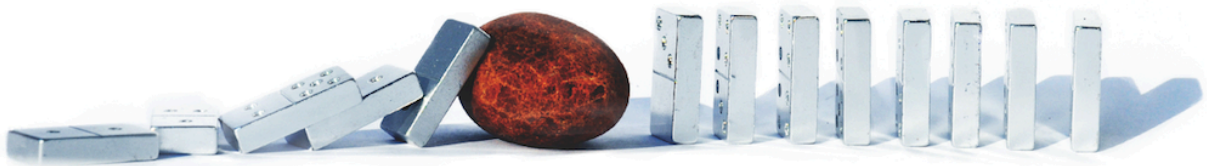


The ART of Coaching

Coping with Disruption

AN INVITATION TO ACTIVE AND CONTINUOUS SELF-DISRUPTION

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Effective coping with disruption in our exponentially changing times asks for leadership agility in learning to be comfortable with the uncomfortable to successfully create opportunities when facing challenges.

Coaching can enable engagement for action and support active self-disruption for forward thinking individuals, especially in the context of leadership roles in complex settings.

Mindful and purposeful self-leadership is at the core of befriending disruption and the ability of aligning with equanimity and joy – a calm strong authentic **executive presence**.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Coaching is a powerful resource for leaders in important transitions and for personal growth. Growth requires change - leaders must make challenging choices. Moving forward with confidence and purpose can be enabled in a trustful coaching relationship and accelerate the achievement of desired outcomes with reliable results and sustainable new operating modes. This becomes visible in effective daily behaviours and perceivable in enhanced personal well-being.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Part 1: Disruption Brings Forth New Leadership Qualities

The highly volatile business environment is stretching leaders out of their comfort zone; thus, new leadership competences emerge as relevant for coping successfully with exponential disruption and change. Meaning making, understanding, clarity, courage, agility, etc. are key to reversing the focus in overwhelming challenges.

Part 2: Volatile Change Awakens Creativity in Leaders and Gives Birth to Equanimity

The continuous disruption is unsettling even the strongest leaders, making them feel uncomfortable, insecure, unclear and ambiguous. They feel highly challenged in sustaining highest levels of performance for themselves and their teams. Coaching minded leaders reach out for dialogue and courageous, constructive conversations.

Part 3: Coaching as a Segway for Activating and Focussing Resources in the Eye of the Storm

The trusted coach can be a great sparring partner in the process of creating fresh perspectives, honing down over-used strengths or activating underutilized strengths and required resources in the face of unfamiliar challenges and the feeling of being stuck.

Part 4: Delivering Lasting Change and Bottom Line Results for Organizations

The scope and diversity of challenges requires focussed and tailored development support with high impact, for effective and lasting fitness of the leaders, to ensure reliable delivery on agreed commitments and positive outcomes. The coaching approach is enabling and supporting a co-creating dialogue culture that is fostering exponentially successful organizations.

The ART of Coaching

Coping with Disruption

AN INVITATION TO CONTINUOUS SELF-DISRUPTION

In 2001, I combined my 25 years of FMCG business and senior leadership experience with my passion for people development and became an independent Executive Coach. In this role, I have had the opportunity to work around the globe with the most fascinating people and inspiring companies across very different cultures. Throughout this entire time, I saw how **disruption is at the core of all coaching and learning activities**. Our thinking patterns are driving the way we live our daily lives and how we are and act professionally. Neuroscience is providing many clues to better understand our emotional triggers, offering valuable insights for self-leadership on how to overcome unconscious biases while encouraging lifelong learning and experimenting to leverage the elasticity of our brain and being.

Disruptions in the business context are almost taboo; they are quickly associated with loss of control and failure. We are suspicious of surprises; they are usually not all pleasant and make us feel vulnerable. **Coping with the unexpected is a leadership imperative**. In every venture, the ability to recover quickly separates winners from losers. Making fast decisions requires a clear mind, mental flexibility, the ability for spotting available options, and the willingness to accept the consequences. The leader's choice can have significant consequences in a business context, thus, the decision process is bringing pressure onto the decision maker accordingly. On a personal level, letting go of what has been dear to us is hard and often painful. What might have served us in the past might not be adequate for progressing forward.

