

Authentic leadership

Discover and live your essential mission

Bas W. Blekkingh



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Foreword

This book is about you. Before we embark on our journey together let me introduce myself. I am a former army officer and regatta rower and am now leader of an organisation which unleashes and connects the hidden authentic power of leaders and their organisations. Our mission is to create high performing teams with leaders who feel extremely fulfilled. I see myself as a lucky person. I grew up in a loving warm family with parents who appreciated me and gave me the feeling that I really matter, which has given me great self-confidence. I have been given the chance to develop in a direction that lets me use my talents to the full. As a child I was fascinated by why people do the things they do. I have never lost that curiosity. The moment you know why you behave in a certain way you can speed up your development. This curiosity has taken me through some beautiful, and less beautiful, places and brought me to where I am now. I'm going to start by sharing some (perhaps strange) experiences as they form the basis of the philosophy of this book.

Experience 1 I was a regatta rower, and was selected to row at the junior world championships. There was a moment in training when we underwent a twelve minute test on a rowing machine. The number of revolutions of the machine partly decided whether you were selected for the national team or not. One rower reached the pain limit, as we all

did, and cried, completely exhausted, 'I can't continue. I'm dying.' The response from the national coach was severe: 'If you think you'll die, you are still capable of thinking and can carry on for at least another half hour.' A strange remark, but I was eighteen and believed him. I really believed that this was the truth. This strange belief made me go on and on, pain or no pain. I was convinced that if the going gets tough you can unleash an inner strength which is controlled by your own belief system.

Experience 2 I joined the Royal Military Academy and became an officer in the army. It is an honourable profession and physically very challenging. I became responsible for the development of conscripts and professional leaders in the army. I joined the Royal Army Medical Corps because I realised that I would rather help people (both allies and enemies) out of trouble than put them into it. I was pretty fanatical and wanted people not only to understand but also to feel how powerful they are and how this power could be conveyed to their personnel. At the point at which these upcoming officers became physically and mentally exhausted I taught them to help others, and invariably a wondrous, previously hidden power was released that allowed them to carry on, making them extremely proud and fulfilled. It was magnificent.

Experience 3 I was a leadership trainer at a commercial organisation. We taught managers influencing skills and techniques. I found that leaders became very good at the tricks, but that in the process, they lost some of their authentic power. It was as though they had become fake in some way. I came to the conclusion that true leadership is not about learning tricks. It's about unleashing your authentic inner power and facing the fears that stop you giving yourself completely to your environment. I quit my job and started my own company.

Nowadays as an advisor and university lecturer I often work with leaders, their teams and their organisations. This has made me increasingly aware that leaders who have a lot of responsibilities are faced with a challenge. They want to develop, but have enough job-specific experience, skills and techniques. What they are searching for are ways to get more out of their job, sometimes more out of their lives. More fulfilment, more effectiveness, more of a sense that they are making a real contribution, that they are doing their job with purpose. They feel that they have

a lot to share, but every now and then, something is holding them back. In the open and honest talks I have had with them I have detected two common threads: they are searching for a mission that will allow them to make an inspiring contribution to the world around them, and they are unconsciously confronted with the negative aspects of their egos. Over the years I have developed insights and methods for dealing with these issues and created a tried and tested approach which leads to greater success and happiness.

I have been struck by something else too. People often dig too deep or, conversely, not deep enough, for a solution to a problem. Moreover, leaders look for structures and guidance in order to better deal with problems. While thinking about these points I was introduced to Bateson's (1972) theory of logical levels of thinking. Although this is an interesting model, it did not fully serve my purposes. I thought it lacked something. However, it inspired me to develop my own practically applicable model: the seven-layered model. The content arose from a synthesis of study, research, practical experience, talks with colleagues and literature study. As a lecturer in Authentic Leadership at Nyenrode, I have had the opportunity to further elaborate on this model over recent years. It is my ambition to pass on insights that are effective in practice.

Authentic Leadership goes beyond management. It concerns understanding your motives and discovering your mission, with the aim of inspiring and leading yourself and others. Authentic Leadership revolves around the fundamental questions in life: Who am I really? Why am I here? What's my mission? What do I stand for? According to my dictionary, 'authentic' means 'genuine' and, therefore, 'reliable'. Your mission lies hidden within your authenticity. Your mission is what gives your life meaning, the contribution you are going to make to the world. Many people understand the concept of leadership to mean 'managing others'. However, within the context of this book, I use the term 'leadership' in the sense of 'being an influencer'. Authentic Leadership therefore amounts to 'exerting influence with your mission in mind, in a genuine and reliable way'.

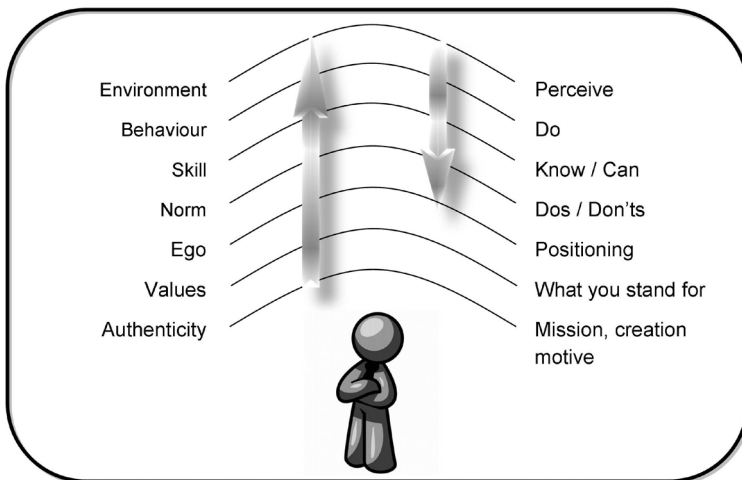
You will quickly learn to work with this field-tested, seven-layered model, which you can apply to yourself as well as to others. Through case

studies and a few exercises, you will undertake a reconnaissance of the seven layers of your existence. In reaching inwards, you will probably become increasingly curious about your core, your authenticity. What are your deepest motives, what mission lies behind all those layers?

Once you have found your core, you will be able to work towards the outside. Your mission will then guide your behaviour. Your problems will be cast in a different light. The model presented in this book will enable you to analyse and solve your problems. You will learn to understand your egos and you will discover and live your mission. You will learn to put Authentic Leadership into effect. Moreover, you will learn to help others to take the same steps that you are taking. These insights will therefore enable you to lead a more fulfilled and successful life.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK: THE SEVEN-LAYERED MODEL

The division of chapters is based on the seven-layer model with each chapter presenting the problems associated with a layer and suggesting approaches and solutions to the difficulties. Step by step, you will become acquainted with increasingly deeper layers. Chapters 1–4 provide a theoretical framework that will enable you to understand the most important insights of Chapters 5–8.



Chapter 1: The environmental layer

The outermost layer is the starting point. Most people project problems onto this layer: an obnoxious boss, a troublesome employee, a nagging neighbour, a weak government. You will come to understand that people's perception of their environment is often flawed, and is usually the result of selective perception. People who don't progress beyond this layer resort to complaining and position themselves as victims. In order to achieve Authentic Leadership, it is essential that you have an understanding of the psychological phenomenon of selective perception.

Chapter 2: The behavioural layer

This chapter explores the behaviour that you display in your environment and examines a number of psychological concepts such as self-image, self-fulfilling prophecy and self-talk. This knowledge is essential in order to be able to tackle deeper layers. You will discover what motives guide your behaviour and what results you hope to achieve which will allow you to experience the power of a strong vision. This process will raise a few questions: if I experience a problem in my environment, where does my responsibility to do something about it begin? What behavioural choices do I have? You will translate a problem from the first layer into the second, and will gain insights that will enable you to solve your problems more effectively.

Chapter 3: The skills layer

Why is it that some people can solve problems in a constructive way, while others always end up arguing? This chapter outlines ways in which you can deal with such issues and the relevant communication skills.

Chapter 4: The norms layer

What are norms, and to what extent do they influence our behaviour? Norms are often the decisive factor in whether we engage with, or ignore, a problem.

Chapter 5: The ego layer

In this chapter we will discuss what egos are, and how they function. You will discover why you unconsciously use them, what benefits and risks are involved and how you can overrule them when you realise they are not producing the results you desire. This is an important issue, since this is where you'll come up against a glass ceiling: something is obstructing your development, but you don't know what it is.

Chapter 6: The values layer

Values are the fundamental principles on which inner norms are based. The combination of norms and values in a specific environment is referred to as its 'culture'. This chapter will give you insight into the structure of a culture and how you can effectively deal with cultural conflicts. You will also explore the values that are important for your mission.

Chapter 7: The authenticity layer

This is the deepest and most important layer, the one that gives meaning to your life. This chapter deals with questions like: What is your mission? What really makes you fulfilled? What would you like to achieve? How can you operate more independently in your environment from within your 'self'? What would you like to contribute to the world around you? Why does authentic behaviour give you the best chance to achieve happiness and results?

