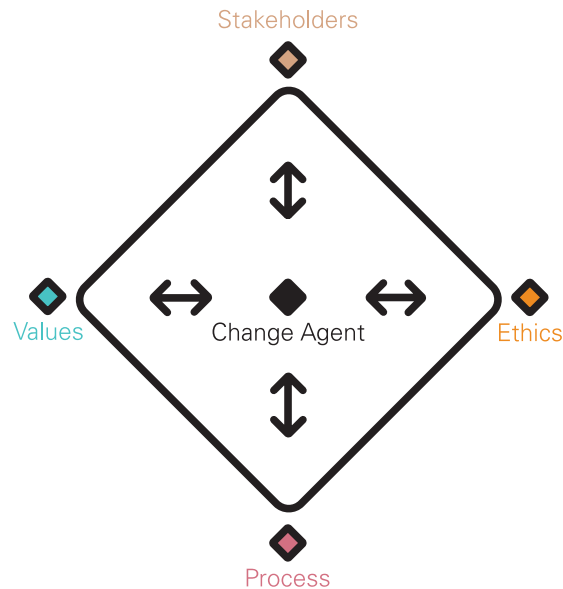


THE DIAMOND OF RESPONSIBILITY



The Diamond of Responsibility¹ is a brilliant tool for enabling an individual to become a Change Agent for responsibility. It is based on the precept of *Personal Responsibility*:

Personal responsibility is an individual's open, wise and ethical engagement with the world, for the sustainable good of all.

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In our private and working lives we are confronted by a bewildering series of issues and challenges. These range from ongoing dilemmas about right or wrong at work and in our society, to real economic concerns, such as the ever increasing manifestations of corporate and high level personal greed. Set against these are louder calls for conscious consumerism, extended CSR in businesses and in other organisations to underline the fact that our planet is both finite and precious. At an individual level, we might feel inadequate and confused, and in a corporate situation, a leader might feel overwhelmed by the conflicting pulls on his or her time, not knowing how to mobilise the employees and other important stakeholders to more responsible action. The Diamond of Responsibility is a way of starting to make a difference – a way for you to become a Change Agent.

A Change Agent is a person who acts as a catalyst for change, a person who makes a positive difference. In our view, it is not the skill set of such an individual that is important, but their mind set. It is their desire for change, their motivation to do things differently and encourage others to act positively, that is most important. As a Change Agent, you are at the heart of The Diamond of Responsibility, giving it lustre and fire. Without this heart, the Diamond, and its brilliance, are flawed.

The Diamond has four key points which, when taken together, are essential for enabling change agency and innovation: *Values, Ethics, Stakeholders* and *Process*.

Values are the engines and guiding principles for our lives, which we absorb informally from our own and individually experienced environment be that at home, in the family, from school, from our religious training and from our wider society. They are learnt as we grow and become our cultural foundations. There are common *values* that are shared across cultures: honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion, yet there are differences, which can lead to clashes and hostilities. Further, one area of stress and frustration is where your own personal *values* are at odds with the company or organisational *values* of your place of work. It is unlikely that your personal values will be completely aligned with those of the organisation in which you work – indeed complete homogeneity could be stultifying – but it is very important that there is some agreement, diversity and overlap. For this, it is key that you not only know what your own or personal values are, but that you also know the values of the organisation in which you are active. From an organisational perspective, it is essential that the company or organisation not only has clearly stated *values* but that these are also lived by the entire organisation, from the board room to the engine room: this is what stabilises the chain of stakeholders and makes all organisations successful!

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Ethics: although the word *Values* suggests virtue, not all organisations which have strong values are virtuous, as criminal gangs prove. Therefore, *Values* need to be further polished by the application of *Ethics* which is our thoughtful and reasoned discussion of Right and Wrong, the light and dark that lie at the heart of all dilemmas. *Ethics*, which has a philosophical dimension, needs to be studied and considered, as there are many philosophers and schools of thought able to give you insight and support.

Stakeholders are individuals or groups that are affected by, or have an interest in, a company or organisation and it is usually understood in stakeholder theory that these individuals and groups can be spoken with.

“A stakeholder is any individual, organisation or group - which includes the Environment - that can affect, or is affected by, the action of an individual, organisation or group”

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As individuals, we also have *stakeholders* in our own sphere of influence. Stakeholder maps for companies and organisations are often complex and no two are alike. Frequently, these maps do not include two groups of *stakeholders* that we feel are essential: the Environment, as in the natural world, and Future Generations, so that our actions are guided by longer term thinking than is frequently the case in business. These last two *stakeholders* are key for the sustainable aspect of our definition above.

Process: once we have identified our *Values*, are clear on our *Ethics* and know who our *Stakeholders* are, then we need to add *Process* – or action – to the cutting points of the Diamond, or no external change will take place. To help make the first move you can:

- *Surprise*: surprise yourself – and others - by doing something differently that is aligned with the other points of your Diamond;
- *Enthuse*: spread the word and get others involved in some way in your company or organisation;
- *Get out of the Box*: (a) reframe the situation by doing something positively and with responsibility in a free and untrammelled manner or (b) go to your tool box and find a structure that works for you such as, in organisational terms, the ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility. In a company, the governance procedures are also crucial, as they are linked with the firm's values.