Today, **self-disruption** has become an integrated "development technology" and part of "Leadership 2.0" for coping in a fast moving, digitally driven work environment, to successfully bring the leader's competencies to the next level. Mindful self-disruption is seen as a key enabler for **creating a better more evolved version of leadership** practice. Yet, how do you smartly self-disrupt in a business setting? In our personal life, we are more open to see changes as freedom to create our own destiny. We often experience change as a welcome diversity or an invigorating new adventure. When we begin to understand how disruption is naturally embedded in our life at every moment, it can become a useful ally and we can start to truly appreciate it for its full value as a trigger to realign ourselves. This awareness allows us to leverage and integrate the positive and challenging forces in all our endeavors.

As an Executive Coach, I work with highly successful people who are ready for new ideas that they can integrate into their approach - to be more effective and to be more themselves, striving to reach their full potential. They are seeking ways to connect with their **equanimity** - their calmness of mind and composure, a state of peace, clarity and serenity. By interrupting the normal or expected thinking, a coach, as a sparring partner, is intermitting to allow the leader to pause, reflect and integrate the *Not Knowing* with the *Knowing* to create something new that makes the chosen approach fit for the future. With the help of an appropriate push or 'tweak' when feeling in disarray, unsettled or uncertain, shifts can be made more easily. Even when the adjustments are very small, they can have a significant positive impact. We can see with new eyes what might have been invisible to us before, or what was simply forgotten. Disruption can be like a wake-up call to **full alertness and more awareness**.

This chapter aims to highlight different coaching situations for exploring the idea of coping with disruption, understanding the experienced reality of fear, self-doubt, perceived setbacks and steps to reframe one's outlook; elaborating the co-creation process in the client-coach relationship; and valuing the benefits of coaching for organizational results.

In our exponential times with rampant, ascending speed of change, people are quickly pushed out of their comfort zone. Developing the awareness and strength to be fit and agile to effectively **transform** an externally triggered disruption into a self-disruption initiative, by **seeing new opportunities** and **creating unexpected added value** for relevant key stakeholders, is key. This ability is allowing us to experience a new sense of **freedom** and self-determination in a challenging context, enabling us to face the eye of the storm gracefully.

The following five diverse coaching case studies show how **disruption can elevate individuals** to their next level of competence for dealing with change when they are facing the perturbances from external or internal disruptions. These case studies also show how the coaching process allowed them to quickly discover opportunities to create and adopt something new. The examples span from a senior executive banker at a renowned private bank to an executive in a pharmaceutical multinational, a surgeon in an international hospital network, a female CEO in a social institution, and an entrepreneur in a global trading business (names of the persons and organizations involved were changed to protect the anonymity of the individuals). Each case study is followed by a short summary of coaching concepts that can be helpful for both the coachee or the coach.

Disruption Brings Forth New Leadership Qualities

While stunt people say that *you can get used to the life-threatening experiences*, leaders that are experiencing a free fall from reorganization seldom would have enough practice to confirm that. Most executives learn through their career how to move swiftly from a feeling of challenge toward courage to put the focus on seeing the essential and spotting new opportunities. However, applying this in a very personal situation is much more challenging. We get more easily caught by our emotional triggers and are distracted with difficult feelings and worries. This is when the coach, as a **trusted sparring partner, can be of great value**, helping make the journey more manageable and ensuring that the change can be transformational, therefore more lasting. Sometimes the best choice for moving forward is letting go.

