

# A Leader's Voice

## *Shaping the Post Heroic organization*

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The intention of this paper is to share the voice of H (as called in this paper): A leader in a global R&D organisation, leading a department of a couple hundred people developing power supply systems for an international industry.

We wish to share his way of consciously shaping the post heroic organisation..

Enjoy your read.

/Karin & Niklas

## One Page Summary

- We sit down with H, who is fundamentally reshaping his department of a couple hundred engineers and developers within battery power supply systems, to become a Post Heroic organisation'. A department where purpose is central and a human centred culture is naturally built within a clear, supportive and liberating structure. Where strategy, information, decisions and decision paths are transparent. An organisation that can act from a post-heroic awareness.

A vision at the forefront of organisational development, aligned with the future of leadership that Into The New see is the natural and necessary way forward. It's a journey. Join in and enjoy reading.

### **Orientation:**

The title 'Post Heroic organisation' comes from the research field of developmental psychology, which describes the psychological figures, or action logics, that all humans share. Figures that we can let be the basis for the way we collaborate and organise. For those of you who know Laloux's "Teal" organisation: a teal organisation can be one example of an organisational form with a post-heroic approach.

The heroic part of us humans, where "I" is often more important than "we", consists of four psychological figures. The Opportunist - our egocentric self. The Diplomat - our belonging-seeking self. The Expert - our seeker of knowledge, sometimes "I know best" me, and the Achiever - our performance-driven, optimising self.

The post-heroic part of us holds a wider awareness. Where a value greater than "what's in it for me" becomes more central. Where the many perspectives and common needs become the way to find the next step towards our common purpose.

The way we build our organisations affects which figures are valued, promoted and triggered. The structure and culture we consciously or unconsciously create enable people to be their full selves and make their full contribution, or hold people back. The post-heroic organisation deliberately tries to create a system where people flourish. Where individual and organisational growth goes hand in hand. Where we really unlock the power of being many.

The key aspects H shares in the article are summarised below.

**Purpose** - to have the purpose as the foundation for everything. Making decisions towards what most effectively leads to the purpose creates a deeper commitment and a motivating, unifying direction.

**Transparency** - around visions, strategies, organisation, decision-making and information paths etc., unlocks the power of being many, when everyone can go in the same direction and be empowered to make their own decisions and shape the collaborations that are required.

**Empowerment** - when everyone has the conditions to act independently together - interdependently - both individually and in teams, a drive is created in the organisation that is not hindered by information or mandate residing elsewhere.

**Structure and culture** - that creates freedom, responsibility and alignment.

**Organisational feedback loops** - that are built into everyday life, at all levels in the organisation, making it possible to constantly see and evaluate whether we are doing the right things, in the right way.

**A deeper understanding of our inner psychological patterns**, and how we can create an organisation that harnesses power and avoids triggering fear that holds people back.

**A strong "present centred awareness"** - to be aware of how the choice of words, actions, energy, presence and participation constantly shape the organisation. Everything is leadership.

## Shaping the Post Heroic Organisation

We sit down with H, who is fundamentally reshaping his department to become a Post Heroic organisation'. A department where purpose can take centre stage, a human centred culture is naturally built in a clear, supportive and liberating structure. Where strategy, information, decisions and decision paths are transparent. An organisation that can act from a post-heroic awareness.

A vision at the forefront of organisational development, aligned with the future leadership that Into The New works for. Made in the automotive industry, with its long history of long term planning and rigid structures. It's a journey. Join in and enjoy reading.

We meet H at his workplace. H, who we have come to know as a warm hearted, very sharp, intelligent person truly caring for others. He enters the room with a smile. We have met many times before within our leadership program ending earlier this year. "Hello. So nice to see you!" he begins with both calmness and presence.

### Interview

*H, tell us a little about what we're going to talk about today. You are consciously trying to create a Post Heroic organisation. What is it, and why?*

In recent years, I have actively tried to create a Post Heroic organisation. An organisation that can act from, what you would call, a post-heroic consciousness.

So what is it and why? It is an organisation that I am convinced is needed to meet the times we live in. An organisation where we build structures and create a culture that enables all employees to move in the same direction, based on the fact that we are all different. Where we build on individual motivation and freedom to act, guided by our purpose: why we exist as an organisation. Where we can create space for everyone, our experts, our achievers, our redefiners, to contribute to the same purpose, guided from a post-heroic awareness. All supported by a culture where the human perspective is central.