Chapter 8: From ego to authenticity

This chapter deals with the recognition of the ego and authenticity layers and their integration. You will be shown how you can progress from ego to authenticity.

WEBSITE

In addition to the book, there is an Authentic Leadership website (www.authentiekleiderschap.nl/en). The website provides products, articles, examples of missions and an explanation of additional leadership skills.

INVITATION

I would like to invite you to go on a journey and examine yourself layer by layer. During your journey, take note of points that you can immediately put into practice. Make a note of striking events and anecdotes related to the issue of Authentic Leadership. Also try to keep track of the experiences that give you a sense of satisfaction, since this will help you to define issues in more concrete terms at a later stage.

Absorb the subject matter as a leader, not as a student. Start working on it immediately. Don't keep the subject matter to yourself. Take people along on your journey (some people select a sparring partner for their journey).

Visit the website, and follow me or our company on Twitter (@basblekingh and @authle respectively) to share your experiences with others. You can also find us on Facebook under 'Authentic Leadership'.

Enjoy both the journey and the destination!

Explanatory note

The original Dutch publication of this book in 2005 had quite an impact. I had not expected that individuals, teams and organisations would have such a great need for our philosophy. After a successful launch, the book has become a standard work in many management and coaching courses. We started a company called Authentiek Leiderschap, guiding individuals, teams and organisations to live according to the philosophy of Authentic Leadership. This approach demonstrably increases their success and sense of fulfilment.

Authentic Leadership has since become a catchphrase. It is a form of leadership that centres on a leader's inspiring mission. Thousands of leaders and influencers have been moved by the profound and, at the same time, practical insights of our philosophy with regard to Authentic Leadership. Does this mean that it is the only truth? Of course not! But it is a way of looking at things that very quickly penetrates the surface and facilitates the development of individuals, teams and organisations.

I wrote this revised edition in 2013 on the basis of new insights gained by my colleagues at Authentiek Leiderschap B.V. and myself in practice in the Netherlands and abroad. I did not need to rectify or retract anything for this new edition as everything still appeared to be up to date. However, I did add a few new insights and approaches:

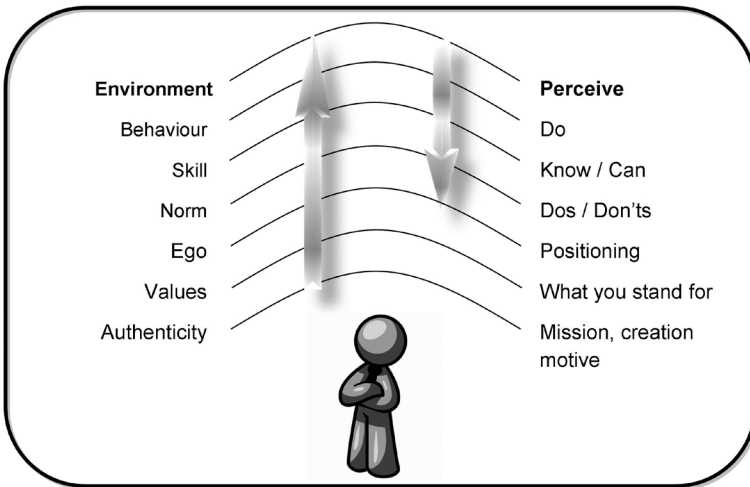
- How individuals, teams and organisations can stretch their comfort zones to gain success, self-confidence and job satisfaction.
- That you can distinguish between Comfort Zones, Growth Zones, Contraction Zones and Reckless Zones in behavioural development.
- How invisible, restricting patterns in organisations can be uncovered and made manageable.
- How restrictive norms can be turned into stimulating ones.
- How cultural development programmes *can* succeed and prevent people falling back into ‘old behaviour’.
- That an ego is really a good thing to have, that it can even enhance your authenticity.
- How you can deal with the excessive ego behaviour of others.
- How you can use the technique of defining a personal mission to define the mission of a team or organisation.

I received a great deal of assistance via my Twitter account (@basblekingh) from clients and colleagues for this revised edition, including a huge number of useful examples, suggestions and evidence from clients about how Authentic Leadership works in practice. The most common reactions were that Authentic Leadership leads to fast, profound and durable organisational development. I was slightly overwhelmed to receive these responses. Clients are our greatest source of inspiration. They are where the action is. To be able to go on a journey with them and witness their further development gives us a great sense of fulfilment.

Bas W. Blekkingh
Hilversum, April 2015

1

The environmental layer



As I mentioned in the Foreword, the structure of this book corresponds with the seven layers which make up all human beings. In this chapter I begin by introducing the first, outermost layer: the environmental layer. This is an important layer, since experience shows that most problems are projected onto this layer. I then explore three themes in greater detail: What does 'selective perception' mean? How do you define a problem on the environmental layer? What does selective perception mean in terms of how we communicate?

YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Imagine you're in a café getting a drink from the bar. The barman is busy so you have to wait. The person next to you (a stranger) is also waiting, so you strike up a conversation. What kinds of things do you talk about? You might tell him what part of town you live in, what line of work you're in, what your hobbies are, etc. In general, these are light topics. You will not tell him straight away that you always want to be liked, or that you think honesty is very important, or that you sometimes feel very insecure. Such topics are very likely to scare the other person off, since we are not used to broaching deep topics with strangers; we are inclined to discuss slightly 'safer' topics at a first encounter. What is striking is that these light topics are linked by a common thread: all of them say something about your environments: your residential environment, your home environment, your working environment and your recreational environment. Although you aren't saying very much about who you really are, you are saying something about how you look at these environments.

The environmental layer is an abstract concept. It is your layer, but it concerns the world around you. The environmental layer is important since most people project their problems onto this layer. They have problems with a controlling boss, for example, or a nagging neighbour, a hostile community or a declining market. Experience shows that people are quick to project their problems onto this outermost layer. You will later come to understand that this has little to do with Authentic Leadership. It is therefore worth examining this layer in greater detail.

TRY THIS...

Take off your watch without looking at it. Put it in your back pocket or somewhere else where you can't see it. If you don't wear a watch, use the clock you look at most often. Now take a piece of paper and a pen and draw what your watch looks like. You have three minutes. Draw in all the details: hands, numbers,

lines, points, brand, strap, colour.

Now get your watch out and compare it with your drawing. You will probably see differences: a different brand name, Roman instead of Arabic numerals, a forgotten date display, no lines, different colour. Some people even confuse a round watch with a square one. You may of course have drawn a perfect likeness. If so, you are one of the few (or you have a very basic watch). People look at their watch on average thirty times a day. This adds up to about 11,000 times a year. Nevertheless, many people don't know exactly what their watch looks like.

SELECTIVE PERCEPTION

I chose this example because it serves as a good illustration of the simple operation of selective perception. You don't know exactly what your watch looks like because you don't think it's important. It's as simple as that. You look at your watch a lot, but the only thing you really look at is the time. This means that you look at the position of the hands or the digital numbers. The last time you really saw what your watch looks like was probably when you bought or received it. You only perceive the things in your environment that you consider important – at a particular point in time. Incidentally, 'important' does not mean 'nicest'. It only says something about what is most on your mind at that particular point in time. This is largely a subconscious process.

The following examples may sound familiar:

- You have just bought a new car. You now see the same model everywhere you look (maybe even the same colour).
- You're sitting in a café and overhear someone say your name, although you didn't follow the rest of their conversation.
- The soft ticking of an alarm clock is keeping you awake, while all you want to do is sleep.

- You can think of hundreds of reasons why something will not work.
- You can think of hundreds of reasons why something will work.

The above examples (and thousands of others) have everything to do with selective perception. If you think your new car is important, you will see it everywhere you look, since you are (subconsciously) receptive to it. Other makes are less likely to catch your eye. Because you consider your name to be very important, you catch it among all the other sounds around you. Because you are annoyed, the ticking of the alarm clock assumes such importance that it becomes a dominant noise.

For these reasons, you fail to perceive many of the things in the world around you. You are also capable of misrepresenting things in your mind. For example, think of all the things on your watch that you failed to draw and all the things you drew which are not on your watch. You made associations in your mind which do not exist in reality. You seem to have a (mental) filter that filters out any information from the world around you that you consider unimportant: *selective perception* (see Figure 1.1). This clearly shows the need to be honest and self-aware about your perception of the world around you. What is true of your perception of your watch is even more so when you are forming an opinion about someone's behaviour. It is therefore essential to realise that when you interact with others, you don't see the truth, just your version of the truth.

