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Introduction to Leary's Rose

Influencing others

This book provides an insight into your potential to achieve your goals through conscious communication. To acquire an insight, you require an overview. In this chapter we will thus give you a clear overview of your potential to influence others.

These possibilities constitute the basis of 'interpersonal behaviour', behaviour between people.

INFLUENCE THROUGH DOMINANCE

One way of exercising influence on others is to vary the level of dominance.

If you never make yourself heard, you simply will not be heard and he who is never heard, is never taken into account. People who express their opinions loud and clear are more easily listened to.

Ed works in an advertising agency. He complains that nobody ever asks him for his opinion on issues that are not directly related to his field of expertise. He would like to be part of discussions regarding client contacts and the manner in which the company advertises, as he has some ideas of his own on this subject. The issue is that Ed never gives his opinion. As a result the others monopolize the conversation and pay no attention to Ed's thoughts, which they can not hear anyway. Fiona, one of Ed's colleagues, is quite well informed about what is going on around her, and often discusses matters with others. People regularly ask her for her opinion and they also listen to her.

Ed's behaviour incites complementary behaviour. As long as he does not express his opinion, Ed gives others the full opportunity and space to do this in his place. They fill the available space as it were. Fiona's behaviour is also completed: she speaks, the others listen to her. In this example Ed exercises influence in a much less dominant manner than Fiona.

INFLUENCE THROUGH ‘I-ORIENTED’ OR ‘WE-ORIENTED’ MESSAGES

Another possibility to exercise influence is to vary the subject or object that you are targeting. Anyone who orients himself towards someone or something else, which he/she finds more important at that moment in time than his surroundings (‘I-oriented behaviour’), will be left alone or ignored. If you indicate that you enjoy contact with your surroundings (‘we-oriented behaviour’), you will, as a rule, be involved in your surroundings.

Harry, one of Ed’s and Fiona’s colleagues, is often in a bad mood when he comes home from work. ‘Nobody talks to me’, he tells his partner. Conversely his colleagues also complain about Harry, who, they feel, is often unfriendly and is only interested in the company’s results. He seldom attends informal company events. He is always too busy, or simply does not feel like it. They do not feel the need to talk to him and prefer to give him a wide berth. Things are quite different for Ben. Ben always has a moment’s time, stops for a chat here and there and shows a lot of interest in other people’s affairs. That is why everyone likes him: He is regularly invited to parties and feels at ease in his work environment.

One approach is not better than the other. It is about what you enjoy most. Sometimes being left alone might be exactly what you want.

Leary’s Rose

In order to provide a clear overview of the possibilities mentioned here, we will use the so-called ‘interpersonal circumplex’ or Leary circle: a model representation of the different behavioural possibilities and their impact on others.

In the 1950s American psychologist Timothy Leary developed such a model at the University of California, based on large quantities of observations of people. Because Leary was inspired by a compass rose, while developing his research data into a model, we now refer to this model as Leary’s Rose. Even today, almost fifty years later, the model still contributes to gaining an insight in the effects of mutual communication. Based on the notion that one person’s behaviour induces certain behaviour in the other, we can predict one another’s behaviour, influence it and then make conscious choices as regards action and reaction.¹

Agnes and Ben are consulting with one another. Agnes discusses a plan that she has conceived and Ben is listening. Agnes ends her argument with a question: ‘So what do you think?’. Agnes falls silent and looks at Ben expectantly. Ben can now give his opinion about the affair and clarify it.

Agnes starts to talk, is active, while Ben listens, is still passive. Then Agnes gives Ben the space to talk, to tell his story. The roles are reversed. This is a very simple and everyday example of effective communication, whereby taking and giving influence take turns.

If you want the space to give your opinion, you need to make yourself heard and seen. If you want to give others the space to give their opinion, then sometimes you will have to withdraw temporarily.

But things can go quite differently too: If Ben starts talking halfway through Agnes's argument, then Agnes might also object and say: 'No, wait a minute, I have not finished talking yet'. If Agnes thinks that Ben is justified in interrupting her however, then she will withdraw. At that moment Ben will have then taken control of the discussion for an instant. Agnes might also choose not be interrupted by Ben, while Ben might not agree to this. This results in a situation of conflict. So: to exert influence (and to keep it that way!), you need to *alternately* take and give space.

Assignment

Why not review three discussions that you have had with different people today and try to understand how the balance of influence shifted on both sides. Who took the lead? Who gave space to the other? Did things change in the course of the discussion? What occasioned the change? If you see the opportunity to record short discussions, then you can establish exactly how things went.

