

# Leadership 2.7

*Marc Vanschoenwinkel, Time To Grow*

Good leadership knows how to motivate people to attain optimal performance. This seemed to be the main paradigm for 20th century. In the 21st century, however, good leadership should, in my vision, be able to make people happy. This calls for a whole new approach to motivation. I call it motivation 3.0: a term derived from the book *Drive* by Daniel H. Pink. Motivation 3.0 is all about re-fuelling the intrinsic motivation in people.

Since I assume there are still several steps we need to take before implementing motivation 3.0, I will try to outline an intermediate step with this article: a leadership model called leadership 2.7. My work is based on recent opinions in human motivation and incentives, in combination with more than twenty years of experience in assessing and coaching managers, and assisting organisations in leadership development and change processes.

This article is more a piece of opinion than a purely scientific publication. In addition to referrals to experiments and scientific publications, it also contains many assumptions from the above mentioned experience. My goal is to further develop this text, sharply lining up the underlying assumptions, and to determine where insufficient scientific research exists. I would also like to encourage all readers to give feedback and share their own opinions and experiences in this area. To that end, please contact me at [mvs@timetogrow.eu](mailto:mvs@timetogrow.eu).

“Rewarding

people

often leads

to reduced

motivation

## MOTIVATION 2.0 AND 2.1

The predecessors of motivation 3.0 were motivation 2.0 and 2.1. The core of motivation 2.0 states that you can best motivate your employees through extrinsic motivators, such as rewards, punishment, etc. Influenced by psychological science, that point of view was further extended in motivation 2.1, namely with the idea that attention is essential to man in order to motivate him – but the basic assumption remains that motivation is extrinsic. Motivation 2.0 seems to work well with employees performing strictly routine tasks.

However, surprising scientific experiments evidenced that people regularly rewarded for their work often feel less motivated. For example, children who enjoy drawing and were explicitly rewarded for it from a specific moment, started doing considerably less afterwards. Conversely, children that were not rewarded continued with as much pleasure and enthusiasm. Similarly, artists delivering something on request and against payment appear to lose a great deal of creativity. Explicit rewards turn fun into work and, therefore, breaks down intrinsic motivation.

Re-awakening this intrinsic motivation with employees – that is what motivation 3.0 is all about. Research by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, described in his book *Flow*, indicates that this happens when work complies with three requirements:

“People  
are  
naturally  
interested  
and  
active

- **autonomy:** to a certain degree, being able to personally influence what you do and how you do it;
- **craftsmanship (mastery):** getting the hang of something and get increasingly better at it;
- **purpose and connection:** doing something that makes sense within a broader context and thereby feel connected with it.

If these requirements are met, a situation originates in which the employee does the activity for the activity by itself: because he derives pleasure and challenge from it.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LEADERSHIP?

This insight has great consequences for how we see leadership. It requires us to look at people in an entirely different way: employees no longer appear as capital or resources, but as equal partners.

People are naturally interested and active. They do things that inspire them with passion and enthusiasm. Sounds idealistic to you? I agree. There are a large number of employees (including managers!) that don't seem to strive at all for independence, craftsmanship and purpose. But let us be honest: to what event do we actually endeavour to implement autonomy, craftsmanship, and purpose? Aren't we rather focused on control and management, on rewarding and punishing employees that accept or refuse to accept our control? Isn't it only natural that we encounter less and less passion and drive? While the speed at which our world is changing specifically requires this, the fact remains that leadership based on control and management will not enable us to address the challenges being faced by modern organisations, however, leadership stimulating internal *drive* and independency will.

Another explanation for the lack of desire for autonomy, craftsmanship and purpose is perhaps somewhat more daring: the struggle between nature and culture, or emotion and reason, which I believe still continues. Research into the functioning of the brain, combined with insights from emotional intelligence, have shown that the emotional centres in our brain can work independently. This means – and specifically in both positive and negative sense – that our emotions determine our behaviour, possibly even more than our lovely rational visions and thoughts.