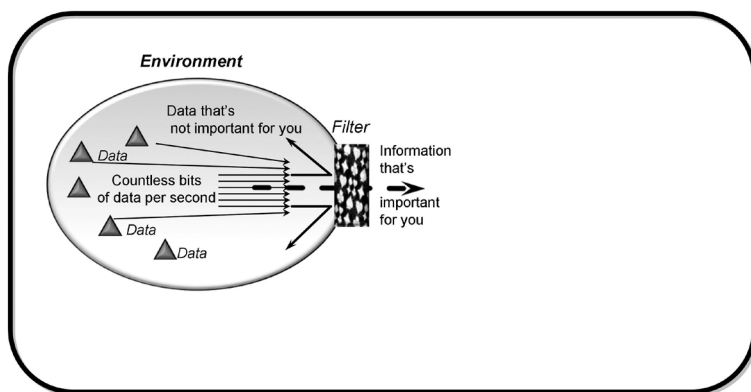


Figure 1.1 Filter operation

We use this filter because our system can't process an overload of information. Imagine having to register and store everything that happens in the world around you; it simply wouldn't be possible. A filter is a useful mechanism, however, you should be aware of its limitations. Because of it you fail to perceive many of the things that are really out there.

PROJECTING PROBLEMS ONTO THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAYER

People tend to project most of their problems onto the environmental layer. Problems that belong on the environmental layer concern a problematic environment. For example: I have a controlling boss, one of my colleagues is always complaining, my client is not paying her bills, today's youth are lazy, my neighbour is a nag, my parents have never supported me, there is famine in Sudan, the shop has sold out of cauliflower. In other words, both big and small problems can be found on the outermost layer. What they have in common is that the cause or 'fault' of the problem lies with your environment. The problem can be defined as:

My environment is the problem.

You therefore position yourself as a victim of this environment. For example: 'My boss doesn't take me seriously.' As I pointed out in the Foreword, it is important to project a problem onto the appropriate layer so that you can establish its *correct level*. With regard to problems on your environmental layer, you have to check if your perception – and the corresponding emotional response – is accurate, since you now know that your filter means that you are only receptive to things you consider important. You should therefore try to separate the things you perceive from how you label them. First, describe the facts as you perceive them in the world around you, that is, just describe what you see: my environment does this or that. In the example of the boss, this could mean that you replace 'My boss does not take me seriously,' with 'My boss never takes up my suggestions.' Then ask yourself two questions:

1. *Is that always the case?* 'Does my environment always...?' You may be oversimplifying things. In any case, try to see the nuances and re-define the problem. For example: 'My environment often...' In the example of the boss: 'My boss only takes up a few of my suggestions.'

2. *Is my judgement, or my label, correct?* ‘Is it really true that my environment...?’ ‘Can I think or feel differently about this?’ For example: ‘Is it really true that my boss doesn’t follow my suggestions?’ ‘Can I think or feel differently about this?’ ‘Could it actually have to do with the quality of my suggestions?’

Try to use your new insights to redefine the problem. Put the problem in the first person. We are going to make it your problem, not that of your environment. You will see that this casts your problem in a different light. For example: ‘I find it annoying not to know if the environment...’ or ‘It bothers me that my environment...’ In the example of the boss: ‘It bothers me that my boss only takes up a few of my suggestions.’

So now you’re at the wheel. It’s no longer your environment’s problem – it’s *your* problem. The good thing is that you can now turn in any direction you want: you can complain or deal with a problem, or you can accept a problem, or walk away from it. It’s your call, not that of your environment. You have perceived the world around you slightly more objectively and have consciously separated your perception from your emotional responses. This will enable you to work towards a better solution. In any case, it will put you in a better position to discuss a problem.

COMMUNICATION BASED ON SELECTIVE PERCEPTION

Conflicts sometimes arise because something goes wrong in the *manner of communication*. This is often because the person you’re speaking to feels too little opportunity to give his opinion. Things are presented too concretely, as if they are the only truth, not just a selective perception. By really accepting that you don’t determine the objective truth, and by being able to convey this to others, you enable the people around you to hold a mature dialogue. A few communication examples are given in Table 1.1.

Accept that others may hold other truths because of their filters. By understanding this, you will increase the chance of solving a problem properly. I will deal with this in greater detail in Chapter 3 when I discuss the SHAPE technique (sharing perceptions).

Table 1.1 Communication based on selective perception

It is not so	It is so
That's how it is	I think that's how it is/It's my impression that.../It would seem to me that...
You're so...	I think you're so...
That's nonsense	I think that's nonsense/I don't agree
It would be best if...	I think it would be best if...

TRY THIS...

Describe the environments you consider so important that you want to invest in them.

You spend time in different environments. To be able to translate theory into practice, it is advisable to choose three specific environments in which you would like to invest. Examples of environments include family, work and associations.

SUMMARY

The environmental layer consists of your environment as you perceive it. In other words, it is not your actual environment, since you only perceive the things that are important to you due to selective perception. Because a filter prevents an information overload, you fail to perceive many things that really exist.

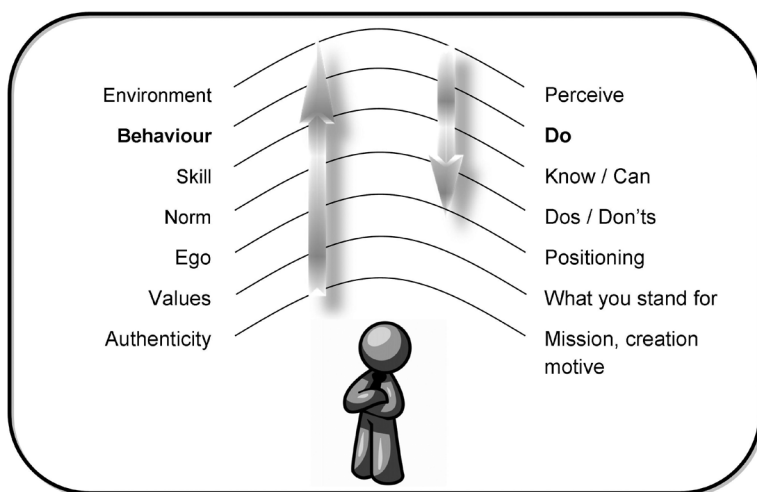
You may also think that things happened in your environment that never actually took place. You are capable of misrepresenting events in your mind.

Problems that belong on the environmental layer concern a problematic environment. In practice, many people project problems onto the environmental layer and leave it at that. In doing so, they position themselves as a victim. You are therefore well advised to examine problems on the environmental layer in greater detail. You can do so by taking a careful look at the problem definition. Ask yourself if the problem could have been oversimplified, if the emotional overtones you feel are justified. Always put a problem in the first person.

When you communicate with others, try to bear in mind that what you experience is only *your* perception, not the truth.

2

The behavioural layer



The second layer, the behavioural layer, concerns the behaviour you display in your environmental layer. I will first deal with the origins of behaviour. I then discuss the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy. You will then discover what motives drive your behaviour and what rewards you seek. This will help you see how effective it is to have a good vision. The potential rewards of behaviour are then further elaborated. I will show that, because of all kinds of processes in your inner world, you

are continually selecting the modes of behaviour from which you stand to gain the most at a particular point in time. This raises the question of your responsibility to do something about it. Finally, I will discuss the problem that belongs on this layer and the four approaches to it. You will gain new insights that will enable you to solve your problems, and those of others, more effectively.

People display different types of behaviour in their environment in order to exert influence on that environment:

- Peter has felt from an early age that it's no fun being alone. He has discovered that people respect and befriend him when he does his work better than they do. Peter works hard, very hard.
- Robert makes people laugh with his jokes.
- Hank is afraid of failure and therefore never opens his mouth.
- Jake gets his own way by dominating others.
- Anne tries to bond with others by telling them how hard she's got it.
- Joyce, the new manager, really needs recognition. She lets everyone see how good she is.
- Patrick questions his girlfriend Nancy's love for him. He often discusses this with her.

The behavioural layer is a clearly discernible layer on which you do all kinds of things: you talk, run, keep quiet, touch things. It is an important layer since it is the deepest layer that others can perceive of you. Others see, hear and feel your behaviour, selectively of course. The behaviour you display results from processes taking place inside and outside of you. Although we know a lot about the origins of behaviour, there is much more we don't know.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF BEHAVIOUR?

As we have seen, only some of the events in the world around you are allowed into your inner world. These environmental stimuli are eventually

transformed into information, or stories. There are many stories in your inner world, stories which you selectively perceived at one time and which you have developed over the years. These stories represent your 'truth'. About all the things you know and are capable of; about what you think of the world; about what is right and what is wrong; about how you see yourself and how you would like to be seen by others. Stories about why you're here on earth. Every story – or combination of stories – has its own qualification, its own judgement or label: something is hot, cold, pretty, ugly, safe, unsafe.

SELF-IMAGE

Some of the most important stories in your inner world are about your self-image: the stories about yourself. Have you noticed that you hold contradictory stories about yourself? On the one hand you're independent; on the other hand you need a lot of affirmation. You sometimes don't care what others think of you. At other times you are bothered by their criticism. One moment you want to be liked, the next you bring someone down. In other words, you appear to have several self-images. Incidentally, these are not all lofty (images): respectful, ambitious, modest, dedicated. They can also be everyday images: whether or not you like sprouts, whether you can ride a bike or drive a car. Your self-image is a motley collection of stories about yourself. About how you think you behave in certain situations. About what you do, think and feel in such situations. You will learn in Chapter 5 that self-images form the basis of what we later refer to as 'the ego'.