A Free Fall of a Senior Executive in a Private Bank

Steven had taken a well-earned sabbatical from his fast-paced executive job in private banking to check off some key activities from his bucket list. It took him some time to get into the groove of less structured weeks. Halfway through his leave of absence his corporate friends contacted him to announce a re-organization, where his role no longer showed up on the organization chart. He felt the tremendous inner confusion of hurt feelings, sadness and anger, while working hard to stay rational and maintaining composure. His daily reflections on sabbatical had brought up some intriguing thoughts about his future, but he was far from being ready to act on these ideas and dreams. The disruption of the reorganization caused fear and shock and prompted a call to his coach, a trusted advisor, to share what was going on. *“What have I done wrong? What can I do now? How do I best communicate to my team? How do I now deal with my stakeholders? Where should I start? What is my best game plan to move forward? ...”*

Trust is a prerequisite for people to be willing to open up, especially in a state of vulnerability. **The first step is about fully embracing what is happening** in the moment and knowing that

there is a clear opportunity in every change. The ability to move toward and through the initial fear of change with **courage** and **self-confidence** make it possible to notice the doors that are opening, to imagine possible alternatives and to adapt the thinking and behavior to the new situation with **mental and emotional agility** in exponential times with rampant change and augmented ambiguity.

As an Executive Coach, my deep trust in this process allows me to lead the “dance” by asking probing questions to help rediscover the core purpose of the pursuit. As a coach I am a trusted sparring partner. The ‘dance’ in this process is to be reassuring where strengths show up to connect the person with their own resourcefulness and also to be challenging where unvalidated truths, self-limiting beliefs and rigid habits get in the way. In this, there is the challenge of a parallel process for the coach; with detached connectedness, the coach needs to make sure to be empathically present, while staying on solid ground to avoid being drawn into the muddy field. In coaching sessions like these, with sensitive and fragile transition process conversations, the inner voice of worries is a red flag for the coach to watch out not to become directive. The process has to be allowed to flow where it is meant to go. Steps forward and backwards are needed to get to that **shift point**, where a small change in applied principles and thinking patterns can have a big impact. It looks and feels like a co-creative dance. At times, this can be similar to a beginner’s dance class, when new figures are tried out. Seeing and understanding better what this situation is creating, step by step, is a **rewarding discovery process** and, when pursued **with determination**, creates new **alignment** and **flow**.

The highly volatile business environment is pushing leaders out of their comfort zone. Thus new leadership competences are needed for coping successfully with exponential disruptive change. **Open-mindedness, clarity, courage, and agility** are key for adjusting or reversing the **focus** when facing overwhelming challenges. **Simplifying** is essential to bring what needs attention to the foreground. With an open mindset, we are ready to embrace what is - including noticing our emotions and being able **manage the impact** they have on us.

As a result of the coaching Steven was ready to let go of status and role and felt liberated to seek a new challenge that is aligned with his up-dated life and career vision and that is playing to what he is best at, thus, can manage with joy and ease.

Mindset is Everything:

- ➔ Stay connected with your purpose and the ‘magic of your essence’ to feel the pull
- ➔ Understand your priorities to focus only on what is important
- ➔ Listen to hear what others are contributing to gain new insights
- ➔ Adopt and integrate your learnings to progress
- ➔ Close what you want to let go and accept the loss that comes with choice to move on
- ➔ Take courageous decisions and be prepared to move forward step-by-step

Volatile Change Prompts Renewal and Awakens Creativity & Equanimity

Differentiation is a competitive tool that leaders learn about quickly when working for leading businesses. When it comes to self-leadership and personal branding, however, it is tempting to become confluent with the identity and needs of the business. This process goes on over time and is hardly noticed by the individual involved. It is comparable to the technique of a successful actor who says that emptying oneself is vital to be able to fully and authentically step into a role.

Catching yourself in this 'hollow' experience feels like a loss and kicks-off a journey of self-rediscovery. This is about consciously reconnecting with your own passion and enabling a process of **updating, reinventing and realigning the Self**. It is like installing a new operating system that is compatible with current demands - activating new forces and **enabling new strengths** while using them in genius new ways. The coach can be a tough challenger in these situations, helping to kick out unhelpful habits and blinders that are hindering the outlook to new paths and even new universes.

