

# Developing a Digital Mindset

## Practical Steps for Everyday Life

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### Foreword

First of all, let me say that this is about you, so let go off everything and try to take away as much as you can when reading this booklet.

It is about your inner strengths, growth and selfcare in the age of digitization.

Many of us are leaders in any context and I suppose all of us have to deal with a high level of influences and distractions which make it difficult for us to devote ourselves to the essential issues.

Creating impact at the crossroads of selfcare and leadership is the aim of this booklet.

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## The Post Pandemic Age of Digitization

Remote working has been improved massively, and productivity with it. But mental wellbeing, staff engagement, collaboration and inclusivity have taken a big hit. Eight in ten employees are re-assessing their priorities. Only one third of the organizations have updated their employee offer. This is taken from the Digital Leadership Report, the former CIO Report, of the Harvey Nash Group.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen high budgets being spent on digitization. This course is still going on, although the driver is no longer – or not so much – the remote working environment. The main driver now is digitization as such.

New services, data driven innovations, remote learning, new ways to engage with each other – to name but a few – are in full swing.

We are in a *movement* that is called digitization.

Let me ask you something: in your understanding, is the success of digitization determined rather by technology and how we are able to use it or rather by human skills and the ability to evaluate things that happen?

The question is tricky because without being able to use tools and technology, we will not be part of digitization. And without human skills and the ability to evaluate things that happen we won't be able to digitize processes in a meaningful way. So

both are important. Neither one is wrong and both are equally important.

The digital mindset, as used in this context, is a success factor of digitization. The question here is, how do we define success?

A digital mindset is part of inner leadership competency and comes with characteristics like gratitude, openness, curiosity and a few more.

These characteristics are given, they are seeded inside every human being. In a sense, this booklet might only be a reminder of what you already know.

Allow me to turn from the individual level to society, to your organization, your family and whatever group you are a part of: More than ever, there is great demand for authentic people with a strong inner leadership capability, who can also lead others.

So be the one, become a role model based on your very own values and priorities, radiate the attractiveness of inner strength and confidence and look out for ways to promote purpose. You hold the way to do so in your hands.

Today, success by any means is of course determined by technology and how you are able to use it in everyday life, but even more and on a higher level, it is determined by human skills and the ability to evaluate things that happen.

But how do we evaluate things that happen and how can we find our unique path according to what is valuable to us? How do we prioritize?

The main answer is: by getting to know sources of inner strength, of meaning and values. And by developing courage and composure.

To me, the teachings of Viktor Emil Frankl continue to be a valid and highly relevant basis and those of you who have heard of him might recognize some thoughts here.

It all comes down to priorities, based on values - which can and may vary greatly from person to person. What is important and valuable for one person is not necessarily so for another.

Values provide guidance on the path to successful inner leadership and they are a prerequisite for leadership with integrity and authenticity towards the outside world.

Examples of values include reliability, loyalty, team spirit, humour and many more.

Navigating through life, through change processes, needs to be based on values, on an individual as well as an organizational level.

Navigating calmly and courageously while accepting uncertainty may be seen as a goal. Limited time and a high level of influences and distractions are stressors. These circumstances make it difficult for us to devote ourselves to the essential issues.

I would like to give an example from the airline industry: Many years back from now I was a member of the cabin crew aboard a national airliner. The airline's decisions, especially the pilots' decisions had (and still have) to follow certain guidelines in precise order: safety – schedule – comfort – noise – economy.

So in any situation, the crew had to follow these values, no matter what. It was not to be discussed if the flight route should be changed so that the passengers could have a better view of the Lake District. Because comfort followed schedule.

A guideline is something you apply in a situation. So are values. And so are priorities.

## Leadership Development in a nutshell

### Treasure hunt inside yourself

For thousands of years, the "big questions" of humankind have been the same. But since Goethe's Faust failed to answer the questions of what holds the world together at its core, we don't even want to deal with them.

The following questions are still similarly difficult to answer, even if they are a little more manageable. Every day, without knowing, in our subconscious minds, we deal with thoughts like:

What is essential? What matters? Who is right? What moves me? Where is my place? What can I contribute? And the list is by no means finished. These questions are subconsciously present in every human being and they are reflected in the attitude to life in the form of restlessness, uncertainty or fear in whatever form.

