and not as an answer to something. Love came first and the situation came after since the object of our love didn't exist. To create something requires that quality; being able to love something that does not exist yet. And that's exactly why creators create, they love their creation and want it to be true. They love it before it exists.

Having that in mind, it seems natural that God dreamt of his creation and love his creation even before it became true. Which is the reason why he loved man although he wouldn't be as perfect as he wished.

So, here we are, living in a world invaded by non-perfect creatures who are deeply loved by their Creator. And, with a strong creative instinct have thus become co-workers in this creation which the Lord once dreamt about dreamt. If we want to play the game, nothing else remains to be done but to continue with the creation process, starting by loving all that we dreamt about with such a strong feeling to make it come true.

I would like then to conclude with some of the conclusions out of Fritz's studies.

The creation process

Even though human mind has its own proceeding rules, in all creation process we can recognize the phases we will describe below. These phases take precedence over all kinds of creation processes, and being completely natural, they are deeply linked to our human nature and can be learnt and developed as well as any other technique. These rules can be applied by professionals or can be used unconsciously and naturally. No special states of mind or supernatural flashes of inspiration are required.

In a very simplistic way, the main steps on the creation process are:

1st Stage: The conception and the vision

During this step, the process of thinking about what we want to create starts, the word “conception” being used as a general concept, not exactly defined but yet with a sure purpose. The vision usually specifies more about the concepts conceived creating then a much more clear image with a high degree of detail regarding what we are intending to create. We do not exactly need each detail one by one but we must know enough about our future creation in order to be able to recognize it when has just been created.

2nd Stage: Current Situation

Once we recognized the final result we are planning to create, we must know exactly which stage of the road toward it we are at, in order to understand how much further we must go. The comparison –where am I now and where I want to be- between these two positions along with the wish to achieve or get the final result produces psychological stress that must be resolved.

If our love is strong enough; if our concepts are clear and we can count on a good dose of patience, then the stress can be resolved at the end of our creation. If, on the contrary, we lose endurance after failing, if we don't know to wait between mistakes or if our love becomes weak, then the resolution will require to be disguised, simulating reaching the goal and leaving our true aspirations unfulfilled. I think there are thousands of situations like this, every time we look around.

3rd Stage: Commencement

I read once that a vision is an in-motion dream. A dream without action is just a dream and an action without a dream is lack of meaning. So once we know where we want to go and where we are now, then we must define specific and feasible plans to keep striving towards of our objective. This is the moment to ask ourselves how can we get there and what tools or means are needed to reach our vision.

4th Stage: To evaluate, learn and keep moving

Creation is a continuous process of learning about the things that make us get closer or further away from our goal. There are no mistakes but stairs to climb and to learn from. And as human evolution shows us, this is a never-ending process.

Once our aims are fulfilled, they then become new stairs to climb and a place from where we again start striving towards new objectives.

Man is continuously in motion and evolving. And so are the organizations he creates. Nothing remains static, everything changes and moves through creation.

In the next chapters we'll try to fully understand each of these stages.

Chapter 4

THE VISION

“The purpose of the existence the mankind is not what you must be worried about. Instead, the question that you must ask yourself in life is why you are where you are. And if you still have not found the answer, then set yourself high and worthy goals and try to reach them. I can’t think of a better reason for living than fighting to achieve what seems to be impossible”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Let's keep on with the parallelism with Genesis now as a guide to continue with a more detailed description of the creation process and particularly, of the stage in which conception takes place and the vision we must have of what we wish to create.

The Genesis narrative starts with an empty and deserted scenario that later becomes an ordered and crowded universe. During the first stages of the creation the original situation was the result the separation of opposites: sky from the ground, light from darkness, and the seas from the soil. After this separation, everything was ready to welcome living creatures.

The narration rhythm emphasizes the statement "*And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning.*" that perfectly represents the stage of evaluating progress as commented before regarding the creation process.

God creates, observes, evaluates and continues creating.

It wouldn't make sense to try to understand what motivated God to create life. I don't think the reasons (which we explained earlier) why humans feel the need to create also apply to God. The Bible doesn't explain anything about this either. But what does appear to be clear is that God made his masterpiece just for love. Because only love can explain the patience and perseverance that God showed even when some of his creatures didn't behave as he had wished.

This is exactly what we clearly find in The Bible: the clear difference between what God attempted to create and the results of his creation: between a world of humans living in harmony as brothers, to the disobedience of Adam and Eve and the killing of Abel and so on.

When reading, we see that initially what God created seemed to behave as expected. The work and the dominium of the creation –tending the garden and the imposition of man over animals- both are part of the mission of man to dominate nature.

But in a moment, suspicion and distrust of the Lord arise in the heart of man: what is he hiding when he prohibits man from eating the apple? Is it because of love or is he is jealous and doesn't want us to grow? The answer is given by the snake: "You won't die. You'll become God". And again, everything is turned upside-down. Man lost his trust in God and hides. Shame and accusation appear between man and woman and on the horizon the first crime in history is about to be committed: Abel dies at the hand of his own brother, Cain. Later, the growing spiral of violence continues down to all the descendants of Cain.

We are not able to describe what vision God had for his creation, but we can imagine it by looking at his interventions and involvement along the history.

Characteristics and definition of the vision

The concept of “vision” is well known by all of us. Briefly, vision tries to describe, with utmost precision, what we wish to create. A work of art, a book, a musical composition, a working environment, the way I want my company to be, a personal future, a way of being or whatsoever. But vision is not about a dream or desires. Vision is strictly about what we are willing to create and about what we are deeply involved in.

Let’s make some semantic exercises with the meaning of “vision”. Right at the beginning, two words come immediately to mind: “see” and “look”. The word “see” refers to the stimulus that light has on the eye. It is a scientific fact. It is objective. On the other hand, the word “look” also implies feelings and gives the word a certain gentleness. Looking requires a heart. You get involved.

The word “see” underlines the idea of understanding things the way they are. A vision tries to describe things as they could be. The difference is important because it is only through our vision that we can invent and create a future.

In order to have a vision, it is first necessary to know how to look.

The vision will then define the future we want to create and build. According to this definition it would seem quite simple to define and describe a particular vision of a desired future. However, it isn’t that easy if we want to have that vision to have and cause real consequences and not merely be wishful thinking. Nor is it something that we can resolve quickly. It has to be the result of a process from which the future we want to create ends up being something important enough for us to be able to love and foster.

It is very important to be able to define and describe what we actually want to create.

The question about “what” we wish to create should be asked very clearly and independently of our paradigms, limitations or prejudices.

I’m quite sure most of you have had the experience of a new idea that arises - as many do from a brainstorming session - when there is always someone who asks “ok, but how are we going to achieve this?”

And this is the core point: to understand that it is basic to separate both questions during this process. There is a big difference between “what I want is...” and “how do I get it?”

The first question is aimed at “results” while the second pointed to “processes”. If we simultaneously ask about “what” and “how”, we are limiting our possibilities to make things we already know how to do. On order to get outstanding results, what really matters is to ask ourselves, without fear, “what” kind of results we want. And then, go after the right processes and best tools to achieve them.

Sincerely, it is very common that when we ask ourselves about the results to be created, we are also asking ourselves how to achieve them, what the chances are, and what difficulties they may bring. And that's how the questions about the goals, processes and tools needed to reach these results become one question, causing the "how" ending up putting limitations on the "what".

And what happens when we look for the same attitude in ourselves and the co-workers in the organization? Most of the time it is we who mutilate our dreams and projects. We do not let them fly high, we do not let them grow or develop. We don't even give them a chance.

I'm not saying that it is a mistake to think or to plan how to achieve a certain future, or certain work stability or get a degree in any professional career.

This is one of the steps of the creation process and is exactly the Commencement. But let time do its job. Let the idea blossom and start feeling its taste. Give yourself the right to dream for a while as long as you imagine that your dream can come true in the near future. Give yourself some rest in this day-to-day competition to visualize, to look at and feel a different future. We don't need all the answers at once but rather, let's choose the right questions. And then, answers will come to us as we walk along the road.

Commit yourself to conquer noble and high goals. Don't be afraid of being brave. And instead of the fear of failure, beware of your own insecurities and our paradigms and prejudices that limit your genuine aspirations and true possibilities.

It doesn't mean that we will always succeed in the accomplishment of everything we wish. Those are not self-help techniques or hidden forces or mystical energies.

It is obvious that we won't be able to achieve all we desire but its important to keep in mind that by setting a goal, we do it without the limitations that our own knowledge may impose on us. A big part of scientific advances were discovered after clearly defining what was intended to be created or discovered and then research began which led to the road to success. Many things were not discovered, but if we don't start with a high and worthy vision, the results will never be exciting.

Jack Welch, a legendary president of GE used to say: "One of the things I've learnt is the value of challenging the organization, defining goals far above expectations and also above the goals people believe they are able to reach".

And results are really amazing. In general, we reduce our chances of success by continuously asking ourselves about "how" to achieve the expected results. This is a limitation. But, if we first define the "what" to reach and then find that the "how" is not enough, naturally there are many other unknown "how's" that will appear and answering them will enable us to walk that extra mille to achieve results far above those we once thought were our highest.

It is necessary to fully understand that it is only our own prejudices, our own fears and our own paradigms that cause our limitations.

The Promised Land

The history of Jewish people is a significant example of the site on which God dumped his vision of his creation. And the utmost significant moment was the Exodus through the desert, after leaving Egypt. Let's take a look at this narrative and the role of Moses, the leader. Let's begin at the very moment the Jews first saw the Promised Land that they dreamt of. At the exact moment in which the vision God had for them became real.

The Bible narrates the significant crossing of the Red Sea after leaving Egypt. A crossing that had a very clear and explicit involvement of God who parted the waters to let the Israelites pass and then closed them over the Egyptian army. Also, the Book of Exodus lets us know about the favours God gave his people to satisfy their needs along the road to the Promised Land; a place where his vision, his creation, would come true. Creation that was based on just one Law: Love.

The story narrates that closer to the Promised Land, Canaan, and God asked Moses to send a few men to explore. All the explorers returned and told of a generous land flowing with milk and honey. They warned that the people living there were powerful and lived in fortified cities. Uncertainty about whether to settle there or not was created in the minds of these explorers..

The Israelites reacted strongly in fear, despair and with suspicion.

All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

Numbers 14: 2 - 4

Note that despite the clear and wonderful signs God gave his people, the Hebrews didn't trust him enough to take the next steps and conquer Canaan, the Promised Land. They acted as cowards, having everything in their favour. But their fear was stronger than their desires and love. They were not prepared to trade the security of the known for an uncertain but promising future.

They got to such an extreme of claiming to wish to return to slavery! It is clear then, that the vision God had for his people hadn't been understood nor accepted. They were only considering the "how", that is, how could they ever dominate those people. They never realized that their domination would come later but first that they had to concentrate on the "what". And so, God punished them for their rejection and lack of faith by preventing that generation from ever entering the Promised Land. Not even Moses. And thus, the Jewish people wandered across the hard and inhospitable desert for almost 40 years.

Coming back to the conceptual aspect of this stage of the creative process, vision is not related to the things we want to occur but related to the things we are willing to create. Vision must be about something we love the most so we will always be ready to work our best and take risks.

That's why the vision must be strongly linked to the creation process. We have often heard of organizations complaining about things they dislike. And well, we have the right to argue about things done badly but what we can not do is define our vision based on such things. Vision must always have a positive point of view only about the things we really want.

Evidently, after conceiving the vision of the future we want to build, many things will appear not to fit into such a scheme and must be eliminated. But, again, this is not part of the development or conception of the vision. The vision should never be based on a problem and its solution. He who focuses his life or organization in solving problems, only channels his energy towards the elimination of something already existing. Instead, he who dedicates his energy to the creation process, as we explained, will become "the cause" for the existence of something new. The difference is very clear.

It is not the same to eliminate something than to create something. Things are seen from a different point of view when we focus on the construction of a future than when we don't have a defined horizon and only concentrate on giving up what bothers us. This focus, the one in creation, is an optimistic one, a point of view of what is possible, of the permanent expectation which means to be alive.

Let's continue now looking at a few examples of this first stage of the process of creation to fix ideas and clarify many concepts.