A Personal Branding Crisis of a Senior Executive in a Pharmaceutical Multinational

John had it all laid out. He was so preoccupied with the details of his challenge that he could not see the forest for the trees and the beauty of the larger context he was operating in. He found himself paralyzed with the thought that if he ever would leave his organization he would be a 'no-name'. The idea of the risk, to possibly be an empty shell, with no value to the outside world, obsessed him. His career had taken him on an interesting ride with many opportunities and rewarding experiences. Now, in his mid-life reflection, he was wondering about the sustainability of his track. He was even tempted to imagine a life outside of the "golden cage". This idea triggered strong self-doubts, and he felt like an imposture. This created disturbance and neurotic conflict to the extent that he could not think clearly or feel his usual strength and outgoing way of interacting with the world. He was imagining the worst - loneliness, loss of meaning, loss of respect, loss of everything he had built up over the years, even possibly losing his job - all while he was still well-positioned in a rewarding assignment. This personal crisis also made him question if he was having enough impact with his current projects and how he could maximize his efforts to change that. *"Who am I? What am I here for? What do I have to offer? What are my unique strengths? What else can I do to have greater impact? ..."*

Stepping back to look at the bigger picture, dissecting the pieces with the coach, helped to clarify his options and opportunities. Emphasizing his capabilities to clarify the vision, understanding his personal strengths, and defining the opportunities for value creation in stakeholder relationships quickly brought back the intrinsic motivation to create a positive impact in line with his vision and values in the context of a larger system.

Continuous disruption is unsettling even to the strongest leaders, making them feel uncomfortable, insecure, unclear, ambiguous and destabilized. They feel extremely challenged in sustaining highest levels of performance for themselves and their teams in the face of their performance goals. They feel under pressure and often alone in their organization. Coaching minded leaders reach out for dialogue and courageous, constructive conversations. The **safe space to speak their mind and heart** allows them **time to think to recalibrate** and makes them feel in control. In this collaboration they can activate their **resourcefulness** to sort out what is in front of them, feeling self-assured to tackle what it takes to succeed moving forward. Working **together** and co-creating with others is energizing and inspiring and puts the person in a state of **Equanimity**.

Investing in coaching as a resource allowed the executive to clearly express his ideas and passions which, when communicated, immediately resonated with the people around him. In this way he was able to quickly create new opportunities for himself in his mission for the business, and he was able to engage fully with his inner power to feel more motivated and fulfilled.

Equanimity is a strong, calm presence, a serenity that comes from within. With practice we can go to that place of peace faster. We get back quicker into our productive mode, ready to engage with the people and world around us with clarity, empowered and committed.

Coaching as a ‘Segway’ for Activating Resources in the Eye of the Storm

Discovering and understanding coaching as a great resource to leverage potential for winners rather than a remedial process for losers is still more the exception than the rule. In challenging, high-pressure phases in the continuous development of successful leaders and organizations, coaching can be a great segue to make best use of the Storm for lasting positive outcomes.

Coaching is a way of being where **two-way dialogue**, **deep listening**, and **active partnering** are key disciplines. A trusted coach can be a great sparring partner in the process of creating fresh perspectives and activating underutilized strengths along with other required resources needed for unfamiliar challenges and in situations where one feels the lack of progress or being stuck.

The maze of ongoing activities with all the conflicting priorities and potential confusions is a playground. Slowing down to connect with the personal feelings related to the current reality, dissecting the parts, and putting the data together in a new order that is aligned with clear goals and validated with what is relevant for all involved, creates a fresh, clean start – allowing one to let go of unnecessary baggage.

Working with executives and highly successful people often requires the coach to bring the individuals into a state of being that allows them to take time for themselves as they are typically all absorbed in providing for others and in delivering results. Taking time to see the beauty of what they have is a valuable first step, as this often gets lost in propulsive efficiency and speed.

Executives that are **self-aware** have the audacity to **self-interrupt** and **self-disrupt** themselves to create a jumping board for launching the next phase of **self-development**. **Leading is a continuous process of renewal and growth**. Maintaining the status quo is not an option. Everything is in motion and requires a process of adaptation - by leaving, modifying and adding.

In both of the following cases, the individuals engaged me as their coach in a meeting of synchronicity, when they felt they were meeting a person that they could partner with in the current state to move forward successfully. The relationship resonated with their needs and ideas. They had already decided for themselves that to self-disrupt was the way to go.

