



## 2. Managing self

### 2.1 Introduction

A young person is often in a management position within a youth organisation not because s/he wants to be a manager, but because s/he has the opportunity to serve the organisation for a limited period of time. It is therefore common that such a person has not had management training beforehand. Often this situation is the first time the person to has had to formally manage something.

In this section we will consider the need to manage oneself in this new situation; coping with new duties, new people, new emotions. Usually the main reaction is to do things; trying to start performing as soon as possible. In this T-kit we suggest you to take a minute to think about yourself, your history, your ways of dealing and relating with others and especially with your way of learning. At the end of your management period in the organisation, you will discover that learning has been one of the main outcomes- both in terms of skills and attitudes acquired and in terms of development of your own potential.

### 2.2 Personal awareness

#### 2.2.1 Learning to learn

There are different definitions of learning, related to knowledge and abilities or skills. There is no one best method of learning. Learning might be described as gaining a new awareness about one's potential; manifested in new knowledge, new capacities, new attitudes, new skills and especially in the combining of all these into what might be called professionalism.

Learning is not only an intellectual activity. Too often in formal schooling, pupils are taught study methods based only on the use of intellect. Being taught can be considered a passive activity while learning is active. In teaching, the focus is often the teacher, while in learning it is the learner. There is a significant difference. Where is the focus in training? Are we like teachers? Peter Vall says that today because we use modern technologies and more

comfortable seats, we tend to believe that we do not reproduce the formal school setting learning environment. Where is the difference between a formal education setting and the one we propose?

In non-formal education, the term learning is preferred to teaching. Personal learning and learning how to learn become then the focus of self-development. The environment and other people are extremely important in learning as they form the context and bring extra meaning to the learner.

In today's society intellectual capital has replaced the more traditional meaning of capital needed for success in business or in life. Learning to learn is based on the recognition that there are different ways of learning involving the whole person including elements of intellect, emotions, body and thinking abilities.

#### *Suggestions for training*

- Collect sayings from different cultures about learning, teaching, education and training (include the European Union definition of life-long learning).
- Classify and check them.
- Confront differences and similarities.

#### 2.2.2 Experiential learning and learning styles

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford have identified different learning styles. Their theory says that each person learns from specific situations. Being able to apply different learning styles implies that the person is able to learn from a variety of situations and experiences thus maximising their learning opportunities. In some settings then, training becomes an opportunity to reflect on our own experience and learn from it.

Honey and Mumford have developed a learning styles questionnaire presenting 80 situational statements aimed at helping you focus on your



behaviour. The responses to the statements are processed to provide an assessment of your preferred learning style. The originators then give an explanation of the four different styles, the situations best suited to those styles and suggestions for dealing with situations where less preferred styles would be more appropriate. You should be aware that this questionnaire has been developed in the USA and some statements may be culturally sensitive.

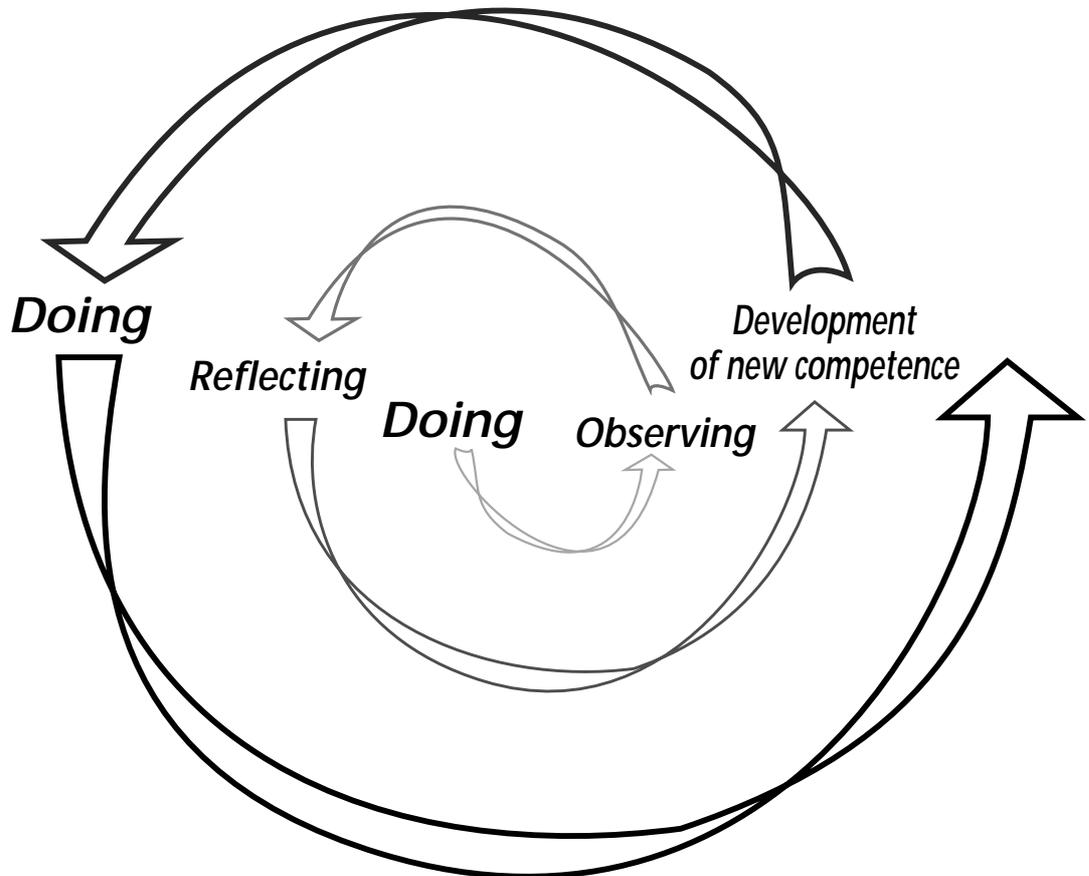
Honey and Mumford developed Kolb's experiential learning circle, here transformed into a spiral to stress continual development.

According to this theory, what is important is not what happens to you, but what you do with

what happens to you. Experiential learning is seen as a 4 step process. It does not matter how long it takes, the most important is to go from the experience phase to the thinking it over, to the critical analysis and generalisation to come to planning of the use of the newly acquired competence.

- Stage 1 – Doing and experiencing is part of everyday life but it can also be an arranged opportunity.
- Stage 2 – Observing and reflecting on what has happened to you.
- Stage 3 – Concluding from the experience and generalising.
- Stage 4 – Applying the newly acquired competence or planning a new experience.

Fig. OM-3: *Learning (circle/spiral)*



Source: Honey, Peter and Mumford, Alan (1992) *The Manual of Learning Styles*, p. 3, ISBN 0-9508444-7-0. Adapted version.



