

Multi-Dimensional Leadership Transformation

Executive Transformation is the key to successful transformation.
 Lego™ Serious-Play™ is more effective than traditional leadership coaching methods



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The current global changes in society and the economy are very serious. Much more profound than those of the industrial revolution. Comparable radical changes of this kind occurred when Gutenberg invented the printing press. This radically changed society and the economy. At present, we are not dealing with just "one" innovation, but with very many interconnected changes at different levels. Even if the "digital" transformation is in the foreground. We are also dealing with other levels of transformation: Mental, emotional, behavioural, consciousness, collective, digital, artificial etc. Old recipes and patterns for "successful leadership" can no longer keep up with this multi-dimensional transformation. The old leadership development and change management programs are too "superficial" to change deeper patterns of thinking, feeling, and doing. New methods and tools are needed to change leaders' "beliefs" that are deeply anchored in their subconscious. Lego™ Serious Play™ offers proven solutions for these multi-dimensional challenges to overcome the current problems in leadership development.

Multiple paradigm shifts in leadership

What is the difference between leadership of the past and in the future?

The leadership development programmes of the past decades were designed to prepare leaders in their role in fixed structures with clear tasks. The employees to be led were available at their physical workplaces and at fixed regulated times. The focus of leadership was very much on the inner workings of the organisation. Apart from some separate "strategy development programmes" where external partners such as customers, suppliers etc. were engaged. Nothing more. The network economy has turned this on its head. The digital transformation has already created completely new, networked structures. Internally, as well as externally. Inside, the world of work has shifted away from a fixed workplace to a mobile workspace. Or even largely to the home office. Externally, completely new platforms have been developed, creating new purchasing, supply chain management and communication systems.

At the same time, the speed of change has increased dramatically due to digital systems and artificial intelligence. And with it, the pressure on leaders to adapt their organisations. The complexity and the dynamics of change in the ecosystem are now setting the pace for leadership work. The corporate strategy is not developed internally and implemented externally, but the change in the ecosystem forces the organisation to adapt to new situations. Agile and in real time.

„Transformation today takes place on several levels simultaneously“.

In the past, change management programmes focused on one dimension. E.g. mind-set change, or digital transformation. Today, all dimensions (structural, digital, mental, emotional, behavioural, etc.) need to be worked on (from one-dimensionality to multi-dimensionality). And all this not in a linear processing, but in a networked, complex

world (From linearity to complexity). The time available for this no longer moves in annual planning cycles, but in rapid waves of adaptation, virtually in real time (From planning phases to real-time transformation).

Past	Future
Linearity	Complexity
Digital Transformation (one dimension)	Multi-Dimensional Transformation (structural, digital, mental, emotional etc.)
Repetable patterns to be successful	Always new creative solutions to solve new problems
Change Management phases, longer periods	Real Time Strategic Transformation
Partial solutions	Wholistic solutions

A multiple paradigm shift is required to meet the future challenges for a new world order

Old recipes for success in management (annual planning and budget cycles, controlling and steering systems, fixed workplace, fixed working relationship, old incentive programmes, unchanging sales channels, etc.) have been radically undermined.

The old patterns of thinking and behaviour in the heads of managers have remained. Even more. Whereas in the past "patterns of success" were preserved over longer periods of time and had to be adjusted only slightly, now new, unprecedented problems are emerging all the time. Suddenly. There is no solution to a problem that has already existed once. The complexity, inside and outside, requires the analysis of a problem and requires finding a new method for solving it. This is a new approach: Constant reinvention does not require optimisation of existing processes, but rather the "invention" of new solutions over and over again. This has to do with creativity.

„The current challenge is not only to support leaders in their transformation, but to transform the worn-out leadership development programmes themselves“.

Even experienced top managers who have been spoiled by success for decades are facing these changes like rabbits in front of a snake. What is to be done now?

The metaphor is valuable in several ways. Firstly, because it shows the depth of the radical changes that are now imminent in leadership. And secondly, because it reveals the shock effect, the "state of fear". Fear is an emotion. Just like the feeling of happiness of a winning team that has achieved its ambitious sales goals.

Due to the economic pressure that has arisen, decisions are being made by managers under stress, but with old "leadership patterns". This has fatal consequences. The measures do not lead to success. The failure spiral begins, associated with a loss of confidence in the management team. Demotivation spreads. The energy that is still there in teams accustomed to success to move mountains has disappeared.