You saw in Chapter 1 how difficult it is to describe something 'real', such as your watch. It is even more difficult, if not impossible, to describe the truth about yourself. After all, who decides what the truth is? You? But if I think differently about you, surely that's true as well? You will see that different truths about you can exist side by side.

You are always filtering in information that confirms your self-image (in both positive and negative ways) and this is essential for your further development. For example, imagine having to give a presentation in front of twenty-five people. Your self-image tells you that you are not good at

giving presentations. A few things in the group will then immediately catch your attention:

- two members of the audience are checking the time (they already want to leave);
- two members of the audience are whispering to each other (they don't think it's very interesting);
- someone is looking out of the window (it's not interesting).

You simply fail to see the other twenty group members who may be listening carefully and taking notes. They are not as important to you. You only perceive what you consider to be important in your environment at a particular point in time. If you are (subconsciously) preoccupied with your inability to give presentations, your filter will be wide open to confirmation of this. You filter in information that confirms your own stories. Hence, you also filter in information that confirms your self-image.

Now let's turn things around. Imagine that you are confident of your ability to give good presentations. You will then make the following observations about the group:

- people are nodding their assent at all the conclusions you draw;
- two members of the audience are checking the time (they are sad to see that your presentation is almost over);
- two members of the audience are whispering to each other (the material you have presented prompted them to discuss a practical example);
- someone is looking out of the window (the presentation has given her something to think about).

You will see that one self-image perceives things in your environment which another self-image fails to perceive (people nodding). You will also see that both self-images perceive the same things, but with completely different emotional responses (people whispering). This is why some people regard something as an opportunity while others regard it

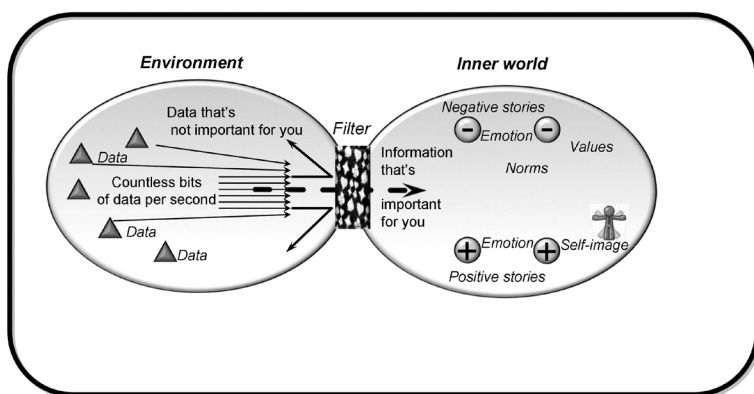


Figure 2.1 Filter, stories and self-image

as a problem. This is why some people like to take charge while others hate to do so. You either think that something suits you or not, that something fits in with your self-image or not (see Figure 2.1).

ASSOCIATION AND EVALUATION

Several processes take place in your inner world at the same time. On the one hand, your filter determines which stories it lets through and, on the other, the stories you have stored determine the openings in your filter; in other words, a chicken and egg situation. In any case, you are inclined to seek confirmation in your environment of previous stories. Of course this does not mean that you can't learn anything new; the various stories in your inner world develop at a terrific pace. Simply put: you learn faster in areas to which you – consciously and subconsciously – are more receptive. The number of stories about these themes will develop faster in your inner world than other stories. For example, someone who is interested in giving good presentations will learn good presentation skills faster than someone who is less interested in this. Associative and evaluative processes play an important role here.

You can (more or less artificially) put the processes that take place in your mind in order. This starts with certain environmental stimuli that are filtered in. This process is called *association*. When you make asso-

ciations, you ask yourself where you have come across this information before. You try to link this new information to old stories, thereby giving them meaning. Environmental stimuli are eventually transformed into information. The most important stories in your inner world will have the greatest effect on this association process. If you have experienced something that left a great impression on you, this will play a major role during the association process and will eventually determine your behaviour. This is also the reason why people who have had an intense experience, for example, are sometimes no longer 'their old selves' (in a positive or negative sense).

The next process in your inner world is the *evaluation* process, when you wonder what the consequences of a perceived event are. You ask yourself 'What implications did this have for me in the past? What implications does this have for me now? How should I label this information? Does it go with my self-image? What potential consequences does this information have for me?' You could say that the most important stories are collated during the association process, and that a label is attached during the evaluation process. Something is labelled as good, nice, disgusting, attractive, painful, etc. You will then assess the potential courses of action. The courses of action from which you eventually make your choice will, by and large, have produced the best results in the past.

Only now do you come to your *mode of behaviour*. How you eventually behave will result from a process that took place in your inner world. Your behaviour is determined by *your* associations and evaluations, not by the events in the world around you. In other words: it is *you*, not the world around you, that decides on the mode of behaviour which will produce the greatest rewards for you. Thus, if someone close to you says something awful about you, *you* will decide – consciously or subconsciously – how to assess and respond to this. Behaviour is therefore a (subconscious) choice. This is *always* the case. You will always display behaviour for which you stand to gain the most at a particular point in time. Even when you do something which you know is bad for you, this is bound to be offset by a greater reward. Take smoking, for example. You know that smoking is bad for you, but still do it. For a smoker, the short-term rewards of smoking exceed the long-term rewards of giving

up smoking. What complicates matters is that a 'good' reward for one person is not necessarily a 'good' reward for another (e.g. a criminal's goals are *very* different from his victim's).

Although the association and evaluation processes are portrayed here as simple, one-off, clear, steady, objective processes, many association and evaluation processes take place within a fraction of a second. In his book *Flow*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi discusses the quantity of information humans can handle. It appears that we can process no more than seven pieces of information (e.g. sounds, visual stimuli, recognisable nuances of emotion, thoughts) at a time. We can distinguish eighteen different sets of information per second, that is, no more than 126 per second or 7,560 per minute. That seems like a lot except that Csikszentmihalyi also states that you need forty pieces of information per second to be able to hear what someone is saying, not counting the other bits of information we register (e.g. facial expression, clothing, touch). Moreover, when you realise that speech content only accounts for 10% of influence, sound and volume 30% and non-verbal communication 60%, you will realise how difficult it is to fully understand the person you're speaking to.

You will therefore select the (mode of) behaviour which you think will produce the *greatest rewards*, that is, a mode of behaviour is selected which benefited you the most or cost you the least in the past. This process takes place during major *and* minor decision-making: when you duck an overhanging branch *and* when you buy a property. You might imagine that many associations made when buying a property are made consciously, while ducking a branch has become a learned response. But in both examples, you decide on a particular mode of behaviour having 'considered' the consequences of both events during the evaluation process. The entire process (from association and evaluation to behaviour) is represented in Figure 2.2.

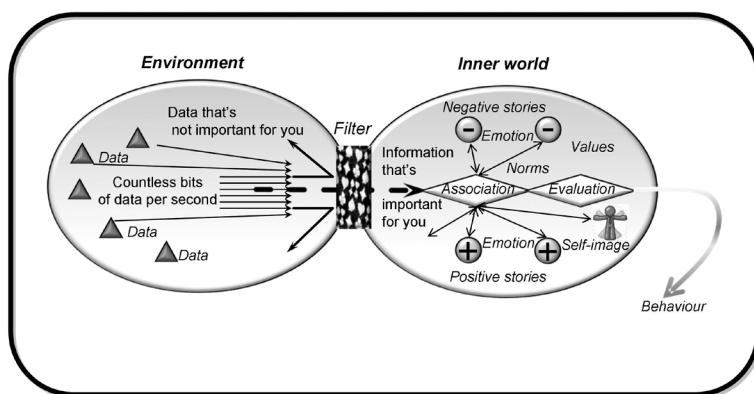


Figure 2.2 From association and evaluation to behaviour

TRY THIS...

Describe the events (e.g. a death, being fired, illness, divorce, an accident) that had such an impact on your life that they affected your behaviour at a later stage. Also consider whether this effect was a positive one.

If that was not the case, try to add nuance to the story by using the information from Chapter 1 (defining a problem on the first layer). Otherwise this story might continue to have an excessively negative effect on your further development.

Describe the various self-images you recognise in yourself: What kind of person are you? You might want to ask your partner or a good friend which of your images they recognise. It will of course be interesting to compare the differences and determine the situations/environments in which they arise (I will discuss various self-images in detail in Chapter 5).