The emotional brain does everything to protect life, dignity and self-esteem of men. If we respect people, their positive emotions will give them a positive drive. On the

contrary, if we trample their dignity and self-esteem (whether or not on purpose!), we cause negative emotional behaviour hence people can no longer work constructively and rationally for their organisation. I am convinced that excessive control and management implicitly but constantly conveys employees our mistrust in their abilities to fulfil the mission assigned, thus the need for control. The ensuing emotions will make people act accordingly, becoming increasingly more dependent and hesitant.

Some organisations have already, and with much success, taken creative steps to more autonomy and purpose for employees. The ROWE-concept (Results Only Work Environment) of Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson, for example,

offers inspiring results. The core of this concept is an organisation where you judge people on their results and let them be: decide for themselves when they work, who they work with, and how they work. It is evident that this is not yet an option for every organisation. Less extreme, but still a challenging idea is to release a part of their time. 3M, for example, allows employees to work one day per week with whomever they want to, on whatever they want to and where they want to. The result being numerous innovative products, including the famous post-it.

*“People have the right  
to be happy  
at work*

## THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP 2.7

The essence of leadership 2.7 is another way of thinking and hence acting. This paradigm shift has already occurred in science, but has not yet fully penetrated our companies. In other words, there is a gap between what science uncovers and what our companies do.

I assume that it is possible for most organisations to change through evolution and not through revolution. While the latter may appear necessary, the first tends to be more realistic. Evolution is finding a gradual way whereby you can achieve change, adaptation, and renewed success through a different course of action (including another leadership method). Leadership 2.7 strives to be a source of inspiration for this.

The central values and opinions of leadership 2.7 are:

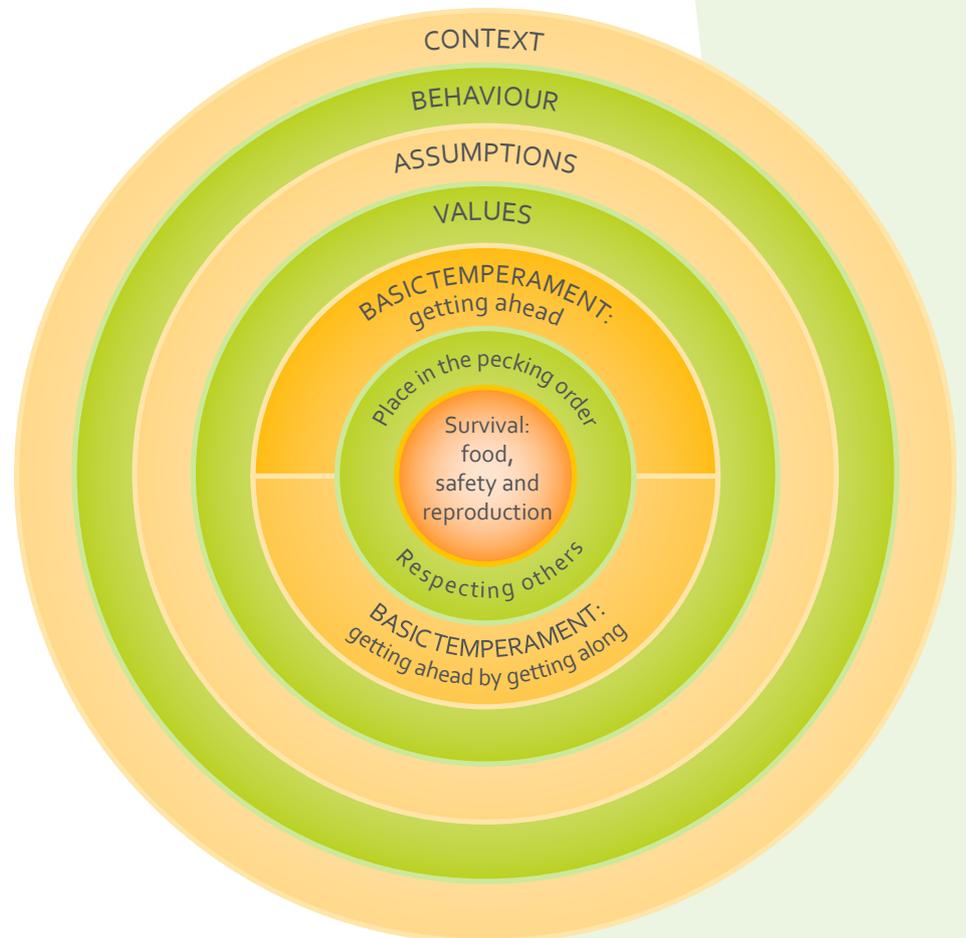
- Employees want and naturally strive for a **meaningful and autonomous way of working and living**. Autonomy stands for the ability to choose and influence; it does not mean: separate from others.
- **Employees are partners in our company**. One may expect input, participation and quality from a partner.