In our view, The Diamond of Responsibility can also be used by the leaders of companies and organisations to harness the energy from their core stakeholders (such as employees) in three temporal ways either as a (n):

1. *Prequel* for responsible initiatives or processes such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability² and so on, to bring ideas and action from outside;
2. *Equaliser*, to help disseminate existing CSR / Sustainability ideas throughout the company so that they really become part of the organisation's DNA;
3. *Sequel* to responsible actions in maintaining their positive energy in external stakeholders – by effecting continued change - long after such change has been fully assimilated by the core organisation, where it is the accepted and responsible way of doing business.

Frequently, semantics are used as a way of avoiding responsible action: “*Corporate Social Responsibility?* That's only for the big boys, for the multi-nationals. It has nothing to do with me!” or, especially in the US, “*Corporate Social Responsibility...* that's pretty much communism – we don't like that here”. The Diamond of Responsibility cuts to the heart of the matter transparently and precisely so that being responsible is no longer a burdensome obligation but something that is multi-faceted, robust and valuable and – if we may extend the metaphor – excites wonder.

2. “*Sustainability is a guiding principle which supports the innovation, creation and fostering of value to fulfil the needs of our stakeholders, wherever present, now and across time*”

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Appendix: *Personal Responsibility Definition, other languages:*

Responsabilidad personal es el compromiso abierto, consciente y ético de un individuo con el mundo en búsqueda del bienestar de todos los que vivimos en él.

Osobní zodpovědností každého jednotlivce je otevřenost, moudrý a etický vztah ke světu za udržitelného dobra všech.

Persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid is een verstandige, ethische en open betrokkenheid van een ieder met een duurzame wereld die goed is voor ons allemaal.

Det personlige ansvar er det enkelte menneskes åbne, kloge og etiske bidrag til det fælles bæredygtige bedste.

Henkilökohtainen vastuu on yksilön avoin, viisas ja eettinen sitoutuminen maailmaa kohtaan, maailman kestävä kehityksen ja hyvinvoinnin varmistamiseksi.

La responsabilité personnelle est l'engagement ouvert, sensé et éthique d'un individu avec le monde pour le bien (être) durable de tous.

Persönliche Verantwortung ist die aufrichtige, kluge und moralische Vereinbarung des Einzelnen mit der Welt zum nachhaltigen Wohl allen Seins.

La responsabilità personale è un impegno aperto, saggio ed etico che ciascuno di noi ha con il mondo per il bene sostenibile di tutti.

人的责任是以个人的开明、智慧和道德与周围世界的融合，致力于一切持久的美好目的。

Personlig ansvar er et individs åbne, kloke og etiske engagement overfor verden til bærekraftig nytte for alle.

A responsabilidade pessoal é o compromisso aberto, sábio e ético de um com o mundo para o sustentável bem de todos.

Личная ответственность означает открытое и осмысленное индивидуальное взаимодействие с миром, отвечающее общепризнанным нормам этики, и направленное на поддержание устойчивого развития общего благосостояния.

Personligt ansvar, betyder en persons öppna, visa och etiska engagemang för sin omgivning, i syfte att skapa en bättre och hållbar framtid för oss alla.

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APPENDIX: a very short and condensed guide on how to apply the Diamond to yourself and the organisation you belong to

VALUES

- write down the 7 things you value
- for each value, ask yourself: what do I get from having this value fulfilled?
- in this way you will end up with some “core” values!
- arrange them in order of priority
- for each (core) value, ask yourself: where does it come from? Experience, tradition, culture, religion etc.
- compare these values with the values your organisation and your society prescribes to (written and lived).

Ref.:

Gentile, Mary C. (2010) *Giving Voice to Values*
Parks, Laura and Guay, R.P. (2009) *Personality, values and motivation*

STAKEHOLDERS

- upon whom are you dependent and who is dependent on you?
- make a stakeholder map (include the environment and future generations).
- evaluate and prioritise: consequences?
- iterate and go to process.

Ref.:

Freeman, R. Edward et.al. (2010)
Stakeholder theory: The State of the Art

ETHICS

- work out your ethical platform/foundation i.e. how do think about what is right or wrong when you take action = your ethical DNA/ manual
- write it down and ponder about how you use this manual in your daily life.
- take your core values through your ethical manual.
- any surprises?

Ref.:

Thompson, Mel (2013) *Understanding Ethics*

PROCESS

- study the governance procedures your organisation has decided to follow.
- your own governance universe?
- in the view of the values, ethics and stakeholders: what needs to be changed or done differently?
- use creativity to create a change process.

Ref.:

Kidder, R.M. (2006) *Moral courage*