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

The behavioural examples from the beginning of this chapter are repeated below. These concern almost subconscious behaviour. I will now add a few examples of potential rewards:

- Peter has felt from an early age that it's no fun being alone. He has discovered that people respect and befriend him when he does his work better than they do. Peter works hard, very hard. His career is progressing very nicely. He is praised by his colleagues. They are happy to work with him. Now he is never alone.
- Robert makes a lot of people laugh with his jokes. This gets him the respect he longs for.
- Hank is afraid of failure, so he never opens his mouth. He therefore doesn't make any mistakes and is allowed to stay in the group.
- Jake gets his own way by dominating others. This makes others respect him and do what he wants.
- Anne often tries to bond with others by telling them how hard she's got it. She feels better when she gets support and understanding from others.
- Joyce, the new manager, really needs recognition. She lets everyone see how good she is. Everyone respects her for her achievements.
- Patrick questions his girlfriend Nancy's love for him. He often discusses this with her. By talking about it, Nancy can tell him how much she loves him, thereby removing his doubts.

Everyone in the above examples has displayed – consciously or subconsciously – behaviour that has produced a desired reward. In psychology, this process is known as a '*self-fulfilling prophecy*'. You are (sub)consciously living the story you have stored. The people in these examples want to create something and all of them accomplish the positive story they have stored in their heads. In themselves, these are logical stories. The examples are given again below, with different endings:

- Peter has felt from an early age that it's no fun being alone. He has discovered that others respect and befriend him when he does his work better than they do. Peter works hard, very hard. He surpasses everyone. Because he wants to be the best, he sees everyone else as a competitor. Others are therefore reluctant to work with him. He has complained lately of feeling increasingly lonely.
- Robert thinks he always has to be funny. He therefore becomes less fun to be around. He feels that others are not taking him seriously.
- Hank is afraid of failure, so he never opens his mouth. He therefore doesn't contribute to the group and doesn't really belong in it.
- Jake gets his own way by dominating others, and they try to thwart him in increasingly subtle ways.
- Anne often tries to bond with others by telling them how hard she's got it. The people around her think she is a moaner and drop her.
- Joyce, the new manager, has so much need for recognition that she becomes impossible to work with.
- Patrick questions his girlfriend Nancy's love for him. He discusses this with her almost every day. Nancy is increasingly annoyed with Patrick because she feels her integrity is being attacked.

These examples also reflect the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy. You ensure that the story is realised as predicted in your inner world. However, the ending turns out to be different from the one you had envisioned. This is probably because in the second example it was a negative story driving the behaviour. A self-fulfilling prophecy is an important and very complex phenomenon. It is nice when it leads to fulfilment and success, but it is very annoying when it has negative consequences. Imagine having a very negative story about something in your inner world, like Robert, who thinks he always has to be funny or else he'll be thrown out of the group. The following will then take place in your inner world:

1. You will only perceive the things in your environment which you consider important at a particular point in time. Unfortunately, 'important' does not necessarily mean that these things are pleasant or

positive, it could also be an unpleasant but relevant experience. You will therefore filter in information that conforms to this negative experience. (Once again, they're not paying any attention to me.)

2. You will use previous negative stories to make associations and evaluations. (I've been through this before. They will surely throw me out of the group.)
3. The negative story drives one's behaviour. (I've almost been thrown out of the group. I must stop this happening.)
4. Even if you start behaving differently to avoid this negative story, the image of this story will still feature prominently in the background. (I'll just play the joker. That stopped me being thrown out of the group in the past.)
5. Fear will continue to play a role in your behaviour. You will provoke the negative story by your very efforts to prevent it. (Still not expelled from the group? I'll just play the joker again.) Your filter is still wide open to information that confirms these fears. (They're already laughing less enthusiastically. Oops, this is going wrong. One more joke?)
6. Your fears will come true through your very efforts to compensate for them. (You see, they're tired of me. They're ignoring me. They're going to throw me out of the group. I knew it!).

If your fears continue to drive your behaviour, the negative self-fulfilling prophecy will cause them to come true in the long-term. You need to replace the negative story with a stronger positive one. I will elaborate this further in Chapter 5. The negative self-fulfilling prophecy is represented in Figure 2.3.

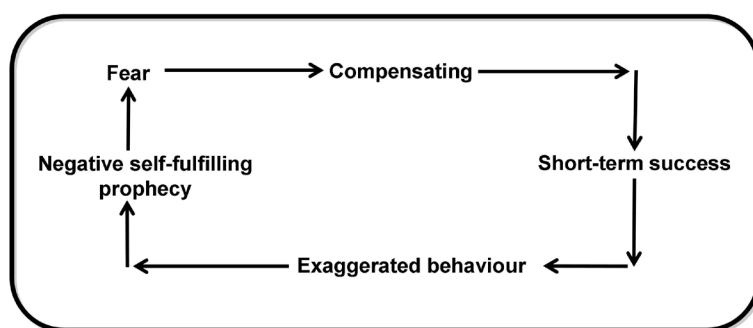


Figure 2.3 *Negative self-fulfilling prophecy*

It is important that you recognise a negative story about yourself and turn it into a positive one. Take your time with this. If you think you're not capable of something, think back to when certain things did work out. Try to find out why they worked out well then. Try to project these examples onto the current situation. Try to imagine that the situation you're facing is going extremely well. Try to fill your inner world with relevant positive stories. This will give you some control over your self-fulfilling prophecy. Bear in mind that this will only work if you really believe in the positive story you're thinking of. Modern techniques involving visualising something you really don't believe in simply do not work.

SELF-TALK

Self-talk is behaviour that follows on from a self-fulfilling prophecy when you tell yourself that something will or will not work (the field of neurolinguistics has delved extensively into this area). This self-talk can take place in your mind or actually be verbalised. A self-fulfilling prophecy is affected by the way you talk to yourself. If you are always telling yourself that something will not work, the 'it will not work story' becomes increasingly strong in your inner world. You will therefore filter in information that confirms this. If you persistently engage in negative self-talk, you will find that you start behaving in ways that *cause* the negative consequence. Therefore, be wary of self-talk. If you talk negatively about yourself to yourself, this can be dangerous. If you recognise this, realise

that it won't help you and replace it with positive self-talk. For example, replace 'I'll never manage this' with 'I will bring out the best in myself' or 'I'll show them the best I've got'. The self-fulfilling prophecy and self-talk are shown in Figure 2.4.

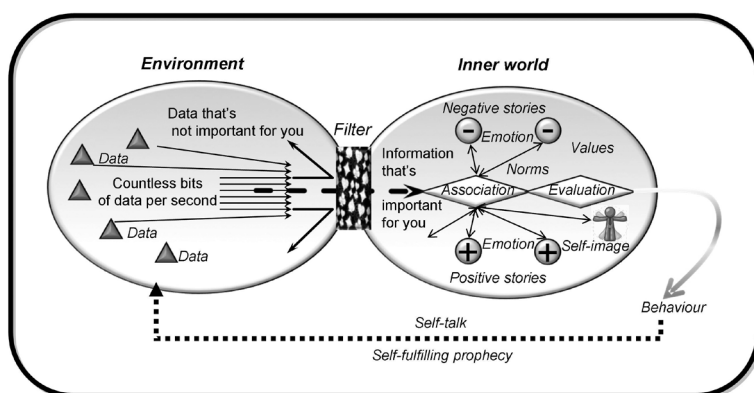


Figure 2.4 Self-fulfilling prophecy and self-talk

THINKING IN TERMS OF CONSEQUENCES

The behaviour you display comes from envisioning a particular consequence in your inner world during the evaluation process. The consequence that produces the greatest rewards will determine your choice of behaviour. Seen from this perspective, there are only two key behavioural motives: *fear* and *creation* (see Figure 2.5 for a simple representation of thinking in terms of consequences). You often see *fear* and *love* used together – perhaps an even better choice of words. However, I have noticed that many leaders are uncomfortable with the word 'love', so I use the word 'creation' in this book – fear of something and creation of something. This is not to say that fear is something akin to horror or being afraid, and that creation can only be found in great things. No, what I mean here is that fear makes you avoid a negative consequence and that creation makes you achieve a desired consequence. Both motives are rewarded, but the underlying motives differ. The insights from this section can help you enormously as an educator, manager, coach or friend.

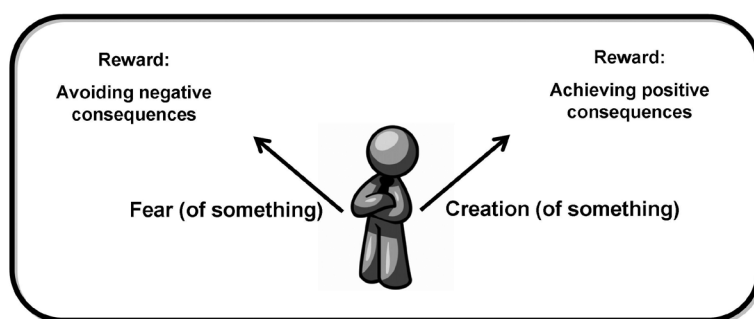


Figure 2.5 Thinking in terms of consequences: two motives

THE FEAR MOTIVE

We're sitting together in a room and I throw a poisonous snake on the floor, three metres from where you are sitting. The snake slithers towards you. What do you do? If you are not extremely fond of these reptiles *and* don't know how to deal with them, I expect you will quickly get up and rush out of the room. Why is that? You will say it was because of the snake, but that is not completely true. There is no denying the snake, but that is not what you are really afraid of. You are afraid of the *consequence* of the snake. The consequence is a painful bite, or even worse, a deadly bite. Because you don't want to be bitten, you avoid this consequence and rush from the room. You stand to gain most by leaving the room.