Basically, I want to create an organisation that performs very well and is very healthy! A sustainable organisation, to put it simple. Where people can grow and develop freely. And I see that we get very good results from what we do.

*Post-Heroic Consciousness. That is our language, but perhaps unknown to many. What does it mean to you?*

For me, it means, for example, that we are led by and make decisions based on our purpose, our larger WHY. That we use our purpose as a direction-setting and a liberating frame. And that we do it together, in a way that ensures that as many perspectives as possible are heard. The more facets of reality we can listen to, the better decisions and the better collaboration.

For me, it also means that we go from "what's in it for me?" to build a culture and structure where, through collaboration, we create greater value together. In this, personal growth is central, which is why we build it into the structure.

When we shape the organisation in this way, we achieve both greater flexibility and better results. We build a system where people can contribute fully, in a common direction. We experience great commitment and that people both feel well and develop. It's a very rewarding, and continuous work.

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*To create an organisation that is freer, more flexible and that creates better results. It is very exciting to hear you put into words that a deeper understanding of the human being in a system is a basis for this very thing. Please tell us: How do you do this?*

Our organisation has been around for a while and we are constantly growing. In 2018 we split the organisation again. Then we got a chance to start from the beginning, and thought carefully: what are the big steps that exemplify the journey to a post-heroic organisation? We realised that we need to start with our purpose, then create a decision flow that allows us to deliver, and feedback loops that help us make sure we don't slip back into the old hierarchy. To grow the power of individuals together, we need to create a team organisation that enables empowerment, transparency around vision and strategy to uplift the power of the entire organisation, and a culture holding people, individual growth and well-being at the centre. An organisation that is led by its purpose, with full ability to deliver and where people are healthy.

With a new organisation, we must have a good structure that enables what we want to achieve. The first thing we did was to set up a decision-making organisation with a well-thought-through decision flow. Where do we make our decisions? How does information flow in the organisation? Where do our important interfaces meet? How do we ensure an Achiever organisation that delivers?

Structure is important, but also how it is shaped and how it affects the organisation. We formalise the mandate and try to create liberating structures. Structurelessness becomes confusing - and likewise too much structure, or the wrong structure becomes suffocating. I have worked a lot with the teams in this, to find structures that release the power on the organisation.

It is also extremely important to be aware of where the decisions actually should be made. Which decisions should we not make, but send back down? So that the teams really get and take decision mandates. It is extremely important to enable power in the teams. We talk about it a lot. At every decision meeting we ask ourselves: Was this the right meeting for this decision? What should we do next time? You MUST always have these feedback loops. Otherwise, you very quickly slip into the wrong mode, towards control and centralization of power.

To keep consistency we have created similar decision making structures across the entire organisation. Also in our sister organisations. We don't stay within our borders. We are where we need to be, help where we need to help, constantly trying to look at the whole and not create silos in the organisation.

*So, with well-defined decision making structures and information flows you ensure that you can operate from Achiever. That you can meet what is required from the surrounding organisation. Interesting! And to make sure you don't slip into the wrong mode, towards control and centralization of power, you design feedback loops in every decision meeting... To constantly raise awareness, and make sure the power is where it should be... We would describe it as having a structure and culture that strengthens your "present centred awareness" and opens up for emergence. Very wise and quite brave. How did you proceed?*

In the next step, we asked ourselves: what do we need to grow, develop and become more efficient? How can we face the increased complexity we live in? We know that we need to build our competence in the long term. We will continue to grow as an organisation, and

we will increase our complexity. Today we have two electric vehicles on the market. In a few years... Well, then we will have many... And we will have new platforms... We need to be able to handle that complexity. The key here is our teams, and for us to succeed we see two important perspectives:

1. Empowered teams. Teams must as far as possible be responsible for their own delivery, only then can we be fully empowered as a team. Then we need to reduce interdependencies between teams.
2. Not to create too narrow teams. Broad competence base enables wider responsibility, and above all development for the individual in the team. People shouldn't quit because they don't develop.