**Fig. OM-4: Learning styles strengths and weaknesses**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Activist – strengths</b>  | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
| Flexible and open minded<br>Happy to have a go<br>Happy to be exposed to new situations<br>Optimistic about anything new and therefore unlikely to resist change | Tendency to take the immediately obvious action without thinking<br>Often take unnecessary risks<br>Tendency to do too much themselves and hog the limelight<br>Rush into action without sufficient preparation<br>Get bored with implementation/consolidation |
| <b>Reflector – strengths</b>   | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
| Careful<br>Thorough and methodical<br>Thoughtful<br>Good at listening to others and assimilating information<br>Rarely jump to conclusions                       | Tendency to hold back from direct participation<br>Slow to make up their minds and reach a decision<br>Tendency to be too cautious and not take enough risks<br>Not assertive – they are not particularly forthcoming and have no “small talk”                 |
| <b>Theorist – strengths</b>  | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
| Logical “vertical” thinkers<br>Rational and objective<br>Good at asking probing questions<br>Disciplined approach  | Restricted in lateral thinking<br>Low tolerance for uncertainty, disorder and ambiguity<br>Intolerant of anything subjective or intuitive<br>Full of “should, ought and must”  |
| <b>Pragmatist – strengths</b>  | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
| Keen to test things out in practice<br>Practical, down to earth, realistic<br>Businesslike – get straight to the point<br>Technique oriented                     | Tendency to reject anything without an obvious application<br>Not very interested in theory or basic principles<br>Tendency to seize on the first expedient solution to a problem<br>Impatient with waffle<br>On balance, task oriented not people oriented.   |

Source: Honey, Peter and Mumford, Alan (1992) *The Manual of Learning Styles*, p. 47-48, ISBN 0-9508444-7-0.



The four learning styles: activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist are linked to the four stages of learning.

For each stage there is a preferred learning style. A preference for the activist style equips you for stage 1.

A preference for the reflector style equips you for stage 2.

A preference for the theorist style equips you for stage 3.

A preference for the pragmatist style equips you for stage 4.

All-round learners, or “integrated learners” are clearly best equipped to manage all four stages. However, most people develop learning style preferences that assist with some stages and hinder others. Those style preferences very significantly affect the sort of activities that people learn best from.

- Activists learn best from experiences where: There are new experiences, problems, opportunities from which to learn. They can engross themselves in short “here and now” activities such as business games, competitive tasks, role playing exercises. They have a lot of the limelight, high visibility. They are thrown in at the deep end with a task they think is difficult.

- Reflectors, on the other hand, learn best from activities where: They are encouraged to watch, think, chew over activities. They are allowed to think before acting, to assimilate before commenting. They have the opportunity to review what has happened, what they have learned. They can reach a decision in their own time without pressure and tight deadlines.

- Theorists learn best from activities where: They have time to explore methodically the associations and interrelationships between ideas, events and situations. They are in structured situations with clear purposes. They have the chance to question and probe the basic methodology, assumptions or logic behind something. They are intellectually stretched.

- Pragmatists learn best from activities where: There is an obvious link between the subject matter and a problem or opportunity on the job.

They are shown techniques for doing things with obvious practical advantages currently applicable to their own job.

They have the chance to try out and practise techniques with coaching, feedback from a credible expert.

They can concentrate on practical issues.

Once you know your preferred learning style(s) it is important to be clear about the relative strengths and weaknesses of each style. Selecting appropriate learning opportunities essentially involves finding activities where strengths will be utilised and where weaknesses will not prove too much of a handicap. The table on page 21 will help with your own assessment.

Your preferred learning style has implications for you as a manager, learner and trainer; most importantly you need to develop your under-developed styles so that you can learn in as wide a range of situations as possible.

It is important to remember that you tend to use your preferred learning style(s) while training or managing. To work well with people with different learning styles it is important to use a mix of activities in line with the 4 learning styles so that you can provide opportunities for everybody.

### *Suggestions for training*

- Distribute the Honey and Mumford learning style questionnaire \* and the scoring sheet without the definition of the learning styles.
- Group people according to the results obtained from the questionnaire
- Ask each group to identify experiences where they have learned best and create a profile of learning style by choosing only common elements.
- Compare them with the learning styles identified by Honey and Mumford.

Please note that in many cases people do have more than one preferred style.

*Subject to copyright. You can find the questionnaire in Honey, Peter and Mumford, Alan (1992)*



### 2.2.3 Emotional learning

Experiments on the working of emotions and their failing have given attention to the fact that emotions are important in social life as they influence our attitude towards ourselves and others. Even though there is no agreement about the origin of emotions, there is a growing evidence that fundamental ethical stances in life stem from underlying emotional capacities. There are three main approaches in studying emotions: biological, cognitive and constructivist.

The biological approach gathers emotions in basic categories that are anger, fear, happiness, love, surprise, disgust and sadness. Emotions are universal as they are biological propensities to act. The hypothesis of the facial feedback says that our feelings are strengthened by the awareness of our expressiveness and then smiling strengthens our feeling of joy (Ekman).

The cognitive approach says that each emotion comes with a general sense of excitement and then we classify them according to social conventions. Therefore we learn which emotions are allowed in which situations. The biological propensities are shaped further by our life experience and our culture. Emotions are also ambiguous and the choice of naming them is based on the consensus of others (Schachter).

The constructivist approach then affirms that emotions are only social performances governed by rules for proper emotional expressiveness.

#### *Suggestions for training*

- List the feelings that your culture allows you to express.
- Think of the feelings your culture forces you or expects you to express in given situations.
- Describe how you are allowed to express your feelings.
- What differences exist in expressing feelings between genders?
- Compare such outcomes with other cultures.

The studies above have not yet solved the dichotomy between head and heart; some point to the pre-eminence of heart, some not. There are acts of the emotional mind and acts of the rational mind. In a very real sense we have two minds, one that thinks and one that feels. These two fundamentally different ways of knowing interact to construct our mental life. The two minds operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world. These minds are semi-independent faculties, each reflecting the operation of distinct, but interconnected, circuitry in the brain. In many or most moments these two minds are exquisitely coordinated; feelings are essential to thought, thought to feeling. But when passions surge the balance tips.

Goleman suggests that in the human brain there is a meeting point between thought and emotion, a crucial doorway to the deposit for the likes and dislikes we acquire over the course of a lifetime. Cutting oneself off from emotional memory means that emotional reactions that have been associated with it in the past are no longer triggered – everything takes on a grey neutrality. That means that we often make mistakes as we do not remember the emotions linked to past actions. Therefore feelings are indispensable for rational decisions; they point us in the right direction, where dry logic can then be of less use. Emotional learning send signals that streamline the decision by eliminating some options and highlight others. The emotional brain is involved in reasoning as is the thinking brain. The emotional faculty guides our moment-to-moment decisions, the thinking brain plays an executive role in our emotions.

The old paradigm held an ideal of reason freed from the pull of emotion. The new paradigm urges us to harmonise head and heart. In addition as we explore the connection between body, mind, and spirit, we find that our emotional and thinking states influence us physically, and vice versa. Just observe your body language-when you're feeling uplifted, your body feels light and your energy is more "up." When you're depressed, you feel heavy and your energy is "down." When you're feeling vulnerable, your shoulders cave forward, your arms tend to cross your body for protection, and so on.



### *Suggestions for training*

- Ask people to lay down on the floor by creating a chain. The contact point is head against belly. The person with the head on the belly of another person will feel the movement of the belly and it is automatically provoked to reproduce the same movements.
- Ask the person starting the chain to laugh and you will experience that everybody will start laughing one after the other like dominoes falling down.
- Put people in pairs, ask them to simulate feelings using different expressions. Create a vocabulary for the expression of feelings.