Incidentally, as is more often the case with fear motives, a deeper fear often drives your behaviour. For example, you might consider business to be 'not very challenging' while really you're afraid of being rejected by potential customers. With an eye on your work–life balance, you don't want to climb the management ladder, while really you're afraid of being rejected by management or fellow board members.

Back to the snake. What goes on in our inner worlds? The fact of the approaching snake is filtered in. You make associations: Where have I seen this before? In a film, in a book, in real life ...? You evaluate: how will I be rewarded for this? With pain and death? What are my best options? To avoid pain or death. Your behaviour: get out!

A less extreme example is the overhanging branch. You duck because you want to avoid the negative consequence of a painful encounter with the branch. You stop for a red light because you want to avoid the consequence of a crash or a fine. You take your medication because you want to avoid the consequence of illness. Peter, from the examples given earlier, thinks he always has to be the best in order to avoid the consequence of being lonely. Robert thinks he always has to be funny because he is afraid of being excluded from the group. Hank keeps his mouth shut because he is afraid of failure. In short, fear is not the same as being afraid. This distinction is important since fear *can* be a very good counsellor.

Is fear in our genes?

This appears to be the case. Our ancestors had to continually survey their surroundings for danger. They had to be alert and able to react quickly. Danger could take them by surprise at any moment and devour them. The fact that we now predict all kinds of dangerous consequences enables us to anticipate them at an early stage.

What is good about the fear motive?

- The reward of the fear motive is that you will not die before your time and that you will be able to hold your own in unsafe environments. In this context, 'unsafe' is understood to mean 'an environment where something unwanted may happen'. You wouldn't survive a day without the fear motive (think of using the road without the fear motive).
- Fear equips you with a survival strategy and protects you from misfortune.
- Fear comprises what is called the 'push factor'; it 'pushes' you out of your current situation and may therefore lead to further development.
- The fear motive keeps you on your toes and ensures that you take immediate action: fight or flight.

- Fear makes you act faster. You simply have to, otherwise ...
- The sense of relief you get when you have avoided a negative consequence, when you see that the danger is over, can be great.

Business-wise, use of the fear motive (fear of the competition, fear of deteriorating working conditions, etc.) could have a positive, short-term impact. Fear can create a sense of urgency for forthcoming changes. However, when fear persists as the overriding motive it will have a paralysing effect. People will be truly motivated when they can work towards a vision. This is where we speak of a creation motive, since you want to create something. You have desires and ambitions that you want to fulfil. Some managers know how to use the fear motive at the right time, as a starting point, and to subsequently switch to the liberating creation motive. Thus they increase the sense of urgency in the short-term to motivate people to start acting (the push factor). Then they use the liberating vision to motivate people to work towards a desired outcome (the pull factor).

Business-wise, the fear motive can also have a short-term impact in that fear unites people: us against the wicked outside world. You can see this within families, teams, departments, organisations, cities, countries, religions, etc. Some companies create a common enemy as a rallying point. We have also seen many times how politicians divert attention from dismal internal affairs by focusing attention on a common enemy. Many demagogues were able to mobilise whole communities to keep out 'evil forces'.

What difficulties are there with the fear motive?

- It's a reactive motive.
- Your environment determines your behaviour.
- You *feel* that you have very little choice.
- Fear makes you dependent.
- It can be emotionally draining.

- Many negative feelings might arise.
- It may leave you feeling insecure.
- Fear can lead to panic, and thus poor decisions.
- Too many stressful or frightening incidents might stop you trying new things and keep you from developing further. You will simply hide in your shell.
- Your comfort zone may shrink.
- It takes a lot of energy to deal with fear.
- Fear may cause you to do only the things you *have* to do (as opposed to *want* to do). If this motive forms the basis for your behaviour for too long, something will snap inside you, you will become highly-strung or passive. This applies to individuals as well as groups. Fear is contagious, especially when expressed as a complaint.
- One fear motive often gives rise to another.
- In the long-term, the mechanism of the negative self-fulfilling prophecy leads towards the realisation of your fears.
- The leader who uses the fear motive a lot may find that it escalates out of his control. It is quite an achievement to be able to channel it successfully, and a disaster if you can't.

What are our deepest fears?

Our deepest fears are instinctive. The three main ones are:

1. Fear of death.
2. Fear of physical pain.
3. Fear of being expelled from a group (resulting in pain and death for social animals). And this is separate from the emotional pain we might feel. The fear of being expelled from a group is one of the biggest fear motives driving our behaviour (see also Chapter 5).

You will appreciate that firefighters, construction workers, soldiers and other professionals have to deal with all three of these fears on a regular basis.

You can also project your fears onto those close to you; you naturally want to keep your loved ones safe from death, physical pain and expulsion from a group.

THE CREATION MOTIVE

We're back in the room together. I tell you that there is a big surprise for you in the room next door. What do you do? You will probably get up and go next door to see what your surprise is. You long for a desired consequence. The information about the nice surprise is filtered into your inner world. You make associations: Where have I seen this before? Past surprises? You evaluate: What do I stand to gain by this? Is it nice for me? What are the potential courses of action? I can remain seated or I can act. What decision worked out the best in the past? Taking action! Your behaviour: you will do the thing by which you stand to gain the most; you will get up and go to the other room.

I have used a simple example to illustrate the simplicity of things. Your behaviour in both cases – the snake and the surprise – is identical: you leave the room. Only the motive and emotional state are (completely) different. It is much nicer to do something based on the creation motive than based on the fear motive. It is nicer to desire something than to prevent something. It is nicer to *want* to do something than to *have* to do something.

Is the creation motive in our genes?

This appears to be the case. It is our deepest motive to create things. Our species would quickly die out if the will to create (offspring) was no longer in our genetic material. The term survival of the fittest says it all: only those species that are continually able to develop will survive. All species pass on their best genetic material to their offspring. Humans are able to do so consciously by creating a story and planning for it.

What's special about human beings is that we are able to envision the consequences far into the future. We are therefore able to create grand visions and anticipate dangers early. It is one of the skills that has enabled our species to survive.

What's good about the creation motive?

- The creation motive motivates and forms the basis of a vision you want to work towards. The creation motive creates a pull factor and has a proactive effect. You are positively motivated to achieve a certain objective.
- The path to this objective is enjoyable in itself.
- The rewards of the creation motive are therefore two-fold: it is nice to work towards a goal *and* it makes you feel good when you achieve it.
- Working with a vision in mind motivates the people around you. It can mobilise forces to travel the same path. Keeping a desired consequence in mind can bring out the best in others and therefore brings people together.
- The creation motive has a long-term effect.
- Success in creation leads to a rise in self-confidence.
- It's not a matter of 'having to' but 'wanting to'.
- You use the creation motive the most when your environment feels safe. Because you then don't need to worry about any negative consequences, you will feel able to focus exclusively on the vision.
- The creation motive forms the basis for all positive creations. You create things and elevate yourself and the world around you to a higher level.
- Success resulting from the creation motive brings with it a sense of satisfaction or fulfilment, instead of just a sense of relief.
- Creation inspires creation. When the people around you see that you really act according to this motive, you will see that they too adopt

this approach. In this way, you will bring out the best in a team, organisation, religion, etc. The creation motive is therefore inspiring. A successful team-building session is a good example. When the first member of a team really opens up and shows both her good and vulnerable sides, you will see that this encourages others to follow suit. In this way, the group develops a much deeper bond and commitment to jointly want to create something beautiful.

- The creation motive ensures a positive self-fulfilling prophecy.

As the person ultimately responsible, your challenge is to allow this motive to become paramount within the team's collaboration (and also, for example, in your dealings with customers and suppliers): the desire to really build something beautiful, of which all parties can be proud. You can assume that all parties will embrace this. You can judge the quality of a leader by the extent to which he allows the creation motive to drive behaviour and is able to mobilise the creation motives of the people around him. This is an important aspect of Authentic Leadership.

What is difficult about the creation motive?

It is not always easy to appreciate the immediate short-term effects. You may be so motivated by and convinced of the thing you want to create that you lose sight of the risks – you become too reckless. This may lead to disappointment. It is not always easy for leaders to hold on to the creation motive, since it is sometimes seriously put to the test; some staff members become deeply disappointed as a result of past experiences and no longer perceive their environment as safe, making them approach all positive initiatives with mistrust.