It's Monday morning. Fiona feels like a chat. Agnes does not have the time. She tells Fiona: 'Not now Fiona, I do not want to be disturbed during the next hour. I can make some time for you this afternoon.' Cora has just made some coffee. She asks Fiona about her weekend. Cora and Fiona drink a cup of coffee together and have a chat.

Agnes breaks the contact, while Cora makes contact. It is obvious that there is no situation of conflict as a result of the manner in which Agnes broke contact ('I can make some time for you this afternoon').

Anyone who wants to be in contact with his surroundings needs to emit 'we-oriented' messages.

We shall see that it is very important *how* a message is emitted. Agnes could have also said: 'Fiona, I think it's quite a bother that you want to talk to me now, while things are

so busy. I want you to get back to your work right now!'. The effect on Fiona would have been quite different. Can you predict it?

THE CO-ORDINATE SYSTEM

These two different examples can be integrated in Leary's Rose, which consists of two axes, which together form a cross: the vertical axis represents the measure of dominance while the horizontal axis represents the extent of 'I-oriented' and 'we-oriented' messages respectively.

For a clear understanding of the matter, let us agree on the following. Dominant behaviour will be referred to as *Above*. If behaviour is barely or not at all dominant, we will refer to it as *Below*. This will generate a circle, which comprises four sectors.

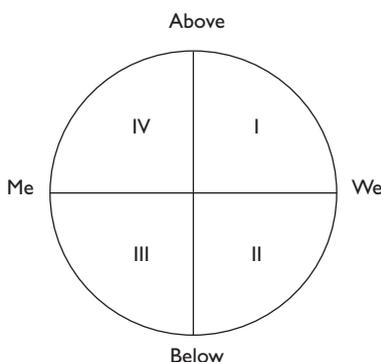


Figure 1

An important outcome of Timothy Leary's research is – as we already saw – that behaviour incites behaviour, sometimes equal (or *symmetrical*) and sometimes contrary (*complementary*) behaviour². Above incites Below and the other way round. They are thus complementary. We-oriented behaviour incites we-oriented behaviour and I-oriented behaviour will result in I-oriented behaviour. They are thus symmetrical. If we combine these data, then we see that behaviour from sector I will incite behaviour from sector II and the other way round. Behaviour from sector III will incite behaviour from sector IV and the other way round (see figure 2).

Behaviour in sector I is we-oriented, dominant behaviour. We will for the moment summarize this as **leading behaviour**. Behaviour in sector II, which is we-oriented, but which is not, or much less dominant, will be referred to provisionally as **dependent behaviour**. Behaviour in sector III, which is not dominant either, but which is I-oriented, will be described as **defensive behaviour**. Behaviour in sector IV finally, dominant and I-oriented, will be summarized as **aggressive behaviour**.

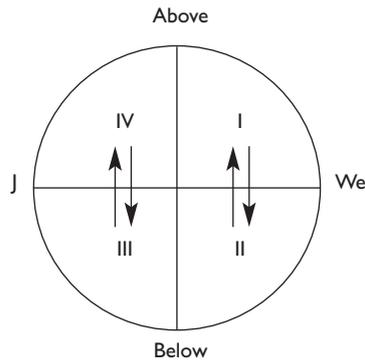


Figure 2

Below you will find more descriptions of behaviour, but for the moment this is sufficient. You can now see that an attack (sector IV) will result in defence (sector III). And when someone takes the lead (sector I), this incites dependent behaviour (sector II).

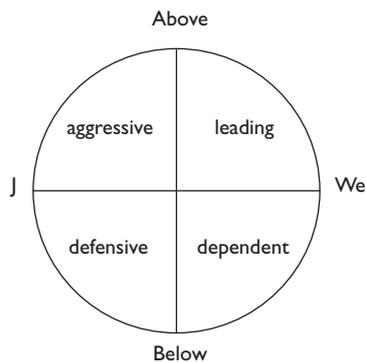


Figure 3

Based on a simple example I will now demonstrate how these different behavioural choices can encourage potential reactions in people.

Derek is interested in taking a holiday in the Mediterranean to enjoy the sun. His wife is interested in a trip to Norway for a long hiking trip. They both enjoy hikes and she does not appreciate a sun, sea & sand holiday at all. They have already made a few hiking trips earlier in the year.

Except for the fact that he is interested in travelling to the Mediterranean, Derek should also ask himself what his objective is in relation to his wife. Does he wish to take a decision in harmony (we-oriented behaviour), or does he not really care what she thinks, and does he want to get his own way (I-oriented behaviour)? And does he wish to

dominate or does he want to give his wife the space to realize her own ideas? There are all types of underlying views in this context, for example with regard to his marriage, but we will not take those into consideration for convenience of comparison. Let's take a look at Derek's goals, his behavioural possibilities and his wife's ensuing possible reactions.