#### **2.2.4 Learning to think**

Is thinking a skill? Can we learn how to think and how to use our thinking possibilities? You have two possible answers according to what you believe. The first one is to consider thinking as a matter of intelligence determined by genes and measurable with IQ tests. The second one is to consider thinking as a skill that can be improved by training and practice. The two opposing views can be combined rather simply by using De Bono's definition "thinking is the operating skill through which intelligence acts upon experience".

This definition implies some considerations: Intelligence can be a trap in the development of thinking skills. A highly intelligent person can take a view on a subject and then use his or her intelligence to defend that view. The more intelligent the person the better the defence of the view. The better the defence the less that person sees any need to seek out alternatives or to listen to anyone else. A second aspect of the intelligence trap is that a person who has grown up with the notion that he or she is more intelligent than those around wants to get the most satisfaction from that intelligence. Reward for intelligence is to prove somebody else wrong.

Practice is not automatically followed by improvement. There is a need to pay direct

attention to the methods of thinking. Thinking is not on the school curriculum because education gets caught up in the tradition trap. Those making decisions have experience and values based only on the past. Information is given priority because it tells what to do. Thinking is considered impossible to teach separately, but only linked to other subjects, thus denying its own value.

Critical thinking is the most known way of thinking. It comes from the Greek meaning "judging". It is articulated in three phases: analysis, judgement and argument. If we look at science and technology, the successes come not from critical thinking but from the "possibility" system that creates hypothesis and visions.

Perception is the most important part of thinking. Perception is the way we look at the world. What things we take into account. How we structure the world. It seems now likely that perception works as a "self-organising information system". Such a system allows the sequence in which information arrives to set up patterns. Our thinking then remains trapped within these patterns.

Thinking tools are as necessary as tools for any activity. The tools are "attention directing tools". Without them attention follows the patterns laid down by experience and we remain trapped.

Think of a coloured map. If you need to locate a motorway, your attention will be attracted by the line in the colour you know represents a motorway. Now you are in a room. Somebody invites you to close your eyes and asks you to name all the green objects in the room. Probably you will have difficulty in naming all of them. These examples show that thinking is more functional when it is directed.

Difficulties arise as we use different levels of thinking such as logic, information, sensitivity and creativity at the same time. This causes confusion in ourselves and in communicating with others. For instance, if when making a decision we let our thoughts evaluate what we would like to do, what should be avoided, our feelings, etc. we could find ourselves in a deadlock.

Edward De Bono has suggested six thinking roles which he describes in terms of six coloured hats:



The white hat – expresses number, data, objectivity, the known. It is not allowed to express personal opinion. It is just allowed to listen without discussion. What is said is not always valid for everybody, it is just an indication to be considered as such, in a neutral way.

The red hat – allows expression of emotions and feelings without justification and without a logic base. We do not need to guess other people feelings, we can ask about it. The possibility to freely express feelings allows us to turn emotions on and off in just a few seconds, without denying, hiding or modifying them.

The black hat – expresses the negative-logic; whatever logically cannot function in the given situation. It can be considered pessimistic but it is logical and not emotional. It explains why something cannot work and highlight risks, dangers and gaps in a given situation or project. This way of thinking confronts past experiences, puts them in relation to the present and values the possibility of future mistakes or failures.

The yellow hat – expresses positive thinking, optimism and is constructive. It evaluates the positive aspects of an idea, project or given situation. You should find as many good reasons as possible to support your optimistic declaration. Should your idea not be fully supported by your declarations, it is anyway worth expressing them.

The green hat – expresses the creative thinking without considering prejudices, logic, critiques or interpretations. Its aim is to look for alternatives behind what should logically chosen. It is a moving idea; jumping from one to another. It provokes us to get off the usual thinking patterns.

The blue hat – serves to control the thinking itself. It identifies the necessary thinking to explore the topic. It organises all the other roles, focusing on what is needed to deal with and to classify all aspects of the given situation, by asking the appropriate questions. It performs the co-ordination role, supervising and summing up, solving the conflict and getting to conclusions.

The hats are tools and rules at the same time. This classification of thinking is a model but remember that the map is not the territory! The exercise below will help to clarify the use of the model.

### *Suggestions for training*

- Individually or in a group identify a problem, a situation or a project.
- Wear the hats one after the other and assume the role given.
- Freely express yourself (protected by the role).
- Do not argue with the others (people and/or roles).
- Wear the blue hat and come to conclusions.

### *2.2.5 Prejudice*

Before talking about prejudice it is necessary to define attitudes as a tendency to make a quick positive or negative reply to a specific object or group of objects. In an attitude there is the content (the object) and a value judgement, either positive or negative, towards the object. Attitudes are persistent. As prejudice has such characteristics, thus it can be considered an attitude. There are three main aspects of prejudice:

The cognitive aspect: the total of concepts and perceptions towards an object or group of objects.

The emotional aspect: feelings towards an object or group of objects.

The behavioural aspect: actions towards an object or group of objects.

We can define a prejudice as a specific positive or negative attitude in dealing with a person when such person belongs to a specified category of people. When the prejudice is translated into a specific behaviour we can talk about discrimination.

Discrimination can have two negative effects: (a) an attack to the self-esteem (when you feel inferior, you think that you have no value) and (b) looking for self-failure as commitment to success is proportional to the perceived probability of success.

Discrimination can also be positive: This is an important element to consider in a management environment: we behave according to expectations and thus we fulfil prophecies by validating the prejudices.



There are 4 elements of social influence in a management (or training) situation:

- The emotional environment – the positive consideration towards some people
- Information – the higher degree of information released to some
- Change in behaviour – more attention given to those we love most
- The degree of feedback – a clearer and constant judgement given to the preferred colleagues (or trainees).

### *Suggestions for training*

- Identify the prejudices towards a category of people you belong to.
- Classify them as positive and negative, intentional and non-intentional, covertly and overtly.
- List those you reinforce by saying them or behaving according to them.
- List those you oppose and how you express your opposition.
- List what you do to convince others not to say or behave according to the prejudices you are against.

There can also be institutional discrimination: Research has shown that the effect of discrimination varies according to the place in history.

### *Suggestions for training*

- Divide the group in pairs and give to each person a role taken from discriminated category of people. In turn one person takes the role of the discriminated person or the role of a person against the discriminated one. One person has the role to attack and to say all sort of stereotypes against and the other has the role of defending her/himself. It should last around 5 minutes per round. Questions for the debriefing:
- Did you change your behaviour?
- How did you feel when you were attacking?
- How did you feel when you were discriminated against?
- Were you better equipped in defending yourself or in attacking?



Today there is more understanding about many groups of people and social influence has lessened its pressure towards some of them. There is also more awareness about one's rights and less fear about claiming them.

As prejudice is expressed in behaviour, change in behaviour does not always correspond to change in attitude. Often change is difficult because prejudice is socially accepted and seen as a way to recruit new friends or to build position.

Prejudice is normal, degeneration is not normal. Problems arise when we want to impose something such as our good ideas, traditions and so on. The degeneration of prejudice is linked to the power you have and the use you make of it in management or training situations.

You will find out that there are stages in dealing with prejudice.

The first step is the "ist" situation – to recognise and to acknowledge that prejudice exists in ourselves and in other people.

The second step is the "non-ist" situation – to refrain from behaving according to and taking distance from prejudice.