A couple of examples

For a while now, I've been willing to write a poetry book. I started compiling a few poems dated a long time ago and I have continued collecting others until I had a little one. This little book didn't exist in fact and what you are reading now is not poetry, is it ?

However, it does constitute what I was willing to create.

Because in fact, my motivation, at least, my personal vision was oriented to express many concepts and personal experiences and thus, share them. The fact of writing this book makes my vision come true, despite it not being poetry.

What happens here is a good example of the misunderstanding of the "what" with the "how" we talked about earlier. At first, I thought the right vehicle for expressing my ideas was a poetry book. But in the end, it was another type of book. But I can still recognize it as my vision.

What is more important in this example, is that it was me and only me who made this creation possible. To succeed in the quest or in the way in which I finally did it depends only on my own ability and wishes to carry on.

Here you have another example: in my experience as a father. I already have a vision about the type of future I want to build for my daughters. In one way or another, all of us who have children share this kind of vision. And that is because our children are the masterpiece of our existence. Our kids were already loved prior their physical existence. They already were in our projects, their creation itself was an act of love and love was in our dreams about them. Sometimes we even know his or her name prior to his or her birth.

Well, based on the vision I have for their future is why I made daily resolutions regarding, for instant, their education. So, with that vision in mind I choose a school, or that I encourage certain values and rules of conduct, etc. In the prior examples, the creation process is performed. I conceived a vision, I compared the current situation with one that I dreamt about and I started walking along that road to reach my goals.

However, there is a huge difference between both cases. For the vision of the future for my daughters, not everything depends on me only. They –my daughters- will be the ones who, in the end, will decide that direction or road to take in their lives. My creation process will be in vain, if my daughter's visions don't match the ones I have for them.

And this is the point where things became a little bit complicated but still with some fun. Moses was very clear which road to go on when they were almost at the gates of the Promised Land. But Jews doubted. Moses was not capable to convince his people to walk in the same direction. His people didn't share his vision. And everything seemed to demonstrate that the vision the Jewish people had was closer to that of the security of a daily meal instead of that intangible vision of a plentiful and independent life.

A leader must lead his community towards achieving a vision. But... towards which vision...? The vision of the leader..? The vision of his followers...? Can both visions be different? How do I make them match...?

And with those questions we find an important aspect or concept that in a human group we'll find individual visions but also a vision shared by the group. Let's take a look at this aspect.

Shared Vision

As I told you before, in the example of my experience as a father, when a leader dreams of a certain future and tries to lead his group towards achieving it, the vision of the leader and those of the members of his group interact. Evidently, if all the visions coincide, then the results can easily be achieved.

Thus, this is the leader's main challenge. And many aspects must be considered in this challenge such as the leader's skill to influence other members of the group in order to establish a shared vision as well as influence the individual behaviour of each member and the group's aim or willingness to

follow the leader. This process involves a lot of psychological and sociological characteristics.

Those who –like us- dedicate our lives to teamwork and group leadership know very well that both aspects are of outmost importance. A group is formed by many people who frequently interact with each other, share certain beliefs and rules, have common needs and pursue defined goals. As a result of this interaction, each member of the group develops an interdependent relationship, based on the specific roles and abilities of everyone.

Accordingly, we must never forget that both the entire group as well as each of its members are –themselves- a universe of singularities. Man himself carries his own experiences, feelings, his own beliefs, values, fears, projects and dreams. These things will evidently influence his behaviour and the way he perceives reality. The group also will experience many interactions at its heart, between each of its members, different types of influences, attractions, rejections, competence, etcetera.

Any leader intending to accomplish his mission successfully should get involved in a such tangle of individual emotions and life experiences and feelings but also get involved with those of the group as a whole and I'm sure that, while reading this book, many of you will remember, having faced situations in your organizations where you acted more like a psychologist than like a business man, didn't you? And this is exactly the point. If we intend to manage an organization by simply applying financial, marketing or other similar knowledge, we may not achieve significant goals. These skills may help us to efficiently manage resources. But people cannot be managed. People can only be led.

José Ortega y Gasset said that *"I am me and my circumstances"*. So, we came to this world, after leaving a factory where we were not assembled to the point of perfection but God still insisted on making his vision of man come true and, since then, has never given up trying to perform his creation the way he once dreamt. And one of the ways He found, was to change the reality in which we live everyday. Because only by creating we can make real non existing things and in doing so, can change the environment that surrounds us.

And as we saw, the superior force that makes it possible comes from Love. How should we manage this in order to get a specific group or organization create a determined future which is different from the one its members are feeling and live?

There is more than one answer, but it is also very clear that, if the vision of the future to be created by all members of the group or of the organization is common to all of them, and if all of them love that possible future intensively, then the superior force that will flow from them will be incredible strong, enhancing their chances of making that vision come true.

But no one can love something simply because someone asks us to. Love can not be ordered or forced. We can, however, be persuaded about something, not by just any boss, but rather by a leader.

From where did these goals come from? How were they conceived? Did all the members of our staff take part in its conception? How were the goals communicated to the organization? Were they well received...?

We must bear in mind that a person is motivated only by his or her own vision, not by the leader's vision. So, it is essential that the leader's vision fits the vision of the people involved in its achievement.

It was here where Moses failed in defining a goal accepted and embraced by all the people.

There are several definitions of leadership. But what matters now is a singular characteristic of the leader: to be able to visualize the future to be built and of leading the group towards it. A leader is someone who can make his group become part of a future that doesn't exist yet. The leader, along with his team, must be capable of creating that future.. The leader must know about love and must get all his people to love this unknown future. The vision of the leader is important but only when the vision is shared or understood by all members of the group can the group take the first step towards achieving it.

Many organizations fail at this point because the vision is usually created at management board level and later communicated to the other levels. This is especially true in traditional and hierarchical structures. But in these cases there is no vision as a whole. In fact, in these kinds of corporate structures, employees don't care about goals or visions or things like that. They just do as they are told.

We can see this happening in organizations that are trying to get their ISO9000 Certification. To meet the requirements, they hire consultants to write sentences with strong meanings about a vision and a mission which staff members subsequently misunderstand or are totally unaware of.

We know it isn't easy to give recipes but again, keep in mind that the single way to constitute a deeply committed organization is by sharing the vision at all levels. What came first, the chicken or the egg? This is the type of question I ask myself. What comes first, the leader's vision or that of the masses?

The traditional answer to this question is clear; the leader's vision comes first and then he must communicate it to the masses and get them to accept it.

Thus, the real question now is, who will the leader be. If we are lucky enough to have many candidates in our organization, regardless of their hierarchical position, they are welcome.

One efficient way to reach a shared vision is to encourage our people to develop personal ones. And then, the role of the leader will be to try to converge every personal vision. And this is not an easy task.

Because, once more, we should remember the fact that what motivates a person is their inner vision which is what drives their effort behind their

aspirations. The leader's vision is obviously essential; but his effectiveness will be established once the similarities of his personal visions are determined within the organization.

An interesting example of a shared vision can be seen every time a Jewish father tells his son the story about the Exodus from Egypt, transmitting in this way, from generation to generation, God's vision for creating a society, a world where they could all live in peace and harmony.

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons.' And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand."

Exodus 13: 14-16

Even today, Israelites practice and repeat the ceremony of the Jewish Passover each year as a way of keeping the vision alive. This shared vision of the Jewish people is always strongly linked to the feeling of belonging to a nation. We must think also of the fact that handwriting was developed in Israel almost 1000 B.C. with memories being orally narrated from generation to generation. Always remembering, to remain united, to develop a sense of nationhood and to be recognized as pilgrims heading towards God's promised land.

The commitment to reach a vision that is understood, accepted and shared across our organization is the only way we can be sure to count on a team of synchronized rowers all putting in an effort towards a clear and well defined goal.

I strongly insist that the issue of a shared vision is required not only for reasons of effectiveness. There is also an increase in the quality of such a vision when the process of its creation is shared and not simply "announced" and then required to be understood and shared by all staff members.

When the companies did not need to worry about differentiation thanks to a huge demand, ideas were conceived in a few thinking heads. It was enough with a Watson in IBM. The rest was paid for doing, rather than thinking. Just imagine the waste of intellectual power when having thousands of employees limited to task execution.

But times have changed. We cannot have the luxury of throwing away such a power. It is indispensable for the brain of the organization to grow.

The leader should trust his team, share information and take part in the process of shaping men and women in the organization.

Maybe you are a manager for whom it is sufficient to have workers capable of "performing". So your organization will be one in which your employees will only be able to satisfy their basic needs. But those employees for whom the satisfaction of such basic needs is not enough, there is only one way out: to

leave your organization and find the right one that permits them to develop their potentiality. In many cases, this new place is none other than your competitor.

It is essential therefore that the organizational environment facilitates the development of leaderships and the vision of its members. We should not be afraid of that. We have much more to win when a whole population starts thinking.

The future we are able to build within our organization will be a direct consequence of what we, as human beings, can be.

The quality of raw materials usually determines the quality of the final product. This is something we all know. So I invite you to think that if the vision and the future of our organization is built by its members, then we must take special care of them and pay special attention to the “quality” of our people in order to ensure a vision of high quality. As Paul Sartre used to say: *“Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself”*.

To count on the best human team is the keystone for the success of any organization. And if you are an entrepreneur and are worried about the financial results of your company you can't ignore this point. If success is what you want.

Chapter 5

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION AND REACTION

“Not even the stars remain intact when I move.”

Fernando Pessoa

As we have already explained, he who creates something, possesses the ability to love something which doesn't exist yet and should focus this love on both attitudes and decisions in order to complete it.

This is easier said than done. It is very easy to say that and easier still to understand this concept, as it is a simple concept which is deeply ingrained in us since birth. It is natural for us to fight for something we love. But when we think of putting it into practice, the problems arise and it all seems so difficult to make real.

First of all, I think that the type of love we are accustomed to is a reactive one, meaning that it is a feeling, a love that "reacts" as a response to an external condition rather than being a love that, on its own, initiates a process of creation.

It is said that in any relationship between two people, there are those who love and those who are loved. We can say, in a way, that he who loves is the one who manages to create the bond of love between them, while the one who is loved, responds favourably to that love creating the right environment for this love to grow and strengthened. This doesn't imply that one loves more than the other. Not at all.

But, to create what we need is the proactive kind of love. To transform the organization, that I'm part of, into the one I wish, I have to imagine and love it first. And this love is necessary to make the organization I dreamt of come true prior to its creation. But you also need the environment, to which I apply my actions, to react properly and in the right direction. Like a loving relationship. One loves, but the environment should behave as one who is loved.

The main point to observe at this time is that in several cases or situations the effect that an action can produce can be clearly predicted.

I already know the reaction my daughters will have when I invite them out to have some pizzas or when I buy a DVD from a store.

And I also know the reactions of my work colleagues facing daily situations: what goes on when a business is lost or a client complains and also, I know how they would react if I gave someone a raise in salary. Will John and Peter react in the same way? And, consequently, me -as their boss- shall I treat them both in the same way or should I take decisions keeping their singularities in mind?

I'm not saying that there will always be the same reaction to the same action. If man has a singularity, it is the ability to change, especially if changing is a result of a personal decision. I think that is why it is very common to observe reactive behaviours at almost every stage in Society.

The humans are social beings, whose interaction with others causes a determined phenomenon. The behaviour of a man is not exclusively related to

that man but rather, involves all men around him. As individuals, we are both a reference and receptors of behaviour of those around us. Even the stars react to our actions.

Let us go back to what we defined as “creative love”. If we experience a love strong enough to love something that does not exist yet, then we will be able to design so many actions that, affecting everything and everyone around us, they will react the way we planned.

Unfortunately and in a general way, man is more accustomed to react in a familiar situation than to “act” a in new one. Love is not the single feeling capable of creating emotions in our heart. And what we all feel on a Monday morning is, for instance, a very clear confirmation of this. The fact that “it's Monday” is something external to us. However, we do react to it. And in doing so we give it power, because we let “Monday” affect our mood. It isn't the fact that “it's Monday” which makes us react, it's the way we react to the fact.