According to Viktor Frankl, a meaningful life is one which relates to a purposeful agenda in the main 5 segments of a human being.

The social environment, the self, spirituality, tasks and the cultural and environmental surroundings.

Ahead of the following exercise, please think of your personal talents and skills. Are they used on a daily basis? Can you contribute in the best possible way when carrying out your activities? If you are unsure, you might want to find out.

Take a piece of paper and answer the following questions relating to the social environment honestly.

Who do I trust and why? Who am I truly myself with and why? Who joins me when I am happy? Which encounters give me strength?

If Sally is the one you are truly yourself with you might want to find out why. The answer might be because you trust her. So, trust is a value to you.

In the field of tasks you may ask yourself questions like: Which tasks do I see? Which tasks do I perform and what does it do to me? What do I experience in the devotion to my tasks? Which talents and skills do I use in my tasks?

What does it do to me if I apply gratitude, optimism, openness or curiosity to my tasks?

Please find a full questionnaire covering all 5 main segments of a human being at the end of this booklet.

The process is worth it, I promise. It is simple but highly effective and I have often had the opportunity to accompany people on their way to successful inner leadership, starting exactly with these questions.

Once you have found out about some of your main values, the next step will be to prioritize them and to formulate goals pertaining to them. With a little interest and consistency, desirable outcomes will follow.

## The power of imagination

The application of imaginative procedures in a dialogue can be life-changing although the best way to experience them requires a coach, facilitator or therapist with the related qualification. Imagination is profound and efficient, it creates resonance, leads to insights one can feel, and with a little perseverance, it ideally brings together possibility and potential. Nothing unusual in quantum physics. Not so common in executive coaching. If you are lucky enough to find a coach who is trained in Imagination or Hypnotherapy, go for it.

What you can do yourself is apply the method of Hypothetical Inquiry as honestly as possible for yourself.

## Hypthetical Inquiry

Hypothetical Inquiry will help you find tangible answers and development potentials. Simply take a piece of paper and write down everything that comes into your mind when asked questions that start with *what if*.

*What if* I was more courageous? *What if* I had more self-confidence? *What if* I was more integrative? *What if* I was accepting uncertainty?

Whatever your values are, put them into a *what-if* question.

Asking these questions somehow leads you to imagining desirable situations and that is how development is triggered.

### Life design by telling your life story twice

This exercise's goal is to reframe your past. Reframing your past does influence the present. It makes a difference how you look at your past and whether you look at it with gratefulness, forgivingness, optimism or curiosity.

Start to write your life story, uncensored. It is not meant for others to read. Writing it down is the beginning of your biographical work. Dive into your memories and go from decade to decade. Try to write down the quality of your thinking and feeling, the people who were with you and the goals you had, the setbacks you had to go through and how you came to the point where you are today. You might regret things, you may be happy about your memories.

It does not matter how long your life story is or how meaningful. Whatever comes to your mind, put it on paper.

And then – here comes the point – take a break of several hours or even days and try again but reflect the following: The process of biographical work in connection with a forgiving and development-oriented attitude supports you in taking stock of your life so far. Whatever you have gone through. Life story reconstruction promotes a clearer perception of one's being between the massive forces affecting you, the role demands of everyday life, and the external changes through time.

Biographical work requires an honest but relaxed interest in the causes of our being from the sheltered perspective of the present, where nothing (more) can happen than pure observation.

Space, time and attention are the only framework you will need. The path leads through the great realm of your experiences, through "forgotten" moments to the here and now.

The jungle of life impressions finally clears the way to the sources of happiness and sadness, past dry seasons and deserts. The treasures, the rewards for all your hard work, are seeds waiting to bloom again in the flow of life available to you today.

#### **The diary of the good hours**

A journal or diary can be used as an accompaniment to train your perception. Put a small notebook on your bedside table and jot down in it regularly or even daily the many small, beautiful, funny and exciting things that you have experienced, thought or seen.

Over time, this diary will become a living work, a little companion in which to collect whatever takes your fancy. Collecting the selected impressions will positively influence your perception and imperceptibly and permanently increase your individual quality of life.

### **Pick your role models**

People who impress you in any way can be your role models. It doesn't matter whether it is your grandmother or Arnold Schwarzenegger. Try to figure out why exactly you picked them and list 5 characteristics for each of them.