*So, in order to grow and face increasing complexity, you want to create empowerment, for real. And build broad teams where people can really grow, to reduce turnover. Many organisations focuses on teams today, and many put teams together in order to "have a team", where there is really no basis for being a team. How do you view teams that aren't really teams?*

We have some teams with individuals who work individually, and thus are not really teams. But they sit within the same technology area and can benefit from crosstalk, and share information. When we create teams, we try to find collaboration where it creates benefit. But, above all: it is our responsibility as an employer to give everyone social safety and a strong sense of belonging. Teams are also about the social aspect. About being human. To be well.

*Wow, we love that you take the human perspective, about social responsibility and belonging to feel well, and not just the corporate goals of delivery and efficiency. Please tell us more about how you work with team empowerment.*

I see empowerment as a key to creating a post-heroic organisation. We do not control and steer how the teams work and what they do. But we (as a company) want to be able to see what they deliver, your plans and your problems - so that we can support when needed.

To enable empowerment, we did a topology mapping, where we mapped all the relationships and dependencies between the teams.

H shows a picture of the mapping, where all relationships are shown as arrows between the teams. It is a myriad of circles arrows and lines, visualising directions of dependencies and connections.

And in this messy picture, we get low scores on collaboration (in employee surveys). And that's interesting, because collaboration and cooperation is the main thing we do, as you may understand from viewing this graphic. With that as input, we restructured our teams, to reduce dependencies between the teams from a topographical perspective. We saw several cases where several teams owned the delivery together, we have restructured so that each team now owns its own delivery, with some dependencies included (we can and need to live with that). Then there is continuous work to reduce dependencies between teams.

It was also important that we worked together to map our interfaces. It created a common, clear picture of the complex world we operate in. "Oh, we work with all of this." We have one main product, and many teams, so collaboration is key. To meet this, we need to

to ensure that we can be where we are needed, put our effort where it does most good, and not where we should be organizationally.

*Did the teams have a clear view of their mission and purpose, at team level?*

No, and it was also an important step. A prerequisite for being empowered is that you know what you are responsible for. Know your contribution. Your purpose. This can be done top down, as a list of responsibilities that management draws up and gives to the teams. But I don't believe in that, I believe in participation. Instead we did several events where we co-created this with the teams. Always connected to the purpose of our organisation. Both the collaboration, multi-perspective and working with the purpose as a foundation enables a shift towards the post heroic paradigm. Very good events!

*That's exactly our experience. That people need to be involved and co-create their own purpose, linked to the common organisational, evolutionary purpose, in order to create participation and commitment. So good to hear you tell how you did it just like that. You mentioned earlier that you as management base a lot on your dialogues in your purpose. Can you tell us a bit more?*

Yes, from management we talk about WHY, HOW, WHAT. Purpose and Vision. It is important that we as leaders always talk about it, that we constantly connect what we do to the purpose. That shapes a post-heroic framework to move freely within. It is when me and my leaders talk about Purpose and Vision that we enable us as an organisation to operate beyond Achiever.

We have worked through Purpose and Vision in a series of workshops. Spent a lot of time getting it big, visionary, yet concrete. Our purpose is: "We develop energy storage technologies to accelerate the transformation to a carbon neutral, sustainable society." I get a strong response that our purpose is important, especially from our younger colleagues. That was also why I myself chose to work here. It is important to make a difference. And we make that possible here.

Based on our Purpose, we have then clarified what we deliver, at a high level, to the company.

Our purpose also helps us to never think "that is not our responsibility." Instead, we think: "If we are most suitable, we should do it - if it contributes to our purpose." We talk about this a lot, all the time. This means that we act very little in silos. If we are most suitable, we will do the work, or contribute where we can, where it makes most sense.

*It is very powerful to hear you describe the purpose as a directional and at the same time liberating framework. What have you seen are the conditions for it to work?*

Based on our Purpose, we work with our strategy. Our HOW. I see it this way: If we are to have empowered teams, working towards a common purpose we need to democratise information. All information. In that we have a job as management team; to define and make visible our plans and strategies, our rollout plans, our plans for new labs, new technologies, suppliers, etc. With the aim of democratising' information, and making it available to everyone. All this must be transparent, simple and accessible.

Purpose and Vision must serve as guidance for our decisions, every day. For everyone, not for a selected few. We need everyone to understand both our Purpose, our Vision and our Strategy. Therefore, I work through it carefully with my management team. I don't want



people to come to me and ask about what decisions to make. I want them to tell me what decisions they are making, or will make. Then we have enough clarity!

