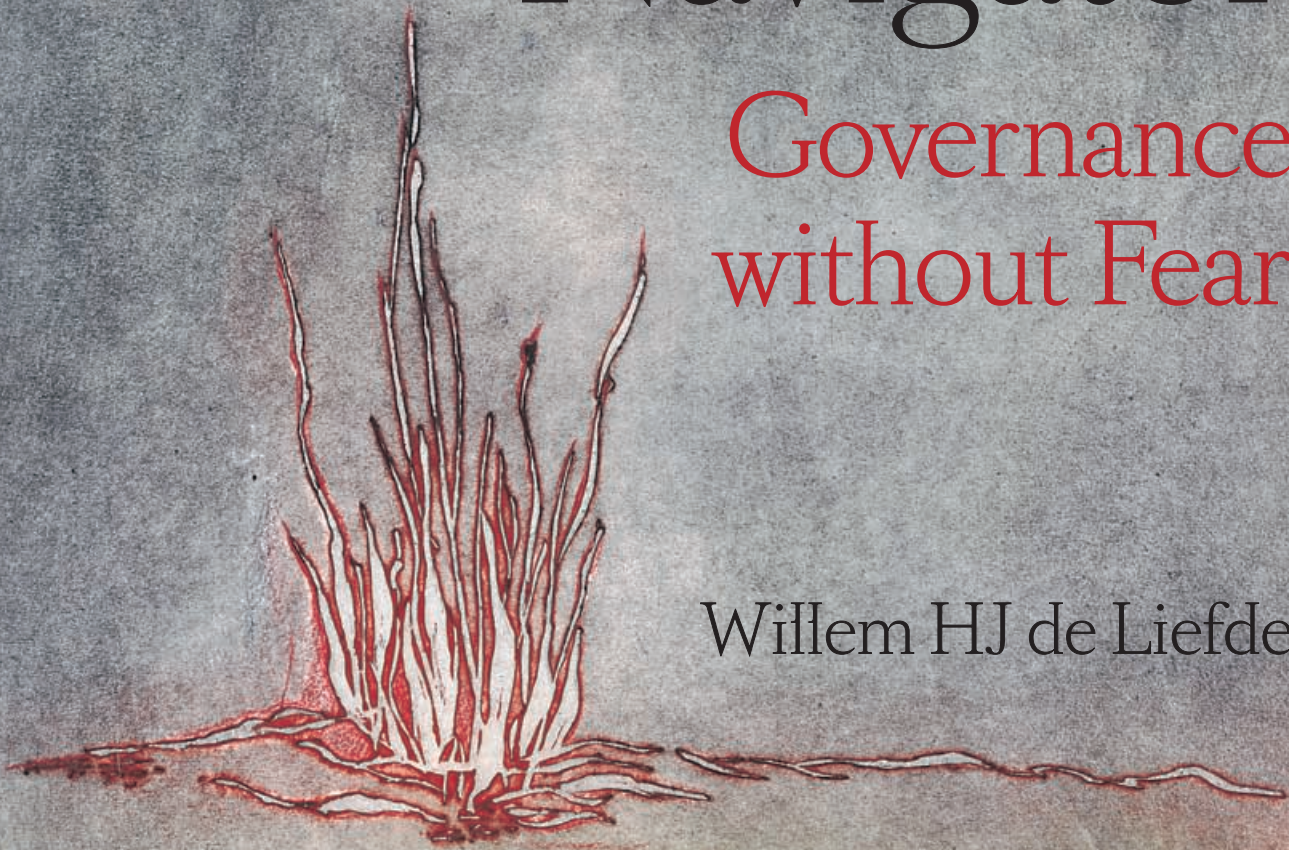


ULC

# The Leadership Navigator

Governance  
without Fear

Willem HJ de Liefde



## About the author

Willem HJ de Liefde was born in 1941 in Coevorden. His working life began as a helmsman in the merchant marine with Royal Rotterdam Lloyd. He ended his naval career as an officer in the Dutch Royal Navy. Thereafter he studied economics and held several management positions and directorships in Europe, the United States and Africa, working for multinationals such as Ericsson, Xerox, Rockwool and Draeger. His field of expertise is managing transformation, inspiring employees and team-building.

*“The western mindset places a greater emphasis on the ‘I’, the healing of the individual whereas we Africans believe that if the community is healed, we as individuals are healed in the process.”*

Lemaseya Khama, B.Arch Botswana/South Africa

ULC

The Leadership Navigator

Governance without Fear

This book is dedicated to my beloved grandchildren: Thomas, Dorien and Sophie de Liefde.  
May they live in a WE world.