The Sky is Not the Limit for a Leading Surgeon in an International Hospital Network

Striving for perfection is a hard endeavor. Many sacrifices are made in service of high expectations and efficiency. There is more to being your whole **Self** than to work at the best of your abilities. Effectiveness is key to have the desired impact, to deliver on the purpose and to have success. However, personal fulfillment comes from a deep connection with the essence of your **Self**. Often successful leaders have to give themselves permission to move away from standing in their own way, to feel the freedom of achieving more with less. Even the most successful and most efficient track can be self-limiting. Further potential and fulfillment can come from a lighter touch and allow growth beyond self-created constraints.

Dr. Rick is a fantastic surgeon and the patients he works with love him. As he is a very people centered person, the medical staff went out of their way to please him. Dr. Rick’s collaboration with his peers was a bit more challenging as it required more willingness for him to change his

habits and expectations. What turned out to be the “goldmine” in the coaching process was to give room to the other significant talents he had as an entrepreneur, researcher, teacher, and leader. By giving more time to his other fields of expertise, Dr. Rick was able to let go of some of the rigid thought patterns that made him feel tense as if he was restrained in a straitjacket.

“What is wrong that I work so much harder than others? What makes me so impatient towards my peers and co-workers? What makes me so obsessed? What drives me? What makes what I am doing worthwhile? What if I think about a different life? What is the right time for what? ...”

By focusing on what is on top of Dr. Rick’s mind - what was accomplished and achieved daily, as part of a regular debriefing, the coach was able to help this highly successful individual to gather a clearer, more fully developed picture of his purpose and work to become more at peace with his intense daily life. Understanding how he was able to maintain such a high level of productivity, recognizing his outstanding capacity as a doctor with a big heart in engaging in personal conversations and relationships and respecting and accepting that he is an outlier with extraordinary skills, was something that needed to be acknowledged to understand that his way of operating was quite different from the typical profile. Many outstanding people take their good work and high capacity and great willingness to perform at their best for granted and tend to be too strict with themselves, especially when it comes to **self-appreciation** and **self-care**. Even the deep understanding exchanged with a loving and loyal spouse can be clouded by roles and habits; it can fall short of creating the tipping point that is disrupting predominant thoughts and behavior patterns.

In the meantime, Dr. Rick has been able to shift his allocation of time and energy in a way that better reflects who he is. As a result, it is clearly perceivable how his way of being and behaving has become more fluid, more agile, and more responsive with respect to his own needs, and, paradoxically, also to the needs of the people around him. He has also gained momentum in making overdue decision on topics that had appeared peripheral and have now fed into the core of the scientific research activities and innovative ventures he was about to create. Thus, the **authentic self-servant leader** is having a positive impact on the business, the organization, and the wider social system around him.

Mobilize your Inner Strength and Serenity when Feeling Pressure of Disruption:

- ➔ Breathe deeply to create calm presence and time to reflect (in the moment)
- ➔ Notice and name your feelings. Observe your reactions (under pressure)
- ➔ Appreciate and embrace what is there (regularly)
- ➔ Focus on listening to yourself/others without being hijacked by feelings or emotions (always)
- ➔ Decide - make an aware choice from options and backups you have (in time)

A World That is Too Small for a Courageous Female Executive

Amy, a female CEO of a social institution, described her status quo as feeling caught like a fish in an aquarium. Her situation was not about the lack of skill but the absence of the opportunity to demonstrate her true potential and capabilities. So she decided to break free to create a larger universe for herself, to allow herself to tackle bigger challenges, and to take on more responsibility. She told me at the beginning of the coaching that her best friends had been the **catalyst for initiating a self-disruption** as they kept assuring her that she was ready to go for a bigger more challenging role. *“Am I good enough? Will I be able to live up to the demands and expectations? What do I best focus on? What if I get lost? What do I need to know? ...”*

Amy prepared well for this new adventure and connected with her own purpose and strengths. However, when it came to acting in bold and new ways in the new environment, the hardwired habits took a quick grip and tamed the adventurous part of her self to protect her and stay safe. This change took a while to implement. Surprisingly it was the more challenging tasks in her new assignment that made a shift to new behaviors easier. The relatively unfamiliar territory made the risks associated with this new assignment less familiar – there was less previous experience to draw on, thus, less to be afraid of.