So, we can clearly observe two opposite ways of face everything in life, either they are personal or working issues. In one of them –the creative focus- the power is in our hands as it is we who finally decide which action will be executed. In the other focus –the reactive one- the power depends on external circumstances, as they will determine our attitudes, our answers, no matter what decision we take.

Let's see a few examples: we all have studied the Newton's principle of action and reaction. Basically, it means that if an object with a mass “m” is exposed to a force F, the object acquires an acceleration where $F = M \times A$. The object reacts under the applied force by getting in motion but such movement was not originated by the object itself but in the external force.

But this principle didn't apply only in physics. The *behaviorism*, in Psychology, for instance, bases its interpretation of human conduct describing it as “reactions” to other “actions”. Religions originated in India name it “karma” as a principle of justice which gives back what we had sowed at some time.

Have you heard about identical particles that go in opposite directions after a quantum reaction?

Suppose that due to the effect of a quantum reaction two identical particles are generated, alpha and beta, which travel in opposite directions. According to the theory of quantum mechanics, each particle has the power for a right-hand spin or left-hand spin and can take any of them with equal probability. The spin is only acquired when it is measured, not before.

But physics is fantastic because even when the spin appears by chance... the spin of each particle will always be the opposite... two “sister” particles will never have the same spin...!!!!

Furthermore, if we first measure the spin of the A particle and later the spin of the B particle.... and as far as we already know that both spin will always be the

opposite... what if the A particle is in Rio de Janeiro and the B particle in Japan....? How do they know what spin direction to go in ...? Because remember that the spin appears after the particles are measured.

So far, there isn't a single or accepted opinion in the scientific world.

I know it is quite a complicated example but what I have tried to demonstrate is that the A particle was free to choose any spin but the B particle was not. It merely reacted to a previous fact.

When we insert this concept into the one this book is about it becomes clear that we often react in diverse ways to actions that happen around us. When we talked about love –a clear example- it means that we react to a single stimulus.

That's why sometimes we become vulnerable to the external circumstances that surround us, as they produce or cause specific reactions and predetermine conducts.

Focus on that concept; we can state that the power resides in the circumstances around us and not inside ourselves. The forces that shape and build our life are settled outside ourselves. Evidently this will produce nothing but insecurity and anxiety as we feel ourselves like a simple dry leaf carried in and out by the wind.

If we compared this way of looking at facts with the focus on the creative process we mentioned before, then the differences are clear: if we focus our life and the life of our organization in acting from a creative point of view then it will be us –and not the circumstances- who will activate and generate the actions that will create our future.

Every thing, every action, and every move we make impacts around us. Every action generates a re-action. If we action on unity, we will be creating unity, if we action in confidence we will create confidence, and finally, if we create a vision properly, we will certainly create a path to it, for sure.

Archimedes used to say *“Give me a place to stand on, and I shall move the earth.”*

A single place, a solid place, a correct action in the right direction. And just wait for the right re-action.

Such a reaction must not be associated to something negative or something with a negative impact. Have your heard about the film “Pay it forward”? It is very a simple script about an idea a child has, of having each child at the school do a special favour to three different people who must then do the same again and again. This idea was visualized as an absurd one from the adult's point of view. There is plenty of action and re-action. Because each person in this chain, does a favour to someone else, it will create a constant action of “do a favour” and so on.

What must be carefully observe in this example is that re-act does not mean to create. If we look at it, it was only the child who conceived the idea of creating something new, a new way of relating. He was the one who launched the process.

This difference between action and re-action influences many aspects in our lives as well as in our organization and in every one of its members. I'll show you how this influence affects the process of transformation and the changes we are talking about. And I'll base my explanation on the Principle of Peter.

Peter Principle

Let's talk about change.

Change is a constant issue in every available management manual, book, guide, etc. And I'm sure we all agree that "the change" is the paradigm that dominates the modern world.

I'm not saying that changing is a new concept. Heraclitus used to talk about the permanent changes in the surroundings and environment around us.

But what is characteristic of the times we live in at present is the speed at which changes are made, a pace that obliges all organizations to remain in a permanent state of high alert.

Extensive research has nowadays measured the amount of knowledge existing in the human race at every moment of its history. This research is also able to measure the speed at which new knowledge is produced and they all agree that it is exponential.

The first duplication of knowledge in the Christian era took place in the middle of the 18 Century. But in the 20 Century, only two centuries later, a new duplication took place. And again, by the 50s yet another duplication of knowledge took place.

At present times, the entire human knowledge duplicates every five years and by year 2020 its speed of duplication will be made every two to three months.

This implies that one's learning capacity will be more important than having the knowledge because that knowledge will soon become obsolete.

Let's find out how this can be related to what is known in management as Peter Principle:

The Peter Principle is a proposition that states that employees tend to be given increasing responsibility and authority until they cannot continue to work competently.

This is a situation that is frequently observed in many organizations when a worker –based on his outstanding achievements - is promoted to a superior

level but fails in the achievement of his new duties at this new stage. So, does this mean that any outstanding worker should not be promoted? What a paradox!

Let's take a deeper look at it.

We had talked about the difference between focusing our lives from a reactive perspective and from a creative one. In the first case, the individual concentrates to reach a good understanding of the reactions on its environment according to the process of action/re-action and thus, the person acts or replies with resolvable and predetermined behaviours. They are individuals whose behaviours are mainly oriented to satisfy basic needs as we mentioned and described on Chapter 2.

These people somehow experience a certain lack of control of the exterior world a fact that causes uncertainty; they defend themselves from such a threat by putting a strong emphasis on their individual performance, as their sole range of control is what they already know.

On the other hand, those individuals who focus their lives with a creative perspective are individuals who venture to create a different future. They are able, capable to foresee the opportunities in changes and not only the possible threats. And those capabilities make them agents of change. They are individuals who are motivated by the needs of self-development and base their success on their ability to learn from new situations.

Another singularity is that, in general, those people don't achieve an outstanding performance inside the organization, in the accomplishment of a pre-determined, and repetitive task

That's the single conclusion.

However, those who avoid day-to-day routine jobs or tasks will be the only ones capable of facing the future ahead. Only individuals who are able to focus or base their lives from a creative perspective, and who have a great capacity to learn can lead us to the changing future to come.

Sooner or later, natural evolution will put us in a world full of developed human beings, creatively focussed and aligned to the initial plan of God for humanity.

The main point is that we must get away from being a "consequence of" something to become its cause, "the cause of..." We must stop acting merely in response to certain external condition and, instead, become the "makers", the creators of a new environment we once dreamt of.

This is the very essence of the gift of creation we humans were given and on which lie our roles as builders of the destiny dreamt for us.

Chapter 6

THE PRESENT SITUATION

“No man is free who cannot control himself”
Pythagoras

The present situation doesn't seem to be an important stage in the creation process. Basically, it is all about creating a new situation, to substitute the present by the content of our vision and only keep a memory of the situation where we started. However, I assure you all that focussing correctly is the key to success the moment you seriously start trying to create the future we wish.

We should bear in mind that the helping force that will support us while making our dreams come true is born in the strain coming out from comparing the current reality we are in with the reality we want to reach.

One of the risks that stress brings about is that it overwhelms us and proves too bothersome. In this case it is common for an escape to occur and we cheat ourselves by decreasing the strain, whether it be sacrificing the goals originally set or disguising the current situation as relatively close to the desired one. Obviously in these cases we are seriously compromising the achievement of the vision that we had developed.

To be able to recognize the current situation objectively requires great courage on our part. It requires us to shed our fears and our anxieties of the present which we are not completely satisfied with and which we want to leave behind in order to head towards an uncertain future without guarantees. The future is always unknown, so all our defence, effort and safety mechanisms are questionable because they are based on past experiences. What is new causes anxiety, and it is very natural that we try to minimise it internally by trying to convince ourselves that what used to work in the past will work in the future.

But it is also natural to doubt our capability to get by well in a future full of uncertainties along with the uncomfortable feeling of living in a present that doesn't match our needs of fullness, make us disguise our present reality with something barely acceptable: "we are not that bad, are we?"

We find then that there are two basic risks that may cause our venture to fail: the fear of the unknown and the anguish provoked by a present we dislike.

How can we manage this in order to avoid becoming discouraged by such strain and be successful in searching for the change we wish? By avoiding anxiety, as it may cause us to slide into a vicious circle of negative effects which is very hard to escape from.

Let's consider this situation: suppose that after crossing the first stages of the creative process, the desired situation is defined and we possess an adequate perspective of the current situation we had when we started. So, as a result of this gap we decide to change. We strive towards this objective, but perhaps the changes don't happen, or happen too slowly. This can produce frustration which depletes our energy and desire to continue trying, and may even lead to depression. Depression as a psychological condition has a clear symptom which is the reduction in one's self-esteem.

We can therefore see that it's very important to define the current situation objectively since by subjectively bringing it closer or taking it further away from

the desired goals will produce effects that will threaten the chances of achieving them.

The key that will allow us to have sufficient objectivity and peace of mind to recognize the current situation is to *accept* reality as it is. It may seem paradoxical that at the same time I ask you to put to start building a future, I mentioned the need to accept the present.

It is the acceptance of the reality, just as it is and well underway, that makes us more active than stagnant.

Accepting doesn't mean giving up. It means to clearly see the situation in which we find ourselves. It can be a personal or an organizational situation. Accepting reality allows us to observe it with sufficient serenity to clearly understand it and be able to visualize the right time to face change. It implies being calm enough so that temporary state doesn't distract us from losing our vision of our future or wasting our energy. Accepting the reality involves an inner state of silence that is essential to face change. It is a fundamental step which psychologically and positively influences our attitudes because the very fact of perceiving oneself has a healing effect.

Accept the current situation initially involves not to destroy rather to start doing. That itself is positive since destroying is not enough to build, and the destruction of what we do not like is what we often feel temptation to do believing that this is enough to achieve our vision

Yet God initially had an attitude of non-acceptance of his creation. In the famous flood which destroyed his creation, he didn't accepted it and made no effort to change it. The results obtained with this attitude were not at all encouraging and he should have tried other mechanisms, based primarily on the acceptance and perseverance to continue with the process of bringing his creation closer to the vision he had intended right from the beginning.

There is a well-known prayer by St. Francis of Assisi, which says: *“Lord, grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”*

Only the initial acceptance of the current situation will allow us to distinguish between the two types of realities and therefore focus our energies on the things we can change.

Accept reality is to accept to live in it, it is a commitment to life itself and implies freedom. The freedom to be ourselves, to choose according to our preferences and choose our own path. Accept the reality in which we find ourselves will also allow us to discover the good things we probably already have, and from where we must start to realize our vision and our dreams. Our desire for change should not overshadow the achievements that we have obtained, and only acceptance will give us clarity and calmness of spirit to affirm them and rescue them.

If you look in your organization at only those things that don't fit the vision you have laid out for them, chances are you don't know where to get the strength from needed to begin to realize your dream. And even for things that aren't working properly you have to know how to discover the qualities that enhance and change.

A well-known quote by Buddha says, "The world is full of suffering. The root of suffering is desire. The remedy is therefore to eradicate all desire. "

It is important to pause here and try to understand what Buddha meant, since a hurried and literal interpretation of this quote implies that we should discard all our desires, whereas, so far, we have been emphasizing the need and importance of having desires and dreams of a vision of the future that we want to create. To want to eliminate suffering by discarding desires is like chopping your head off because you have a headache. Though effective, it's obviously not the idea. Accepting the current situation causes stress because we don't have our future or our desired creation in our hands right now. It is precisely this stress that should not cause us suffering.

Suffering comes as a result of revealing ourselves unconditionally when facing a situation in which we find ourselves. Accepting it would eliminate suffering and anguish, though probably not the pain from being in a given situation we don't like or one which doesn't satisfy our true aspirations. It doesn't eliminate the discomfort nor the desire to change, and this is precisely the point.

Buddha suggests we should eliminate that feeling we usually have when we say, "I can't go on anymore, I can't carry on living like this." What we should say instead is, "Yes I can live like this, but don't want to, so, I will try to change." Can you see the difference? It's not that we should eliminate the desire; what needs to be eliminated is the conditioning towards a dignified life conditioned to achieve our desires.