When we make all information available, it also becomes a matter of confidentiality. Should these be secret documents, as you sometimes label them as companies, or should they be openly available? That balance can be a bit difficult at times. But... since we need to be fast and responsive to really reach our goal, "...carbon neutral, sustainable society" we cannot keep information and plans secret, it slows us down and risks driving us in the wrong direction.

*So, information transparency, accessibility and simplicity around strategies and direction are central to guide day-to-day decision making across the organisation. How do you work to create clarity from there in the short term?*

In the short term, we work with Goals and Objectives. The agile way of working serves this very well in the short term. We have the 12-week plan under control. In addition to that, all teams also work with a one-year plan. Mainly for their own sake: to look a year ahead enables the long-term to give birth to the short-term. The teams find it very valuable. For us as an organisation, this is extremely important, in order to secure our delivery going forward. If, for example, we risk lacking capacity to deliver in the future, we want to know that a year in advance, because then I can act and ensure that we have the capacity when we need it.

*Team-plans a year ahead, you say. Why one year?*

One year gives us sufficient heads up and planning space. With that heads up, needs can be solved through, for example, resource balancing. We might move prototype or product builds. Or take projects in and out. Or hire extra staff. And we can usually do all that in six months. Sometimes a year. Also, the teams don't live much longer than a year. We restructure, adapt the organisation. I mean, we don't make a static product that we have made for a hundred years. Everything changes so quickly so it makes no sense to have a longer plan than that for the teams. In the longer term, we fall back on the strategy. And as always, we have high granularity in the near term, and quite low in a year. But we have the perspective, and show that we have thought about it, and how. "This is what we see in the future right now." And the teams agree. That's the feedback loop I want. Organisational double loop: are we doing the right things?

*One year plans as a way to create a feedback loop. That's an interesting and refreshing perspective. Can you please share more around the way you look at and work with feedback loops?*

Feedback loops are extremely important in this. To constantly feed back what we do so that we can adjust, refine and evolve. And in this area there is always something to do, to work with. We work a lot with feedback, but not primarily with what is usually seen as a feedback culture, where we have to give each other individual feedback. We work with feedback on our structures and workflows, on the product and on how we do things. Even on our WHY.

We have a big-data team that works with feedback from products in the field. So that we constantly get real feedback from the product in the field to be able to improve the quality flow based on that.

Then we have the internal feedback loop around decisions. When we make decisions, I

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always start from our purpose and ensure that we make the decision in line with our purpose. If we ever need to make a decision that goes against Purpose / Vision, then we need to be in 'triple loop awareness': Are we missing something in our Purpose, or an underlying aspect of the decision? Isn't the purpose right anymore?

It is exciting to map 'Single, double and triple loop awareness' to Purpose/Vision (representing triple loop), 3-5 year strategy and short-term plans (representing double loop) and how we do things every day, verification, collaboration (representing single loop). It is a way of creating learning in what we do. And in that we talk about which KPIs we need within each area, and there are NOT that many. The important thing is the feedback loops, so that we see that we are getting the right results.

This has been received very well, it has created a very good response from both the teams and the organisation. And the response is often "oh, now we've realised something new". That's the response I want. Because the purpose is not to popularise an organisational idea, but to get the right questions back. So that we continuously create a deeper learning. In this approach both individuals and what we can create together grow.

*Feedback loops on structures and workflows, on the product and on how you do things. Wow. Love how you raise your perspective from the individual to the system. To create a learning system. But in the freedom that your purpose creates, how do you work with motivation and commitment?*

I remember my mentor saying: "If someone comes up with an idea, you have to be careful not to take on the idea yourself. And always support the person to pursue their idea, with all the encouragement and energy you have. If he fails, maybe you can step in and correct and help. But if he succeeds, we have gained a lot, and gained a person who is growing and perhaps ready for new challenges." We never stop an idea that can contribute to the purpose. We humans are good at killing motivation. Good at killing ideas. But we have to build up motivation and commitment over time. We need to find the right liberating structures, and then avoid killing an initiative. You can easily cut a year's worth of work in building motivation by dismissing or killing someone's initiative or idea. How we instead choose to support and encourage initiatives and ideas is absolutely central.

