

A great place to grow & A great place to grow up

A day on “An Everyone Culture” organized by Het Eerste Huis.

Monday 6th November 2017, B-Amsterdam.

Intro

If you missed this day or if you don't want to spend time reading the book An Everyone Culture, Great Places to Grow, here is my view on the day and the book.

I add some of my own experiences in the field of powerful deliberate learning at work and at home as extras. These are put in italic writing.

Opening of the day on An Everyone Culture

Robert Kegan & Andy Fleming spread their passionate word on the need for courageous, compassionate & highly connected personal & organizational growth in organizations. They advocate a better, safer, and more challenging workplace, with as results: sustainable business, fewer accidents, healthier workforce, happier clients. In these organizations resilience and agility stand high.

Continuous Flow & Great Places to Grow

All of us have happy memories about a period that we worked in a team in flow, in a state of exhilaration, highly focused, working on something new. You were in your next zone of development, feeling the support of your colleagues.

Kegan & Fleming push us to go beyond this temporal state of successful team learning to continuous organizational learning across teams. Just as Peter Senge told us to do in The Fifth Discipline.

How about all teams, all personnel, all managers going for flow, day in day out, year on year? Kegan & Fleming dream of all companies turning into Great Places to Grow (and not just to work). They see the need of this in a world growing more and more agile, hostile and uncertain.

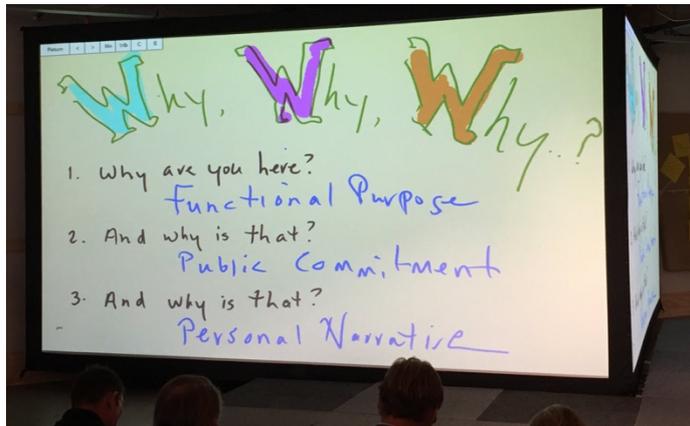
They wish, just as I do, a better future for all children, all of us living in Great Places to Grow Up. Their parents and neighbours can support this by getting into the groove of deep learning at work, transporting all they have learnt at work to their neighborhoods, sport clubs, churches, mosques, synagogues, schools, parks & streetcorners.

An Everyone Culture & Wholeness

To make this happen Kegan & Fleming advocate “an every one culture” at work, in which you willingly bring in all your life experience and cultural luggage. All you have learnt at home and on the streets is needed to improve learning & working together. There is no time to waste talents and tacit knowledge: bring in and use your wholeness, as Frederic Laloux puts it in Reinventing Organizations.

Candor & Vulnerability

The opening exercise in the day got their message across: we need candor & vulnerability to go the next miles. For opening us up they set the following task:



Within ten minutes we got to the essence of what makes us tick. The logical levels of thinking (Dilts/Bateson) was as a firm basis of this opening exercise: what is my job, what am I convinced of, what is my identity, my personal narrative? Question three led to insights of the importance of “where did I grow up?” Insights Kegan and Fleming shared vulnerably with the audience by telling about their youths and Fleming citing his favourite poem by heart.

Great Place to Grow Up

Our upbringing influences us in a great way: it gets our ‘self-efficacy’ going. It sets us up for a Growth Mindset. Am I going for high trust in a good ending? Am I alright in making mistakes and learning fast? Do I feel comfortable out of my comfort zone? Will there be somebody around to catch me, stretch me, support me, challenge me? Did my mother and father ask: “which questions did you ask in class today?” or “What went well & Why?” Did my parents or the situation in my neighbourhood teach me a Growth Mindset, a mindset of trust that learning involves falling and getting up, trial & error? Was I supported on my effort rather than on the results of my efforts?

If so: this Growth Mindset helps you becoming and staying an inspiring & challenging colleague, leader, teamplayer, neighbor, teacher, parent. Then you can help building organizations with selfsteering teams which are #GreatPlacetoWork & Grow, and neighbourhoods & schools which are #GreatPlacetoGrowUp.

If not, don't worry: a growth mindset kicks in whenever you really want to. See Carol Dweck on a Growth Mindset.

Edge, Home, Groove

In their book *An Everyone Culture* the scheme Kegan & Fleming work from uses three elements: Edge, Home & Groove. If these three all work to their maximum: there will be a DDO: a Deliberately Developmental Organization.

