



## Tatjana Dragovic

### Abstract

Features of effective leaders in present day businesses are more complex and demanding than ever before. New business principles demand from leaders to be change managers, developers of teams and individual employees, coaches, and last but not least 'multipliers' of knowledge, skills and a professional and ethical approach to work. All of these they are to achieve in collaboration with their colleagues through common vision and aligned values. Dilts' (1990) realisation of the complexity of the leadership process led to his suggestion that for such a complex process we need at least four elements: 'self', 'others', 'goal' and 'system' with their accompanying sets of skills: self skills, communication and motivation skills, strategic thinking skills and systemic thinking skills. Even though it might look very simple to understand the 'self' (first element), it also represents the greatest puzzle, and at the same time the key to holistic effectiveness and balance at work. The first element, 'the self' might sound self-evident, but on closer analysis it is a highly complex and disputed concept. The self appears as a result of a process of finding and understanding oneself. Prange (2011) warns that what we really are is visible only through relationships with others. We are visible in our actions and also in our lack of actions. The self is visible in what we know how to do/perform and equally in what we do not know. In business it means that leaders find themselves indirectly through experiences and interactions with others and through successful and unsuccessful actions/results. In the 19th century, Goethe said that 'Man knows himself only to the extent that he knows the world; he becomes aware of himself only within the world, and aware of the world only within himself' (1823/1955, p. 38). Modern successful leaders could achieve holistic effectiveness and balance through discovering and connecting their (individual) self to the self in the world, i.e. in the organisation. A three-year long leadership development programme designed and delivered over the last two decades addresses all the four elements Dilts (1990) promotes (self, others, goal and system) while emphasizing 'the self' element through creative dispositions. The combination of creative/artistic elements and an experiential approach to topics such as decision making strategies, change management, conflict transformation skills, etc. has led to transformative experiences of the participants. The creative/artistic elements in the three-year long leadership development programme have contributed to leaders' innovative approaches to their own professional practice and provided a twist, i.e. an 'out of the box' framework for their professional and personal development.

**Bio**

Tatjana DRAGOVIC is a doctoral educator and a leader of the Leadership, Educational Improvement and Development (LEID) research community at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, UK. For the last 23 years she has worked across different disciplines, sectors and industries and is recognized as an international educator, whose interdisciplinary expertise and research interests lie in the fields of creativity, leadership development, coaching, and the professional and personal development of educators.