Third step is the "anti-ist" situation – to actively invite other to recognise their prejudice and to change their behaviour.

From ist to anti-ist is a long journey.

For further reading you can also consult the T-Kit on intercultural learning.



## 2.3 Managing your personal resources

The first part of this section has allowed you to become aware and acquainted with the discovery of yourself and your potential. This part will go into techniques on how to manage your personal resources.

### 2.3.1 From competence to professionalism

Essence can be described as what is “one’s own”; the potential with which we were born, rather than what we have acquired through our education, our ideas or our beliefs. The environment both physical and human and the relations in the environment provide us with the opportunities that if taken, can help in developing our potential and thus becoming “competent”.

The relevance of some competencies varies by time to time. It is therefore very important to identify the competencies necessary to our stage of development through an attentive analysis of what is happening around us.

Competence is the combined result of values, skills, attitudes and knowledge and experience. Values are the behavioural responses or actions according to the moral beliefs held by an individual or an organisation. Skills are the abilities that enable you to do something. What you have in your mind that comes out of your hands. Attitudes are about thinking something, this thinking makes us feel something and we react accordingly. Knowledge is about information and understanding is about the ability to manipulate and apply knowledge. Another way to describe competence is that it is the result of knowing, doing and being.

Le Boterf suggests that however we describe competencies, they do not have a life in themselves. They are nothing if not linked to an individual that makes them alive. It should also be said that there is a difference between acting competently and the resources necessary for doing so. Resources can be external – data, individuals, organisations – or internal – knowledge, skills, qualities, experiences, emotions, etc. professionalism is then the ability

to combine resources for competent actions. Human beings do not think according to a linear structure or just with logical operations: metaphors and analogies have a role. Human beings react to signs with a no fixed a priori meaning and with an unlimited number of meanings. Therefore we cannot control the conditions favouring the combined knowledge. The real professional competence lays in the highly probable forecasting. There is no one single way to be professional in front of a given situation. Different behaviours can be all good or bad. Professionalism lays in the ability to describe complex pictures and situations by picking up the key elements to interpret it without reducing or simplifying it. The richer the image is, the higher the professionalism.

In such a complex situation as the reality of today, planning can be replaced by navigating. In order not to fall into a sort of wandering, it is important to fix some key points. In that sense managing and training are not about control but they become a way of giving meaning, sense of direction and motivating. As we cannot be in control of our life, this philosophy helps you to recognise what you can and cannot.

There are some tools you can use to make it happen, e.g. personal development plans (setting personal objectives), empowerment plans (guided taking of responsibility) or self-evaluation plans like mapping competencies as described below.

- Identify your best competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes).
- Put them on the “Competencies’ map” and score them (0=nothing, 1= very low, 5=very good).
- Note the peaks and troughs.
- Identify a job or task you need to perform and list the competencies needed for it.
- Compare your map with the competencies needed.
- Look at the gaps.
- Identify opportunities for improvement.
- Do it again after a while and look at the differences in listing and scoring competencies or compare it with those of your colleagues to seek for complementarities.



### ***Suggestions for training***

#### **Self development plan**

- Identify maximum 5 aspects of your life you do not want to renounce.
- Identify maximum 5 aspects of your life you are not satisfied with.
- Try to link them and identify possible paths to get to your self development plan.



#### **SWOT analysis**

- Identify your Strengths.
- Identify your Weaknesses.
- Identify Opportunities offered by the environment.
- Identify the Threats offered by the environment.

### **2.3.2 Self-motivation**

Youth activities are mainly done in groups. Decision-making is a group process in youth organisations. Structure always involves committees. Meeting is always a source of emotions, pleasure and workload. Preparation and implementation of the decisions is often delegated to one person. Everybody relies on her/him for the daily management of the organisation. Motivation comes along with group activities, but it is not always present in working alone when you feel the pressure of the entire organisation on your shoulders and especially you do not have anybody next to you to share your

thoughts with. Self motivation is a skill essential in your work as difficulties sometimes are seen as insurmountable because everything seems out of our control.

Motivation is the force that drives you to do things. It is linked to emotions, needs and expectations. The concept of need that motivates people has been the foundation of most motivation theory. In our society, for most of us, most basic needs have been met – food, clothing, somewhere to live. There are middle-level needs – job security, a reasonable wage, reasonable working conditions. Higher level needs will motivate people in a lasting way.

These are the needs to belong to a group, social status, the need to be in control of one's life, the need for self-fulfilment and pride, the need for personal development. Further notes on motivation in the work place can be found in the section on Managing People.

Often youth workers and volunteers complain that their middle level needs are not fulfilled, but they stay and keep on doing their job. Is the voluntary world different from other organisations as far as motivation is concerned? In the business sector people tend not to stay with an organisation unless middle level needs are fulfilled.

Try to think about the elements that encourage you to perform better. Praise is a powerful motivator. If nobody is around you, praise yourself, aloud. Sometimes it is enough to say "well done!" or reward yourself by doing something you especially like.

Pavlov introduced the expectancy element into motivational theories. His studies proved that a suitable reward – praise, a bonus, approval of colleagues – after the required performance will soon lead to expectations that a suitable performance will bring its own rewards. In the same way an unsuitable performance can lead to expectations of disapproval, loss of a bonus, etc.

The studies of Mayo and Herzberg showed that motivation stems from the consideration given to people and their involvement in the decision making process. The feeling of being "important" or necessary to the organisation is a high motivation factor.



### ***Suggestions for training***

- Ask yourself this question “What or who motivates me?”
- List *who* and *what* in separate lists and group them.
- If the *who* list is bigger than the *what* list, start there.
- Identify some areas where you feel that you could be motivated by the *who* identified.
- Help them to motivate you. In this way, helping them to the right attitude towards you, you can greatly increase your own motivation.

You also have the power to increase your own motivation. You can follow these steps:

- Realising your own worth – write a five line description of yourself, emphasising your good points. Most people find this extremely difficult as culture teaches us to be modest! Try to find 10 good points. If not you might like to try the diary method. Record each day in a small pocket diary that you carry with you, three events that you really enjoyed. It will help to remind you about your ten good points!
- Realising that you can change things – is question of moving from the duty stage to the will stage. “I do things not because I am obliged to but because I want to”.
- Thinking positively – first of all believe that you will succeed. Failure is an adult concept, children are not afraid of mistakes. Identify an aspect you would like to change, write it down and then identify the barriers to this change and write them down. Are you sure that these barriers are insurmountable.
- Setting your goals – write them down and remind them to yourself! Decide on the means to achieve them and set a time scale.

Do not hurry this process and remember that motivation is infectious!

### **2.3.3 Managing time**

Time management is one aspect of good management and is one of the most important elements in self-management. It is important for everyone and especially for those who have responsibilities for others.

What is time?

- Time is our most important resource and it is important to utilise it fully
- Time is the only resource we cannot increase. Once it is gone it cannot be regained.
- Everyone has the same amount of time, all the time that is available is 24 hours each day. The way we use it is the only thing that differs.
- Stealing time from others is inexcusable. If you create respect for your own time you will respect other people’s time. Always being late for appointments or meetings means that you are wasting other people’s time while they wait for you to arrive.
- At different moments of the day, points in your life, time seems to pass at different speeds. When you are absorbed in your work or having a good time it goes quickly. When you are bored or frustrated it passes slowly.

