

Dennis Heijn

The Fearless Monkey



A Creative Guide to Leadership in a Paradoxical World

De Zandkorrel BV
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The Fearless Monkey - A Creative Guide to Leadership in a Paradoxical World
Dennis Heijn

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With love for

Guinivere, Bo, Dee Dee, Deion, Yulan, Joni and Miko

Seven grains of sand, seven enormous avalanches

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**Better to remain silent
and be thought a fool
than to speak out
and remove all doubt.**

**These words of Abraham Lincoln kept me from writing this book
for a long time.**

Introduction

A good leader has a healthy degree of low self-confidence. High enough to be able to operate effectively, but at the same time low enough to allow reasonable doubt so he never thinks he knows it all. In my view this level of self-confidence is also a characteristic of a good writer. An important message of this book is that you just have to dare to do what is important to you. Have the courage to trust that you are a match for what you are going to come up against. With an opinion like this there was little else I could do than take the leap and write this book, be fearless.

Doing business is an integral part of the world around us. Success and failure have a direct impact on our life. If we improve the way we do business by improving how we engage and treat our employees, clients, suppliers and other stakeholders, then it will have a significant impact on society. That there is a lot to improve and change has become painfully obvious in recent years. But where do we start? What can we do?

In the pages that follow you will encounter the insights that I have gained and the tools that I have learned over the last decades.

For me, all of this has shed a little light on what reality comprises and has enabled me to act more efficiently. My commonplace book. Long before there were computers and the internet, people like Darwin and Locke kept a journal in which they noted everything they encountered and considered important. They described their experiences and copied out excerpts from other books or pamphlets and this was called a 'commonplace book'. I accumulated my insights during a successful career at Heineken across the globe, as the boss of a start-up in the media branch, when the fashion company in which I was a majority shareholder went bankrupt, during the kidnapping and murder of my father, as the almost (but not quite) boss at Ajax football club, as a husband and father of seven children, but also from reading the works of many inspiring thinkers and 'doers'. The mix of these ingredients makes it a book with a wide variety of perspectives that all shed light on (how to lead) organisations and the role of the individual in that. This approach also makes it very personal.

The aim of this book is to offer you lots of different lenses for looking at reality and to provide insights, or clarify them and to get you reflecting; reflecting on what you see and experience in and around you. Hopefully this means you will look at reality differently. And from the moment that you look differently, things will actually be different for you. My hope then is that as a result you will also take action, that you will start acting according to these new insights. Because in the end greater knowledge, or rather greater wisdom, must also lead to better practice: better practice in a fast changing and paradoxical world. What is the value of wisdom if it doesn't help you in daily life?

I would have liked to have summarised reality into 'the three laws of Dennis' or 'the five steps to success' or 'always happiness from now on, seven tips' but alas, life won't let itself be captured in a few rules, I am afraid. I will not therefore offer a 'solution' at the end of the book. That might make you feel slightly uncomfortable, but that's ok, that keeps you alert. There is not one solution, no 'one size fits all' approach, you will have to find out what works for you and in the following pages I will try to help you start exploring this.

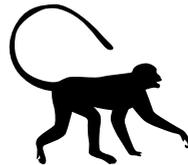
I will pass on a few lessons, but for every lesson you can come up with exceptions or opposing lessons. 'So the first shall be the last' and 'haste makes waste' versus 'a good start is half the work' or 'the first blow is half the battle' clearly demonstrate that wise lessons, supposed to help you navigate through life, can contradict one another. You will encounter that in this book too and the art of life, the art of leadership, is in applying the right rule at the right time. There is already enormous benefit to be had from being aware of these contradictions, because from that point at least you can make a conscious choice and learn from the results.

What I really envisage is what Sufi Master (Murshid) Inayat Khan so beautifully expresses:

'It is not that a murshid gives his knowledge to someone else. It is not possible to give one's knowledge that way, so the murshid does not profess to be able to do this or that. His work is to help another person to find out for himself, to discover for himself what is true and what is not. There are no doctrines to impart, there are no principles to lay down, and there are no tenets according to which his pupils must order their lives. He is just a guide along the path. He is the one who kindles the light that is already in the pupil.'