We then find a much more obvious reason that speaks of the need to accept our present. So, the present is the only true and concrete thing we have. While we can and should push to achieve the desired future, we can't live on the basis of a future that ultimately we don't have. Not accepting this involves destroying any chance of a happy life. It is only the present that can give us the joy of life, friendship, and love.

Our achievements and failures occur in the present. It's what we have and it's only from there that we can find the elements with which to create and build a better future. It may seem paradoxical that we are talking about accepting this as a precondition before we set off to transform it into a different one.

I'm sure that what you all most expected from me, the most "logical" thing would have been for me to say we must reject the present, fight it, in order to be able to finally change it.

Note that I put quotation marks around the word "logical". And I'll explain why. We usually use concepts from Aristotelian logic for reasoning. It is this logic in which we have been educated and which is consistent with the common sense

we have acquired. It is part of our knowledge with which we base all our deductive reasoning everyday. Briefly, this logic is based on three principles which are: one thing is identical to itself, a thing can't be and not be at one time and one thing may or may not be, but there is no place for a third option. Cristal clear.

However, there is another way of seeing things. In contrast to this logic we can talk about a paradoxical logic. This logic prevailed in eastern thought, in the philosophy of Heraclitus and was taken further by Marx and Hegel in dialectical materialism. Lao Tzu explained this logic by stating that "the words that are strictly true seem to be contradictory." According to Heraclitus, the conflict between opposites is the basis of all existence.

In this sense, Taoism, which is a philosophy of not searching, maintains that to attain enlightenment you have to stop trying to find it. Something similar happens with change. To change we must first accept and love the present. Change must be sought freely. No strings attached to the present or to the future. We must cast off and go with the wind while at the same time having a clear inner direction to follow. A state of calmness and quietness should prevail in our spirit. Action and risk should drench our hearts and minds.

To summarise a little, we should love the future we want to build, but we should also love the present we don't like, we must have dreams and at the same time eliminate desire. I might have confused you with these concepts, well, that's the idea. You will not find any magical recipes here. There aren't any. All I want to do is instil the conviction that paths are made by walking and that each of us is a master of himself.

Somepsychological basis

I would like to briefly introduce some psychological concepts here, that partly explain the kind of behaviour that men - and therefore - organizations suffer from when making a decision about our present and our future. We find in them some additional explanations about the stages in the creative process.

I am not an expert in these matters so I'll mention only what I think is indispensable to continue with my central issue. I apologize if in simplifying I became a little bit imprecise about the concepts.

In the middle of the XX Century a new psychological concept entered the scientific world named "humanistic psychology" which became the third force in psychology and confronted the classical theories of psychoanalysis and behaviourism. Most people involved in this new line were influenced by Existentialism concepts. It was a theory that began with different authors that coincided in concepts where man is considered his own builder and responsible for himself, where man is subjectively free, able to chose and assume responsibility for its actions.

The original ideologists brought clarity to classical theories as John Watson did for behaviourism and Sigmund Freud did for psychoanalysis. Those theories

take the protagonist role out of man regarding his destiny and provide very mechanical and decisive explanations about the behaviour of human beings. They hold that due to biological causes (psychoanalysis) or in reply to stimulus-response mechanisms (behaviorism) man appears as dominated by reasons far beyond his control, that take away his freedom as well as his capability to have initiative.

We have already mentioned, in the previous chapter, the outstanding differences between looking at our life from a creative point of view, where the power is in our own decisions, or from a reactive perspective, where the power resides in stimulus or conditioning situations which we can't control.

Humanism appeared as the opposite force to the prevailing dogmatism of the Middle Ages during the Renaissance Era. In this line of thought, man is rediscovered but now as a singular figure, the master of his possibilities and capabilities of growth and development. This concept of man was later on adopted by existentialism during 19th century.

At that time, man was recognized as having the capability of choosing and the power of deciding about his existence in an active way. So, the human being develops a life oriented towards a goal, to objectives and values which will become the base to his identity. In this line of thinking, man didn't observe 'his life the way we watch a film where things and facts only happen on a screen. Man creates his own existence.

Zen Buddhism, Taoism and the Old Testament exerted a wide influence on the development of humanistic psychology

Let's observe how this apparent paradox of accepting our present prior to our efforts for its transformation is already an existing fact explained by humanistic psychology.

The Paradoxical Theory of the Change

In some of the psychological interpretations used in this treatise, inspired by humanism and the development of human potential of existentialism, a paradox is used to explain the keys to changing human beings. It's deservedly called "paradoxical theory of change".

Carl Rogers, one of the most influential figures in humanistic psychology, argues that the human being has in itself the potential to evolve into a self-realized and psychologically mature being. Besides it also possesses an innately tendency to develop these qualities.

So then we ask ourselves why isn't this the most common situation in the people around us. What is the reason why most humans don't develop their full potential and navigate the waters of life only to settle for a mediocre and unhappy existence?

Rogers answers this concern and argues that individuals also develop defensive barriers that act in response to threatening surroundings, which causes them not to develop their full potential, to put aside their feelings, desires, emotions and needs, obstruct their natural potential and distance themselves from their true self.

This is why, when man is able to behave and be the way he really is, when he accepts himself with all his capabilities and not for trying to become something different in response to external pressures, that he is also able to change and develop.

Can you appreciate the paradox? The person changes when the person doesn't change. The key to change is to transform ourselves into what we already are.

The challenge is to encourage us.

I invite you to go back to the narratives in the Bible to illustrate this stage in the process of creation.

Joseph, son of Jacob

Evidently the Bible hides a clear educational message within the pages since only in this way we can understand the "mistakes" God made with his creation. God could not believe how imperfect the man he created was and tried again in multiple ways to mould man according to his vision. The results of his actions were of dubious effectiveness, but it is interesting to see how God changed his tactics to achieve his purpose. I mention the educational message in the Bible because I think we should draw lessons from its pages since things go wrong the first time, both for man and God himself.

After his failed attempt to build a new humanity out of Noah, in the famous episode of the great flood, God set about forming a new town where he could create his vision for humanity. The names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are related to this new plan that God had. It is they who were newly chosen by God to convey and express the true meaning of existence and show them the vision he had about his creation and how things were not working out just as he had wished.

So God appoints a new General Manager to direct his business hoping to achieve the desired results.

God wanted to begin a new creation with Abraham (as he did with Noah). A new family from which the seeds of universal coexistence in harmony would emerge and thereby realize God's vision for man.

The story of these patriarchs is very interesting, especially to see that, although they were God's chosen people for his new creation, things don't turn out that easily. Also, misunderstandings, confrontations, betrayals and lies occur in these families. But God doesn't give up on his mission, and with great carefulness and life-teaching lessons, knows how to draw out goodness from

each of the mistakes made, and thus transforms real tragedies into miracles of faith, hope and wisdom.

What an astonishing example of leadership!

In this regard I want to tell the story of Joseph, son of Jacob, in which we find a clear example of the hard reality that is finally transformed into a new chance of a better future, instead of becoming an impediment. And this is a lesson: difficulties are always opportunities.

Joseph, who was the beloved youngest son of Jacob, caused his brothers to become very jealous of him, so they devised a plan to send him away from the family. So then they decide to sell him to some slave traders and make Jacob believe that he had died.

Joseph spends a long time as a slave to the Egyptians until events take their own course and Joseph becomes governor of Egypt, but soon thanks to the Egyptian authorities they discover the great wisdom he possessed. Notice how the wonders of life can bring greatness out of small things. The most terrible things can suddenly become the basis and platform for a great future. A simple Egyptian slave is appointed governor.

For that, Joseph had to accept his situation as a slave. He didn't stand against it. He knew his fate could be different because of his natural gifts, his wisdom and his faith. And so he used his ability to get out of the real and concrete personal situation he was in.

Joseph trusted himself and believed in a different future.

With the passage of time the fate of his brothers and family changed and famine gripped the region they live in. So Joseph's family went to Egypt in their search of food, unknowing, of course, the fate of their lost brother. The story of the meeting of Joseph with his brothers is a worthy example of forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance.

"But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children."

Genesis 50: 19-21

This story of Joseph expresses a pattern that repeats constantly: the humiliation and subsequent exaltation of great men. He was persecuted unfairly, led to a desperate situation, then exalted and brings salvation to the very people who persecuted him. The position held as governor is not used by Joseph for revenge, but rather, for forgiveness. Joseph knows how to stop the spiral of violence.

Moses: The Birth of a Leader

Time passed by and Joseph, his brothers and all of his generation died. The Israelites multiplied so that they became very powerful. This frightened the Egyptian government, who decided to take them as slaves in order to dominate them.

So the Jewish people lived for years suffering the yoke of forced labour and lack of freedom. About 200 years were spent in slavery, during which time they worked in the construction of the cities of Pithom and Ramses. Moses was born at a time in which, as an additional way to control the growth of the Hebrews, the king of Egypt orders all their newborn male babies to be killed.

The story of this child is no less exciting and spectacular than the events that would take place later during his struggles for freedom. Facing imminent danger of being killed, the baby Moses was set adrift on the River Nile in a floating basket, which gently led him to the vicinity of the family of Pharaoh of Egypt. History tells us that Pharaoh's daughter found him and feeling compassion for him decided to adopt him. The name Moses would mean something like 'take out', as he was taken out of the water. Notice the wisdom of this name, because later it was Moses who "took out" the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt.

Moses grew up, living as a Egyptian and looking naturally the slavery of Jewish people. But the story is wise and by accident Moses becomes a fugitive murderer, and in his escape from Egypt he discovers his true identity. After several and spectacular signs Moses manages to free the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, and is responsible for leading them to God's promised land.

However, in a grand finale, Moses dies very close but unable to achieve his dream to reach the promised land.

Imagine the wealth of experience that Moses must have had to lead his people, and some distrusting followers, under uncertain conditions.

I invite you to you learn from this experience and recognize how human nature in relationships continues being the same today, as it was then, in any type of organization.

The call of Moses

Reading the various books of the Bible shows us a God who perseveres with his intentions. He wanted a free people who could live in peace and harmony, and in that way God intended lead the Hebrews. And God chose Moses to achieve these goals. But above all, God keeps his sight set on his vision for man:

"The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey... So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

Exodus 3:7-11

We can see from this quote that God is very much aware of the situation his creation is in. A completely different situation from the one he had wished. God looks at the situation, recognizes it and decides to commence and intercedes so as to lead his creation towards the future he had wished. The phrase "commence" is key. Things don't just happen.

It's important to note how, in this intervention in history, God doesn't decide to destroy his creation (as he did in the days of Noah and the flood). Now God recognizes his creation, takes responsibility and decides to accompany it in its process of change. This is a clear example of a prior acceptance of a situation from where it left, but obviously the desire is to change it.

Chapter 7

CREATE OR DESTROY

“There are those who prefer a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice”

Martin Luther King – Letter from Birmingham City Jail

According to the creative process as detailed above, the step following the full discovery, knowledge and acceptance of the present reality is the step for the commencement of clear and concrete actions. It is the time to develop and implement plans which get us closer to our vision.

We shall discuss this step in detail in the next chapter, but let me first make a small parenthesis here to tell you some of the things that happen frequently when we get down to work.

For this I will continue the story of the Exodus of the Jewish people. Exodus that exactly means change, the abandoning of a known situation to meet a hardly imagined new situation, with all the difficulties involved in the transition from one reality to another.

The Bible tells us that after the majestic crossing of the Red Sea, things weren't at all easy for Moses and the Jewish people.

Nutritional needs of the multitude and the disorganization of the people in the book of Exodus are matters for further consideration. Let me pick a quote about this:

"The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death"

Exodus, 16:3

This statement about the Jewish people at first seems to surprise us. The signs made to Moses to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage clearly show that God was on his side. The famous staff of Moses witnessed the most amazing wonders: the plague on livestock, locusts, frogs, mosquitoes, sores, hail, turning water into blood, death of all firstborn Egyptians and to top it all: the parting of the Red Sea and the Egyptian army buried under its waters.

However, at the first signs of difficulties the Israelites expressed a desire to return to slavery.

Is there such resistance to change? Are there so many fears that put us in an uncertain situation?

What the Jewish people were experiencing was incomprehension and thus, the non-acceptance of the vision God had for them. They were only concerned about avoiding suffering and hard work under the Egyptian yoke. They weren't committed to fulfil the promises received by their ancestors to reach the Promised Land. Much time had passed since then and the promise was possibly a way to maintain their identity as a people rather than a real and concrete possibility.