There are some basic principles in time management. They can help you in identifying criteria to improve your time management.

- Planning – Learning to plan each day, week, month, year is the first step in learning to control your workload. This also enables you to start being realistic about how much work you take on, how much time it will take and what it will involve.
- Prioritising – Learning to distinguish between urgent and important tasks and assessing which aspects of your work should take priority is essential when trying to manage your time.
- A good working system – Learning to establish a daily routine, dealing with paperwork effectively, telephone calls, communication with colleagues and filing, all play an important part.
- Using your diary as a tool – Your diary plays an essential part in managing your time and should include plans, action lists, important notes and any other relevant information concerning your job.



- Learning to say NO – One of the reasons we become overloaded is that we have an automatic tendency to say “yes” when people ask us to do things. Learning to say NO is one of the golden rules of time management. Nothing is so important that we cannot take a few minutes to assess whether or not it would be realistic for us to agree.
- Am I the right person for the job? – Often we agree to do something without assessing whether or not we have the skills, knowledge or confidence to do what we are being asked. We often just feel guilty and say “yes”. It is useful to assess whether or not the task fits in with your overall responsibilities or is in line with your job description.

This exercise, if it becomes a daily exercise, will help you in rationally using your time. You should not forget that the concept of time changes according to latitude. In some cultures being late is unacceptable, in others is allowed or expected. Therefore our perception of time is not the same everywhere. Time is also linked to the concept of quality, power and to expectations.

In whatever latitude you live, it is important for you to be aware of your way of using your

and other people’s time. Only if you use your work time properly will you have time to rest!

### **Irish poem**

*Take the time to work,  
for it is the price of success.*

*Take the time to think,  
it is the source of strength.*

*Take the time to play,  
it is the secret of youth.*

*Take the time to read,  
it is the seed of wisdom.*

*Take the time to be friendly,  
for it brings happiness.*

*Take the time to dream,  
for it will carry you to the stars.*

*Take the time to love,  
it is the joy of life.*

*Take the time to be content,  
it is the music of the soul.*

### **Suggestions for training**

- Brainstorm a list of everything you would need in order to complete a task.
- Arrange the task list into priority order in a time sequence.
- Decide who will complete the task.
- Estimate how long it would take to complete each task, given your existing workload.
- Establish any additional resources you may need.
- Set a deadline for each task.
- Transfer tasks into a daily task list in your diary.





**Fig. OM-5: A method to identify your thieves of time**

| The following questions should help you to control your time at work and to identify your thieves of time | True   |       |           |        |
|---|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
|   | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely |
| The telephone bothers me when I am in a meeting or preparing an important document                        |        |       |           |        |
| Telephone conversations are almost always unnecessarily long  |        |       |           |        |
| My assistants or colleagues interrupt my activities to tell me their problems or to have a chat           |        |       |           |        |
| Visitors or vendors interrupt my personal work by turning up without warning                              |        |       |           |        |
| Working meals and receptions make me feel heavy and sleepy  |        |       |           |        |
| Meetings last too long and are too frequent   |        |       |           |        |
| The agenda of meetings is non existent or badly prepared  |        |       |           |        |
| The computers break down too often  |        |       |           |        |
| The secretaries are overworked  |        |       |           |        |
| My assistant calls me up during the weekends and during my family holidays                                |        |       |           |        |
| I have a mountain of matters on my desk to deal with  |        |       |           |        |
| I find it difficult to establish and meet deadlines except when under pressure                            |        |       |           |        |
| I have too many papers on my desk, the mail and other reading take too much time                          |        |       |           |        |
| I put off to the last moment the important tasks which demand a great deal of concentration from me       |        |       |           |        |
| I can't clearly define my objectives and priorities. They are confused and changeable                     |        |       |           |        |
| I deal too often with secondary matters   |        |       |           |        |
| I don't make a daily work plan  |        |       |           |        |
| I don't delegate a part of my responsibilities to others  |        |       |           |        |
| I have a tendency to want to do things too well. I get too involved in details                            |        |       |           |        |
| I often have to resolve problems which others could deal with just as competently                         |        |       |           |        |
| Add up the points obtained in each column   | =      | =     | =         | =      |
| Multiply the total in each column by the value which is allocated to it                                   | X0     | X1    | X2        | X3     |
|   | =      | =     | =         | =      |
| Calculate the general total   | =      |       |           |        |

**From 0-30 points :**

You are letting yourself be robbed every day by the thieves of time. As you do not plan your time they are stealing your capital of time.

**From 31-40 points :**

You try to install a security system to protect yourself from the thieves of time. But the system does not work sufficiently or regularly enough for you to really succeed.

**From 41-50 points :**

You manage your time well enough but you notice some problems and weak points in your control system through which the thieves could attempt an armed attack on your capital of time.

**From 51-59 points :**

Your capital of time is not likely to fall into the hands of the thieves. Congratulations, you are a model for all those who want to learn to manage their time.

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### 2.3.4 Managing stress

Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between a demand made on a person and the resources available to respond to the demand. The demand may be real (i.e. things outside the person's control). Likewise the resources may be real (facts) or perceived (what you think, feel, imagine, etc).

Resources include:

- Physical ability: health, fitness and strength.
- Intellectual ability: capacity for complex thinking and problem solving.
- Emotional ability: accurately identifying feelings and constructively meeting needs.

Good stress can have a positive impact on a person. This form of stress is achieved when the brain and body feel challenged and want to extend in order to respond to the situation. This is caused when a person is feeling as though s/he:

1. Has ideas of possible solutions to the challenge ("Look at all these possibilities!");
2. Has the resources (internal and external) to solve the challenge ("I can do it!");
3. Has some control over what's happening ("I have choices!");
4. Has had sufficient rest between his/her challenges.

The severity of stress is the amount or level of stress that is felt as a result of a stress or – event or situation causing you stress. There are certain factors which influence the degree of stress that is experienced, these have an impact on the person's well being both physically and psychologically.

The Factors are:

- Characteristics of the stressor
- Your perception of the stressor

Each event or situation has certain characteristics that determine the severity that the stressor may or may not have on us. The characteristics of the stressor and the severity of stress which result, include the following:

- Significance – how critical and important the event is to the individual (deaths, failing an exam, break-up with boy/girlfriend), and how much change will have to be dealt with. The greater the significance and change, the higher the impact of the stressor.
- Time length – if a stressor is continued over a long period of time, it will result in higher stress levels. For example, tiredness: insufficient sleep over an extended period of time will result in higher stress than that caused by just one night of bad sleep.
- Cumulative Effect – This is when stressors are built up over a period of time without appropriate mechanisms to reduce or release the build-up. For example, a long series of little irritations and annoyances could result in a massive blow-out between two people.
- Multiplicity – A number of stressors at one time will result in higher stress levels. For example, a fight with one's parents, final exams around the corner and loss of a loved one will be experienced as much more stressful than if each of these events happened separately.
- Approaching deadline – if a demand has been made a few weeks or months in advance of the deadline, the degree of stress will increase as the due date approaches. For example, if you are given a project assignment two months in advance, it will probably seem to far away to get worked up about. As the deadline approaches, and the work has not been completed, your stress level will increase until you do something about the project.