- **Employees have the right to be happy at work**. This goes beyond giving them a portion of attention so that they work harder. Of course, I realise that many will consider this argument somewhat naive. However, can any organisation afford to disregard this considering that people spend an important part of their lives at work?

## THE TRUE HUMAN DRIVES

There is still a gap between these considerations and reality. I believe that this is caused by fundamental human characteristics preventing the fulfilment of autonomy, craftsmanship, and purpose conditions. These characteristics are found at both the management and organisation levels.

The following diagram provides a summary of these fundamental human motives.



## ***"Following creates preparedness"***

Everything begins with the essence of life: survival and passing through life. To that end, one needs food, safety, and the opportunity to reproduce. Now, whether you enjoy this depends largely on your position in the pecking order. From an admittedly simplistic view, one could say that there are two strategies to get your place in the pecking order or group: getting ahead and getting ahead by getting along.

- ***Getting ahead*** is a strategy based on dominance and taking your place with force and assertiveness or aggressiveness.
- ***Getting ahead by getting along*** is a strategy that originated from the experience that survival chances increase for everyone if they live and work together in a group. One acquires its place by working together and giving something to the group or powerful members thereof. Because this evolution started millions of years ago, we can safely assume that cooperation and morality has since been embedded in the human brain. The background to this is described by Patrick Vermeren in his book "Anders leiden" [Leading differently].

Your basic temperament, in combination with your education and your experience, leads to emotions, values and opinions that direct and/or explain your behaviour. One of both strategies (getting ahead or getting along) will likely determine taste.

The relationship between behaviour, opinions and emotions is still a heated discussion topic in psychology. Cognitive psychology traditionally proclaims that your opinions determine how you feel and behave. New directions pretend that the opposite is true: your emotions determine your behaviour and your opinions serve to give everything meaning. This is supported by recent studies demonstrating that you often begin to act, driven by the emotional brain, before you have rationally made the decision to act. Your hand is already reaching out, even before you have rationally made the choice to slap someone. Your emotional brain makes the decision, specifically in situations in which your life or your dignity is in danger.

Either way, this interaction between emotion and reason leads to conscious behaviour, but even more often to unconscious and emotionally controlled behaviour – most of the learning takes place unconsciously. Without knowledge of this interaction, behaviour is not always easy to indicate or to understand. It also leads to numerous misunderstandings between people and between managers and employees.