If Derek acts from sector I, i.e. both dominant and we-oriented, the story might play out as follows:

- *Goal*
Derek wants to make it quite clear to his wife that he wants to go to the Mediterranean and wants to convince her so she will give in.
- *Behaviour*
He will then for example tell his wife: 'I really do want to go on holiday with you. What I would really like to do is spend some time in the sun and not have to make too much of an effort, because I have been doing too much of that in the past year. Okay?' He thus emphasizes the fact of going on holiday together, and he makes his preferences very clear.
- *Reaction*
Derek's wife now knows exactly what Derek wants and she can make her own desires known. Then she can choose to counter Derek's requirements, or follow his suit. Regardless of her final decision, she will probably do it in a quiet and agreeable manner (aimed at acceptance). His message will not easily lead to a conflict, because Derek wants to go on holiday with her and shows her that he does.

Summarized: Derek often acts from sector I, his wife re-acts from sector II.

If Derek acts from sector II, his message will look quite different:

- *Goal*
Above all, Derek is not interested in a row, but he still wants to travel south. He hopes that she will join him. Hope is expecting, not very dominant.
- *Behaviour*
Derek for example will say: 'At any rate I do want go on holiday with you to the south, but you're interested in going to Norway, aren't you? What shall we do?' Derek gives his wife a lot of leeway to make the final choice.
- *Reaction*
This will probably not result in a row. Derek's wife will probably opt in favour of the hiking trip. 'You'll love it!'

Things are quite different in sector III:

- *Goal*
Derek wants to oppose the habit of always going on hikes, and wants to propose an alternative, namely to follow his idea.
- *Behaviour*

He says: 'Why do we always need to take hiking trips! I'd like to spend some time sunbathing somewhere in the Mediterranean.' Derek's attitude is already defensive from the very start. He is no longer interested in doing what his wife wants.

- *Reaction*

Derek's wife will probably get angry and will not comply with him. 'You know that I do not like to sunbathe?' Derek is 'pushing' her towards an attack as it were.

Above and We can also coincide with the term 'taking matters into one's own hands, with attention for one's relationship'.

We and Below with 'following, adapting, in order to give the other space'.

In sector IV finally we find ourselves in even more difficult waters:

- *Goal*

Derek does not want a discussion. He wants to achieve his goal quickly by confronting his wife with his decision. She will simply have to do what he says.

- *Behaviour*

'We've been on so many hiking trips this year. I want to go to the Mediterranean. Can you find us a hotel?' Derek simply determines what will happen. He does not really care what his wife wants. His wishes will be carried out.

- *Reaction*

If his wife wishes to attend to her own interests, then she will defend herself. She will for example say: 'Not at all, you're not the only one making decisions here!' A conflict is approaching fast!

In figure the four 'quadrants' of the Rose have been collated once again, but with the more extensive descriptions, which we developed before.

Below and I are summarized by 'offering resistance, rebelling'.

Above and I by 'attacking, competing, defending one's own interests'.

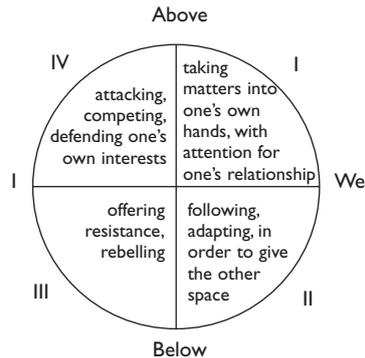


Figure 4

THERE ARE NO AUTOMATICALLY WRONG CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO BEHAVIOUR!

It is important to agree that there are no wrong or right choices when it comes to behaviour. The main idea is that we are all aware of the impact of our behaviour in order to act purposefully, based on a prediction thereof. If Derek's goal is to arrive at a joint decision, in joint consultation with his wife, then sectors I and II are excellent choices.

Temperament and mood are also important. A dominant type will choose I rather than II, a somewhat timid person will base his or her actions on position II. The temperament of the other also plays a role. For example, Derek's wife could be quite indecisive. Derek however wants to make a decision with her. He will then start the discussion in the Below position, by asking: 'Now what do you want?', but his wife simply continues to hesitate. In order to achieve progress and make a joint decision, he will have no choice but to change his attitude. He will achieve more impact from the Above position in the Rose. Sector I for example: 'Okay, we're not getting anywhere like this. I suggest that we go to the Mediterranean.' Derek 'moves' around the Rose as it were in order to make his wife 'move' too.