ULC

The Leadership Navigator

Governance without Fear

**Willem HJ de Liefde**

For more information on the ULC Leadership Navigator, please contact:

Willem HJ de Liefde  
Blair Atholl, Cradle of Human Kind, South Africa  
Warmond, The Netherlands  
willem@ulc-navigator.com

[www.leadershipnavigator.com](http://www.leadershipnavigator.com)

© WHJ de Liefde, 2011

All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-0-9921770-4-1

Also available as an e-book

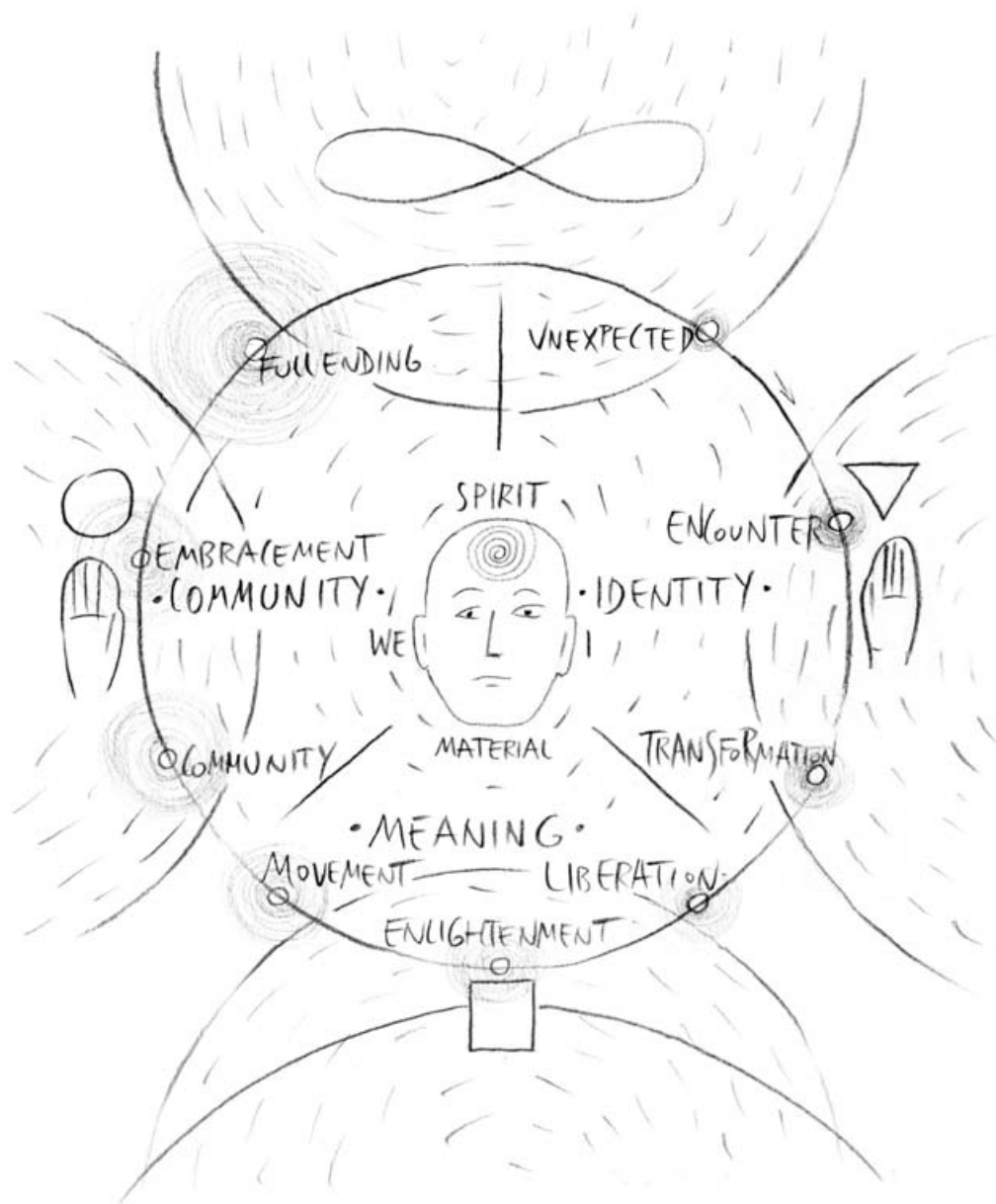
d-PDF ISBN 978-0-9921770-7-2

ePUB ISBN 978-0-9921770-6-5

mobi file ISBN 978-0-9921770-5-8

# Contents

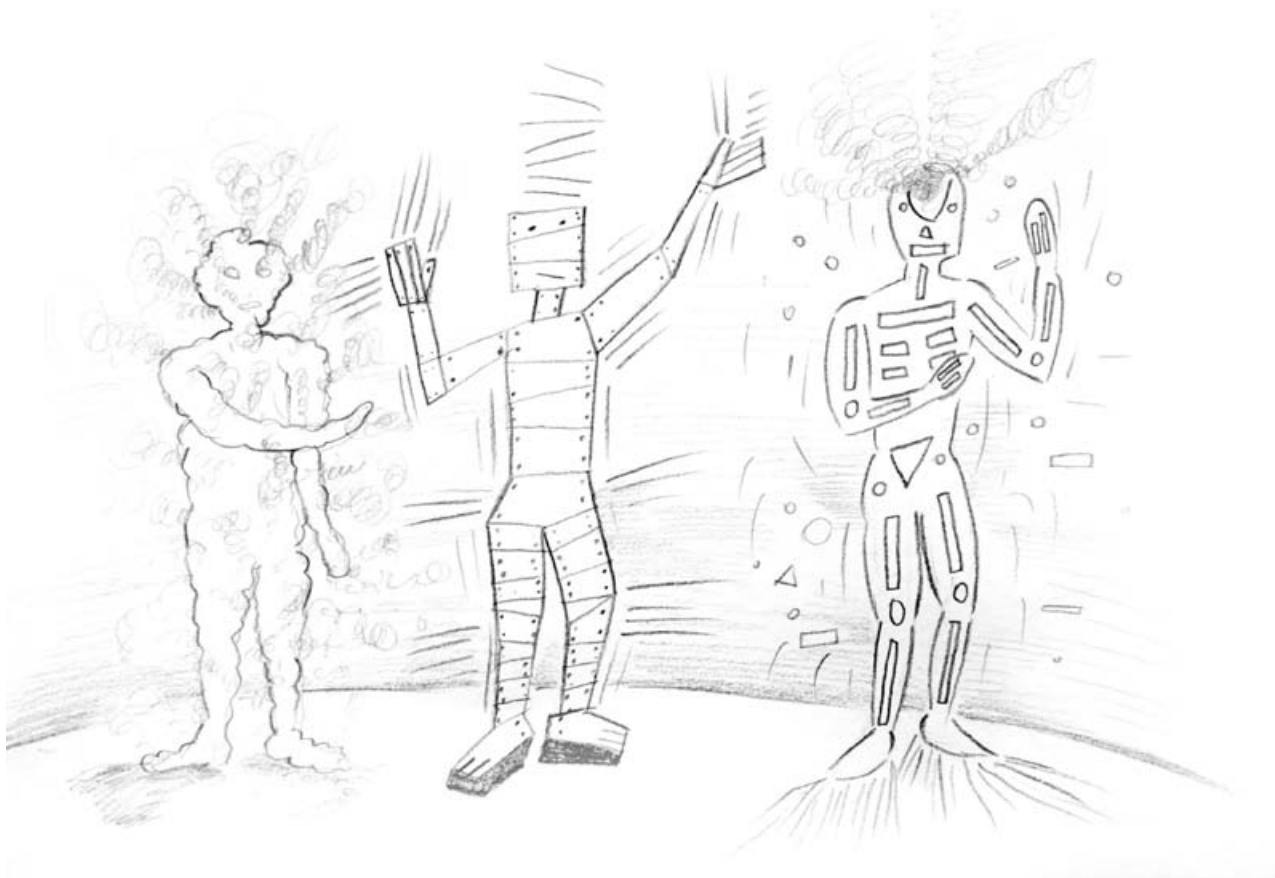
|                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| List of tables and figures.....                                  | 1   |
| Foreword.....                                                    | 3   |
| A paradigm of leadership .....                                   | 3   |
| Basic rules on a tablecloth.....                                 | 5   |
| From the writer's desk .....                                     | 9   |
| 1 Lekgotla: a platform for dialogue.....                         | 12  |
| 2 Embracing Leadership .....                                     | 20  |
| 3 The Universal Life Cycle for individuals as<br>navigators..... | 26  |
| 4 A trinity of leaders.....                                      | 34  |
| 5 The Universal Life Cycle in a<br>corporate setting.....        | 42  |
| 6 False beliefs.....                                             | 56  |
| 7 Awareness of the WE versus I Ego .....                         | 64  |
| 8 Embracing leadership in a corporate context .....              | 86  |
| 9 Power versus force: a leadership indicator.....                | 96  |
| 10 Embracing leadership: an international perspective.....       | 102 |
| 11 We have the tools.....                                        | 116 |
| References.....                                                  | 122 |