Under slavery, the Jewish people complained and cried to God for the harsh working conditions, the ill-treatment from lack of freedom and the assault on human dignity that they were suffering from. And while they were very aware of God's promise of a land that would one day belong to them, the events that

unfolded after their flight from Egypt would demonstrate that the desire to get out of slavery was much stronger than the desire to have that land. Their energies were focused on an existing situation that would cease to exist, but were not willing to work hard to build a future.

What they wanted was to make something *disappear* instead of making something *appear*.

This situation frequently occurs in organizations. When facing an unsatisfying reality, it's easy to summon support to change it, at first, as its usually *against* something and not *for* it. The point is that if the energy that drives us is destructive towards the current reality, and not constructive and positive toward a particular visualised future, then we'll probably take a few steps in that direction, probably destroy many of the things that bothered us, but never succeed in building the future we hoped for.

In the case of the Jewish people, the path taken after their departure from Egypt probably initially caused them suffering greater than that experienced under slavery, so the people's rebellion shows very clearly that they were solely motivated by basic needs and not by hope and love toward a better future.

If the vision of the future to be built is not fully understood and shared, then all the efforts and commitments that we obtain will be very short-lived and die out at the first sign of difficulty.

The Hebrew people were so focused on avoiding things rather than creating realities. That's why at the first sign of trouble, they opposed the changes imposed by Moses and manifested a preference to stay in Egypt, where at least there was food.

To recapitulate a little about the concept in the previous chapter: suppose that we are in a situation where we have to recognize the current state of our life or organization and that this situation contrasts with the vision we have developed for our future. We've already explained that this produces stress which will have to be dealt with, either by sacrificing our vision or transforming the current situation, creating a future like our dreams and desires.

Obviously this is not something that occurs instantaneously. The design of our vision and the discovery of the situation in which we find ourselves are both the result of a gradual process. And so the discovery of the distance that separates us from our desires also occurs gradually.

Normally in this situation more destructive feelings arise than constructive ones. This is because what most bothers us is the reality of the present situation and so we usually have the tendency to define our possible future reality diametrically opposed to the reality we have now.

It is in these moments that one must realize that destroying current reality to create the reality we desire isn't enough. Yes we can possibly eliminate some of the tensions, but nothing more than that. This is counterproductive to our goals.

Although it gives us some relief from situations that bother us, our energies may be lulled by a slightly more tolerable situation where we may end up adapting to a reality that is mediocre, not very ambitious and far from our legitimate desires.

That's why the acceptance of current reality, as discussed in the previous chapter, is essential for the success of the proposed change and for it to head in the right direction of the creation we want.

To destroy implies that something that currently exists, ceases to exist. To create, instead, implies that we are the cause that something, which doesn't exist, begins to exist. The difference is important.

This is precisely what happened to the Jewish people when they were in the desert. They had not understood the vision of God nor the magnitude and importance of their flight from Egypt. His "vision" was a negative one, it was a "vision" of what they didn't want. And clearly the desert made them have more needs and brought them more misery, but also it gave them an enormous promise they were unable to discover.

This sort of behaviour is often observed in the attitudes of different members of society who have to deal with situations they face. Their speeches are usually against something rather than in favour of something. It is true and valid in the short term and as initial actions we focus on destroying, but it should always be done with a clear and compelling vision of the future we want to build.

Consider, for a moment, the political speeches we usually hear: try to see how many of them talk about building a future and how many discuss ways to eliminate or destroy a current structure.

For example, psychology traditionally has behaved in a similar manner. Traditional schools of psychology have studied "sick" people, drawing conclusions about their diseases and their causes and ways to remedy them.

There is no problem in healing those who are disturbed. But what about healthy people? It's very interesting to study them, and understand the reasons why they are healthy as a way to prevent the disease.

So in the 90s other psychological studies emerged with a radically different approach: to study healthy people too, not just the sick. The work undertaken by Abraham Maslow displayed this type of approach, which he called the "the self-actualized man".

Thus, not only do we know the reasons why humans get sick, but also know why some achieve more fulfilment than others. These studies show that the absence of factors that cause disorders is not enough to ensure the fulfilment of the person. There are other factors that need to be created and built in order to achieve fulfilment. So eliminating the disease doesn't necessarily create a completely healthy person.

Destruction isn't enough; it will always be necessary to build also.

The main idea is where to focus energies. We need to focus on the things we want and not on the ones we don't. Knowing what we don't want is obviously useful information to define what we want, but isn't enough. We can't develop a plan of action for the future of our organizations and our lives by simply eliminating and saying what we don't want from them.

Traditionally, managers have been trained to solve problems. We have learned to use the Pareto and Ishikawa (Fishbone) diagram to understand what problems to target and eliminate.

Besides we, traditional managers, feel comfortable with this scheme, as it's an easy way to mobilize the staff we manage to face a common enemy.

But it's very important to understand that managing a company by concentrating energies on solving problems is very different to begin to construct and create new things.

If our motivation is only derived from solving problems, then these energies will soon vanish as soon as we're able to slightly improve the situation that bothers us; but nothing will come from this course of action.

If we manage our organization based on problem-solving, the organization will soon only encounter problems, and will indeed try to solve them, and that's not bad. But it will not discover the realities that are possible.

In this way the company will not be discovering what it is able to build, if it decided to do so.

We must learn to think in terms of possibilities.

It's very likely we'll have to get rid of many existing things along the path towards achieving our creation. But the energy that should power us along that path is the creative type and not destructive type.

Creating justice is not the same as eliminating stress, as we mentioned in the epigraph of this chapter.

In this dichotomy and internal struggle between the desire to destroy and the desire to build, the life of one of the greatest prophets in the history of the Jewish people was debated: the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah: the prophet who never smiled

Jeremiah begins his sermon shortly before the Babylonian invasion of Judah, almost 600 years after Moses.

In those days the Middle East is affected by a series of conflicts involving Egyptians, Syrians and Babylonians. Palestine then becomes a place of

passage for foreign armies, suffering siege and displacement by the Egyptians and later by the Babylonians.

The Jewish people at that time was divided into two independent states, the Northern Kingdom, or Israel and the Southern Kingdom or Judah.

Jeremiah preached in the Southern Kingdom, and lived the last days of the kingdom of Judah before falling to Babylonian troops. All his teachings involved warnings to the people of Judah who, if they didn't change their attitude, they would face catastrophic consequences.

The call he got from God boils this dichotomy down to create or destroy.

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart...See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."
Jeremiah 1:4-10*

Throughout his achievements Jeremiah was contradictory in his ways, being peaceful one moment and then, in another, constantly announcing acts of violence and destruction being committed by the Babylonian armies as they approached Jerusalem to besiege her. But Jeremiah also announces a new way of living, with the law of God inscribed in the hearts of the people. His condemnation of the behaviour of the Jewish people and his warnings of huge catastrophes were always linked to hope of a new way to live together. Jeremiah was destroying first to build later.

At that time, an 8 years old boy – Josiah- becomes king of Judah. This king, upon reaching adulthood at the age of 13, undertakes a structural reform that gives the prophet his hopes back.

The pagan places of worship are destroyed and the temple becomes a place of worship again. A change of structures silences Jeremiah's warnings and makes him focus on supporting the king's reforms. Destruction yes, but with a clear vision of the future: to become God's people.

However, this structural change was not enough to change the hearts and attitudes of the citizens. King Josiah died fighting in the battlefield against the Egyptian army, commanded by the Roman Emperor Nero. From there, the emperor began to make and destroy things as he wished, deporting Josiah's successor to Egypt and appointing Joaquin as the new king of Judah.

This will cause a split in the political situation and the destruction of Josiah's reform, and once again, the people of Judah will fall into idolatry and confusion, turning their backs on their God.

At that time Jeremiah's denouncing cries are heard again, lamenting a situation: political reforms were not sufficient to change the hearts of men.

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil. "I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind. This is your lot, the portion I have decreed for you," declares the Lord, "because you have forgotten me and trusted in false gods..."

Jeremiah 13:23-25

Babylon finally manages to take the northern kingdom and then turns to Judah. Dire times are approaching.

It's said that Jeremiah was stoned to death by his own countrymen on Egyptian soil, who were tired of his threats and warnings.

Jeremiah's proclamation was characterized by a constant tone of menace and focussed on the destruction of the present situation. God himself used a tone that threatened to destroy:

"So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."

Jeremiah 18:3-5

But above all, to every word of threat wielded by Jeremiah, the dream that God had for his creation arose from within himself, and when the people were already hopelessly lost, words of comfort came from Jeremiah's lips announcing a new covenant between God and his people.

"This is the Alliance I agree: I will put my law on you, I will write my law in your hearts and I become your God and you my people".

This is the attitude of a true leader: to ensure that the vision of the organization to be created remains etched in the hearts of its members, so that it is accepted and desired, and for which they will be willing to work with zeal and commitment.

God previous strategies had not worked. The destruction during the flood didn't change history, the patriarchs broke the alliance and the deliverance from Egypt also inspired people to move towards the world that God had dreamt. But God didn't give up and again became committed to backing life constructively.

Clearly, if we only eliminate things, we can't build or create anything. Imagine a musician who only tries to capture those things he doesn't want in (or wants to eliminate from) the creation of his new piece of music.

Elimination or destruction only makes sense when it's part of a creative process, when it aims to build a desired state of our life or organization. It must be a means to an end, but and a defined and a desired end.

Destruction itself is just that: destruction. And this is the typical behaviour that arises when we want to change something without prior acceptance of the present situation in which we find ourselves. We have already discussed this in the previous chapter; we will not achieve significant changes with that attitude.

Chapter 8

COMMENCING

“Yesterday, to resign meant the passive acceptance of the present conditions in the Universe. Today, only those who fight until they break down are allowed to resign.”

Teilhard de Chardin

As we were discussing earlier, to carry forward the creative process satisfactorily, it is essential that the situation to be created and the situation we are currently experiencing are both clearly and objectively defined. Both realities must also be accepted, one which you have to live with and the other as a possible reality for which you must channel your energies. We must also be willing to head towards the situation to be created despite the difficulties and uncertainties which the path is surely going to bring.

We, as company executives, finally arrive at that moment most of us like. The time for action, for commencing. It's the time to make plans, set dates, assign responsibilities, etc. It's time when the adrenaline starts pumping, the time when we get start our 14 hours of work a day and when we self-motivate ourselves with a that steady and encouraging rhythm. This is when we, as leaders, usually feel useful and demonstrate our leadership capacity, defining almost every detail by ourselves.

Well, my friend, if you're one of those executives, I regret to inform you that in order to carry out the type of project which simply requires a schedule, there are professionals out there who can do it better and cheaper than you can.

It's good that we should put our shoulders to the wheel. But the fundamental role of the leader is to plot a course along a path towards a future vision to eliminate the gap. It is the leader who should keep the desire of a future in an organization alive and who should know how to find the positive messages hidden along the path. And this, my friend, is not easy and you are required.

I point this out because sometimes activism is a clear symptom of our inability to do the specific job we have as leaders, and we hide under the umbrella of this activity as a way to feel useful. That's not something that is done in a premeditated way to deceive our team, please don't misunderstand me, as it happens, it's not easy to effectively exercise our rightful role as leaders. The leader isn't the one who should command and control. The leader should lead the way, lead the way and be able to generate enough energy to make things happen.

A few years ago I was attending an IBM course for internal managers. The opening of the course was made by one of the executives of this company and his speech was simply based on the following concepts: do, manage and lead.

He was very specific with his message and said, "When you joined the company you began to do things. As you were good at doing things, we promoted you to managers and we asked you to stop doing things and start managing. As you have managed so well, we are now asking you to stop managing and start leading."

At that point I wasn't sure what to lead meant exactly, but the introduction by this executive seemed to beg a question: if we were promoted to managers when we stopped doing things and started managing them, will you promote us to leaders to start leading now?

The answer was implicit; all present managers should become leaders, even though they hold a managerial position. Managerial tasks should be delegated but not performed by the new managers (leaders).