Assignment

Why not study the following (abbreviated) example which I have taken from De Stad van Axen (Cuvelier, 1992), a book which also deals with mutual communication: Three children are playing. Anton says: 'Let's play pirates.' Bruce says: 'No way, there's only the three of us, that is not enough.' Anton answers: 'What game shall we play then?' upon which Bruce answers: 'I want to go to the sea to find shells.' Jasmin then says: 'Cool, that's a great idea. I'm coming too.' Anton's face darkens, he resists, wordlessly. Bruce continues: 'And once we have a lot of shells, we can use them as our pirate's treasure.' Jasmin once again says: 'Cool, yeah'. Anton joins in now, he is fully convinced. Can you make an analysis of the movements made by these children? Which influence did they have on one another and where did they opt in favour of

acceptance, and where didn't they? Give it a try, before you look at the analysis below.

Analysis

Anton makes a proposal, he takes the initiative as regards the game to play (sector I). Bruce rejects the proposal, he resists (sector II). He has thus understood Anton's proposal to be an attack (sector IV). Anton reacts by asking for a new proposal (sector II). He does not answer Bruce's resistance with a (new) attack, as one might expect him to do. Bruce answers by suggesting a new proposal (sector I). Jasmin endorses the proposal (sector II). Anton thus feels attacked this time. He resists, wordlessly (sector III). Bruce completes his proposal, takes a new initiative as it were (sector I). Once again Jasmin endorses him (sector II) and now Anton has also been convinced. He also endorses the new proposal (sector II). This is a brilliant example of how a switch from initiative (Above), support (Below), enthusiasm (We) and resistance (I) alternate with one another.

Norms about right and wrong often influence our desire to achieve influence. In our culture the norms seem to accept that compliant, friendly behaviour (sectors I and II) is good. While critical behaviour and defending one's own interests (III or IV) are experienced as unpleasant, and thus wrong. Everyone will admire the friendly boss, who is capable of motivating his or her employees (sector I) and who gives them a lot of space (sector II). However resistance against the prevailing order (sector III), taking decisions and setting boundaries (sector IV) are also prerequisites for a better result, even though they are often received less positively.

Ergo, anyone who consciously chooses effective behaviour is directed by the predefined objective and not by norms about what is good or bad. If Derek feels that he has to make a decision, then he will have to choose his behaviour from position IV.

Assignment

Can you think of two other examples, which require behavioural choices from sector III? And from sector IV?

Behavioural choices in sector III and IV can be just as necessary as those in sectors I and II. Put differently: The relation with the other is not always more important than other interests, such as one's own interests, business, financial or educational interests.

An example regarding the latter category: educational interests. Mary dawdles at breakfast. School starts in five minutes, and it takes at least four minutes – on foot – to get there. Mother says: 'Come on Mary, get on with it!' Her face does not look very friendly. The mother's objective is quite clear: To ensure that Mary gets to school on time and that she learns something from the situation: 'When I dawdle, mummy is angry'.

Choosing behaviour

In order to make a conscious choice in favour of a certain type of behaviour, you need to be aware of your own potential in order to also take into account the other.

YOUR OWN POTENTIAL

Based on the questionnaire in the appendix you can put together an overview of your own preferential behaviour and those behavioural choices that you would not be inclined to make. If you think that you 'say it like it is', then there's a good chance that you will not be referring to or thinking of yourself as a timid character. You will also be more vocal in certain situations whereas you might not be in other situations. Finally, you will also change over the course of our life – your behaviour at age 20 is different from that at a later age. An important benefit of choosing your behaviour consciously is that you do not merely act based on your feelings.

Cora walks through the corridor. She passes Harry, who is clearly in a hurry. Cora asks Harry whether he has some time for her. Harry snaps at her. Can't she see that he has no time? The rest of the day Cora does not dare to go anywhere near Harry. She thinks: So typical of Harry, such a mean-spirited man.

Harry reacts the way he always does: arrogant, distant and curtly. In so doing he harms his relation with Cora, at any rate for the rest of the day. Moreover Cora is now convinced with regard to her negative opinion of Harry. If we ask Harry why he did this, he might simply answer: 'I reacted in a primary, impulsive manner.' Often someone like that will add: 'Oh well, that's just the way I am'. But that's not true: Something can be done! In Chapter 3 I will reflect at length on your behavioural possibilities. We can also look at Harry's behaviour from a positive point of view. Harry reacted that way because he was *worried* about something. Maybe he had to go to a meeting, an important appointment. At any rate he wanted to *ensure* that he would arrive somewhere on time. It is a good thing that Harry takes his own worries so seriously, but he forgot to take the other into account.

Your preferences as regards behaviour vary, depending on the situation in which you find yourself, your age and temperament.