Edge: be edgy, be daring, stretch yourself, go out of your comfort zone, challenge others to go edgy.

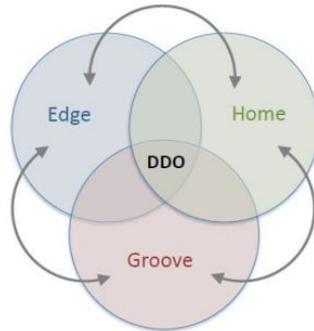
Home: be homy, feel at home, safe, meet your best friend @ work, make others feel at home, feel free to be vulnerable.

Groove: be groovy, arrange repetitive ways of developmental practice, get into learning, combine edgy & homy every minute at work.

Edge

Developmental aspirations

- Mistake-making
- Problem-finding
- My growing edge
- Your growing edge
- Our growing edge
- Organizational purpose



Home

Developmental communities

- Openness about the self
- Appreciating the whole self
- Psychological safety
- Leader vulnerability
- View of conflict
- View of authority

Groove

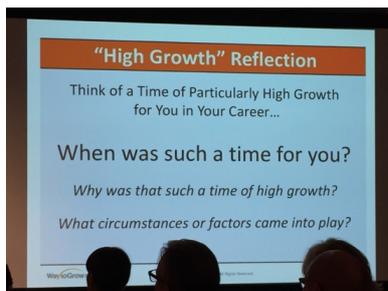
Developmental practices

- Learning supports
- Role-to-person matching
- Feedback
- Regularity of practice
- Symbolic tools
- Process improvement

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Learning on the go every day for all, haphazard turned into deliberate

A DDO, a deliberately developmental organization, works on the principle that you learn a lot the moment you step into a new role. In these periods we learn a lot, we “fail frequently, fast & forward”.



Kegan & Fleming presented another question, so we could dig into our own experiences of high intensity learning & growing. Moments of haphazard learning.

It turned out that we all went for a new challenge, not quite well equipped yet, slightly worried, some good support & mentoring, a best friend at least. Some personal guts and a growth mindset had made it work.

There was just enough Home, there was the maximum of Edge. There was no properly arranged Groove yet, we learned on the go.

All of us remembered teams in which there was a period of flow, as discussed above.

In a DDO learning haphazardly is not enough. Learning & developing is a deliberate part of running the business. So in a DDO people are asked to move on to a new role or assignment the moment they feel comfortable in their jobs, so that haphazard learning can kick in, deliberately again & again.

Good Groove and SCARF

David Rock’s SCARF model was presented by Kegan. David Rock recognizes the essence of our human behavior as highly animal like. We are group animals. We behave like sheep flocking together, feeding on the grass, mating for offspring every year. And like animals we are highly aware of the dangers around us, quick on the mark to flee, freeze or fight.

David Rock realized that we either want to get towards other people or want to move away from them. Just as animals do. In his research it turned out that our Amygdala, our reptile & mammal brainpart, kicks in fairly quickly in moments of uncertainty, fear or anxiety. And that this has a disastrous effect on the workings of our human brain elements, where all information and our reasoning are located. This essential human information cannot be

reached anymore in moments of stress, fear, sadness, anger, as all our awareness and attention is on fight, flight or freeze reactions in the body. These body reactions (away or towards) can be very minimal or more extreme.

David Rock's research delivered the insight of SCARF, overcoming freeze, fight and flight reactions in the brain and our behavior. People who get all the elements of SCARF right, are drawing closer to one another, feel curious about the other, want to go into dialogue together. SCARF is an acronym of the five elements that help stabilizing 'good company' moments between human beings and animals.

SCARF explained

SCARF is like a shawl you feel comfortable in. Nice and warm, loosely around your neck, SCARF opens you up for good company. SCARF are the first letters of the five elements triggering your Amygdala into away or towards movements.

Status between two human beings is clear and not contested: you are my reader now, I am your informer. During the Great Place to Grow conference Fleming and Kegan were our teachers and we took up their information and challenges. This status is a dynamic thing between colleagues and neighbours. It is all to do with relative status in the moment.

There is **Certainty**: animal and human brains crave for certainty. How long is this meeting to go on for, what topic is on the agenda, what procedure do we follow, what is my role here? If you know the answers to these questions, your animal brain is at rest and your wisdom and ratio are free to operate and support the efficiency and content of the meeting.

Autonomy is letter three of the acronym of SCARF. Only if you feel that there are choices to be made by yourself, any moment, your Amygdala feels relaxed. Do I graze here or there? Shall I answer this question or not? Always wise to offer two alternatives to pupils, team members of clients. Then they feel that there is a choice. Then there is autonomy. This opens up creativity for a third alternative too!