The models, theories and other viewpoints that I show here help to discern differences more effectively in different situations and so enable you to act more effectively or accept circumstances more easily. It is not only about the individual, although of course changes do happen at an individual level. It also focuses on what it actually means when a group comes together. What arises, why do new ways of interacting develop and can they be managed? The world is complex and the underlying interconnectedness is great. As a result, the consequences of our actions cannot be easily understood and control is an illusion. This is certainly not a license to do nothing, or to think only of what is in your personal interest. On the contrary. The collapse of many institutions and companies shows that the way in which we manage them needs to change.

What is **the value**
of wisdom
if it doesn't help you
in daily life?



Seeing why something does or does not work helps you to come up with solutions. With this book I hope to make a contribution to that.

For an employee it is vitally important to have the feeling that you make a difference, that you are contributing to something larger, that you are contributing to something that you consider important, that you can do what you are good at. If you can or are allowed to work on this on a daily basis it will be a source of great fulfilment. It is possible to contribute to a better world everywhere, whatever your role, wherever it is. Make sure that you do what you think is important, what you enjoy and what you are good at. That is how easy it is to make a contribution.

Well, easy... clearly it isn't that easy, because otherwise it would be happening on a much larger scale and there would not be such dissatisfaction and inefficiency within organisations. Clearly it is difficult to establish what you really want and then to act accordingly or to get the space you need to do it.

Often it is simply a matter of common sense. But as Fred Kofman so poignantly asks: 'Yes, it's common sense, but is it also common practice?'. And that's the crux of it. How and when do you start acting in line with what you know? Ask a smoker if he thinks smoking is a good idea. Of course not, he will answer, everyone knows that. But to act in line with that; that is what is so hard.

And if it is already difficult for an individual, it certainly won't get any easier when you bring a group together. Why are we together? What do we stand for together? How can we ensure that we achieve more as a group than just the sum of the individuals? This is not easy, but it is extremely important. This determines the success of an organisation and the fulfilment of its members while performing their tasks. The culture of the organisation cannot be copied. A product or service is relatively easy to imitate, but that cannot be said of the organisation's culture. How we interact, all the mutual conventions (and unconscious 'agreements'), are always unique, their development has taken time and cannot be imitated just like that. The members of the group have learned from one another, have been adjusted and corrected by one another and

have therefore learned to trust one another. That is irreplaceable.

That is what this book is about. How can we act more effectively as individuals and as an organisation? What does this require, what obstacles are in the way? By 'more effectively' in this context, I mean in accordance with your own goals, insights and desires. That's what you want, right? Even disappointing results will be an opportunity to improve what you and your organisation are about. I am convinced that with this approach we will also be more successful in the more usual sense of the word: greater profit for the organisation and improvements within society.

How should you read this book?

What's better, red or green glasses? Reading glasses or sunglasses? You can look through any pair of glasses, one has functional qualities for seeing and the other is functional for your image. One pair of specs is more comfortable than the other, depending on your nose, the width of your head, the size of your ears or the material the frames are made of.

We have an enormous need to categorise and pigeonhole everything and to see a book follow one straight line to its inevitable conclusion. Having read this introduction, it will probably already be clear to you that this is not going to happen in the pages to come. We are so desperate to cherish the illusion that reality is logically constructed. By definition we only perceive a small piece of reality, some a little more than others, and therefore, my collection of insights and experiences is nothing more than that: a personal account of the lessons I have learned. I would like to take you on a tour of the insights I have gained from both my personal and professional experiences.

The overall coherence of the book is evident. The examples and ideas are in my view all relevant for looking at organisations, yourself and the link between the two.

The book consists of two parts: 'Look Before You Leap' and 'Now Leap'.

I'm not advocating fearlessness without thinking first and without being prepared.

Total control is an illusion but that doesn't mean your decisions can't be better or less informed. Reflecting and preparing should never lead to paralysis but to action.

The first eight chapters offer contemplations which are useful before you start to take action: what do you stand for; what does the organisation want; what is the value and what are the limitations of rules, or the value of diversity; is being a publicly listed company a blessing or a curse; what happens when your organisation grows; be aware of what you do and do not know, when should you trust the figures and when should you not; in which phase of development is your organisation, what suits you and your organisation, in which phase of development are you and how can you value all perspectives and bring them together?

The last seven chapters contain my view on practical matters such as: the client, sales, organisational change, advertising, your own role and authenticity, creativity and delegation. They reflect on the task ahead of you: what to do with advice from experts in exceptional cases; be aware (of what is happening, what you think you observe); what is preventing you from innovating; what is your role within the whole, what does this mean; be concrete; take action; be the hero of your own story; be curious and be friendly.