The unconscious is the key to successful transformation for executives (C-Level)

For several years now, brain research has been offering precise explanatory models of how thoughts, feelings and convictions interact. Only if we succeed in penetrating the deep "unconscious" of the leaders, we will be able to make these deep-seated convictions visible. Seeing is the wrong word here, because leaders cannot "look" into the unconsciousness. And with the predominant intellectualizing way of doing business, consciously feeling emotions has been neglected. Especially connected with a high level of awareness.

Yet brain research now clearly confirms that the release of creative potential, which is necessary for finding new solutions, only succeeds when positive emotions are predominant. Fear (...like the rabbit in front of the snake) has exactly the opposite effect.



Lego™ Serious Play™ is more powerful and effective than leadership coaching methods because people quickly become aware that they are facing a wall and that they themselves have it in their power to solve the problem by their own efforts. Metaphors help to reflect unconscious beliefs, thinking and feeling.

It is precisely these barriers, the so-called "board in front of the head" that can be made visible with the Lego™ Serious Play™ method. In several sequences, the model can then be rebuilt, which also results in a comprehensible change in the mental and emotional sphere. Metaphors, used in the Lego Serious Play method help to reflect unconscious beliefs, thinking and feeling.

„The key to successfully mastering the challenges ahead lies in the subconscious, in the “mental and emotional body” of the managers. The methods used so far in Mind-Set Change are no longer sufficient!”

So how can the relationships between thoughts and feelings be made comprehensible for the transformation of old leadership patterns? - Now Lego™ Serious Play™ comes into play. One thing is clear: It is no longer just about supporting leaders and organisations in their transformation process, but about fundamentally transforming and renewing the worn-out leadership development programmes themselves.

Through the method of Lego™ Serious Play™, unconscious knowledge can be harnessed. Emotions can be made tangible, visible through models and reflective. Yes, they can even be modelled by the leaders themselves.

In leadership workshops with Lego™ Serious Play™, experiments were conducted to penetrate the connections between thoughts, feelings, experiences and convictions more deeply. It has been shown that leaders find it much easier to understand their emotions with their own Metaphors through their self-built model. Which emotions are at the forefront? - What are these emotions connected to? - How do the emotions, e.g. fear, anger, etc., affect decision-making processes?

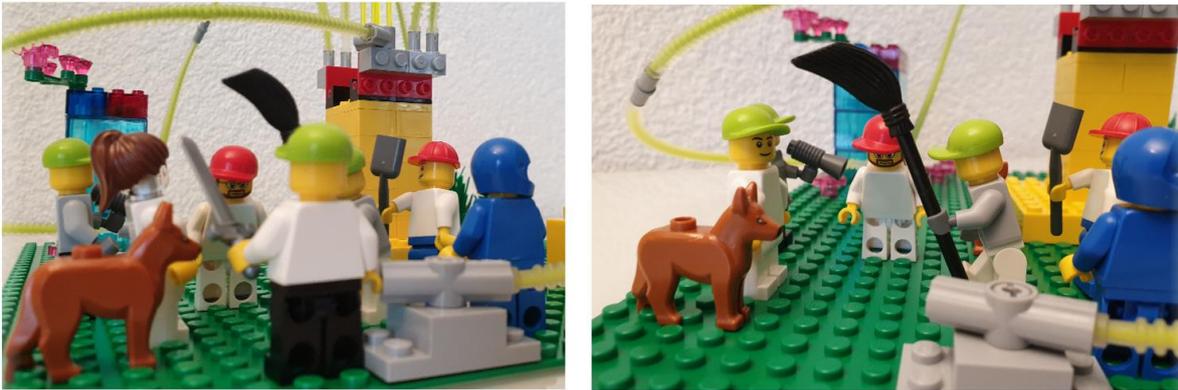
Already in the skills training phase of the Lego™ Serious Play™ workshop, models come to light right at the beginning that, in reflection, make deep psychodynamic insights about the connection between thoughts and emotions in leaders tangible. This is the first step in the later processing of the models.



Examples of leadership models that make connections of thoughts and emotions "tangible".

However, the model is not only very important for reflection, but also for change. When a leader models the model himself, feelings arise. The feelings that arise, for example, fear now becomes joy, can be understood through feeling it. And above all, they have a deep, tangible effect. This "comprehensible" and "at the same time" tangible effect is stronger than a top-heavy coaching session with a therapist or a leadership coach.