Each person perceives a potential stressor differently. How a person perceives the stressor, and the amount of stress it invokes depends on your self-concept, your body's stress tolerance, your age, and your external resources. This section examines these in detail.

Self-concept

This is based on the "Theory of Interpersonal Needs". It states that each person has the following emotional needs:

- The need to discover our unique identity as well as to be included (feel valued and important) because of this unique identity.



- The need to have the power to control or influence what we do and what happens to us
- The need for connecting with others and feeling liked and loveable.

Because we have these needs that only other people can meet, important people in our lives can influence who we become and how we end up feeling about ourselves. When these needs are met in healthy ways, we feel valued for being ourselves, competent, useful, admired, loved and supported. The result is a positive self-concept and self-esteem. When these needs are not met, we end up feeling worthless, useless or unlovable. The result is a negative self-concept and lack of self-esteem.

Your self-concept acts as a filter, and results in you seeing the outside world in the same way as you feel inside. Poor self-concept (i.e. minimal feelings of worth toward yourself) may result in the perception that you are incapable of overcoming a challenge. When faced with a situation that needs to be dealt with, you feel anxiety and fear because you are not sure whether you will be able to handle the situation correctly, or even if you will know how to handle it at all!

If you feel loved and positive about yourself, your strong feelings of self-worth and belief in your ability will give you that extra boost of strength to cope in the face of a stressor! Positive self-concept provides you with internal resources that you can call on when dealing with a demand. It enables you to respond to stress.

#### Body Stress Tolerance

This refers to the amount of stress that your body is able to withstand without totally breaking down. This has to do with your physical resources: how healthy your body is. This is determined by how fit you are, how much sleep you get and how well you eat.

#### Age

Each developmental stage that a person goes through has its own set of stressors. The infant's main developmental task is to establish a sense of self and to have his/her social/emotional needs met by family as mentioned above.

The preteen and teenage years move the focus from family to peers in the form of social life and school. Many teenagers are stressed as a result of pressure to be "cool" and to succeed.

Socially, friends and popularity can become a big stress if the young person does not have as many friends as s/he wants. S/he may adopt behaviours to look (and feel) cool and popular. At school, internal and external pressures arise.

Adult stressors are qualitatively different but still huge in number. A single person has to work out finance-management, living security, work and time for socialising.

With a family, these are all multiplied because one has to worry about oneself, spouse and children. There are so many responsibilities that adults have, and it is these pressures, frustrations and conflicts that result in high stress levels.

The retired person has five main situations that induce stress: loss of health, status, work, independence and friends, with increased dependency on others (financial, physical, emotional).

At different times in one's life, some stressors will have a greater impact than others because of the person's situation, needs and life experiences.

#### External Resources

When you have to deal with a stressful situation, it can decrease the amount of stress you feel if you have one or more people to share your feelings with. It is much harder to cope when you feel as if you are all alone and have to deal with a situation by yourself.

Until now we have been talking about stressors but we need also to consider the meliors – positive indicators, the exact contrary of the stressors.

Melior are experiences that help in creating a status of well-being and happiness, increasing a vital inner force. Probably memories of such events are present in your mind. Each person and each community should identify and recall "their own melior" as they will help the life of the community



Fig. OM-6: *A checklist to help you manage stress*

- You may want to print this page and keep it for future reference! Put it in your journal or diary to refer to it when you are feeling intense emotions. It was designed for school or college students but the applications for managers in European Youth Organisations are obvious.
- Manage and plan your time so work and “play” time is balanced.
- Look at how you use time: do not waste optimal/prime thinking and creative time watching TV or reading the newspaper, rather save those for the time of day when your brain is least energetic.
- Don't procrastinate when it comes to doing homework, projects and studying.
- If you are prone to procrastination, organise a “study-buddy” and you each check up on each other every hour or so
- Set bite-size goals and time limits so you can see your progress and keep moving forward.
- Drink as much water as possible (good for brain functioning).
- Take a break, try to laugh with somebody (not at somebody).
- Always ask questions when you need further explanations.
- Understand that sometimes you will not be able to do all that you want to do (i.e. sometimes school work needs to take the place of partying!)
- Be active outside, breathing fresh air, as much as possible (need oxygen for effective brain functioning).
- Write down all that you need to do before you start, it enables you to have a full picture of what needs to be done!
- Exercise to circulate blood with oxygen, helping nutrients get to brain. Also, exercising uses up the increased adrenaline, sugar, etc. that has been released due to stress
- Eat healthy food, it helps you grow “smarter” brains!
- Talk to people you trust to get the stress out of your system



### 2.3.5 Managing communication

Everything we do tells something about us – words, actions, gestures, way of looking, etc. Not only words have symbolic or conventional meaning but everything has a meaning given by the culture and the context in which it is used. Sometimes we do not use the same symbols or when we do we wrongly assume that the interpretation of symbols will be the same.

In communicating, feelings, perceptions, past experience, history and expectations have a

bigger role than words as they provide noise or interference to the means of communication; distorting or reinforcing the message itself.

In communication there are always the senders and the receivers. The receiver role is to interpret the message sent by the sender and to send back a confirmation message. It is therefore essential that sender and receiver use the same code, composed not only of words, but also gestures and symbols. Attention should then be paid not only to the words but to all communication system around you.

Fig. OM-7

| Johari window     | Known to self             | Unknown to self        |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Known to others   | Open                      | Ask<br>(feedback)<br>→ |
|                   | Tell<br>(disclosure)<br>↓ |                        |
| Unknown to others | Hidden                    | Unknown                |

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Any communication, in order to be effective should consider the following elements:

- Contents – what you want to communicate
- Media – what is the best method of communicating in this situation (spoken, written, images, simulation, exercise).
- Significance – what is the meaning for each participant and for the group
- Direction – is the message given with possibility of reply or is just a communication.
- Effect – check it with the feedback and then adjust the communication.

This will help you to move from a linear communication system into a circular one.

Consider now the context – physical and social environment, interpretation of the participants, identity (roles and functions) of themselves and of the others, previous events and expectations.

The context will allow you to better understand the communication because it allows pre-defined behaviour according to shared rules. The Iceberg model detailed in section 1 clarifies this further.

In a multi-cultural environment it is important to double check the messages given. Often when speaking a foreign language we use the same words with different meanings as we try to adapt them to our own native language. Asking questions becomes a useful tool for making sure that you have understood and that your message is understood properly. Giving feedback is an art not only a tool for a better understanding.

The Johari's Window, named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is one of the most useful models available when describing the process of human interaction. A four paned "window" divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, hidden, blind, and unknown. The lines dividing the four panes – grouping aspects of our self which are known or unknown to us and known or unknown to others – are like window shades, which can move as an interaction progresses.

Some degree of self-disclosure benefits relationships, increases self-esteem and leads to a

more stable self-image. By changing what is in one pane, you change what is in the others. If you seek feedback from people, then you will learn things about yourself that you didn't know before, but others were aware of. Thus, those things are shifted from the Blind Pane into the Open Pane. If you give other people feedback about yourself, you will shift things from the Hidden Pane to the Open Pane. This all involves self-disclosure, a willingness to put your trust in others. It involves taking risks, as we reveal things to others which we have kept private up to now.

In our society there are various limitations on self-disclosure: people of higher status generally reveal less about themselves to people of lower status; women generally reveal more to women, than they do to men.