Relatedness is essential for moments and long periods of good company. You share the Why of our organization, you feel connection on what you work on, you share values on life & work. Animals have a high level of relatedness and a group identity. That is why sterlings can fly so closely together in great patterns without crashing into one another.

And last but not least: **Fairness**. And wow, that one you will recognize: the moment you feel something is not fair your adrenaline or cortisol kicks in. You feel a lot, and your thinking dwindles fast. Fight, Flight, Freeze mechanisms take over shortly. If you take a deep breath, you feel that you relax and the bloodstream to your frontal cortex is opened widely again, allowing you access to all the wise words of your mother, your kids, your teachers, your pupils, your coaches, colleagues and clients.

SCARF: Homy, Edgy & Groovy

Kegan mentioned these five crucial SCARF elements in the context of Edge, Home & Groove. Only if your Amygdala is not taking over completely, you dare to learn. So you have to feel clear about your Status, there is Certainty at work, you have a certain amount of Autonomy, you feel highly Related and life is Fair. Now you will dare to learn.

Even if there is a certain amount of uncertainty: you are certain about how much that is. You know there is Home-attention, when you go for Edge-experiences. So then you can really hear harsh feedback, as it is a deal that you want to hear it. Especially if it is about double loop feedback: beyond your behavior we are checking your convictions and assumptions.

Bringing in Certainty and Autonomy into Groove is essential. What learning practices are there for me? Can I choose the ones that challenge me? Is there a rhythm in these practices, do they fit my learning preferences? Do I feel the Autonomy to even challenge my learning preferences? Are there critical and best friends around at the right moments?

The sharp awareness of the elements of SCARF will help you creating the right doses of homy, edgy and groovy.

Good Groove, Good Starter Questions

A DDO addresses a lot of attention and care to good Groove practices for learning, growing, challenging and comforting.

The following starter questions are needed to get into Groove and help avoiding SCARF defense routines.

I gladly share them here, adding to the tooling Kegan & Fleming offer:

- 1. What do you already know?*
- 2. What is it you don't know that you don't know?*
- 3. Why do you want to learn?*
- 4. What do you want to learn?*
- 5. What have you learned, experienced in life, in earlier education @ home, @ school, in the streets, in your mosque, church, synagogue that comes in handy now?*
- 6. How do you want to learn now?*

Diversity & Inclusion are of the utmost importance building An Everyone Culture. Only then people will open their wholeness at work. Diversity should be seen in its widest sense: so go for diversity in thought and learning preferences as well. In a DDO, in a 'growth mindset' surroundings, challenge people testing learning methods out of their comfort zone of preference of learning.

Check your organization on Edge, Home, Groove

To check your own learning capability in the organization Kegan & Fleming offer a set of starter questions. You can mark them 1 – 5. How DDO is your organization at the moment. Mark 1: hardly ever, mark 5: all the time.

Do this a second time: answering the question: what do you want your working & learning environment to look like?

If there is a discrepancy: great! Start small, prototype fast and iterate faster from there. Fail frequently, fast & forward goes for building a stronger DDO as well.

Questionnaire on DDO

For Edge:

- ✓ Are mistakes shared and used as opportunities to learn?
- ✓ Do we challenge each other's thinking and working methods?

For Home:

- ✓ Do we reveal in which moments and area's we struggle in what we do & how we learn?
- ✓ Do leaders acknowledge in what way they have contributed to the problem?

For Groove:

- ✓ Do we end every project asking proper feedback and feed forward from all involved?
- ✓ Are there clear processes for everyone for improving their skills & expertise?

21st Century innovative agile DDO's: action learning for everyone

No longer organizations can afford to set up HRD activities for the happy few: managers and high potentials, learning off work, every now and then. This age asks for adaptation and rapid change. So we'd better go for HBD: Human Being Development for everyone, every moment & @work. This way all are involved in learning and the costly loss of transfer from trainingroom to workplace is solved too.

Go for action learning, keep it short and with high impact.

In their book Kegan et al mention the following activities to get the deliberate into developmental organizations.