The message was very clear. The role of leaders is not just doing, nor managing what is done. The leader must lead.

From what we've seen so far, although the stages of the creative process are very intuitive at first sight, when you drill down on each of them we all need a more thorough explanation and which often contradict some set concepts and paradigms. It sometimes even goes against common sense and we find new paradoxes. And I love paradoxes. Very deep concepts arise from them which reveal hidden truths which are hard to find.

Commencing in order to create a future is no exception to this. Commencing doesn't merely mean to start doing things. It doesn't mean to talk loudly and energetically. It doesn't mean waking up one morning saying, "Today I will change my organization" or "today I will start a new life" and thereby unleash an explosion of actions.

Activity versus passivity

Not all actions help us get closer to our vision. And this is key to understanding this stage of the creative process.

We are accustomed, in our Western education, for example, when an executive of an organization is talking or doing something visible to others he or she should not be interrupted, since he or she may be busy with important things. We are therefore expected to wait until he or she stops doing whatever they are doing before drawing their attention. In Japan, however, when an executive is just sitting in his office and apparently not doing anything, this is exactly when the person should not be interrupted since that person is supposedly thinking.

It is not easy to understand when an attitude is actually active and brings us closer to the desired goal or when it is a passive attitude that leads to nothing. From the point of view of the creative process, being passive does not necessarily mean sitting around doing nothing and doing things does not necessarily mean being active.

Reacting against something or acting impulsively also shows passiveness. Routine is something that will not produce anything new. We just behave like Pavlov's dog: a reaction to a stimulus. We've already devoted a chapter explaining how a simple reaction to an external stimuli contributes absolutely nothing to the creative process, since it cedes power to circumstances rather than focussing it on our decisions and capacity to choose.

We see that the differences between active and passive attitudes are not so clear. What we see externally doesn't always accurately reflect what kind of process is brewing, and being able to differentiate between the two types of attitude is often quite misleading.

The psychologist Erich Fromm explained this in a radio interview when he was about 80 years old with a case in point that I found very clear. For those who have travelled at some time will agree that it is always amusing to watch Japanese tourists taking photos of absolutely everything they see. Indeed it would seem that they don't really enjoy nor contemplate the landscape, but rather focus on the image retained by the camera, which they can show their friends or look at again after some time to remember where they have been. This is passiveness, no contemplation of the landscape, no interaction with nature, nor with reality, only a mechanical activity to release the shutter to capture something that is there but not even observed. Nothing changes, nothing is transformed with this action, nothing takes on a different meaning.

There are other tourists, however, they appreciate what they see first for themselves and then will capture it with the camera. This prior act of looking is something active (remember that looking and seeing are different attitudes). It's something that benefits the tourists themselves, which makes them enjoy and admire, and therefore transforms. If there's no transforming process, there's no action.

An activity that doesn't transform, which doesn't build, is definitely a passive activity, regardless of the energy used to perform it.

Also consider a more everyday example: a meeting of the management board of our company. It is common to know in advance what each member at the meeting will say, what each of us will reply and what the CFO, the production and marketing managers will reply. Everything is like a machine, absolutely predictable. However, during the course of the debate all show an apparent activity. Forceful speeches full of energy support our opinions. But this is a totally passive dialogue since one only reacts to external stimuli. Each defends his own position with rehearsed answers and arguments based on our own schemes, paradigms and interests. Nothing new emerges from a discussion of this nature. It is a passive discussion, no matter the outpouring of passions we may make.

Again, it is often the aggressive and loud speeches of the participants in these situations attitude that help hide the shortcomings of management to resolve the underlying problems, moving them out of their area of responsibility and delaying those decisions.

Human beings construct masks to defend themselves from what they don't know how to control or manage. The fear of change is installed in organizations, regardless of the hierarchical level of the individual concerned.

I think we all feel identified with this situation, because we've live it all too often. But if we can't get the minds of the members of our team to open up to anything new and become sensitive to transformation, I suggest we simply replace them by software as a quickly and effectively way to reduce costs.

So here we are again at a stage that is not simple. Commencing, I repeat, is not only doing things. Once again, a funny paradox: by doing things we can in fact try to hide our resistance to change.

Commencing involves doing the necessary things to build the future we as leaders have viewed and shared within our organization. If the previous steps in the creative process mentioned in the previous chapters have not been taken maturely enough, our actions will be of little use and our plans are likely to be buried, like so many well-intentioned efforts fail when the time comes to implement them.

Let me continue with the story that we were following about the release of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt and the role of Moses in that quest.

God had already understood the situation of his people, and had decided to end their slavery and give them a dignified and full life and thereby realize the vision he had for his creation.

Thus he says to Moses:

“So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

Exodus 3: 10

Things don't just happen. You need to commence.

God shows us he's not happy with the situation his creation is in, which he had caused. He was responsible for this and intended to keep on course and not deviate one iota from his ultimate goal, to turn mankind into a civilization of love, peace and abundance.

Somehow the vision of God was transferred to Moses, perhaps more as a mission, and from that moment the whole of Moses' life would be dedicated to taking the people out of Egypt and leading them to the promised land.

The dialogue between God and Moses, when this mission is assigned to him, is interesting. Obviously Moses was afraid and doubted that his strength and skills were sufficient to confront Pharaoh and all his might. The Hebrew people represented cheap labour and were absolutely essential for the Egyptians and their economy, so they wouldn't be relinquished that easily.

Moses was thinking 'how' he could undertake such a feat. His mind was focused on the real chances of undertaking it. He imagined the strength and power of the Egyptian empire which he would have to face, as a mere shepherd. He trembled at the thought of being the one to undertake the task and allowed himself to be influenced by a seemingly realistic assessment of his chances of success.

When we mentioned the stages in the creation process earlier, we emphasized that the key question that must be made, apart from any other type of reasoning, is about "what" we want to create.

We also mentioned that one thing is to ask about "what I want" and another thing is to ask "how to get there."

The first question points to the results to be achieved and the second points to the processes needed to achieve them.

Moses could not imagine how he could free the people from Egyptian bondage. His first argument was to put the "what" aside for the time being and put the "how" as a top priority. At first this makes him reject God's plan, questioning the chances of success.

After facing God's insistence and witnessing examples of his power, Moses finally accepts the mission God entrusted to him and commences to see "how" he must carry it out.

At every stage in the creative process that we have been explaining so far, there are implicit leadership concepts which have caused such an uproar in modern management literature. Much has been written and talked about leadership. It isn't possible to develop a successful organization without outlining goals and achieving objectives with the participation of its leaders.

There are many definitions that are often given for this concept, but basically we can make a distinction between two broad approaches.

On the one hand we have authors who focus more on the achievement of results, and define the leader as one who manages to lead his group towards the targets. On the other hand we have authors who focus more on the methods used, the process, and define the leader as one who manages to influence the behaviour and attitudes of their followers to strive and work in a certain direction. The definitions, with more or less words, all point to these two concepts. Results or processes.

Modern trends point to the latter type of leadership. We will shortly see why.

I think it is interesting go deeper into both approaches of leadership and also think it is worth to stop for a while at this point.

Before proceeding let us think about our organization. What do we really value in our co-workers? The results obtained, how they are obtained, or both? How do we weigh up both concepts when evaluating a co-worker?

Processes or results

According to the creative approach we developed, the leader is the one who manages to build and create the desired future. The leader is a builder of dreams. The point I want to make here is that to do this systematically and

continuously, processes play a fundamental role, and therefore the leader to which we will refer must know how to combine both.

As we explained above, the most important question to be made is "what" future do you want to build. Once this has been defined, the processes to be followed, the "how", are activated, but always in that sequence.

Interestingly, although the action plans to be performed for the realization of a vision depend on the vision to be created, the processes or techniques the leader must perform are always based on similar concepts. That is why if a leader is clear about the processes he/she must perform, the results are more easily achieved.

No effort will be worthwhile if we don't stipulate a suitable plan of mechanisms and means with which to realize our dreams. Our power lies in the strength of love that drives us and a strong determination to take the necessary actions in the right direction.

This happens in organizations, especially the ones motivated by short-term pressures, which base their management system on results, regardless of the processes used to achieve them.

This seems correct in principle because ultimately what matters is the results you want to achieve, and processes are just a mechanism to achieve them. The way you achieve the results doesn't seem to be important. The important thing is to achieve them. It would seem to be a case where the end justifies the means.

This argument presents a big mistake. Indeed, we can achieve the desired results in many ways. But if we are to achieve ambitious goals, with a continuous long-term vision, then the process which are used will be key to the success.

By not having the processes defined, measured, understood and implemented at all levels of the organization, achieving the expected results depend more on the ups and downs of external circumstances of our own strength. Once again we are placing power outside of our control.

In this sense there is a very noticeable difference between the management models used in Japan and ones used in the Western world. While management indicators in Japan focus on process, in the Western world they are focused on results.

We're not saying that Japan doesn't place importance on results nor that the West places importance on processes. I'm merely stating where the primary focus of management actions are.

The performance indicators of a salesman of the amount of time spent with customers, the business opportunities identified, levels of relationships achieved, etc, will be given more value by Japanese firms than American ones.

All those who have had experience in managing organizations know that we must exercise both tasks. Through processes we are performing support tasks and with results we are performing control tasks. The monitoring process indicator is an early indicator for predicting whether or not we are going to achieve the desired results.

By maintaining both types of performance indicators we can have an organization which has a healthy balance between quantity and quality and between short and long terms.

If we want to reduce the power that we leave to chance and circumstances beyond our control, the processes should take precedence over the setting of goals.

So now I am saying that the "how" must be defined before the "what". Weren't we saying the exact opposite?

It seems that, once again, we have a new contradiction. I think I told you before, but, I love paradoxes!

We will return to our theme of the creation of mankind to explain and illustrate these concepts.

It is very clear from the narratives, God demonstrated with his interventions in history a clear persistence and tenacity for achieving the desired results. He was also changing the means (processes) with which he could get his creation that much closer to his vision. God was evolving from a Western-type scheme, where only results are of interest, even at the cost of destroying creation and having to start again, to move to a more oriental like scheme where the means are more important, finally reaching the extreme of sending his own son as a personal assistant.

This is a perfect circle. It is naturally harmonious and covers all the factors involved in the creative approach. Love, which is the life force that drives us, also has a similar behaviour with respect to the results and processes.

Let's take a look at it in more detail. Consider for a moment how God may have seen his creation, and how we ourselves see, feel and love our own creations. How do we love our organization? With passionate love? With a love similar to the one we have for a child growing up and in which we have put efforts and hopes? An unconditional love? Interested?

Several times, God himself compared his love for his creation with the love you have for a wife. Sometimes compared it to the love for a son.

To better understand this we should understand more about love. Because in our language the same word can actually refer to concepts with different characteristics.

The love we feel for our wife, isn't the same as the one we feel for a child nor the one we feel for our organization. They all have something in common, but they also have differences that you clearly understand.

I am going to specifically refer to the differences between two types of love: maternal love and paternal love. I'll just point out psychological characteristics of both types of love, which are not always and necessarily related to the paternal nor maternal figure.

Maternal love is an unconditional love by nature. The child is simply loved just for being a son / daughter, and not because they behave in a certain way or complete certain requirements. The relationship with the father is different, as love begins to take on increasing importance in the child as it grows older and develops. Fatherly love is conditional, love is given because the child meets its obligations, behaves well or plays ball well.

I am aware that I am summarizing very briefly and simplifying difficult concepts to the extreme, but again, they are characteristics of each of the types of love. We, fathers, should not feel guilty for anything since we also have a share of maternal love. Maternal love gives security, paternal love is governed by principles and serves as a guide to face the outside world.

I do not know if you can see the parallelism. What I mean is that maternal love is process-oriented. It works regardless of the outcome. It precedes and creates mechanisms for obtaining achievements, but prevails although these are not present. Parental love is instead results-oriented and conditional. The child could be assimilated to our organization; maternal love should always remain for and over paternal love.

So according to this reading it would seem then that the process should take precedence over the results. I think I've got you muddled. On the one hand I insisted over and over again that the leader should first ask about the "what" (results) and not the "how" (processes), and now I am telling you that the most important thing is the process and not the results!

Paradox!