The example of the sequential processing of the LSP model ("emotional body") shows in which steps the model was changed and how the emotional situation of the leader itself changed. Visibly, tangibly, instantly. In real time.



Through the sequential processing of the models of the mental and emotional body, tangible and comprehensible (!) changes occur.

And the special thing. The leader himself reflects and carries out the changes. By "actively moving and changing" the model, a change in the mental and emotional body is actually brought about energetically. This change is also perceptible to the participants, who often comment: "Yes, now it's a load off my mind".

Leadership Transformation with Lego™ Serious Play™

Based on these findings, new leadership transformation programmes have been built. The starting point is always the individual. Because even in large transformation programmes (structural, digital, mental, emotional, organisational, etc.) the individual is always in the foreground. Even large organisations are led by individuals, executives. Before executives transform their organisation, it is necessary to work with the executives directly as individuals. In doing so, it is necessary to reveal which leadership patterns of the past are to be discarded and which new leadership patterns are to take their place. In the LSP method, the approaches for guiding principles can be used as starting line for this purpose.

Three levels are required for leadership transformation programmes.

- The manager as an individual (Executive, C-Level, Individuals)
- The team (Team, department, Projects, networks - inside, outside)
- The system, the organisation (organisation design, transition)

Executive Transformation

Systems cannot be changed without individuals. The individuals are the key. Only if there are enough executive leaders as individuals involved in decisive functions and roles the transformation process can be steered and changes in the organisation implemented. Executives play a special role in this. If this first C-level management level is not prepared, adjustments cannot be made on the team-level and in organisations.



The horizontal dimensions of transformation

Leadership programmes must therefore primarily start at the individual level. The traditional designations in the past were the Self-Leadership programmes. Many contents, e.g. social competences, professional competences etc. still have their significance. However, they are not sufficient to meet the challenges of the future. What is needed is a change in deep-seated convictions (see example Lego™ Serious Play™ Emotional body model). Furthermore, it is an expansion of consciousness to be able to keep up with the complexity and speed. Reflection on one's own identity, goals and performance, physically, energetically, mentally and emotionally are all part of this. The helpful tools of Lego™ Serious Play™ here are the identity model the personal life goal model (visioning).

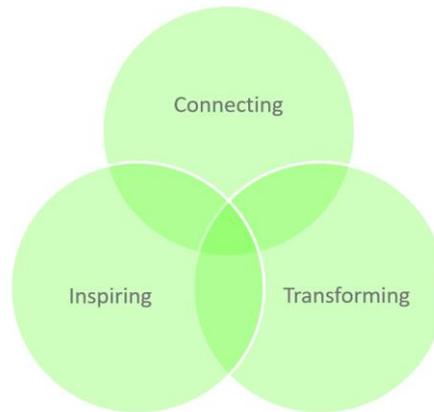
"The key to success in meeting future challenges therefore lies in supporting individuals, especially C-level executives."

In terms of content, the focus is on three areas:

- Connecting
- Transforming (changing beliefs)
- Inspiring (motivating, energising, co-creating)

In the area of connecting, the central point is perception. The better the perception, the greater the ability to grasp complex situations quickly and make the right decisions.

But it is also about self-awareness and recognising one's own beliefs and behaviour patterns.



The vertical levels of transformation

The transformation focuses on "letting go" of the old patterns and replacing them with new ones that correspond to the multi-dimensional transformation processes on the outside. This is the most difficult but absolutely most important area in the whole leadership transformation. At all levels.

Inspiration concerns the perspective of inspiring oneself as a leader, as well as employees, partners, customers and suppliers. Nothing will ever be the same again. Constantly looking for creative solutions to ever-changing problems becomes the new normal in everyday leadership in a new world order. Lego™ Serious Play™ is also the ideal tool for short "haptic brainstorming sessions". Furthermore, LSP vision models and landscapes can be created for different topics.

This is the absolutely most important key for the entire transformation in leadership. If it is not possible to erase and transform the old "programmes" (thoughts, feelings, convictions, work patterns, communication patterns, etc.), especially in the case of executives, it will not be possible at all to lead the way to a new, world order.