The interesting thing (as shown by the examples of the snake and surprise) is that two behaviours can be identical, while their underlying motives are different. And that a motive can be changed. However, this requires you to take a good look at yourself, so you realise that some things/activities stem from the fear motive. By now, you will also have learned that, in the case of fear, a negative self-fulfilling prophecy will not bring you any success or happiness in the long-term, while you must

be careful not to become reckless if the creation motive takes over. These important themes will keep cropping up throughout this book. The different types of rewards or consequences of the motives are set out in Figure 2.6.

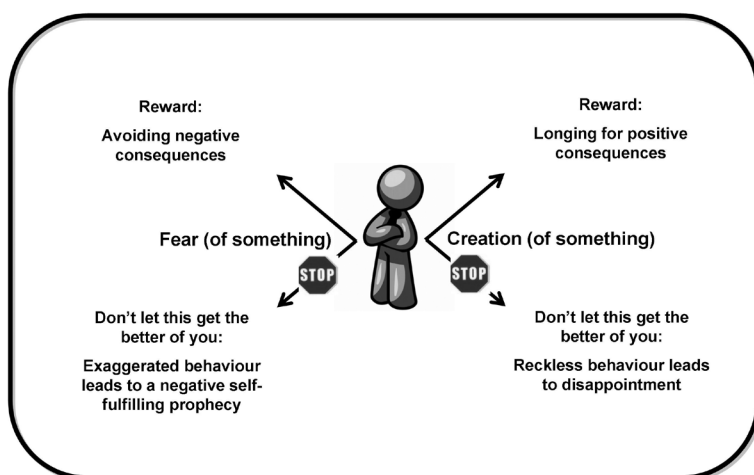


Figure 2.6 Rewards of the fear and creation motives

Some of the characteristics of the fear and creation motives are listed in Table 2.1. It is clear that both motives are necessary in one way or another. They seem to share the same source: the will to live. If you want to advance to a level where you want your creation motive to drive your behaviour, it is important to first examine your fear motives, since the things you don't want say a lot about the things you do want. The trick of Authentic Leadership is to recognise your fear motives and turn them into creation motives. An authentic leader is familiar with his fear motive, but allows himself to be driven by his creation motive since this brings out the best in himself and others and combines success with a greater sense of fulfilment.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of the fear and creation motives

Fear	Creation
Avoid negative consequences	Realise positive consequences
Push factor	Pull factor
Fear protects you from misfortune	Creation leads you to a sense of fulfilment
Reactive	Proactive
'Having to'	'Wanting to'
You are driven by external forces	You are driven by internal forces
Is used in unsafe environments (something bad might happen)	Is used in safe environments (I can be myself)
Dependent	Independent
Has an immediate effect	Is lasting
Has a short-term effect	Has a long-term effect
Makes you alert	Motivates you in a positive way
You feel good when you achieve the end result	You feel good while carrying out an activity
Infects others	Inspires others
Its contagion may result in panic or apathy	Its contagion may blind you to things
As a management style, this requires a great deal of control	As a management style, this does not require much control
Able to mobilise the effective evil of humans	Able to mobilise the effective goodness of humans

TRY THIS...

Try to discover what your fear motives are. What negative consequences are you trying to avoid? What are you really afraid of? Are you afraid of dying, failing, of not being thought of as the best? Carry out a self-examination. When you have discovered your fear motives, you will be able to explain your behaviour and emotional responses in a variety of situations. You should realise that fears are a fact of life; they are useful, but you should also be able to put them into perspective. You cannot directly overcome all fears and there is no reason to. Fear motives can benefit you. By understanding your fear motives, you will be more inclined to accept them and might let them become less powerful – if you choose to do so. One fear might be hiding a deeper fear. It helps in this self-examination to keep asking yourself: ‘Why is that bad?’. For example: I’m afraid of failure. Why is that bad? Because the people around me will no longer respect me. Why is that bad? Because I will be cut down to size. Why is that bad? Because people will think I’m useless. Why is that bad? They will expel me from the group. You may have uncovered a deeper fear here: the fear of being expelled from a group, or the fear of no longer making a difference (incidentally, this fear often lies behind other fears).

Incidentally, in my practice I have learned that, deep inside, many managers are afraid of having their shortcomings – which they have recognised in themselves – exposed. A closer examination has revealed that, like all managers, they sometimes follow their instincts, making many decisions ‘by the seat of their pants’. Instead of seeing this as a strength they fear being found out. In the next section you will examine the creation motives that can help you to deal with these fears.

VISION

Creating a vision helps to turn a fear motive into a creation motive. I use the word 'vision' to mean: *an image of a desired future*. You can create a vision about any subject, whether it be a future sketch of your company or your family composition. You portray your environment or yourself as you wish it to be. The power of a good vision is that it makes people more effective. People with a vision have a clear motivation and a sense of the direction they wish to take, because they are driven by the creation motive. In a variety of situations, the vision can be a beacon on which to focus behaviour. It would be interesting to explain this using the themes discussed in this chapter. If you have developed a strong vision, this means it has been stored in your inner world as an important story. A strong vision changes your perception of your environment. You will filter in information that is important for your vision. This does not require any extra effort (see Figure 2.7). Provided that you think of your vision as realistic you should, as it were, really be able to live it. When you close your eyes, you should be able to describe what you see, hear, feel and, possibly, smell and taste. You should be able to describe your behaviour at that particular point in the future (see also Chapter 7).

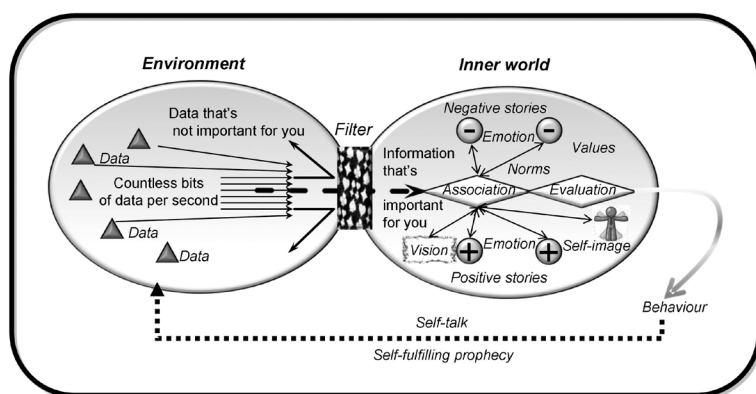


Figure 2.7 Vision in the inner world

As a leader, it is a challenge to create a vision *and* share it with others. If others adopt your vision, they too will become more effective through selective perception. To realise this, it will not be sufficient to share your

vision a couple of times and prepare a document or presentation about it. No, you will have to take your associates on an imaginary journey to this future situation several times. Think of a way to firmly establish the vision as a strong story in their inner worlds. Let them 'live' it as if it has already been realised. The example of Martin Luther King has inspired many leaders to approach their colleagues with an 'I have a dream' narrative (whereby the dream is presented as a modern-day truth). Some companies have produced a 'newspaper', dated five years in the future, containing articles, interviews and adverts that portray the vision. Use your creativity or hire creatives. Present your vision as if it were today's reality.

Is a vision an end in itself or a means to an end?

At first glance a vision appears to be an objective. You talk about an image of a desired future, a kind of end-game. At a higher level of abstraction, you see that having a vision is a means to an end. It enables you to effectively make use of the way you behave in the here and now. It focuses your activities. You could therefore say that a vision is a means to an end, intended to make your behaviour more effective and lead to a wished-for, positive self-fulfilling prophecy. The good thing is that every step that brings you closer to your vision is a joy in itself. The journey is as rewarding as the destination. Treat yourself to such a journey and develop visions about environments you wish to invest in. A vision will allow you to let your creation motive lead the way, with all the associated benefits.

TRY THIS...

Think back to Chapter 1 and the exercise in which you described the environments you would like to invest in. Take your time to develop a vision of each environment. Answer the following question: what will this environment look like in five years' time if everything works out the way I want? The second clause is particularly important. Assume that everything works out; don't let yourself be held back by just focusing on the impossibilities.

Now try to turn your fear motive into a creation motive. Instead of 'preventing something', look for 'something to create, something you want to achieve'. Create a vision in which fear no longer plays a role. You can do this by describing the (positive) opposite of your fear. For example, 'fear of death' becomes 'enjoy every day', 'failure' becomes 'give it a chance to succeed'. Another example which will be recognised by many managers is the fear of not being thought of as the best; that is why they want to be 'the best'. Managers who want to be the best make themselves dependent on their rivals. If a competitor scores a six, the best will need to score a seven; if a competitor scores an eight, the best will have to score a nine. Such constant comparison is exhausting. A good alternative is to aim to 'bring out the best in yourself'. This will put the ball in your court, and your rival's score won't matter so much.