I & WE – Spiritual & Material

# List of tables and figures

|                                                                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| The Universal Life Cycle for the individual.....                                                   | 29  |
| The 18 images of the ULC.....                                                                      | 30  |
| The trinity of leadership .....                                                                    | 34  |
| The practical skills of an individual as the outcome<br>from the personal selection of images..... | 38  |
| The mental/emotional skills of an individual .....                                                 | 39  |
| Identity, Meaning and the Collective<br>in a corporate setting.....                                | 44  |
| The Universal Life Cycle in a corporate setting .....                                              | 45  |
| Moment in time .....                                                                               | 62  |
| Bombarded by the unexpected .....                                                                  | 68  |
| Reaction to the bombardment.....                                                                   | 71  |
| Accessing full human potential .....                                                               | 77  |
| The process of awareness, reconciliation<br>and forgiveness .....                                  | 78  |
| Letting go of the past through awareness.<br>reconciliation and forgiveness.....                   | 79  |
| Our wisdom levels .....                                                                            | 97  |
| Leadership consciousness.....                                                                      | 98  |
| Characteristics of ego-driven organisations and<br>WE organisations .....                          | 113 |



Paradigm of leadership

# Foreword

## A paradigm of leadership

I have spent many years working in the corporate world and have come to realise that the more successful companies become, the greater the potential exists for them to slip into the trap of arrogance that inevitably leads to complacency and ruin.

Only the most astute management teams are able to recognise the need to remain humble, continue being innovative and to steadfastly focus on improving their efficiency as their organisations become increasingly successful. They understand that allowing their standards to slip into mediocrity can quickly reverse any successes.

We have been fortunate to have enjoyed a period of the most significant financial growth and prosperity since the end of the Second World War but this growth and prosperity has been followed by one of the biggest financial crises in recent history. The crisis was brought about by the belief that we are able to control market forces and avert the recessions that cripple our economies.

What is clear amidst all the uncertainty is that we cannot continue to operate in this manner and that a new type of leadership style is urgently required. The work by Willem de Liefde is exciting and original because he puts forward a paradigm of leadership that is both new and innovative but also retains the traditions of ancient wisdom that have proven their success over the ages.

We are gaining a better understanding of how our world works at the deepest and most significant levels and this understanding is translating into a new style of leadership centred in a higher consciousness.

In a world dominated by the tendency to impulsively leap into action when we are confronted by any crisis, the author is absolutely correct in drawing the conclusion that it is essential for us to step back and truly see the issues giving rise to the crisis. Then we can enter into honest dialogue and open, truthful communication before moving forward to action if we wish to co-exist in peace and harmony with each other and our planet.

In his work, Willem provides great clarity about this phenomenal leadership style and defines the roles and the tools through which we can embrace one another and raise our consciousness to the levels required to ensure our continued survival.

I hope you will enjoy and benefit from this great work as much as I did.

Alf McKnight  
Director Beyond Connection

## Basic rules on a tablecloth

In 2000, one of my former professors at the hotel management school in Maastricht gave me a book called ‘African leadership’, by Willem de Liefde. He told me that I had to read it, as it was very similar to what we were doing at Mise en Place, the company I founded in 1994. I finished the book in one evening and became so enthusiastic about it that I immediately bought 10 copies, which I handed out during our annual management meeting between Christmas and New Year’s Eve (our powerplay). I asked management to start reading it right away. At that time, our company existed of five offices in two countries, with a team of 25 driven and passionate full-time employees and a turnover of around five million euro.

### **Determined people working together can do anything**

From then on, we called our meetings ‘Kgotlas’. We wrote a few basic rules from the book on the tablecloth of the hotel where we were staying (the truth will be shared, we will let each other finish talking, a decision will always be made and storytelling will be our number one tool). Today, 12 years later, that specific tablecloth is still on the wall of one of our regularly used meeting rooms. We determined that within Mise en Place, there would be no hierarchy. The so-called hierarchic 0-line was implemented and after a mission/vision weekend in the Belgian Ardennes we made the big decision: ‘Together we proudly put energy into making friends and creating synergy’. The vision would be supported by our values, such as responsibility, positive energy and trust.

### **People create growth, companies report it**

Today I am writing this preface, right after our firm took care of the hospitality staff for all 10 stadiums during the past FIFA World Soccer Championship. The project was a great success and over the past three years we have had the chance to train over 9 000 South African students for this job. For a large part, we owe this success to the concepts and ideas of ubuntu. South Africans truly have ‘hospitality inside’ and it is part of their culture to be hospitable and helpful.

### **The best vision is insight**

After 16 years of Mise en Place, we are active in six countries on three continents, with 40 offices, 300 full-time and 7 500 part-time employees and a turnover of around 50 million euro. Our base is still the same as 16 years ago: friendship, the desire to be innovative and the firm belief that we can help people develop. Matters such as profitability, revenue targeting or ROI are subordinate to the goal of Mise en Place.