Here and there I have included a small exercise, a trigger to help you reflect on what the discussion means for you. They can be skipped of course, or you can come back to them later. There is no right or wrong to reading this book, it's yours, so play with it; rip out what you don't like, repeat exercises you do like, get a pen and underline parts you want to remember, write notes in the margins. The exercises are just there to nudge you into thinking a little deeper or into action.

You will find ten QR codes in the text; so that if your phone has a QR scanner you can go straight to the relevant speech, short film or picture. The  relevant text is marked and the QR code is at the bottom of the same page. You can download a QR scanner for free from your app store.

So there you are

You've got your skis on and you are standing at the top of a mountain blanketed with virgin snow and it is begging for someone to make the first descent. You see that there are trees on the mountainside. They make the descent beautiful, but they also make it risky; it is one of the reasons nobody has gone before you. You know you are prepared and have the skills and knowledge to make the descent. Gather your courage. And set off. It is precisely your speed that will enable you to dodge the trees with grace, and to experience the feeling that each new obstacle is surmountable. Trust that you can conquer what you come up against; you are then not only the fastest down, you have also had the most fun.

Perhaps once you have read this book, I will have removed your doubt as to whether I am indeed a fool, and I hope that you will be just as inspired as I was and that I will have given you valuable food for thought. Either because you have been given insights into what you perceive around you that make it easier to accept, or because you have been moved to take action to improve things in your environment. Or both. So that you gain the confidence to strap on your skis and slalom through the trees to the bottom, bursting with courage and fun.

This ski-metaphor gave the inspiration for the title of the Dutch version ('It Takes Speed to Dodge Trees'). In the course of translating the book, which included an upgrade both in content and in presentation, we came up with the new title 'The Fearless Monkey'. This book is for curious people, who want to lead themselves and others. I want you to think for yourself, to make your own rules and take charge. And the funny thing was that this made me realise that I had published the book along the old lines. So I thought I'd better follow my own advice and design and develop my book according to my rules. It was scary, but it was time to be a fearless monkey.

Why a monkey? Read on...

Dennis Heijn

PART 1



Look Before You Leap

The paradox is as follows:
for a large group to function,
rules and procedures
are needed that people
must adhere to,
but the ones who will really
make the difference
are those who break the rules
and procedures at the right
moment.

Wisdom is knowing when to break the rules.

Barry Schwartz

Know the rules well,
so you can break them effectively.

Dalai Lama XIV

2. Rules and Wisdom

At the start of my career I spent three months working shifts in one of the Heineken breweries. If I was on nights and free during the day and had nobody to hang out with, I sometimes went to play pool on my own. This is how I came to be all alone at 11 o'clock in the morning in a joint with six pool tables. After a while, I fancied something to eat. I ordered two rolls, went to sit at the bar and asked the bartender to turn off the lights over the table for a bit so I wouldn't have to pay for playing while I was eating. The discussion that ensued went as follows...

Bartender: Then you'll just have to return the balls.

Me: But I'm going to play again in a minute.

Bartender: Yes, the balls have to be returned before I can turn the lights off, it's the rule.

Me: I understand that and it's a good rule when it's busy and people are waiting to play, but I am the only one here at the moment. If, while I am eating, so many people turn up that you need my table, you can just put the lights back on.

Bartender: My boss has said that the balls have to be returned before the lights go off.

Me: Do you really think that your boss would want me to return the balls now? Or do you think he would prefer you to make me feel welcome, which is so easy to do?

Bartender: All I know is that the balls have to be returned before I am allowed to turn the lights off.

I returned the balls, paid and made an angry exit. Once outside I realised that I actually wanted to play another round and so we had all lost out. I have never been back and I am sure the owner must be very happy about that...

The owner had drawn up the rules to make sure the business would run as well as possible in his absence, but this example illustrates that a seemingly sensible rule can be turned into something utterly ridiculous. This chapter looks at the tension between the rules and regulations that are needed for an organisation to operate and the knowledge that these rules will never be completely adequate.

The example of the pool club may seem extreme, but sadly we are all fobbed off with 'it's the rule' far too often. Most rules are necessary, that's not the problem. The problem is that no rule can cover all eventualities, so the time will always come when an employee has to use their own common sense to assess the right course of action. The less an organisation is aligned with what it stands for and where it is going and the less mutual trust within the organisation the greater the need for rules.