Team Transformation

With executives at the top who have already completed a transformation phase, you can start the process at team level. Here, LSP formats that have been tried and tested over many years can be used. For example, "Real Time Strategic Change for Teams". Here, too, the time aspect is very relevant. There is no time for long old fashioned change management programs or development processes. Things have to be done quickly, and yet profound changes have to be made.



*Leadership-Teambuilding and -Transformation,
communicating through metaphors with Lego™ Serious Play™*

In the Lego™ Serious Play™ workshops, structures in the team become immediately visible. Who is in the core team? - Who lends a hand? - Who is in the second row? - Is everyone pulling in the same direction? – How does it feel to be in the team? How does it feel to be part of the leadership success team? – It's all about communication through metaphors during a LSP-Session.

The differences reveal how a team should change in order to implement projects and achieve goals together.

Organisational/System Transformation

The existing LSP formats, e.g. "Real Time Strategic Change for your Enterprise", are also ideally suited for the transformation of the entire organisation or system.

However, experience in accompanying strategic processes has shown that it makes sense to first work with the executive team using Lego™ Serious Play™ workshops before integrating other teams and organisational levels into the process. The LSP method ensures that the development process takes place and everybody is engaged. "Everyone gets it's voice". But again, speed is critical. The entire executive level should have a clear visualisation of how the transformation of the organisation should be designed and in which direction the transformation should go. The "how" and the details can be shaped in transformation designs.

	Executives/ Individuals	Teams	Organisation/ Systems
Connecting	LSP- Identity-Model	LSP- Identity-Model, Shared models	LSP- Identity, Shared models
Transforming	LSP-Leadership- Patterns Modelling	LSP- Real Time Strategic change for Teams	LSP- Real Time Strategic change for Enterprise
Inspiring	LSP- Visioning	LSP- Co-creating patterns and principles for teams	LPS- Unlock creative potential and knowledge

*Lego Serious Play can be used in different areas of
Multi-dimensional Leadership Transformation.*

Lego™ Serious Play™ formats can be used at all levels. This applies to the horizontal level (executives/individuals, teams, organisation/overall system) as well as the vertical level (connecting, transforming, inspiring).

With this method it is possible to achieve a phenomenal in-depth-effect within a short time, which cannot be achieved with other methods. Traditional systemic and psychodynamic approaches reach their limits here. Either methodologically due to the lack of depth effect for the emotional body (this means that the level of effect remains stuck in the purely cognitive realm) or due to the therapeutic development paths (change loops) that take too much time.

For the most important key to success, "executive transformation", formats have already been worked out in the individual area.

On the individual level, online formats have also already been worked out. However, the prerequisite is that each participant has the LSP starter kit available.

Executive Summary

The diagnosis of current leadership programmes (leadership development programmes) has shown that traditional programmes are no longer suitable for coping with the challenges ahead. New programmes must be able to change profound, often unconscious "leadership patterns" quickly and permanently. These are transformation processes that take place simultaneously on several levels. The multi-dimensional transformation (mental, emotional, digital, energetic, structural/systemic). Lego™ Serious Play™ is one of the few methods that are suitable for this. The key to a successful multi-dimensional transformation is the executive level (C-level leadership). This is successfully possible with the Lego™ Serious Play™ method, especially the in-depth psychological work and modelling of the "mental and emotional" level by communication through metaphors.

The further development steps are the networking of the individual leadership patterns (Future Leadership Patterns) with the collective field of the organisation. The formats suitable for this are the CSP landscapes. Corresponding detailed workshop designs still need to be developed and tested.

Literature

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The Unconscious at work, A Tavistock Approach to Making Sense of Organizational Life, Anton Obholzer, Vega Zagier Roberts

Links

<https://seriousplay.training/>

<https://www.rasmussenconsulting.dk/>

www.seriousplay.community/dach/method/

www.wissensberater.com

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Manfred's heartfelt concern is the health of people in life and mindfulness in the family and at work. After all, life and working life should be fun and bring joy. And it does...

Through his own professional experience as a manager in international corporations and networks and his diverse further training as a Systemic Consultant, Psychodynamic Consultant, Lego™ Serious Play™ Facilitator, Certified Business Consultant for The New World of Work, as a yoga teacher, business yoga instructor, Warm Data Lab Facilitator and others, he unites like no other the most diverse fields of knowledge and methods for accompanying social and digital transformation processes. For individuals as well as in complex systems.