Each month, the city managers – of each country – come together to inspire each other through storytelling and to share the recent developments within their office. They tell stories about the past or coming month, about private or business matters. The next day, the Kgotla takes place, where we come to conclusions and make agreements.

### **We hire character and we train skill**

We nourish our collective consciousness by regularly organising internal events. An example is the Summer 6 Camp, where over 600 student employees come together for three days of sports,

socialising and partying. We also organise an annual skiing trip with over 200 participants, which embeds our company culture even more.

If people have been on the job for over 1 000 hours, they join the ‘Silver Circle’. At that point, we are getting close to where we want to be: in their hearts and not in their heads. That way they continue to work for us and remain a part of the Mise en Place family, even after their studies. Even though we are not blood relatives, we have a very firm bond and we believe in co-existence between ourselves, our environment and our planet.

**Standing up is a challenge, falling down depends on your ego**

By intuition, experience and trust, our organisation is starting a transformation. The desire for change and new experiences takes us to many places in the world and creates many chances for reflection and development. We pay a high price for the lessons we learn and see this as a necessary step to eventually become an organic growth firm, whose foundation consists of its employees. We laugh a lot about the things that don’t work out and keep looking ahead by sharing our dreams with each other.

**Excellent firms don’t believe in excellence, only in constant improvement and constant change**

In order to select new people we developed the ‘Mise en Scan’, a personal behavioural model. This model focuses on the talents which can still be developed. The year 2010 was the year of 20Talent for Mise en Place. With as little bureaucracy and management as possible, we are working together and taking decisions in ‘open space’. Each voice is equal (it is not the percentage of shares that matters) and by getting our people into a

state of trust and involvement, they are putting in the extra effort that is necessary. During the past crisis, we asked our full-time employees the following question: ‘Should we fire 20% of you, or should everyone (including shareholders) get a 20% lower wage?’ They unanimously chose for the second option. Reciprocity and ubuntu is in our DNA!

**There is no elevator to success, you have to take the stairs**

The fact that I met Willem de Liefde in Johannesburg is the proof that we are on the right path with our company. It strengthens my belief that leading an organisation has nothing to do with managerial models, hierarchy or pay cheques. The leadership of the future consists of understanding, empathy and intuition, in combination with the laws of nature, experience and sharing knowledge. Therefore, it is a huge honour to be able to write this preface. I will definitely place this new book on the booklist for our employees.

**A great leader won't outspurt his team**

The final thing for me to do is wish you a lot of happiness while reading this very inspiring book. Take time, listen to some classical music and apply the concepts. Before you know it, you will be organising the FIFA World Soccer Championships in Brazil, 2014!

Hamba Kahle

Charles van Goch

CEO Mise en Place Group, the Netherlands

# From the writer's desk

Throughout my life, I have discovered that I always achieve the best results when my actions are based on a combination of intuition, experience and sharing the truth. This way of living has resulted in me becoming a believer in the concept of what I call Embracing Leadership and being able to let go of the past.

When I facilitate transformation processes with these groups, my aim is always to involve and empower people. This opens up their consciousness and allows them to let go of their fear and to share their collective wisdom with all the participants.

Now is a fascinating time of change and there is a great need for a style of leadership based upon higher consciousness. I have observed that in every successful family-owned company, some of which have been in existence for over a hundred years, there is a passion for the well being of employees. That is one of the elements that makes such a company successful and sustainable. Their concept of time seems to differ from other corporations, whose first priority is to maximise profit for their shareholders. Profit-orientated companies are based upon the slogan 'Time is money', and this puts enormous pressure on their workforce. The family-owned companies seem to dedicate some of their time to focusing on human relationships. This creates sustainable wealth in their

business and in their relationships. This invisible power of passion and love for humanity creates empowered staff and customer loyalty.

These successful and sustainable companies have the following in common:

- They share their vision and wealth with their employees and customers
- They take decisions collectively and then implement the decisions in the same way
- They are flexible during the implementation process and are open to change
- All employees understand that every decision was taken for the greater good of the collective
- Their customers feel they benefit from the company
- They have a deep respect for cultural diversity
- They prioritise humanity and have compassion
- They believe in the intuitive wisdom of people
- They have a strong sense of identity
- They give meaning to work

To create sustainability in your company, you need to increase the collective consciousness and explore the wisdom of the collective.

This can only be achieved by holding ongoing dialogues with your internal and external stakeholders and sharing and developing a deep passion and love for them.