If you are confronted by a fear (e.g. not being the best), you can consider the following courses of action:

- Make light of the fear when you recognise it (It's him again).
- Ask yourself if your fear is justified (Will I really be thrown out if I'm not the best?). If it's not true, your fear will largely disappear.
- Try to find out what the rewards of your fear are, what you stand to gain by it (I won't be expelled from the group).
- Then try to find out what the rewards of the alternative creation motive are (I'm giving them the best I've got. There's nothing more I can do).
- Now select which motive you want to lead the way and behave accordingly (If I give the best I've got and focus on that, the best results will automatically follow. In any case, they'll certainly want to keep me in the group).

BEHAVIOURAL REWARDS

You have already seen that your behaviour is determined by the story that produces the greatest rewards. You behave according to what you stand to gain. You want (often subconsciously) to realise or avoid a certain consequence. If you want to change your behaviour in certain environments, it is important to find out what rewards steer or drive your behaviour. Below you will find various rewards that could be the basic motive for your behaviour.

Staying alive (don't die)

This is the reason we stop for a red light and don't climb over the fence in a zoo to see whether crocodiles are really as fast as people say. This is also why many people avoid getting involved in a fight. Conversely, it is what moves some people to live life on the edge; they want to feel the thrill of being alive (e.g. bungee jumping and parachuting).

Avoiding physical pain

Not being in pain is often a reward for our behaviour. This is why we are generally careful. This is what we try to teach our children from an early age. People who have experienced pain are more likely to seek this reward. Simple examples: wearing shin-guards in football and a helmet on a motor bike.

Seeking sensory stimulation

In contrast with 'avoiding physical pain', we often seek out positive stimuli, such as a good feeling, taste or smell, or seeing or hearing something beautiful. It is the reward that motivates you to go to the hairdresser, or to a good concert. It is why you want to have a good meal, or put on a nice perfume.

Being right

I mention this separately because it is an important reward, even though it can obstruct your further development. You sometimes think it's more important to be proved right that you are not something than to receive confirmation that you are. This is largely a hindrance for people with a negative self-image. They are (subconsciously) trying to prove, via a negative self-fulfilling prophecy, that they are not cut out for something. When this is finally shown to be the case, they seem to be overcome with relief ('I told you I couldn't do it'). Being proved right justifies not having to try again. Even if something does work out, you might put it down to chance, since 'I'd rather be right about being unable to do something so I can stop trying' than 'run the risk of failure when trying'.

Financial security

Money is important. It allows you to buy beautiful, enjoyable and useful things for yourself and others. It is also one of the reasons you work. Perhaps it's also one of the reasons not to correct your boss (when you could well do so): it could have financial consequences. In my practice I have found that people sometimes exaggerate financial consequences. When you actually lay out the consequences in concrete terms (e.g. by describing a worst-case scenario should you be fired), finances hardly appear to play a role at all. People usually manage for a while, until they find a new job. The same is true of many people who want to strike out on their own but are afraid to do so because of the financial risks involved. Here too we see that these fears can be dismissed if we put them in concrete terms.

Pursuing instant gratification

This is a 'tricky' reward since it's difficult to recognise. We are sometimes driven by instant gratification, although we know this may result in a more negative reward in the longer term. Take smoking, for example. Everyone knows that smoking is unhealthy, but giving up doesn't produce immediate results. This also applies to people who want to lose weight; eating fatty or sugary foods provides instant gratification, while

losing weight doesn't provide rewards until much later. Another example is that we're not always prepared to confront others directly about improving their behaviour in the long-term as we gain less from this than from maintaining a good relationship in the short-term.

Feeling recognised: receiving confirmation that you make a difference

This is the deepest mental reward you strive for, consciously but mostly subconsciously. It touches on the core message of this book. You want to receive confirmation that your life has meaning. This 'proof' can be obtained in two different ways.

In the first place, your creation. You are a creative being. You create all kinds of things, for yourself and for others. If the human species didn't have this motive, it would probably have died out a long time ago. Seeing your final creation proves that you exist, that you make a difference. That is a nice feeling. If you hadn't been around, your creation would never have been realised. Having children is a good example of creation that you are reminded of every day. Other examples include writing a book, painting a picture, setting up a company and helping the people around you to develop further.

Creating is a way to have your 'being' here on earth confirmed. Being and creation are therefore two concepts that go hand-in-hand. A creation is tangible proof of your existence. You recognise your 'being' in your creation: $\text{Creating} \approx \text{Being}$.

The trick is to be conscious of the things you want to create. You can develop this skill. You can rise to a level where you are continually aware of the things you want to create. This is another way of saying that your creation motive leads the way. Why should that be so? Because it is so rewarding. It gives you a sense of fulfilment when you try to define yourself through something you create. The question of why this makes us feel so good has preoccupied me for a long time. What else makes us feel good? You could think, for example, of eating, drinking and sex. Apparently we need all of these to continue to exist, and they reward our body and soul with a good feeling. After all, it would be difficult to have to

eat regularly, let alone have sex, if these were not pleasurable activities. Evolution has probably made sure that the human species is rewarded for behaviour that guarantees its continued existence. This may also be the case with the good feeling you get when you create something. By creating, we guarantee the continued existence of our kind. Because it feels good to be rewarded, humans are stimulated to pass on, in whatever shape or form, the best they have got to give to others. Practice has shown that people experience the greatest sense of fulfilment when they realise a desired creation. They wouldn't do this if they didn't feel safe in their environment. They would otherwise have to put most of their energy into 'staying alive'.

The moral of this story is that creating rewards you with the good feeling that 'you make a difference'. This is your deepest motive. It is perhaps your deepest subconscious motive to give life the best of your life. Authentic Leadership is the ability to lead yourself and others according to this creation motive. Your reward is the enjoyment of the creation process as well as the enjoyment of the creation itself. In combination these give you a sense of fulfilment.

The second way to realise the reward that 'you make a difference' is to receive recognition from the people around you. The people around you can show that you make a difference. They may respect, reward, acknowledge, involve, comfort you, etc. This makes you feel accepted by a group. This makes you feel secure. You often consider (subconsciously) whether a certain behaviour will strengthen your position in a group, or whether you wish to maintain your position. The reward of 'not being expelled from the group' determines the behaviour of a lot of people a lot of the time, without them necessarily being aware of it. Questions that preoccupy us in this respect are:

- Am I good enough?
- Am I independent enough?
- Am I innocent?
- Will I be pitied?
- Will I fail?

- Am I nice, attractive, funny enough?
- Am I still the best?
- Do I help enough?
- Am I strong enough?

These rewards are discussed in detail in Chapters 5 and 7. Most people can't 'make a difference through creation' until they have 'made a difference through recognition'. Because of their need for recognition, people risk being untrue to themselves, acting in a way that has little to do with authenticity. Making a difference through creation forms the basis for Authentic Leadership.

HOW CAN YOU PUT THIS INFORMATION TO GOOD USE?

You might conclude that people act in a certain way because it leads to a desired reward: preventing something or desiring something. Therefore, even when you behave very oddly, this is bound to be rewarded somehow. You could say that a child who lies screaming on the supermarket floor is behaving rather oddly. The reward could be either positive or negative attention. A manager who continually puts other people down might want to be respected as a reward, or to avoid not being respected. Incidentally, excessive behaviour is more often driven by fear motives. If you desperately cling to undesirable behaviour, while you know how you would really like to behave, you would be well advised to first examine the rewards of the fear motive. Determine what it is you are trying to avoid and accept that this is a reward you can always fall back on. This facilitates the switch to creation-driven behaviour. This also applies to the people you manage. If they know how they would like to behave (e.g. to move more towards centre-stage) but fail to do so, you will know that their fear motive generates a better reward. When you know what the rewards are, and can control this, you will control your behaviour. You will only be prepared to change your behaviour if the rewards of an alternative behaviour are greater, therefore, try to work out what rewards you are going for. The moral of the story is that *by understanding the reward you will understand the behaviour and will develop it more easily.*

It is nice to know that fear and creation do not go hand in hand, but that one follows from the other. The creation motive is invariably your deepest motive. This doesn't mean it is always visible; it could be concealed by a fear motive. Fear ensures that the creation is protected. Because of your fear of rejection, you won't immediately bare your soul or share your deepest creation motives when you meet someone for the first time. However, your (possibly) reserved behaviour doesn't mean you don't have a soul. All fear-driven behaviour conceals a creation you want to protect.

FEAR PROTECTS CREATION

This means that a person's fear-driven behaviour could serve to protect a valuable creation, although the person may not be aware of this. Can you, as an authentic leader, still spot the beautiful creation behind the fear-driven behaviour of others? This starts with the belief that it is there.

TRY THIS...

- Which rewards drive your behaviour the most?
- What rewards would you like to drive your behaviour?
- What behaviour do you keep displaying, when you would really like to do something else? How is this behaviour rewarded/what negative consequences do you wish to avoid by behaving in this way?

Do this exercise with people you influence and who are open to influence. Also, try to guess the creation motives that underlie the strange, fear-driven behaviour of the people you have problems with.