“First  
follow  
then  
lead

Some examples:

***You have learned to stand up for yourself in order to disguise your uncertainty and maintain your self-respect. Result: you always choose attack as best defence.***

***You learned to keep everything under control from a certain degree of dominance. Result: you set yourself up as dominant and controlling person.***

***You learned to earn respect by not making any mistakes. Result: you see imperfections everywhere and all your attention goes toward preventing mistakes.***

***You had to fight for your place and this has taught you to object in a non aggressive way. Result: you try to take your place sub-assertively.***

***You learned to always acknowledge and help others to gain respect and appreciation in the same way. Result: you have become very accommodating.***

It is always about the struggle for your place in the pecking order and the protection of your dignity and self-esteem. This takes place visibly and under the surface in all forms of cooperation between people. I think this explains why the daily reality in our organisations is quite different from the ideal image of a group of intelligent, sensitive people striving for autonomy, craftsmanship, and purpose. The daily reality is a mixture of that pursuit and the struggle for a good place in the pecking order, dealing with our own (sub-conscious) anxiety and uncertainties, creating self-esteem and (self) respect, etc. This is why employees and managers are often defensive.

It is my firm conviction that, as we acquire additional insight and understanding of human rationale, we come increasingly closer to motivation 3.0, the model in which employees strive for autonomy, craftsmanship and purpose.

***“It is always about the struggle for your place in the pecking order”***

## SETTING BOUNDARIES AND GIVING SPACE

Does this mean that we, as commercial companies, should offer psychotherapy or retrain our leaders into psychotherapists? Not at all. We need to be aware of the impact of our reptilian and mammalian brain. And even before this, we need to abolish the concept of resistance.

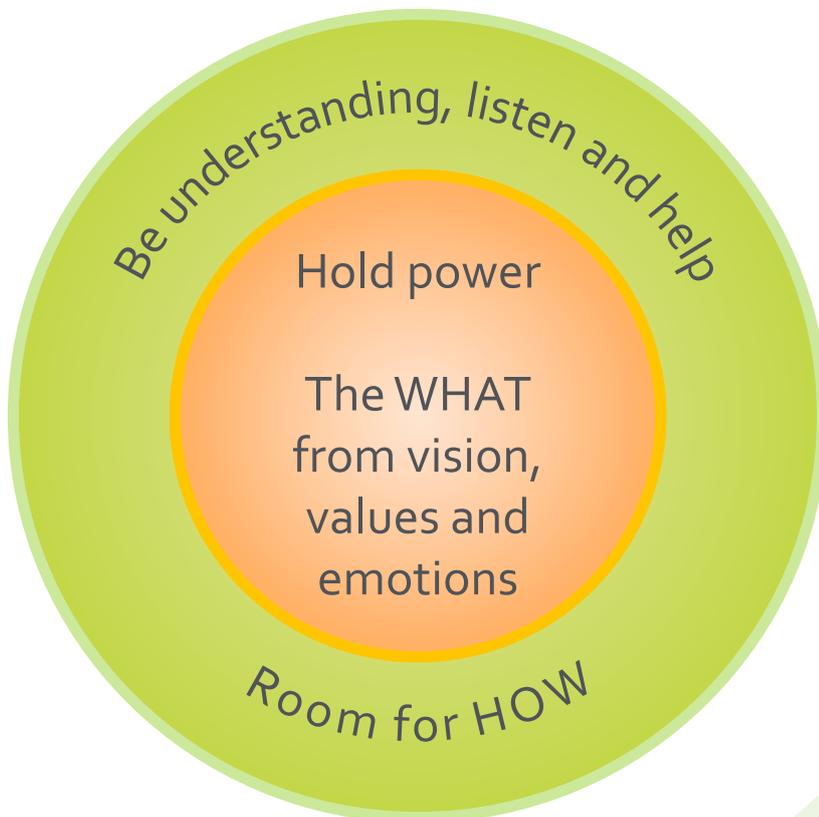
Where there is change, there will always be resistance; I think that “resistance” has been usually given this connotation. I would like to re-define “resistance” as the expression of fair and often useful concerns, and “change” as the management of these concerns. After all, they are the result of the internal dynamics

in every person, as described above. Listen, listen, listen and especially try to actually reduce such concerns – that would represent a great step forward for all of us.