If there is no faith in someone's ability to act in the interest of the company, the management will simply draw up rules that define their behaviour. These rules can never cover everything; particularly if there are other people involved (which is nearly always the case). What's more, the environment changes continuously and the rules are always one step behind.

No job description can cover everything that the role entails. When the phone on your desk rings, you pick it up. I don't think there is a single job description anywhere stating that you must pick up your phone. And yet you still do it, funny huh? This is very well depicted in the film 'A Few Good Men' starring amongst others Tom

Cruise, Jack Nicholson and Kevin Bacon. Kevin Bacon in the role of the prosecutor takes the 'rule book' as the guide for what is true and what is not true in the life of a Marine. The infamous 'Code Red', the central theme of the movie, is not mentioned in the book and so according to Bacon, the code does not exist (in a 'Code Red' the soldiers take the law into their own hands to teach a colleague a lesson if he fails to conduct himself according to the standards and values of a true Marine). Subsequently, the opposing attorney (Tom Cruise), takes the book and asks the Marine on the stand to turn to the page stating where the mess hall is. Confused, the man says that this is obviously not in the book. To which Cruise responds with surprise: 'And still men came to eat there every day, unbelievable,' making crystal clear that life cannot be captured in a rule book, not even for the most basic situations. The same is true for the lawbook. It contains all the laws. These laws are extremely important for how society functions, but the crux of the matter lies in their interpretation and application.

If it were possible to capture life in rules then we would have had artificial intelligence computers that are barely distinguishable from people for a long time. But our brain simultaneously (consciously or not) processes so much, that no computer stands a chance against us.

**This is how all rule books should start:
'Here are the rules of the game, but at all
times keep in mind what it is really about
because there may be moments when acting
against the rules is also justifiable.'**

To be naughty or not, that is the question

No truly successful soccer team, marketing campaign or orchestra obediently follows all the rules. Agreements and rules are indispensable for good interaction but the difference is made by those who deviate from the rules at just the right moment. The agreements and rules create the structure. They have to become ingrained and be clear for each individual. From this reference point a creative difference can be made. If the structure is missing, then generally the creativity is not functional.

Take Marketing, that really is a true profession. You can learn about segmentation, pricing policy, media strategy and the 4 Ps and this can prevent idiotic mistakes. But the really successful campaigns break one or more basic rules, otherwise they don't stand out. If you obediently follow all the rules, you won't make the difference. As General MacArthur said: 'You are remembered for the rules you break.'

McDonald's had a successful campaign in Hong Kong when I was living there. In the month of February, every customer ordering a hamburger meal would get a little doll in the traditional costume of a particular country: every day a different doll, 28 in total. So if you wanted to collect them all, you had to order a meal every day. It didn't seem to be such a smart and realistic plan, but - you've already guessed - it was a storming success. A complete collection of dolls was thought to be worth some 150 Euros. There were long queues for the entire month. People bought a meal and threw it away just to get the doll. And alongside them was a queue of people who said: 'Give me the meal then'. McDonald's was accused of forcing people to buy an unhealthy meal every day and their PR machine had to pull out all the stops. Now, the fact that standing in a queue is a favourite pastime in Hong Kong must also be taken into account, but let it be clear that no marketing book would have been able to specify the rules from which a campaign like this can arise.

Another example given by Barry Schwartz is about  cleaners in a hospital.¹ Their job description was a long list of cleaning chores (there was clearly little trust). This long list contained not one single reference to another person, nothing about patients or colleagues. But the funny thing was that if you asked the cleaners what they considered to be most important about their job, they would tell you that they were there for the patients. They described how they took them into consideration by waiting to clean if family was visiting, for example, or cleaning for a second time if a patient asked them, even though it had just been done. These cleaners knew exactly what a hospital is about, (better than whoever wrote the job description) you can see that they knew that the patient comes first. And this leads directly to another important truth; humanity supersedes the rules. Obviously you also have to assess the cleaner on how well they have cleaned, but those who make the difference for the patient and the hospital are those who put the patient first.

Again this seems blatantly obvious, but nevertheless it very rarely happens. You may avoid disasters with extensive rules, but it is in return for mediocrity at best.

Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), understood very well that a manual full of rules can start to lead its own life and that the rules cannot cover all eventualities. In the end - having been pressed by others for a long time - he did write the Constitutions, but stated in the introduction that the rules would never have an absolute value; that man always comes first. In a situation where the better, more humane solution appears to be contrary to the Constitutions, the more humane solution must always be chosen. This is how all rule books should start: 'Here are the rules of the game, but at all times keep in mind what it is really about because there may be moments when acting against the rules is also be justifiable'. There is no game without rules, but nor is there a game without a healthy interpretation of them. This also goes for those who have to safeguard the rules.