This coaching process was more **about letting go of what was hindering** than about adding new leadership insights and principles. Thus, having made a choice to go for the deeper waters was the key to getting Amy to step into a bigger and absolutely underestimated self. The process of letting go of self-limiting beliefs allowed the natural and virtuous leader to come forth. Self-doubt had been the biggest obstacle to overcome.

Today, Amy is well established in her new role and a well-respected member of the executive team. The “bigger ocean” feels already quite familiar, like a natural habitat. Business has won a talented leader that previously was working far below her true capabilities and levels of expertise - a grounded courageous personality, who is ready to tackle complex challenges and commit to deliver reliable results with her team.

Create Winning Sparring Partner Relationship(s):

- ➔ Stay connected and honest with yourself and each other
- ➔ Dialogue continuously with your key stakeholder(s)
- ➔ Agree on joint goals
- ➔ Understand and respect mutual expectations, including boundaries
- ➔ Grow together through timely feedback and feed forward conversations

Collaboration delivers Lasting Change & Bottom Line Results for Businesses

“First thing’s first” the ROI (Return on Investment) of all these efforts and investments for the business organization is not always immediately obvious. This triggers the “chicken or egg” question. What comes first in providing a fertile ground. The sustainable impact and leverage from coaching work comes from the **coaching culture** that is installed in the minds and attitudes of the people - the leadership spirit of the organization. This potential oriented environment allows working with the assumption that the answers are already present to be uncovered, puts a focus on listening for **discovery and deeper understanding**, fosters an effort for connecting the dots to create new innovative opportunities, and promotes the willingness to tap into the resourcefulness of the people. These capabilities are being developed as a sustainable resource for delivering desired results for all stakeholders and **energize the organizational system** as a whole on an on-going basis. This self-renewal and self-reinventing mechanism allows the company eco-system to create value on a broad scope, beyond the financial bottom line – it becomes a smart self-sustainable living system with meaning and purpose – a learning organization for it’s people and for it’s business.

Make coaching a **co-creative process** and integrated and vital part of your business model. Build great and lasting relationships by continuously involving and **engaging** the relevant constituents and, thus, create a valid, competitive and lasting model. Respect the capabilities of your most

valuable resources – your business culture and your people. *“Going Far? Take a Partner. Going Fast? Go alone.”* (Marc Benioff, Chairman & CEO of salesforce.com, paraphrasing an African proverb). Make everyone feel successful on the journey and beyond.

What is true for the larger system - the organization - can also be applied at the team level as well as to the individual leaders. Entrepreneurs are good role models - their boundaries are often overlapping as they take multiple roles and are typically driven by passion, persistence, and humility to achieve business results.

The Purposeful Pioneering of a Global Entrepreneur

To do what needs to be done is a given for entrepreneurs. This case is about a wonderful young entrepreneur in a family business that is vastly successful. The leader knows the ins and outs of the enterprise from being heavily involved in the daily operations. Change and constant disruption is perpetual in the trading business. This makes the job of leading much easier for him - even when it seems contrary to predominant assumptions. He knows from his daily work what it takes and knows what the challenges and risks are. This makes him have great respect for his employees, just as they have for him. Thus, the coaching in this case was very much about reassuring the leader of his innate capabilities, treasuring what was there and supporting him in turning up the volume on the great things he was already doing to get maximum impact and leverage in his fast growing global business. Openness to listen to people and to stay focused on the essentials gave him the strength and the advantage of not being distracted by less important things. However, it was ultimately the key value: humility, passed on from the family that was preciously valuable and made him such an inspirational leader who created positive resonance with the core people in the business. The humility, openness to the ideas of others, shown by their leader motivates people to be the best they can be for him and for themselves. He role modelled grounded leadership behaviour in an unpredictable environment - moving with agility and mindfully from insight to action for impact and beyond tirelessly and with confidence - leading to customer centric leadership, thinking outside in and future back. The work with the coach was not about change, but about understanding and strengthening what was there to make it stronger and **resilient in the face of constant and volatile change** in the internal and external systems. *“What else can I do? How do I/we stay on track? How do I/we keep up? What could I/we be missing? What can I/ we leverage more? ...”*

The volatility, uncertainty and unexpectedness of disruption, and strain from change are what typically generates fight, flight, or freeze reactions in us. It is my observation that disruptions are commonly understood as challenges rather than opportunities. I am convinced that disruptions are the very fuel of our **vital force, elasticity, flexibility and adaptability** and allow us to reinvent ourselves even in the most unbelievable maze to find a new way and come out stronger.