It is for this reason that modern authors tend to define the leader as one who manages to influence the behaviour and attitudes of their followers so that they push in a certain direction. Obtaining results is not mentioned in this definition, but instead it refers to the processes and means: the influence. It is assumed that a leader with these qualities, the goals are likely to be achieved.

So the processes of an organization for which its members are allowed to, for example, participate in the design of the vision to be promoted, be sufficiently self-driven, be respected and to be able to develop their potential, must always prevail, regardless of the results. They are part of maternal love.

Although the processes and the results appear to be the result of independent analyses, both have really strong interaction and connection when viewed more broadly.

The Exodus of the Jewish people

The biblical narrative continues with successive attempts by Moses to make the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II let the Israelites go. Initially, he tried to persuade him, but that was unsuccessful. Then he used the power of God to show that there was no other option, the Jewish people had to leave Egypt. And so it was, finally.

Amid great deeds and miracles, Moses manages to cross the Red Sea leaving Egypt behind and ruined financially and with a destroyed army. These signs increased faith and confidence of a people who scarcely understood what was happening.

But the path towards a goal is not an easy one to go along. The deliverance from Egypt was only a link in the chain. Moses and his people still had a long way to go with many obstacles to overcome.

The events immediately following the departure from Egypt showed a totally discouraged people who had given up at the first sign of difficulties.

The exploits of Moses didn't have a lasting effect among the Jewish people. They had managed to cross the Red Sea in a spectacular way, seen how the Egyptian army had been crushed by the sheer power of a staff that made the waters rise and fall. But Moses was facing a people who were hardly convinced of the chances of success in their crusade, and who lamented at every step which was difficult to overcome.

Because of this behaviour, poor God exploded into fits of rage. But still, God remembered the lessons learnt, and once again stands by his creation. Again, as with Noah, God listens to his chosen people and calms down.

"I have seen these people," the Lord said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation." But Moses sought the favour of the Lord his God. "O Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and don't bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.' "Then the LORD relented and didn't bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

Exodus 32: 9-14

Although God's leadership for his creation is a leadership which has different characteristics to those we are accustomed, the Biblical account is responsible for showing human characteristics in God such as anger, the desire for revenge and destruction or the apparent loss of patience. Clearly this evidences a

pedagogical scheme from God to men. He wants us to know that we too will suffer from such feelings, and invites us to learn from his experience.

God is seen to gradually get closer to his work. The biblical narrative tells us for example that God speaks to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

It is interesting to observe, just as we were mentioning, the evolution of God and Moses as leaders. Both are learning. God goes from being a leader who only judges and gets angry, to a leader who listens, comes to his senses and makes decisions by evaluating and reasoning.

God now takes care of the processes used for conducting his people.

Moses also shows maturity and stops being a follower who simply obeys God's commands. Moses feels he has a right to say and demand things.

I always remember an explanation given by a manager I used to work for about what he called the "Yes-Sir-style of followers". I don't want co-workers saying "yes" in response to all my opinions. The power of groups and teams lies in both the leader and the followers. I want followers to question me, to impeach me, force me to rethink plans and correct them if necessary. To ask for advice and listen isn't tantamount to lack of power or authority. Even less is recognizing ones errors and reversing decisions.

Moses said to the Lord, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

Exodus 33:12-13

The dialogue itself is very rich and exemplary. Keep in mind that Moses spoke with God. It is the trust in a leader that is based on facts and concrete plans. The followers are not unconditional, their following responds to a purpose.

Personally I am accustomed in my organization to have my co-workers to question me about certain decisions or opinions. That is a very valid thing and I'm totally used to it and it makes me work more carefully. But what has impressed me the most is to discover how we generate concepts, changes in attitudes or influence which we were not even realizing it.

The thing is, we, the leaders, are constantly communicating, intentionally or otherwise.

As I write, a situation with a co-worker comes to my mind that was nice and very touching. We were both repairing computer equipment some years ago. Then I was promoted, given new responsibilities outside the department, to finally return as manager of the same department a few years ago.

At one of the first meetings with the whole team I mentioned that, for me, it was an honour to work with them and especially in this new role. I also said that a

poet whom I admire greatly had dedicated a few lines as a way of celebrating my appointment. I must have showed some emotion at that moment.

Many years passed and given opportunity, facing a new responsibility that was assigned to me, this fellow wrote me an email in which he said:

"I always recall the times we used to work together in repairing equipment. I got very moved when you got your degree in Engineering and I still feel the same every time I see you advancing in your career. I want to wish you much luck in your new appointment.

I'll never forget that first talk with us when you took over the management of the department and were saying, a told us a story about a celebration with your mates in a pub, where there was this person - I do not remember who, whether it was a singer or a writer - who wrote something for you, a message which I do remember. Do you? It went something like this:

"Never lose your way of being or thinking"

The poet in question is the Uruguayan balladeer, Eduardo Darnauchans, and the concept he wrote at the end of the short text he gave me was:

"Never lose your heart."

But the essence was the same, and remained etched in both my heart and that of my co-worker.

I was moved by the content of this note. And apart from the comments about respect he showed and the joy he felt for my promotions within the company, I was amazed that he remembered the story of the writer and even more, the most important part of the content of the poem which he had dedicated me.

It is that, we, the leaders will be the way we are only up to the degree of acceptance that we have on the team. The position within the organization has little to do with the ability to lead effectively.

Sometimes we tend to simplify our relationship with the team we lead by saying "my computer" as if it were ours. In fact the relationship is exactly the opposite: the leader belongs to his / her followers, not vice versa. The leader is an instrument that human groups use to achieve their goals. It is important that we should understand and become fully aware of this.

Returning to the dialogue between Moses and God, it is clear that Moses had already partly understood God's plan, and therefore demanded more. He wanted to know his plans and goals. Where was he going and how was he going to achieve it.

The topic about individuals who demand and need different kinds of management according to their respective maturity and self-sufficiency, is a well known one in management techniques.

There are individuals who have to tell them what to do, how, when, and where. It is a typical example of the initial call from God to Moses, where all steps were strictly directed by God.

At the opposite end of the self-sufficiency scale, we have individuals who are simply told what to do. They know the "why" very well and will be able to deduce the "how", the "where" and the "when", for themselves.

In between these two ends on the scale there is a range of possibilities. Moses clearly misses this last degree of self-sufficiency, but he will need to evolve and will need more answers to his questions. He doesn't accept just being an executor of God's directives. Moses now gets involved, expresses opinions, and cares. Moses wants to achieve the goal. Moses endorses the vision of God. Moses begins to take his first steps, very sheepishly, as a leader.

God and Moses take care now of the processes with which they carry out their vision. Somehow they are saying us that the end do not justifies the means, and that a worthy end requires also worthy ways. This is true in any field.

We see then that the commencement is a critical step in the creative process, but it requires some care to be effective. It should begin with an accurate vision of what we want to build, and should have a leader who is responsible for driving the processes.

The actions taken must be reflected in those processes if we want them to be effectively active and not simple reactions that generate passive attitudes that do not help us get closer to the future we desire.

Chapter 9

APPRAISAL AND PERFORMANCE

“Don't despair, not even over the fact that you don't despair. This means that you live.”
Frank Kafka

Probably you will agree with me that leadership includes a wide range of qualities and subtleties that do ultimately fall into the category of what we normally call an art. A good deal of patience is required to master art. Patience to wait for the accomplishments of our efforts, patience to learn to recognize the time to harvest and sow. Patience to overcome the inertia of organizations and human groups whose desires and security needs become really burdensome when it comes to seriously thinking about changes.

So the exercise of leadership is no different from other forms of arts to which we are accustomed. And the first thing we realize is that the arts are not usually easy to learn. To learn any form of art we have to first learn the theory and then put it into practice.

What is desirable, or rather what is indispensable to master the art is that, at some point, both theoretical and practical knowledge need to unite to become a part of intuition. It is then when this combined knowledge is acquired and begins to spontaneously and naturally flow in our attitudes and behaviour.

In this sense the practicing of leadership, like any other art, requires great discipline. I can't become a leader only if I put it into practice when I'm in a good mood or when I close a big deal. Leadership must be practiced at all times in a disciplined manner.

This discipline must be seen when applying the art with concentration and patience so as to be able to recognize errors and / or failures, be able to evaluate situations, and be able to start over again whenever necessary.

If we recall parts from previous chapters we will surely agree that one of the most outstanding aspects that God managed to develop in his creation was patience, perseverance and tenacity in maintaining a steady and defined course despite all the difficulties.

As an example we can mention the first reactions God experienced from the unexpected results of his creation. While contemplating and changing his mind, given the work he had created, God immediately decides to destroy it. This is the famous event we all know about: the flood.

But, at that time, God was also taking his first steps as a leader and creator, so if I may, let us excuse these outbursts of wrath and see how his message of love and understanding have evolved over time. When we have our own outbursts of rage and anger, remember that we were made in the image of this same God.

Here are some quotes to set out the ideas.

"The LORD saw that the human beings on the earth were very wicked and that everything they thought about was evil.⁶ He was sorry he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.⁷ so the LORD said, "I will destroy all human beings that I made on the earth. And I will destroy every animal and everything that crawls on the earth and the birds of the air, because I am sorry I have made them."

Firstly it is important to highlight the high emotional state of this manifestation of God. He painfully makes the decision. Remember that when we surrender to the creative process, the force that moves us is love. And we all well know that the wounds of love can only heal with pain.

In this episode God seems to opt for the easy way out: destroy his creation and start over again. He only noticed the results and didn't concern himself about the processes to be used.

In order to build, God decided to destroy outright. I think at this point we are all able to predict that this approach will simply lead God to fail.

Bringing this episode closer to examples in our daily lives and especially in our organizations, I want to remind you that the creative phenomenon is always an iterative phenomenon. Creation isn't always at first as we planned. There is a stage for evaluation and new action in order to start building our vision, step by step. It is a path of gradual approximation to the vision we have defined for our future.

We shouldn't expect the road leading to our desires to be an easy one to go along.

Let's look at the example of God himself, who thus wanted to give us a profound lesson. From the pages of the Bible and his own example as a witness, God encourages us and tells us: Don't give up!

Continuing further with the narrative, the Bible tells us that despite the anger that God had for his creation, however, there was a man who he liked. It was Noah.

The following story is well known to all of you. God addresses this good man and gives him very specific and precise instructions to build a boat on which he, his family, and a couple of each animal species God had created, to take refuge. This ark would help them survive the great flood that God intended occur in to destroy his creation and thereby wash the evil from the face of the earth. Noah and his wife would be a new beginning for creation. A new attempt by God to capture the creation he desired in flesh and bone.

The narrative itself of this event reveals conflicting feelings between anger and love that God was experiencing towards his creation. God somehow recognizes his weakness and is a victim of his own internal struggles, the frustration he felt when things didn't turn out as expected. God also understands that this may not be the road to go along. He understands that the road to creation has a beginning, but probably doesn't have an end.

In this way God makes a covenant with Noah and promises never again to destroy his creation. As a way to remember this, God created the rainbow to forever remind himself of the covenant made with Noah and thus oblige himself

to stop the rains when they occur. A rain of colours to stop the rain of destruction.

Here we see how God, now constructively focuses on the situation he is in and, as a good creator, he becomes committed to his creation, and strives with infinite patience and love towards that which he had dreamed of since the beginning. He realized that the destruction is not sufficient to achieve an end, and decided to accept the situation his creation was in and lead it from there to the future he had desired for it since the beginning.

You can imagine what follows; as we said, man was failing and such failures are not resolved with violence. And that is what God was slowly beginning to discover.

Soon the man began falling back into his old ways and poor God understood that the destruction had not given him the expected result.

This lesson should also be learnt by leaders of organizations. There probably are organizations in which the proposition is valid, to overturn everything, destroy everything and start over again. But it is also true that most of them have parts to rescue and which can help us find a shortcut on our way.

God gave up and looked for a new alternative to lead his work toward the desired end.

God decides that he will personally lead his people. He takes pity on his creation. Because he loved it even before it was formed, before it became what he dreamt. He then decides to approach the man again and continue his creation by guiding, advising, supporting man at each step toward maturity. In the world of management we call this ' coaching '.

God contemplates his creation, evaluates what he has done so far, knows that there is still much to be done and so gets down to work again.