I would also like to emphasize that we shouldn't ignore the impact of our reptilian and mammalian brains. Much of our behaviour originates from the more primitive parts of our brains and is often purely aimed at acquiring (or undermining) power and position. Therefore, unfortunately, it remains necessary for almost every manager to show his teeth every now and then and ensure that boundaries are very clear. While leadership 3.0 will only be aimed at a positive approach of people, I estimate that leadership

2.7 will for some time be based on the diversity in human behaviour: The entire spectrum between being focussed on self-actualization on the one hand and on free primary response on the other hand. Leadership 2.7 is therefore aimed at two aspects:

- **make it clear that there are boundaries** from a certain power and dominance positions
- **give autonomy within boundaries**, coach to craftsmanship, facilitate purpose, be attentive to concerns and remove boundaries.



## THE MANAGEMENT FUNNEL

One of the most intriguing management concepts of the past few years is Filip Vandendriessche's management funnel, as described in his book *Leidinggeven zonder bevelen* [Leadership without orders]. This concept shows that you, as a manager, can especially use your power to clearly identify the expected performance and create the boundary conditions for your employees. Within these boundary conditions, you give your employees the autonomy and the craftsmanship to create and implement solutions.

For example: as a manager, you may find the loss of clients to be absolutely unacceptable. This is where you may show your teeth! The fact that you absolutely want solutions and this within certain constraints (time, money, respectful communication, support among employees etc.) is also something that you should be tough on as a leader. However, let the solution-seeking up to your employees. In this area, you should give them full independence, craftsmanship and a sense of purpose, as well as assistance, coaching and a listening ear when it is needed.

The following four aspects remain very useful for employee supervision and the removal of their barriers and concerns:

- **Awareness**
- **Preparedness**
- **Power**
- **Courage**

If these four conditions are met, the probability increases that employees will be motivated and involved. The management funnel, combined with these four conditions, provides the practical implementation of leadership 2.7.

### Leadership 2.7. Schematically:



“Real

drive

originates

between

boredom

and

anxiety

## COMMENTING ON THE SCHEME

The starting point of vision, purpose and boundary conditions is derived from Filip Vandendriessche's management funnel. The core message here is that you define your vision and direction in a relatively directed manner in terms of irrefutable facts. You then lay down your ambition in output terms, to finally outline for employees the boundary conditions in which they can independently search for solutions. As a manager, you should obviously coach and assist (or organise assistance) where necessary.

This concept fits in perfectly with the philosophy of leadership 2.7 because:

- **you provide direction and context** to what should be done (where nothing deters you from including employees' input );
- **you offer maximum autonomy** for finding and implementing solutions, within a clearly defined context of possibilities and impossibilities (the boundary conditions).

You formulate your vision into incontrovertible facts. Instead of: we are not commercial enough, you should for example say: compared to our competitors, we are 30% behind in customer acquisition. This will have two huge benefits:

- **you creates awareness**
- **you communicate objectively,** which will have no (or less) impact on the self-esteem of an employee.

Following and leading means firstly following, then leading; firstly understood and then being understood. Following creates preparedness. You explore the barriers that employees have to overcome to remain driven during change. Essential to this is that employees are able to see, feel, and smell that you are looking for an honest and engaging way to remove their concerns and barriers. And that you make it work then, together with them.

Leadership 2.7 states that, by following, you achieve more and create more motivation. Guidance always remains necessary, but only in the sense that you will have to lay the necessary fact on the table and give feedback in order to get movement in the desired direction. Guidance is only intended to place a rock in strategic river spots to guide the water (the energy) in the right direction.

The basic skills needed to follow and lead can be derived from Leary's Rose in combination with the management funnel. This relates to skills that also come up within the domain of influence skills: follow= ask questions, listen actively, question, summarize, show understanding, agree where possible, appear vulnerable; lead = present facts , express vision, argue, structure, formulate proposals, lay down expectations, evaluate, give feedback, appointment of behaviour and aspects of the relationship.