Disruption allows us each time to reconnect with our intentionality, to be fresh **creators of our own destiny**, while opening new business opportunities in the process. We recognize that we have different **choices** and we become aware that we want to make them mindfully and in time. This is our ultimate freedom. With every choice there is a loss - a closure and a **new beginning**. Thus, looking at environments where the variables are more or less volatile can be a helpful benchmark to calibrate the mindset and behavior for a given context. The more we experiment with different ways of coping with disruptions the more fit we become to do the marathon or sprint. In this way, we are all pioneers of our lives in a **co-creative, emergent process**.

The entrepreneur feels now more self-assured in his leadership, more deliberate. He is more willing to be hands off and trust the capabilities of his people, to free up capacity to look after the growing challenges of the business. He ensures that people are working together to make

best use of diverse perspectives and knowledge and in this way to ensure more solid outcomes and be better equipped to cope with even the most disruptive challenges.

Tips for Creating a Self-Organizing Self-Sustaining Model for Yourself and Your Business:

- ➔ Have an inspiring compelling shared vision – connect on purpose and with meaningful contribution
- ➔ Know your strengths – apply, stretch and adapt them continuously and manage your emotional triggers as they relate to overused strenghts and resulting allergies
- ➔ Ensure a common understanding of the core values and priorities – stay in continuous dialogue for mutual learning and re-alignment
- ➔ Focus on key stakeholder relationships to co-create, learn and innovate - through mutual challenge to get to robust solutions
- ➔ Stay relevant – probe for the core questions, listen deeply and re-new continuously
- ➔ Simplify to keep it light – stay clear and drop hindering baggage in time

SUSTAINABILITY AS THE NEW CURRENCY FOR COPING WITH DISRUPTION

Developing exponential leadership for exponential times not only requires more and better performance. A coaching-spirited mindset enables fundamental disciplines like: **self-leadership**, **self-reflection** and **self-care** for staying centered and strong over the long run.

Be smart about **knowing when to go fast** and **when to slow down**. Taking time out is a key virtue in the life of a leader in order to stay **resourceful**, to stay clearly **focused**, and to mindfully bundle one’s available energy in this volatile, ambiguous, complex and uncertain environment.

Allow yourself time to **re-charge**, take time to **re-connect** regularly with your purpose, goals, intentions and **rejoice** in having big dreams. **Trust and believe** in yourself. Trust a select few with your ideas, listen to their advice and adapt it to fit your needs. Stay calm in the eye of the storm and be aware of your reactions. Take it as data – and not more. Know when not to react. Focus on what is important to you. Set clear boundaries. This is about **the being and the doing** for **long lasting success**.

Deceleration is a key tool for **mindful, intentional** and **adaptable** fine-tuning and management of our habitual actions. Understanding these mechanisms can take us a long way in achieving results that are more in line with our intentions. In situations where there is a lot at stake and when change is volatile, this is typically not enough. Disruption, then, acts as a catalyzer to invigorate our **life force**.

The following **disruption-savvy leadership qualities** have emerged in my observations as an Executive Coach for successful coping with disruptions.