Self-disclosure is often seen as an indicator of positive mental health. It implies trust in others and self-acceptance, it reduces the need for defensiveness and the potential for embarrassment. It shows self-confidence and is often reciprocated. By revealing something about yourself, you are likely to encourage people to reveal something about themselves in return. You will also get to know who you are – you can discover that features of yourself, which you find embarrassing or shameful, are considered by others to be entirely acceptable; but you will not learn that unless you're willing to reveal something.

The process of enlarging the open quadrant is called self-disclosure, a give and take process between me and the people I interact with. Typically, as I share something about myself (moving information from my hidden quadrant into the open) and if the other party is interested in getting to know me, they will reciprocate, by similarly disclosing information in their hidden quadrant.

### 2.3.6 Managing change

There are as many different ways of managing change as there are kinds of change.

Change is about uncertainty. Change management is the process of moving from the current state to the "vision" of the future and involves a degree of transition which may also result in "pain". In this chapter we are talking about personal change.



### *Suggestions for training*

Important – this exercise should only be done with a group who know each other well and within which there is a high level of trust and sensitivity.

- In a group ask everybody to write on a piece of paper a small change s/he would like to do in order to improve her/his life.
- Then ask people to swap the piece of paper around.
- Then ask one person to read out the written statement s/he has found.
- Then ask everybody to clap if they wish to apply the proposed change.
- You will see that some statements will be highly appreciated while others not.

There are different types of change.

- Change can be incremental as from manual recording of information (writing) to current laptops with advanced capability. It has happened through several steps. Each step is incremental requiring skills training and capital outlay.
- Change can be of an even greater nature. Consider metamorphosis, for example, which requires a complete change of state and represents a severe shock to the status quo (in most cases requiring a sleeping phase to cope with the change).

Change evokes all kind of fears and uncertainties. Consequently we tend to change only when we have to. It is difficult to get an organisation to change unless the people inside it can see the reason for change, believe it to be valid and accept it as necessary.

A catalyst has to be powerful if we are to face the uncertainty of change. Often it is difficult circumstances that prove the most powerful catalyst. People resist change for lots of different reasons and to varying degrees. This resistance to change is often proportionate to what they feel they are losing and the uncertainty of the situation they face. Conversely people tend not to resist doing things they understand and which they know will benefit

them. What they do resist are things which seem to be imposed, things which they do not understand and things which are beyond their control or influence.

Key questions you could ask yourself:

What are the key internal catalysts for personal change?

What are the key external catalysts for personal change?

What are the main barriers to personal change?

The characteristics needed to succeed will change and individuals, like organisations must adapt over time. Certain characteristics are known to identify those organisations which are responsive to change. Organisations which recognise and tackle external influences and are responsive to change tend to demonstrate certain characteristics:

- Access to information – if change is to be effective and people allowed to become more involved in the pursuit of the aims of the organisation, they need to have access to information.
- Ability to handle ambiguity – any organisation needs to learn how to operate in uncertainty. People need to be able to tolerate not having all the answers, to learn to keep questioning and to be ready to change course as new opportunities emerge and threats materialise.
- Being innovative – successful organisations are those which release and harness the innovative potential in everyone.
- Taking risks – the freedom to be risk-takers must be part of the culture of the organisation. The “attitude to mistakes” needs to be explored throughout the organisation.
- Team ethos – encouraging a corporateness rather than individuality
- Flexible but robust systems – organisations which manage change effectively keep their procedures, policies and systems simple.
- Ability to handle conflict – organisations which are successful foster argument and divergence and yet manage to bring this together as a creative process.

These characteristics can also be applied to some extent to individuals. Our ability to accept and implement change at a personal level, may correspond to one of the following stages:

- Shock and disbelief – the feeling of surprise or being caught “off balance” when something unexpected happens. “Oh no, it cannot be true; are you sure?”



- Guilt/anger/projection – a feeling of frustration (why didn't they tell us?). Guilt (I should have filled out that questionnaire). Because we cannot deal with anger and guilt over long period of time we tend to project it into others. "They" become the enemy, and are responsible for the change and resulting problems.
- Rationalisation – we begin to move beyond our feelings and start to use our heads. Begin to seek to understand the problems or to make them rational, and to develop ways to cope.
- Integration – attempt to integrate the meaning of the change into our behaviour. Begin action to implement the change.
- Acceptance.

There are then 4 further stages in the implementation of change:

- Awareness – acknowledgement that the change is happening.
- Understanding – involves openness about the "pros" and "cons"; requires involvement in the process; must have open communication; opportunities for education and training are provided.
- Commitment – occurs when people begin to value the change, and understand that change will make things better.
- Action – involvement in the development of implementation plans; clear definition of roles and responsibilities.

Culture and people are inextricably linked. A change programme will affect the way the organisation and the people in it work. People react differently to change depending on their own personal agenda, circumstances and understanding of the process. It is easier to have a negative response than a positive one. Those opposed to change obviously need attention but even those in favour of change will be affected and need to be managed properly.

Remember that organisations do not resist change, people do!

Unless the people in an organisation – at all levels, from senior management to employees – are committed to the change, then it will fail.

This is not an option and without this commitment any project is doomed. Successful change management is about taking the people with you.

The change is not over when it is implemented. It needs careful attention all the way through from the three big stages: unfreezing (accepting the need for change), moving (planning and implementing the change) and then freezing again (celebrating and consolidating the change). This sequence can be repeated many times. It is important to split big changes into small ones. It makes them easier to manage and gives a feeling of satisfaction and reassurance as the stages are completed. It also demonstrates that change works! But remember – when the process is repeated too often it gives a feeling of perennial instability.

Pasini and Donato provide us with some suggestions for the successful management of change of yourself.

#### *1. Discovering the area you want to change.*

It is important to understand that we have different attitudes in different areas of our lives. Identify the area you want to change and check how the environment you live in will let you change.

#### *2. Learning to dream.*

Changing implies dreaming something new, unknown, to be invented. Dreaming something better, imagining what you really would like. Only then do you need to identify the strategies to achieve it.

#### *3. Do not expect change to start from the others*

It is too easy to assume that it is somebody else's fault if you are dissatisfied. You need to find the inner resources to change, without being pessimistic.