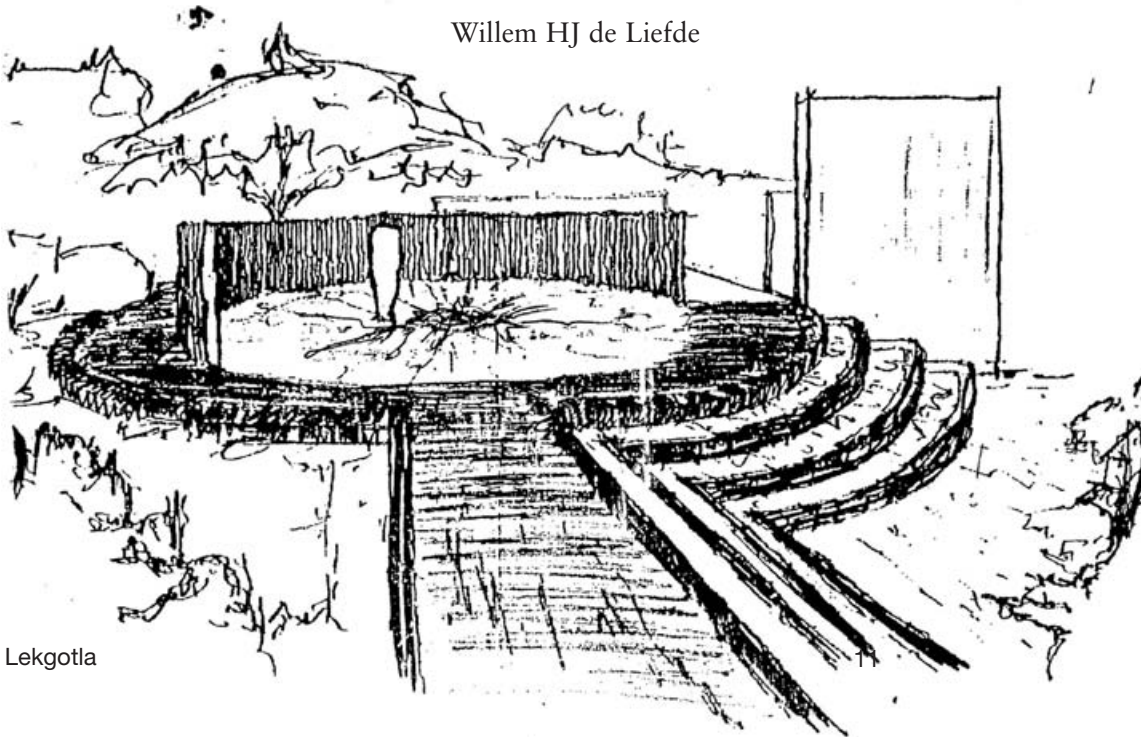
This book aims to awaken you and if it occasionally shocks you

then I have achieved that aim. I urge you to read it with an open mind, from the perspective of creating a better working environment and, ultimately, a better world for all.

I thank the artists Jan Montyn, Michel van Overbeeke, Lemmy Khama and Klaus Elle for allowing me to use their art. I have learned that through art you can open the collective consciousness in a very positive way.