Set up your own **navigation system** and have a great journey.

| Disruption Savvy Leadership Qualities | Coping with Disruption Competence | How to Exercise | How to Stretch | Self-Assessment / Did you ... |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Clarity | Enforces and invigorates the thrust of moving towards a goal | ⇒ Understand what is important to you ⇒ Decide what is needed in the short and long-term | ⇒ Articulate what you care about ⇒ Make it concise and communicate it succinctly | ⇒ Validate understanding from others ⇒ Check-in on your time management |

COPING WITH DISRUPTION IN EXPONENTIAL TIMES

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Focus | Connects with purpose, bundles energy, creates drive, sets boundaries to distractions | ⇒ Have clear goals (What) ⇒ Be clear about the why (Purpose) ⇒ Set priorities (How) in alignment with your vision and values | ⇒ Say no ⇒ Do only what is important ⇒ Have courageous conversations | ⇒ Achieve your ends ⇒ Feel free and self-determined ⇒ Get trust and respect |
| Courage | Enables authentic full engagement, provides mental and heart strength, allows to overcome anxiety and fear | ⇒ Have courageous conversations with yourself and others ⇒ Act from inner strength and with backbone ⇒ Be pulled by your vision and guided by your values | ⇒ Go unbeaten new paths ⇒ Pioneer new ideas ⇒ Move against the current | ⇒ Sense integrity with your guiding principles ⇒ Feel a sense of progress and achievement ⇒ Have emotional courage |
| Open-Mindedness | Allows to listen with all senses, gives freedom to surrender to what is, makes to be curious and mindful, facilitates partnering to co-create awesome solutions | ⇒ Invite input from others ⇒ Listen to contributions ⇒ Collaborate with others | ⇒ Explore your unconscious biases ⇒ Integrate inputs and feedback | ⇒ Gain new insights & learning ⇒ Improve quality of relationships and team spirit |
| Confidence | Encourages to trust yourself with all your abilities and potential, gets you beyond obstacles, creates trust and resonance | ⇒ Breath – think – act ⇒ Make aware choices and grounded decisions ⇒ Be aware of your strengths and use them creatively | ⇒ Stop to think before (re) acting ⇒ Allow solutions to emerge ⇒ Invite input from others | ⇒ Act assertively in complex challenges ⇒ Feel inner piece ⇒ Feel motivated and engaged |
| Agility | Facilitates responsiveness in face of strain, gives tenacity to adapt and stay free from entrapment mentally and emotionally | ⇒ Clearly define your playing field ⇒ Recharge your batteries regularly ⇒ Make time to think | ⇒ Anticipate your options and backups ⇒ Understand your stakeholders' opportunities ⇒ Leverage your relationship network ⇒ Connect with your own (emotional) truth | ⇒ Seize opportunities in disruptions ⇒ Lead change ⇒ Re-invent parts of yourself ⇒ Be your best self in adverse circumstances ⇒ Take smart decisions under pressure |
| Simplicity | Makes things clear and manageable, inspires others, creates freedom, emanates beauty | ⇒ Apply your courage to leave out what is not important | ⇒ Communicate concisely | ⇒ Use your intuition and inner knowing when reflecting |

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR BEFRIENDING DISRUPTION

The depth, breath, and diversity of challenges of executives in exponentially disruptive times require focused and tailored developmental support with effective impact for **on-going fitness of the leaders** to ensure reliable delivery on commitments and positive outcomes. The coaching approach enables and supports a co-creative dialogue culture that creates successful organizations and equanimity in the leaders for sustainability in their exceptional performance.

Self-disruption is the realization that maintaining the status quo is not an option. Either we grow or we decay. The more frequent the disruptions and the more volatile and exponential the changes we experience, the more prepared we can become in coping with new situations with suitable adaptation and innovation mechanisms.

When we are able to imagine and visualize future scenarios and feel capable of moving toward a desirable future, we create a state of being, where we can align our actions with determination and unleash the passion for performance toward the desired results with the most possible impact. **Positive coping with disruption is about embracing the disruption fully and to actively self-disrupt courageously to constantly renew and innovate our way and joy of being.**

Key Messages on Coping with Disruptions:

- ➔ Accept disruptions as the new normal
- ➔ Determine your own pace with speeding up and slowing down your (re) actions
- ➔ Create space and time to see the presenting opportunities in the changes
- ➔ Connect with sparring partners to more clearly see and better leverage your strengths
- ➔ Stay tuned in with your vision and dreams to stay on track and to make the journey meaningful & enjoyable



Marie-Louise Zollinger - Executive Coach