# “What is the message behind the message?”

Development of competence levels and commitment is the foundation for building lasting success. Development is of strategic importance for both the organisation and the wellbeing of men. In his book *Flow*, originally titled *Beyond Boredom & Anxiety*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes how people are often in a state of boredom or a state of anxiety. Boredom arises when you are required to perform easy tasks, like a slave and without any influence. On the other hand, anxiety originates when your skills are too limited for the task you are assigned. Boredom requires further challenge and independence, while anxiety requires increased knowledge and skills development. The actual *drive* originates in between boredom and anxiety.

Development can be implemented based on the fourth aspects we saw earlier:

- **Lack of awareness** calls for facts, figures and examples.
- **Lack of willingness** calls for identifying and removing barriers.
- **Lack of ability** calls for skills development and enhancement of knowledge.
- **Lack of courage** calls for security and safety nets.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IS EVEN BIGGER FOR LEADERSHIP 2.7!

Whichever satisfaction survey you look at, communication is almost always the problem. There isn't enough, there is too much, it deals with the wrong subjects, the wrong times etc.

However, I often feel that it is about

something much more important: What are we actually communicating? What is the message behind the message? After all, you can use words that emphasise the main considerations of leadership 2.7, but behind and between them there is often an entirely different message. It often hides lack of respect and sometimes even contempt. For example:

*I understand, but lets look at the positive side. Or: Dreary pessimists.*

*We have to be more commercially active. Or: Wretched passive idiots*

*That sounds good, but practically that is ..... Or: Theoretical idiot*

Conversations between managers

“Employees

are equal

partners

and employees on every level in the organisation often contain many of these messages that affect people's self-esteem and effectively suppress motivation and participation. These messages suggest that the well formulated opinions often hide very different opinions... which is probably also true! The best way to deal with this is to change your opinions. In the mean time, there is much that one can do implement a more conscious communication. The following scheme provides further detail in this respect.

**LEADERSHIP 2.1. VERSUS  
LEADERSHIP 2.7**

<b>Leadership 2.1</b>	<b>Leadership 2.7</b>
Motivate through punishment and reward, HR-instruments such as attention and training are used as rewards.	Motivation by giving space and influence.
Control and monitoring.	Freedom within clear frameworks (boundary conditions).
Formal power as a means to encourage docility.	Personal power as a means to set boundaries.
Specifying and centrally developing solutions.	The employee solves it independently.
Employees are capital.	Employees are equivalent partners.
Craftsmanship through manuals, control and training.	Craftsmanship through daily targeted feedback.
Purpose through organisation leadership.	Purpose in dialogue.
Resistance is automatic and an annoying by-product of change.	Resistance the expressing legitimate concerns for the protection of human emotions.
Change is convincing people that resistance is unfounded.	Change is managing legitimate concerns, listening and removing the concerns as much as possible.
Defensive attitude against human behaviour that results from anxiety and uncertainty. This behaviour is often interpreted negatively, while it is a sign of sheer incompetence.	Recognition and understanding for humanity results in fundamental respect for each individual.
It is important to motivate employees because this will urge them to produce more.	Employees have a right to be happy at work.
Rationalize their own emotions and resistances.	Look at yourself critically; be open to own internal dynamics.

## ERSHIP 2.7

How do we go about developing leadership 2.7 by ourselves? In my experience, you should follow three paths simultaneously.

- **1st path:** Learn to understand and implement some relevant concepts that give life to leadership 2.7. For example the management funnel, Roos van Leary, the influencing skills related to following and leading, and the three levels of interaction - content, procedure and interaction.
- **2nd path:** Confront your own behaviour and the impact thereof. This is possible by performing very specific and practical exercises in which you take the lead and afterwards receive intensive feedback from the other participants and the supervisor.
- **3rd path:** Acquire insight into your own intrapersonal dynamics and in that of others. Learn to understand how this has implications for an organization and learn to deal with it.

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## Literature