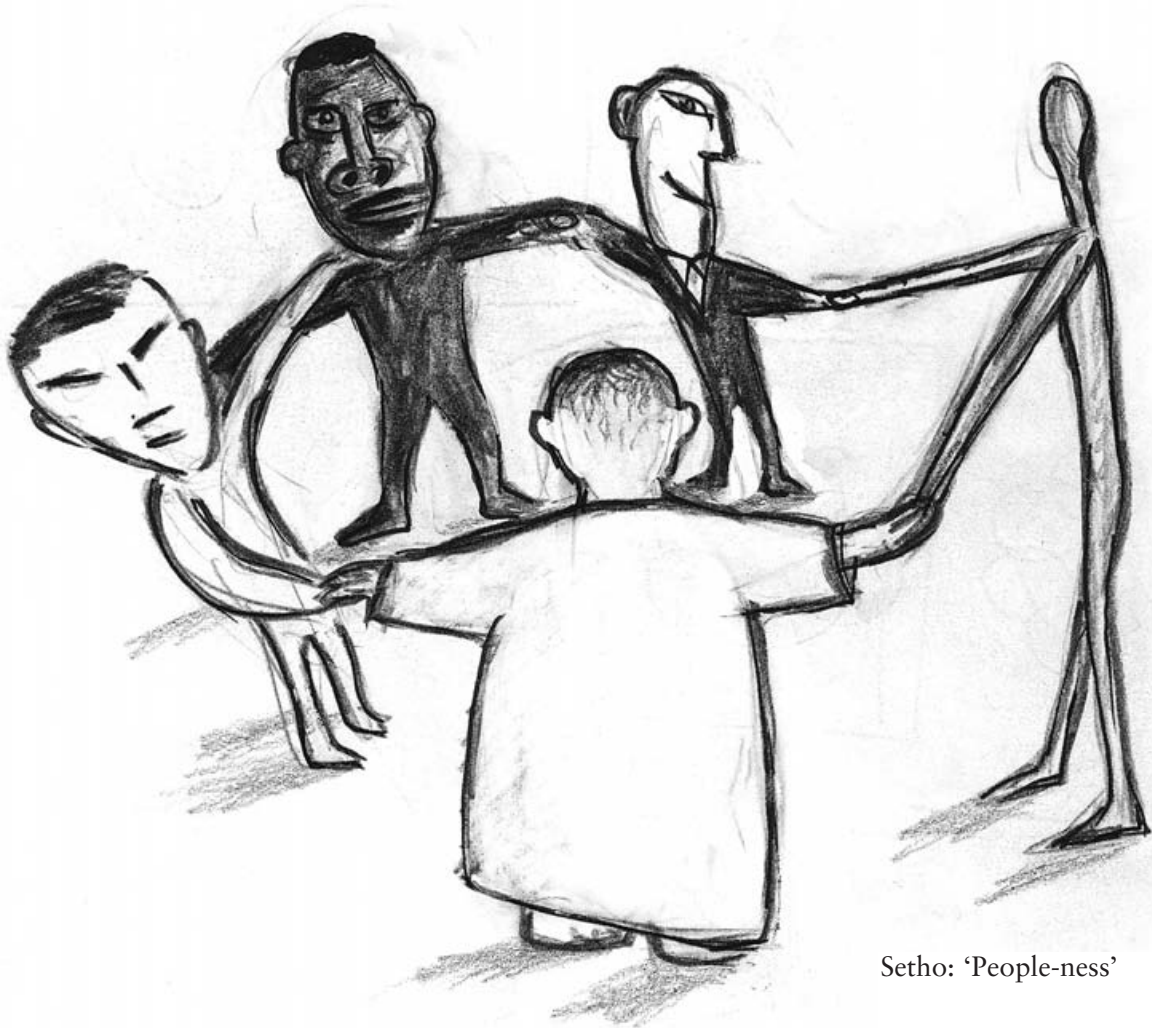
I want to thank all who supported me in the creation of this book: Jansje, my partner who was always there to listen to me and always brought me back to the essence of my thoughts; my son Martijn, a firm believer in the Legkotla philosophy; Barbara, Alf, Chel, Lesley, Robin, Marianne, Maggie, Natalie, Frank and many others who were there to listen to me and continue to give me feedback.

Willem HJ de Liefde



# Chapter 1

## Lekgotla: a platform for dialogue



Setho: 'People-ness'

# References

- Maria Schultz, article in *Mail and Guardian*, 30 January 2010
- Prof. Bohm, Donald Factor and Peter Garrett, *Dialogue a proposal*, 1991.  
Retrieved from the net: [www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/](http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/) in September 2009
- Frank Thomas, *:Are we as the west not a third world*, on his blog in August 2009
- Willem de Liefde, *Lekgotla: the art of leadership*, Jacana Media, 2007
- Martin Luther King Jr, 1955. Retrieved from the web: Martin Luther King Quotes September 2008
- Bruce Lipton, Phd, *The biology of belief*, Hay House, 2005
- Prof. David Bohm, in a speech retrieved from the internet, Dec 2008
- Charlene Smits, 'Committed to me', *The Star*, January 2010
- David. R .Hawkins, *Power vs Force*, Hay House, 1995, 1998, 2002
- Dr. Masaru Emoto, in a speech, South Africa, Cape Town, 1 September 2008
- James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Double Day Books, 2004

## Artwork by:

- ULC, universal life cycle, Jan Montyn, Amsterdam, August 1994, pp29, 30, 45, 78
- Michel van Overbeeke, Haarlem NL, paintings, 2006 and 2008, pp70, 76, inside back cover
- Klaus Elle, Hamburg, Germany, sketches 2002, 2010, pp2, 13, 12, 17, 34, 40, 41, 55, 63, 64, 80, 85, 90, 100, 121
- Lemmy Khama, sketch, p11
- John Hogg, photography, p76