Also, it is relatively easy to be a leader in a project-driven world where you make all the decisions yourself. It often doesn't turn out so well in the long run, but it's a very clear role. And you can be a little angry with people when they don't behave, so that they become a little afraid and work a little harder. [laughs...] Well, it sounds familiar, doesn't it...?

Building the organisational shift to the post-heroic requires something completely different. It is much, much more difficult to be in 'purpose driven leadership' and work with motivation, and to enable and grow human motivation via structures and behaviours and coaching of the leaders around.

It was very valuable in your leadership program, to experience and explore the post-heroic. I read Bill Torbert's Action Inquiry in parallel with the program. Looking at the organisation from the lens of the vertical figures, and what we need to think about in organisational development.

*To never stop an initiative. To shift the organisation through coaching of leaders all around, and build from motivation. These are rather unusual thoughts in today's organisations, where many find themselves in a clear Expert/Achiever centred world.*

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*We can imagine that there will be some friction. What challenges do you face in that?*

I do not want detailed control over my business. But the system, the rest of the organisation, put exactly that expectation on me. That becomes a force from the system. Trust is not highly valued, but detailed knowledge and control is what is expected. It's a bit windy here, and there can often be conflict, but I'm pretty confident in the path we have chosen.

An advantage I have is that I am strong in both Expert and Achiever. I know a lot, can do a lot, and I'm intelligent, mentally capable. I also have strong Achiever parts that I can trigger whenever I want. I sat for 3 years and synced with production, 3 times a week, to get a quality product out. That to me is grit, and beauty.

These two allow me to gain the confidence from others so that I can get away with doing what I do.

But the hardest part is clearly speaking up against senior leaders. To resist. Because you are very lonely then. Then you have to be self confident, and self-aware. Then you have to have trust and stability in yourself. You simply cannot be a person who doubts your own abilities and your place in the world.

Being present, rooted and mindful, being friends with one's feelings, not getting triggered and reactive is a prerequisite for being able to handle that world. Here, for example, yoga has helped me a lot, and that which you bring through your program. Building deep self-awareness is central. You must always be centred and in balance. To choose wisely and be aware of the choices I make. Of course, sometimes letting anger or other emotions out when needed. Sometimes, I almost play angry, and attenuate those feelings to play the system by its rules. But being aware of the choices. If you walk around here unaware of your emotions and reactions, or not being able to align your behaviour towards a leadership strategy, well then you probably won't succeed. So it requires a lot mentally.

*It is beautiful to hear you describe how you see that we must face the system's resistance or Expert/Achiever demands through a deep self-awareness. That self-awareness is central. To choose and be aware of the choices you make in every moment. From a strong 'present centred awareness'. You put words and actions on what is so clearly shown in research.*

*So, has it just been as easy ride, or have you had challenges? If so, where?*

We had problems with the agile roles for quite a while. With Product Owners and Scrum Masters taking responsibility, and the understanding of the role. Expectations differed, and especially many Scrum Masters did not take on the role fully.

I did a lot of work with dialogues around expectations. My expectations on others. And that is a job that creates empowerment, if you do it the right way. Not controlling and ordering - "You must do this and that, and so and so..." - but instead talking about expectations: "I expect you to handle this type of problem. That's your job. And I'm always here to support you when you need it." For me, it is important that the leaders in the hierarchical level below feel- and are able to act 'empowered', and that they really take that responsibility.

We have also moved those who did not take that responsibility. I see that as necessary to do. To move people. Both for the sake of the individual, for the team and for the organisation. If the will is there, it is almost never a problem. Then you solve it with the right support. Then you learn.

Yet, we operate in a very challenging environment intellectually, technically and in terms of complexity. If you don't have the ability to get into that complexity, I have to take the responsibility of finding another role that fits. And I also see that time wins. People constantly move over time, and then you can take the opportunity to replace with someone who is a better fit. For me, constantly keeping track of who I can move in with is a way to dance with the flow of what is. Not to go in and force, but to dance with what arises. Time wins.

And, behaviour can never be forced. "You need to be / behave like this..." No, that's not possible. That is acting far off from the post-heroic. To then get into the post-heroic again, it becomes too difficult when you have sent that energy into the system.