- Develop a curriculum that will be there every day;
- Get rid of training sessions for the happy few, away from work;
- Enhance pleasure and effectiveness in daily learning on the job by offering powerful digital tooling, human contact, time-outs, incentives;
- Put learning & developing on the agenda of every meeting. Both as a moment of reflection on learning at work as a moment of reflection within the meeting here & now;
- Open each work week with 'Moments of High Growth', in which colleagues tell about moments in work in which they learned a lot & painfully so. Moments with the client, citizen, pupil, elderly, in which they felt ashamed, and faced their shame to learn from;
- Get a feedback & feedforward-app in. Use it throughout every meeting, use it frequently. This instant appreciation touches on strengths and weaknesses. As everyone can see it, your colleagues will offer their help for your development;
- Go for double loop feedback & feed forward: go beyond behaviour to assumptions and convictions driving behaviour;
- Find your blind spot, within yourself and your teammates. Tell one another what you are not too good at, or not good at at all. Show eachother what talent is there to be developed;
- Go for training your backhand. Be open about this competency you are not good at. Ask for help. Get your backhand in your daily schedule: plan practicing it;
- Go for strong and straight evaluations. Don't go for kindness: go for sharpness.

- Support each other in moments of discomfort and shame. “Pain + Reflection = Progress”;
- Be as frank on development during meetings as you are at the watercooler;
- The moment you are good at your job, move to another job: stretch yourself;
- Answer Victor Frankl’s questions on a daily basis (thanks Christopher Forman for reminding me of these questions in An Everyone Culture!):
 - 1: Did we create or do something significant?
 - 2: Did we care about another person?
 - 3: Did we face difficult circumstances with courage?

I would like to add the following groove activities:

- *Three times a day: ask What Went Well & Why? (Mark Seligman)*
- *Do the same with the question: What Went Wrong & Why? (Mark Seligman)*
- *Write a letter of deep thanks to a person in your life who supported you in an adverse period of steep growth. Make an appointment and read the letter out loud. (Mark Seligman)*
- *Be aware of your learning preference and challenge it. (Manon Ruijters)*
- *Be streetwise @ work & business-smart @ home (Warner Immink)*
- *Explore your intuition, get to grips with tacit knowledge, and find words to express this deep wisdom, so that it can be used for all. (Edward de Bono)*
- *Write down the tips and suggestions you get on your 7 daily feed forward moments and thank the ones offering their experience, wisdom and time. (Marshall Goldsmith)*
- *Get into nature and learn out loud, tell your cowalker your worries and monologue on for 17 minutes, without interruption or suggestions by your cowalker. (Otto Scharmer)*
- *Go for Developmental Space. (Karin Derksen)*
- *Use the 4 quadrants of hybrid learning to their maximum and fluidity. (Erica Aalsma)*
- *Read a novel, watch a Netflix series, discuss what opened your eyes @ home & @ work. (Lazeron & Immink)*
- *Use diversity as a principle. Society is as getting super diverse. Top level management is male dominated, women coming in, yet lacking colour and other diversity. This can be overcome if you are more daring and less judgmental, challenging your subconscious hunger for choosing your ideal sons & daughters in law;*
- *Ask your kids after school: “what questions did you ask in class?” (Carol Dweck)*
- *Open your mind, your heart and will by stopping the nagging and devastating voices of judgement, cynicism and fear. (Otto Scharmer)*
- *Be courageous, highly compassionate and deeply connected (Brene Brown)*

Thanks for reading, great to meet you again, afresh @ work, @ school, in the streets, anywhere, anytime.

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Thanks Erica Aalsma for this quote, opening your book on the reversed learning road.



Some further inspiration

Rober Kegan on An Everyone Culture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOLEP7cffi>

Andy Fleming on a Growth Culture

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJiN3fpXxdw>

Peter Senge, the Fifth Discipline, on learning organizations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QtQqZ6Q5-o>

Otto Scharmer on Theory U, levels of listening and “from ego to ego-systems”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLfXpRkVZaI>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcbBII__BmM

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi On Flow

https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow?language=nl

Simon Sinek on great leadership

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReRcHdeUG9Y>

Carol Dweck on a growth mindset

https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=nl

Brene Brown on the power of vulnerability and shame

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame/transcript

Amy Cuddy on the power of animal behavior and change

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are

Lisa Lahey on the immunity to change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6reQYIMIBA8>

David Rock on SCARF

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDlyxxayNig>

Sheila Sheen on difficult conversations: the difficulty of feedback

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQNbaKkYk_Q

Dan Pink on motivation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrkrvAUbU9Y>

Frederic Laloux on reinventing organizations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcS04BI2sbk>

Victor Frankl on man’s search of meaning

https://www.ted.com/talks/viktor_frankl_youth_in_search_of_meaning

Karin Derksen on developmental space in teams

<https://research.vu.nl/en/publications/assessing-developmental-space-in-teams>

Erica Aalsma on hybrid learning, mastering work & mastering learning

<http://www.deleermeesters.nl/>

Manon Ruijters on preferences of learning

http://www.twynstragudde.nl/sites/default/files/content/news/tekst_rede_oratie_manon_ruijters.pdf

Martin Seligman on flourish

https://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology?language=nl