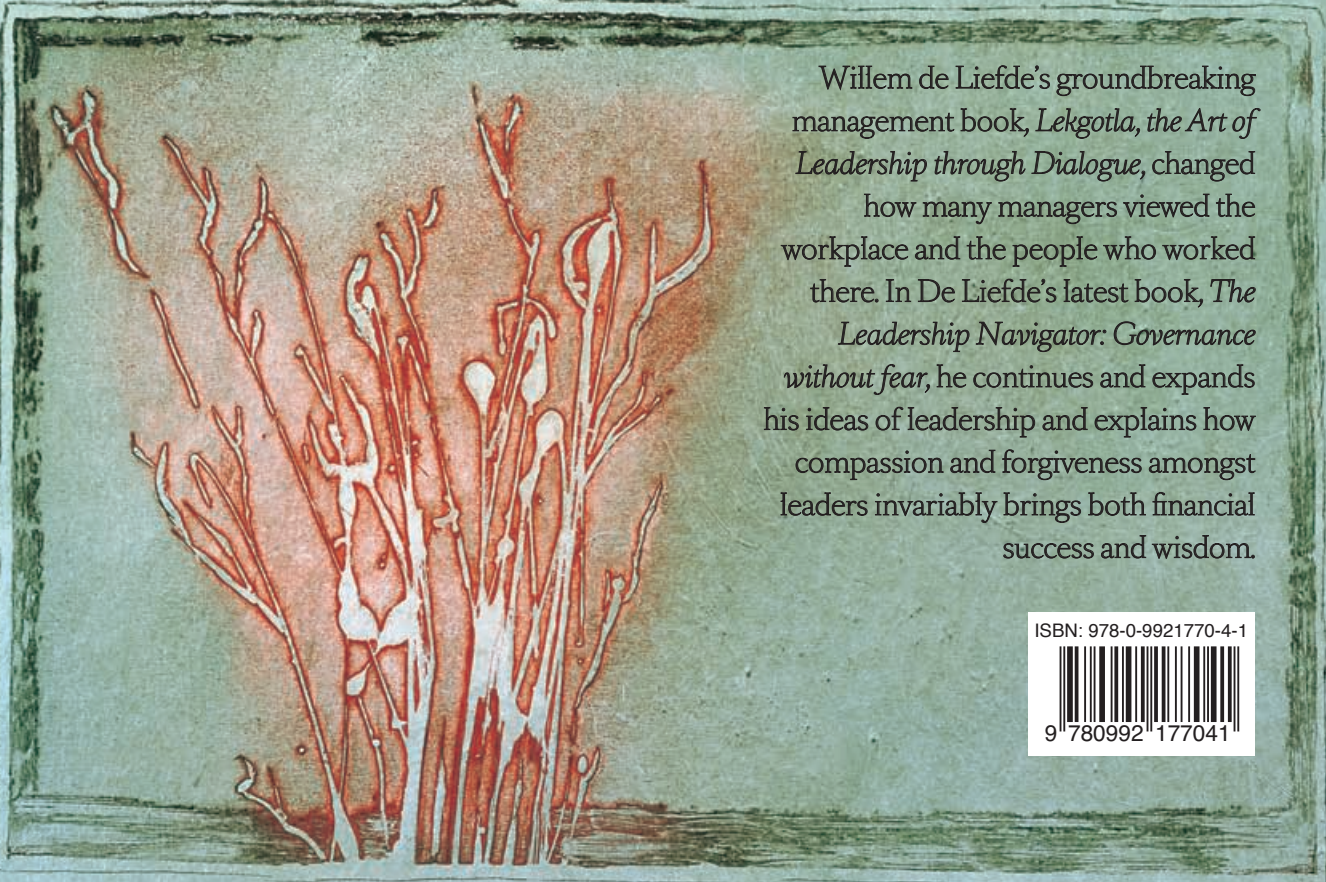


*“Willem de Liefde took an age old African concept and constructed an ingenious matrix he calls the Universal Life Cycle (ULC) to help to understand yourself, your team and your company. This understanding sets the stage for dialogue (lekgotla), creates an environment in which positive change can take place and assists in the process of letting go of the past. The ULC is a clever tool to help and carry your company through the difficult process of awareness, reconciliation and forgiveness. This process leads to the realisation that our success lies in working together in harmony to become a WE driven organisation, thus moving towards an African ubuntu approach.”*

Prof. HJ van der Merwe, Executive Dean: Faculty of  
Economic Sciences and Information Technology,  
Vanderbijlpark, South Africa



“ Throughout my life, I have discovered that I always achieve the best results when my actions are based on a combination of intuition, experience and sharing the truth. This way of living has resulted in my becoming a believer in the concept of what I call Embracing Leadership and being able to let go of the past. ”



Willem de Liefde's groundbreaking management book, *Lekgotla, the Art of Leadership through Dialogue*, changed how many managers viewed the workplace and the people who worked there. In De Liefde's latest book, *The Leadership Navigator: Governance without fear*, he continues and expands his ideas of leadership and explains how compassion and forgiveness amongst leaders invariably brings both financial success and wisdom.

ISBN: 978-0-9921770-4-1



9 780992 177041