*So, to create internal and external awareness you pay attention to expectations, and help people develop to be able to meet them. Time wins. Beautifully. To dance with reality, and not force it. And actually help those who don't want to take responsibility to find a role that suits them better. It is clear that you have developed a good understanding of people.*

*I'm curious about how you work with decisions. Decisions are usually a difficult thing...*

There are many very smart people here. Many tech doctors. Many who are very strong in their Expert. We meet them by being data-driven. By talking about how we make decisions. There is never one right solution. One right answer. Therefore, we must always include several alternatives in the process. If someone comes with only one option, they haven't thought enough - they haven't used their Expert fully - or they don't want to talk about the other options for some reason. But there are always different options. Then there are also different consequences for the different options: cost, manufacturing, risks, schedule, purchasing, etc.

In the decision-making process, other stakeholders must also have the opportunity to express themselves. To really have a say. In this way, we keep the Expert from being triggered by "I'm an expert and I know best" and we also meet the Diplomat's in-group vs. outgroup: "We think like this - you think like that." We put all the data on the table. All the facts. As a decision maker, I have the role of mediator. I show that I don't always choose what my organisation, R&D, thinks, but what most effectively leads toward our purpose.

In this way, we create a collaborative atmosphere, and the Expert receives appreciation for the Expert input. For the expertise. But it is the value created thanks to that expertise, thanks to that input that gives value to the Expert. Not their opinion on which way we should go, but their knowledge added into the process. In this way, we make decisions post-heroically. We make decisions that lead us towards our purpose.

*What you share, we would describe as a very beautiful "scaffold" for post-heroic decisions. Where all our inner figures get to participate without taking over, and the decisions are made post-heroically. Does it always run smoothly?*

No, not always of course. When we make decisions where I know there is dissonance, where there are different strong opinions, it is important to take the time to explain why we are making a certain decision. I spend a lot of time in our decision meetings to explain why we make a certain decision.

Then we make all decisions towards our purpose. If we are to transform, we must sell electric vehicles. Priority one is therefore to ensure that we have electric cars on the

market. For example: If we make "this" decision, we increase the risk very much. Then we might lose 100,000 cars and then we will not achieve our purpose. We cannot do that; although technically better.

The neat thing about the purpose is that our competitor is combustion engine cars. So currently the way to our purpose is to get sales up. To take market shares from the combustion engine vehicles.. We do not link our decisions to sales and turnover, but to our purpose. Those who think money is important get their share, but our driving force is the purpose. We need to shift to a sustainable world, and therefore we need to sell. And it resonates with people. We can talk about fulfilling our purpose, not that we need to sell a million products as a sales goal, but that we need to do it to contribute to a more sustainable world. People can connect to that.

I am lucky to work in a part of the company where it is easy to connect what we do to a larger purpose, in terms of society. It makes it very easy to be consistent.

*To spend a lot of time explaining why you make a certain decision, and on what grounds. And to always connect any decision to your purpose. You speak about it as the most natural thing in the world. That is beautiful! Leading with purpose... We see a big shift here: how more and more people choose to contribute in a system with a clear purpose that makes a difference... Do you note the same?*

Yes, I have noticed that. Clearly! My 15 to 20 years older colleagues talk about the product. That it looks good. Visual impression. About performance. Technical performance and details. It never appealed to me. And I clearly notice that it does not appeal to my organisation which is so young. The product itself is central, but it is not what drives us.

And many leaders haven't understood that. That the purpose is what drives people. So then I need to be there and talk about our purpose. Explain to the teams why they are important, so they feel meaning and feel connected to the purpose.

*H, Thank you! It is very exciting to hear you talk about how you systematically work with purpose, strategy, scaffolding and how you create feedback loops in your work. How do you see the role of culture in this?*

I haven't put much mental energy into thinking about culture. A human centric view in general is super important of course! Parental leave, for example, which is important! I take parental leave for my own sake, and that of the family. But if I hadn't, what kind of signal would I have sent? Half of our staff have children, or children on the way. The company has so much good to draw from in its culture, which resonates very well with a strong human centred worldview.

*And that is astonishing. When we start talking about culture, you say "I haven't thought much about it", and then you mention the view of humanity and a human centred worldview. How are we as humans? How do we see each other as individuals? How do we meet?*

Yes, and I have thought about THAT a lot. And when you look at the cultural documents that exist within the company, they have taken a modern view of people, and thought about what behaviours it breeds. How we want to behave with each other. We must be kind to each other, we must give people the opportunity to grow, we must trust each other. It is not a different construction, it IS our culture.