Characteristics that you recognize in other people are what you carry in yourself. You feel the resonance either in recognition or longing. In any case it reflects your very personal values and shows your development path.

Once you are aware of having role models and have gone through this little process, pick new ones, select them carefully and try to feel the resonance.

Through this exercise you can access your own values, make them visible and develop them.

### What does all this have to do with leadership

The higher the level of agreement with yourself, the higher the probability that others will agree with you and follow. Inner leadership is something we are all capable of, it is what we do anyways. I only would like to encourage you to do it more consciously and with heightened awareness towards purpose and meaning.

Being a responsible, strong authentic person is an attractive goal, for yourself and for others. Become a role model for others and an active part of that movement called digitization.

I have seen people grow and become great leaders and I know that that possibility will meet opportunity. As a start, please simply try to inquire:

*What if you were a leader!*

### Thank you

Thank you for considering this booklet as a companion on your path to successful inner leadership with integrity and authenticity towards the outside world.

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## About me

I studied political sciences with a special focus on global warming at the University of Salzburg, hold a national certification as a Social Counselor (similar to a life coach; I studied over a period of 4 years at the Institute for Logotherapy and Existential Analysis in Austria), based on the teachings of Viktor Frankl. I can take stock of some clinical experience and plenty of coaching experience. In 2022 I finished a Leadership Program at the Stanford School of Business and have recently been taken into the Teaching Team.

In my current occupation I am a member of the Management Team at TCI Consult, a Vienna-based consulting company providing services on the subject of Data and Information Management. My responsibility there is Communication and Leadership.

Creating impact at the crossroads of selfcare and leadership is what fascinates me.

Gabriele Sevignani

## Questionnaire for self-development

### Social Environment

Who do I trust?

Who rejoices with me?

Who gives me a home?

Which encounters give me strength?

What quality do my relationships have?

Through whom do I experience myself?

What unused opportunities do forgive and reconcile offer me?

Do I experience stability in my social relationships?

What role does responsibility play in this area?

What does it do to me when I apply each of the following values to my social relationships? Gratitude - Optimism – Joy of Life - Openness - Curiosity.

What do I experience in these various relationships? Can I lovingly adapt my attitudes?

### Self

When do I encounter myself?

Who am I?

What makes me who I am?

When/through what do I feel alive?

What talents and abilities of mine do I know/appreciate?

Do I give myself (my talents, abilities, tendencies, interests, my desire) a chance/sufficient opportunities?

What role does responsibility play in this?

What does it do to me when I apply each of the following values to the relationship with myself: Gratitude - Optimism – Joy of Life - Openness - Curiosity.

What do I "experience" in the relationship with myself? Can I lovingly adjust my attitudes towards myself?

### **Spirituality**

Have I experienced deep (spiritual) moments?

When/through what do I experience (myself) intensively?

Do I take opportunities to discover my spiritual side?

Are there practical activities that demand my attention (concentration) in a pleasant way and to a very high degree?

What does it do to me when I pray, sing, meditate?

What role does responsibility play in this?

What does it do to me when I apply each of the following values to the relationship with my spirituality?

Gratitude - Optimism – Joy of Life - Openness - Curiosity.

What do I "experience" in spirituality?

### **Cultural and environmental surrounding**

Do I keep in touch with nature?

Do I give my natural environment/cultural environment/environment a chance to get through to me?

Do I experience myself as a part of my cultural and environmental surrounding?

How do I use nature (...) as a source of strength, silence, recreation, inspiration?

What do I find interesting about it?

Do I have skills/talents in this context?

What longing do I have in relation to this segment?

What tasks do I carry out in this area?

What role does responsibility play in this area?

What does it do to me if I apply one of the following values to nature, to my cultural environment, to my surroundings and to the outside world? Gratitude - Optimism – Joy of Life - Openness - Curiosity.

### **Tasks**

Which tasks do I see?

Which tasks do I perceive and what does it do to me?

Which values do I experience in the attention to my task?

What do I feel in the attention to my task?

Which task would my longing turn to?

Which talents and abilities do I use in my tasks?

What role does responsibility play in this?

What does it do to me if I apply one of the following values to my tasks? Gratitude - Optimism – Joy of Life - Openness - Curiosity.

What do I "experience" in the different tasks? What do I create, what do I accomplish?