What a difference it would have made if the boss of the pool hall had shared the rules with his staff with the following warning; that they must diverge from the rules if they have the feeling that they are not serving the customer in a particular situation and therefore not serving the pool club. It would have been even better if he had then also shared the message: 'We can discuss whether it was right or not afterwards and we can all learn from it'.

In an interview with Ischa Meijer in 1984 Johan Cruijff, the best Dutch soccer player ever, said: 'You can't just state that the official guidelines are wrong or that they are generally incorrectly applied. It is extremely difficult to assess whether pulling someone's shirt should be punished in a specific situation or not. It is practically impossible to define this and this is why we talk about the calibre of the referee. Twenty referees have twenty different opinions. This is why we need rules and the existing guidelines are not strange. There are few truly good referees, of which perhaps only two or three really possess the authority to judge the game fully independently and as a consequence are capable of taking the right decision at that specific moment. I've never refereed and never felt the urge to, because I know that I would be extremely controversial in the role. I would do what I deemed right. I would flout the rules. Rules mean: uniformity, and in soccer nothing is unequivocal; no action, no moment is ever the same. Sometimes I see a foul and think: in principle this is not allowed, but in this case it is justified. Football is: total order and anarchy. That's my take on the game.'

Chaos, order, or both?

The balance between chaos and order is central to many things in life as well as life itself. Dee Hock (more about him later) coined the term 'chaordic' for this, a combination of 'chaos' and 'order'.² Just before chaos strikes there is a self organising principle and there is life. In his view, and also in mine, organisations are much easier to compare this way than the old-fashioned comparisons with machines and all their cogs fitting into one another following their fixed pattern. Living organisms are not linear and are therefore unpredictable and this is inconvenient for people who prefer the predictability of machines. That's the reality of it however and the objective of this book is to draw lessons from this fact.

An important aspect of a living organism is its necessary exchange with its environment. An organism exists by grace of its environment and has an open connection to it. An organisation is nothing without its customers, suppliers and infrastructure. Ilya Prigogine calls an organism a 'dissipative' structure, an open system that exchanges energy and matter with its surroundings. Here too you see the combination of two apparently opposing concepts; dissipative, volatile (chaos) and structure (order). He received the Nobel Prize for chemistry for his work on this.

We will speak later about the interaction between the organisation and the rest of the world. Now, I want to talk about the meaning of the fact that the organisation is a living organism for those on the inside.

There are many similarities between a living organism and an organisation. What's more, according to the definitions given above, an organisation is actually a living organism itself. There is however, an enormous difference between an individual organism and a social organism.

An individual organism - a human being, a dog, a germ - possesses a definable 'I'; it is a discrete, independent entity with one type of behaviour. So a human being, with its brain, bowels, legs and lungs moves as one entity. When I get up to have a shower in the morning, my kidneys and right leg cannot decide to stay in bed for a bit longer. A social organism- a company, a gaggle of geese, a soccer team, a school of fish - possesses a definable 'we'. It is a collective made up of individual organisms. Even though a goose in a gaggle is directed by the leading goose, it can always decide to fly in a different direction. Within the collective action the individual always has the choice to take an independent route at any given point in time.

**And this is the crux of the matter:
an organisation may be a **living organism**, but
its individual parts, its people,
can decide to operate independently
at any given time, even if this is not
in the interest of the organism.**

So how can we ensure that each individual acts in the interest of the entire organisation? The paradox is as follows: for a large group to function, rules and procedures are needed that people must adhere to, but the ones who will really make the difference are those who break the rules and procedures at the right moment.

You can't capture the future and reality in rules that will always apply. The truth is that there is continuous change and those who sense this most accurately will be the first to break the rules in service of the whole. We have a need for rules, but at the same time we place hope in the wisdom of the individual to respond in the right way at the right moment. How do you manage that? Can you really say to an employee: 'To do well here you have to follow the rules; but if you want to do really well you must break them at the right moment? The funny thing is that I think you can say just that. What's more, I think it is the only correct message to give. But this principle only works if everyone is clear about what makes the whole. Yasuhiko Genku Kimura and Dee Hock have great ideas about this.³

Alignment Beyond Agreement

Kimura describes the difference between alignment and agreement beautifully. Alignment is the convergence of intentions, agreement is the convergence of opinions. Intentions are creative and focused on the future, while opinions are repetitions and based on the past. Agreement is not a prerequisite for alignment. A convergence of intentions means coming to a joint decision to achieve a specific objective. A joint decision is then made on the actions to be undertaken, in the knowledge that this is a temporary agreement open to adjustment or change. The issue after all is not 'Who is right?' but 'How do we best fulfil our intentions?'. This builds on what I also described in the previous chapter; to choose what is better you must do what is best now in light of our objective and our intention. Alignment creates synergy. If individuals are aligned in their task, their combined intelligence can deliver results that far exceed the intellect of each individual.