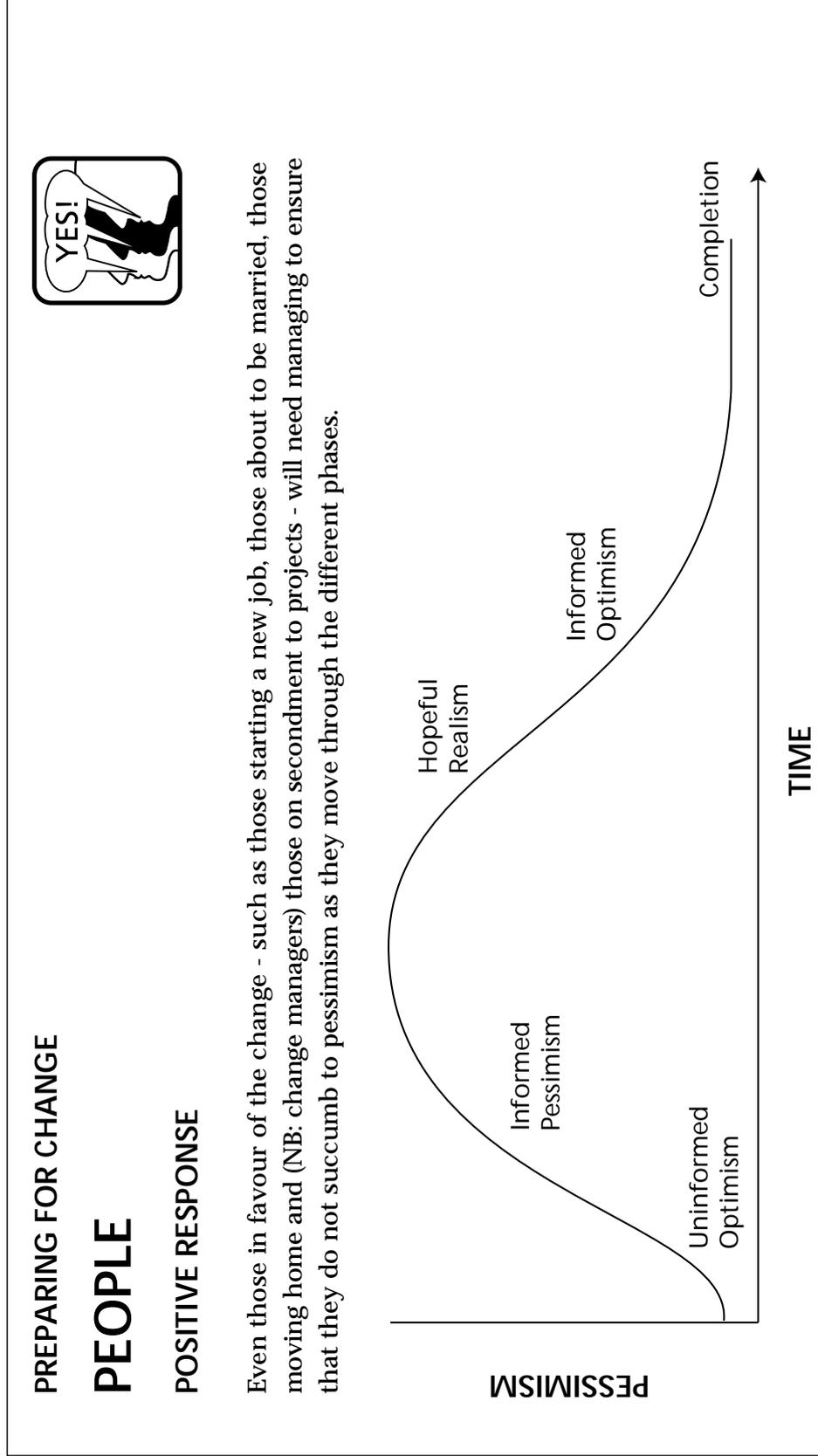
#### *4. Creating dynamic relationships*

Too often we think in stable relationships. Each of us change and it is because of that that we sometimes prefer to deal with strangers instead of friends or colleagues. However, making changes along with others both requires and creates dynamic relationships.



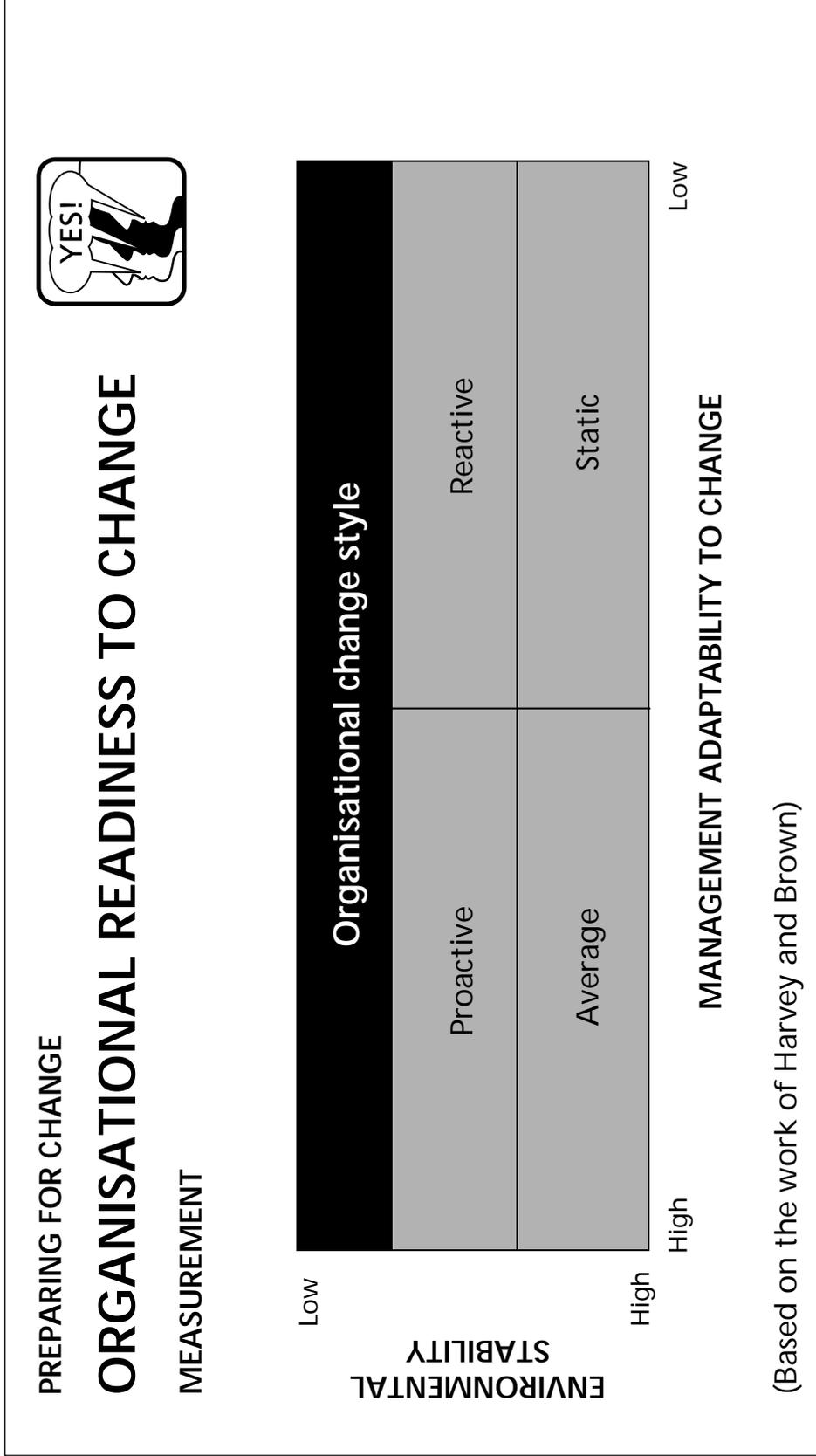


Fig. OM-9



Source: Jones, Neil R. (1995) The Managing Change Pocketbook, p. 58. Management Pocketbooks Ltd.

Fig. OM-10



Source: Jones, Neil R. (1995) *The Managing Change Pocketbook*, p. 61. Management Pocketbooks Ltd.