At this new stage, God chooses an old farmer as his starting point from where to start over again: Abraham.

God promises Abraham that he will look after his family and make it into a very large one, and from it he will continue shaping and building the creation. Thus God promises Abraham and his wife Sarah a son, the starting point of a new way in which God decides to continue with his creation.

But as we said before, God was taking his first steps as a leader and besides his good intention to lead and mould his creation, he still had some violent outbursts that inclined him to destroy anything that wasn't what he wanted. God shows an almost human behaviour.

I think we should try to understand God's attitude. Or should we say, this never happens to us when things don't go as planned and bring out the worst attitude in us?

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: the God who listens.

The word destruction is here once again. How hard it is for us to take the road to realizations, directing our actions to create and not destroy!!

And although God had made a covenant with Noah not to destroy his creation, the temptation to do it again had not disappeared.

The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is interesting, but even more interesting is the story of the previous dialogue between God and Abraham, where God is already showing an essential quality for a new leader: know how to listen. And listening is part of how to lead a group, from the fundamental processes, from the maternal love that must always prevail in an organization.

The narrative starts with the confession God makes to Abraham over his willingness to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because evil ruled in both. A confession which God initially considered not doing and which would conceal his plans from Abraham. However God decides to trust him, engage in dialogue, and why not, seek his advice as a follower whom he intended to become the centrepiece of the new civilization.

At this Abraham is moved and isn't afraid to question the will of God:

"Then Abraham approached him and asked, "Do you plan to destroy the good people along with the evil ones? What if there are fifty good people in that city? Will you still destroy it? Surely you will save the city for the fifty good people living there. Surely you will not destroy the good people along with the evil ones; then they would be treated the same. You are the judge of all the earth. Won't you do what is right?" The LORD said, "If I find fifty good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city because of them." Then Abraham said, "Though I am only dust and ashes, I have been brave to speak to the Lord. What if there are only forty-five good people in the city? Will you destroy the whole city for the lack of five good people?" The LORD said, "If I find forty-five there, I will not destroy the city." Again Abraham said to him, "If you find only forty good people there, will you destroy the city?" The LORD said, "If I find forty, I will not destroy it." Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me ask you this. If you find only thirty good people in the city, will you destroy it?" He said, "If I find thirty good people there, I will not destroy the city." Then Abraham said, "I have been brave to speak to the Lord. But what if there are twenty good people in the city?" He answered, "If I find twenty there, I will not destroy the city." Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. What if you find ten there?" He said, "If I find ten there, I will not destroy it."

Genesis 18: 23-32

Personally I find the story very enriching and it was why I decided to transcribe it despite its length. Both its content and the pace of the literary dialogue between a follower and a leader. Abraham feels he has the right to insist that God behaves righteously. He demands that he behaves according to his promises.

I think the story speaks for itself. God implicitly accepts his mistakes, perhaps reflects and recognizes that he rushed the destruction with the flood. God begins a new style and tries to accompany his creation during the process of change. So, he gave his creation the chance to take part, to participate, he listens to his creation and gives it time before taking any decision. To listen is a key quality in a leader.

Let's stay a moment on this term since there is much more to comment on learning how to listen.

In a world which remains dominated by ideologies, ethnic, religious, racial and economic divisions we find few examples of real dialogue. Each party in this sort of ideological warfare believes it owns the truth and thinks that it has the right to impose its truth for the sake of mankind. We all have heard a lot about this kind of argument with which war and violence is justified as a means to superior ends.

When I was a teenager I had a very simplistic way of look at reality. Things for me were just black or white. There was no middle ground, no shades of gray, and any explanation to justify an intermediate position for me was just an excuse to avoid commitment.

But as I grew up, I was very influenced by my father who wisely knew to walk by my side in this process, and not repress me, and I began to see the shades of gray. I began to understand the contexts, the reasons why, the dreams and frustrations of people.

And if there is anything I learnt in this regard, it is that the truth in the world we live has no owner and it is divided and dispersed among different cultures. The truth is not readily apparent.

Gandhi put it in a brilliantly, in context of religious struggles, by saying: "...religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden..."

God spread his kindness and wisdom over all men and women on earth, on every culture, over every race, among other organizations, in all societies.

Listening is simply knowing how to find the piece of truth that the other has. It is to enrich oneself with the gift the other possesses. This should fill us with anxiety and desire to engage in dialogue with those who think radically different from us. Who knows how much we could learn from them.

And none other than the leader himself must go through this process. God did it with his own imperfect creations. Who do we think we are to reject the opportunity that listening and learning means?

Let me introduce here a quote from Indian philosopher J. Krishnamurti about listening:

"How do you listen? Do you listen through your projection, through your ambitions, desires, fears, anxieties, through hearing only what you want to hear, only what will be satisfactory, what will gratify, what will give comfort, what will for the moment alleviate your suffering? If you listen through the screen of your desires, then you obviously listen to your own voice."

To start all over again

The biblical narrative is a story of constant starts after successive failures. This is also the life of a leader in any organization.

And in God, as supreme teacher, we find a very rich case of persistence and renewed hopes motivated by only one reason: love, the desire and passion to achieve the desired results.

A few years ago, taking part in a pre-selection process to join IBM, I found myself in the last interview with the then general manager.

Only two candidates had reached that stage. Unfortunately for me, the other "opponent" was one of the most outstanding students of my generation at the School of Engineering at the University. Far superior to me since he had never failed an exam. I was sure I wouldn't get the job. My hopes of getting married that year, which was the great goal I had set myself, were being dashed. It had been a long year looking for a better job that would allowed me to financially support my family. I had put all my energy into this job opportunity. It was a huge gamble. It was already November and that year was fast slipping out of my hands.

I was finally selected for the post of technical service representative at IBM, and almost at the end of the year, on 30th December, I found myself receiving the 6th sacrament. I had achieved the goal I had set myself.

A few months later and gaining the confidence of one of the managers that took part in my selection process; I took courage and asked him why had they selected me for the job instead of the other person who had an excellent résumé?

This manager, for whom I keep fond memories for his service attitude, looked at me like saying, 'You're still very young and you don't understand anything'. After a short silence, he calmly said: "We choose you Alvaro because you know how to get yourself up after falling down and keep on going. We know how you react to failures and disappointments, you failed exams, you got up, faced them again and finally got what you had set out to do".

It was a wise life lesson that taught me a lot which marked me thereafter, both in work and personally. I have encountered difficulties many more times in my life, but I always remember this lesson. You have to be able to start again. What will happen to our lives depends largely on ourselves, and the first step we must take is to decide to do it.

The work of God is not immune to this type of behaviour. After being released from Egypt, The Hebrews continued their usual back-and-forth between lack of confidence and the constant threats of wars, invasions and deportations.

Ezekiel tells us about this situation of failures and new beginnings in a really beautiful way. It happened around the year 600 BC.

We are in the boom period of the Babylonian empire. After having destroyed the kingdom of Assyria, rushing under the orders of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon even before the fall of the city.

Those were desperate times, when it became very difficult to get a glimpse of hope. Jerusalem besieged and destroyed and the temple burned. Zedekiah, king of Judah, will be captured while escaping through the fields of Jericho and his children will be slaughtered. This image will forever remain etched in his memory being the last thing his eyes will see before they are gouged out. This leads to the expulsion of the people of Judah and ends the reign of the dynasty of David.

Again, it's the road to exile for the Jewish people. Again they find themselves as slaves in a strange land, as they were in Egypt. It's all over. Everything built was destroyed. All that had been done was undone. All the sacrifices made by these people to obtain their freedom, their land and their independence would seem to have been in vain.

The people cry bitterly and all hope is lost.

However, despite the reality that is lived, Ezekiel understood that rather than mourn for the past, it was necessary to dream and invent the future.

Ezekiel manages to look beyond the situation in which he was; he knows how to contemplate the possibilities and knows that things can be different.

How could a man of flesh and blood have the ability to dream of a future where there is only destruction before his eyes? The answer is simple: Ezekiel had the qualities of a leader, and leaders are best recognized at moments like that.

God will save his people again and commence again, in the right direction to achieve his vision. God wants to continue his work. Let's see how Ezekiel graphically expresses this message:

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the

LORD.' " 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' " So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'

Ezekiel 37:1-14

God can save his people. God can continue his deed. But what is most important is that he really wants to do it. And he will.

I doubt my words can add anything to this narrative. However frustrating we may regard our situation, however difficult we may see the road ahead, it is always possible to get up and try again. It isn't easy, but the road starts with us, with a decision: want to do it.

Even before Ezekiel had any hopeful sign that could let him envision a return to his land, even in exile, even surrounded by distrustful people, Ezekiel immediately starts drawing up the plans for the construction of a new temple. He knew it was important to maintain a strong vision of the future to be built. And he was loyal to such a vision.

In moments of despair, only a true leader can understand and dream of a future.

Ezekiel could. And so you can.

Chapter 10

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Life is but a continuous succession of opportunities"

Gabriel García Márquez

About ten years ago I was participating in a training session for all employees of the company who had direct contact with our customers. The theme of it was very varied, but I remember topics such as negotiation, ways of perceiving reality, and so on. Obviously, given the issues involved, there was a high level of participation, where the input and opinions of all those who participated formed part of the course content itself.

At the end, the moderator suggested some bibliography, among which he mentioned the classic books on negotiations, neurolinguistics, leadership, and was gradually expanding the range and variety to include books on philosophy and Zen Buddhism. Seeing the wide variety and range of exchanges that ensued because of this bibliography, and the emotions it caused us, the moderator finally added: " Well, any good book of poetry will do."

I wasn't able to understand what he meant by that, then. To me poetry had nothing to do with my working life, let alone the role of a leader. But it's something that has remained in my memory since. And today, when I decided to try to write a book of poetry, and I ended up writing this management treatise, I think I began to understand this teacher.

Now the topic is becoming clearer. Remember, in order to create you must be encouraged with the power of love and in order to see and have a vision, you have to follow your heart.

So, it is clear that any activity that promotes and develops these qualities will strengthen us as leaders. The leader must reach the minds of the members of his / her team through their hearts. Everything that nurtures the heart and the capacity of someone to love will end up improving their qualities as a leader in any kind of organization.

It wouldn't have been predictable at all that the summary, aimed at showing the qualities and characteristics of a leader, was going to conclude that, in order to be a good leader, it is imperative to have the capacity to love. Indeed: it is with love that we set our vision of the future to be built, it is love that compels us to achieve it and it is through love that we shall commence our attempt to achieve it with our team.

However it's not something that we have been taught to do at university.

In this respect I remember the famous case of the writer, Leo Buscaglia, who works as a university lecturer and teaches a course on "love." How would each of us react if love was a subject in post graduate degree course in management? And why isn't it taught at school?

Because love is the most powerful force we humans have. Look how much power it has that it leads us to become gods and create things that didn't exist before, as Hess would say.

And it is thanks to the quality of love that we men have become the protagonists in history and masters of our own destiny. Impressive.

I don't remember where I once read a cute definition of love that just described it as "to lead one towards what the other one is"

If we assume then that the key to change is to dare to be yourself, as we saw in the "paradoxical theory of change", and that love is simply the way to get closer to who we really are, we can infer that it is the very leader, who must seek change in his organization, and who must encourage the development of the qualities of each member, and this he should do with love.

I invite you to use this power and to transform your organizations into true instruments with which to channel that creative energy to finally realize the masterpiece which God began at the beginning of time and make our world a wonderful place to live.

In this way, you will see improvements in your business results, in the level and quality of life of all staff members, and above all, experience the pleasure of accomplishment, leaving behind an indelible mark in this world, an unmistakable sign of a true leader.

Now, it's your turn.

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Chapter 5

Principle of Action and Reaction

The Peter Principle

Chapter 6

The Present Situation

Some fundamentals of psychology

The Paradoxical Theory of Change

Joseph, son of Jacob

Moses: the birth of a leader

The call of Moses

Chapter 7

To Create or To Destroy

Jeremiah the prophet who never smiled

Chapter 8

Commencing

Activity versus passivity

Processes or results

The Exodus of the Jewish people

Chapter 9

Appraisal and performance

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: the God who listens.

To start all over again

Chapter 10

Final considerations