In an organisation based on alignment, a difference of opinion does not reduce the power of that alignment but actually strengthens it and can make the organisation more effective. Plurality and diversity of ideas and perspectives, united in one shared

intention, strengthen one another in achieving the objective. In an organisation based on agreement, on the other hand, a difference of opinion leads to internal dispute, political infighting based on discord, the creation of factions and perhaps even downfall.³

It is up to the leader to create this alignment. This mutual collaboration of individuals with different competencies and insights towards a common objective that cannot be reached alone, could be an alternative definition of life. Again it is about creating order from chaos. The leader simply must forge all competent parts into a whole, like a conductor inspiring all members of the orchestra to harmonise.

Dee Hock: 'I believe that purpose and principle, clearly understood and articulated, and commonly shared, are the genetic code of any healthy organization. To the degree that you hold purpose and principles in common among you, you can dispense with command and control. People will know how to behave in accordance with them, and they'll do it in thousands of unimaginable, creative ways. The organization will become a vital, living set of beliefs.'²

And Mr Hock should know. He was the big man behind Visa. He attempted to found Visa on these principles and has largely succeeded. He got as far as 20,000 affiliated banks, jointly serving 600 million customers in 220 countries. Pretty successful. Affiliated members could leave at any point, but if you were affiliated, you were tied to the agreed principles.

If, for example, we agree to honour our father and mother, in all likelihood you and I will do it differently. For you it may mean visiting at least once a week, whereas I may attach more importance to addressing them with respect. Although this sort of principle may seem soft in practice it has been shown to work surprisingly well, precisely because it is flexible. But at the same time we both know perfectly well when one of us is in breach of the principle. And that's what's so wonderful; it would be nothing more than an illusion to think that you can use strict rules to keep tabs on 20,000 banks, each with several thousand employees. That's why it's ironic, that in this ever increasingly connected world, many companies try to compensate for the growing globalisation and complexity with more rules and commands. The better alternative would be: the greater our alignment, the greater the shared intention about our common direction, the more we share certain principles, the better we know what we

stand for together, the fewer rules and control systems we need and the more the organisation can function with efficacy as a whole.

I am not proposing that all forms of control should be abolished. The old Dutch adage 'in God we trust, but lock your bike' is still valid. There will always be Nick Leeson, Jerome Kerviels and Bernhard Madoffs, men who cheat their company, clients and friends of billions and of course they should not be given unlimited space. The difference lies in the starting point and the focus: what will you give most energy to? What will you encourage? Control and regulation are not bad in themselves. If you have to undergo brain surgery, then you won't want a totally uncontrolled environment. But neither should that environment be so dominated by rules that the surgeon is not free to apply his experience and expertise when necessary. Dee Hock says that if you have to advise on circumstances that are not yet known: 'Use your head, but follow your heart'.

A surgeon needs skills (head), otherwise he must not even start and then he needs the courage (heart) 'to descend', to operate, with the belief that he can solve what he encounters. Be fearless in what you have to do, but stay cool and use your head (or keep thinking).

How many CEOs would dare to give this advice to their employees? I don't think many would and I agree with them, because how much alignment would be created? If everyone follows his heart without defining clear shared intentions, then even the best intentions can work against one another.

If you see the organisation as one massive machine that has to operate as smoothly as possible, as a collection of individuals who must perform their allotted task as well as possible (because the assumption is that they would only harm the organisation if left to their own devices), then energy will be focused on establishing rules, on writing instructions and monitoring. If, on the other hand, you see the organisation as a living organism that is continuously adapting, moving towards a goal, then the energy will be focused on reaching that goal together and inspiring your people. If your shared goal is unique, and you refuse to allow yourself to be lead by the dominating opinions and ideas, then we get a great diversity of organisations and great diversity within these organisations.

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