*It's a beautiful story. The consistency in your story. EVERYTHING is very consciously culture shaping. The decision-making process, information transparency. the feedback loops, the reflection on how you do things and why. Social responsibility, belonging, freedom and also individual responsibility. And how everything connects to the purpose. Everything builds culture.*

Yes, everything is shaping culture. And another important aspect is the ownership in my role as a leader. Especially when there are problems. Where I stand and take responsibility for the decisions we made. "We did this. WE as management took a risk. And it has now fallen out. It is not your responsibility. It results from a conscious risk we took. Not because of what you (the teams) have done. You have done a great job. But not all problems are technically solvable in time... And we have to learn from it, so we don't do it again, and so on." And it has been experienced as very strong when we stand and take responsibility for when something does not go well. And that also builds culture. We take ownership of our stuff. And everyone does. People never accuse someone of being bad, or of having done a bad job.

It allows us to meet and have an open dialogue. And everyone can feel satisfied with the reasoning. Even if not everyone agrees, everyone can understand that there is a reasoning behind it.

*Thank you! We know you need to move on now. It has been a pleasure to listen to you, and how you shape the post-heroic organisation!*

Thank you! I am glad that you appreciate our work.

And at the same time... We don't have time to spend a lot of active time planning and doing things like this... So you always have a bit of a guilty conscience. But somehow I've picked things over the years. And do act consciously in every move build something over time. It's about who I AM. In every move. Every action.

*That is a beautiful ending of this conversation. You saying: "We don't have time to spend a lot of active time planning and doing things like this..." Because we see that being a bit of a myth. "We don't have time to lead differently, because it takes so much time to shift." But it is about the continuous process. A process that opens. The uncompromising determination I hear in you. "This is how we need to do it. If we are to succeed together in this transition, this is how we need to do it." It's cool.*

Yes! Thanks! And yes, I am convinced that this is how we need to do it. And we do see the positive results!

And now I really NEED to go.

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And H leaves the room smiling, with the same calmness and warmth that he entered with 45 minutes ago. To continue to consciously BE the change, in every move.

## Closing Reflections

H's story is a story of presence and consciousness. That who he IS as a leader is the most important change agent.

A story of that it is possible to make the shift to the post heroic organisation in the midst of ongoing deliveries and business, with very limited time. A story of the relentless, uncompromising, holistic view on how every detail fits in the larger system. And the continuous, systematic feedback loops enabling constant re-design of the organisational system.

It is a story about being human together and to let that be the centre when designing the organisation. A story of including all the inner figures, all our 'action logics'. Designing organisational structures and processes including the entire human being. From the opportunist to the post heroic figures. Letting their strengths come to play. Avoiding triggering their fear.

H's story is a story of an emerging paradigm in leadership. A story of hope.

Love

Karin & Niklas

### About us:

We, Karin and Niklas, hold a range of global certifications in developmental coaching, vertical leader development, the relational organisation, sustainable change of social systems, vertical organisational development, self-organising structures and so on... But this is not the primary reason why we are really successful in what we do.

Many others use this research to compete. A fit right into our Achiever paradigm. "The more developed the better", "Later is greater", "We need to develop", "We must..." And so on. The problem with this approach is that it actually seems to inhibit the very growth and development aimed for. Striving for consciousness expansion is a great hinder for the same. We learn to say the right things, but on the inside, nothing really changes. It is hurtful. And we have seen it closely.

**We have found another way.** A holistic way. Free from competition. Free from better or worse. We use this research to meet ourselves. To meet every part of ourselves with an open heart. With compassion. With love. And when we do, we start to integrate ourselves. Our consciousness opens up for expansion. We heal. And we grow from the inside out. In a dialogue we had with Bill Torbert on this he said something like: "Trying to expand your post heroic figures without having properly integrated our heroic stages is like trying to climb a staircase nailed to the floor. It hurts. And it is impossible."

So, in all our work, we work holistically. And people attending our programs and workshops are actually moved. Touched by meeting themselves, through others. For we are all beautiful. And deep inside, we know it.

### Get in touch:

We want to share what we, by experience and validation, know have transformative effect within the field of personal and leader development for the emerging future.

Get in touch if you sense that our paths may cross, or if you are curious of what we can do together.