A composite image of Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and city lights at night. A bright blue sunburst effect emanates from the horizon, creating a lens flare and illuminating the scene. The background is a dark blue space filled with numerous stars.

# The Diamond of Responsibility

**"O brave new world,  
that has such people in't!"**

*Miranda from Shakespeare's The Tempest, V i 183 -4*

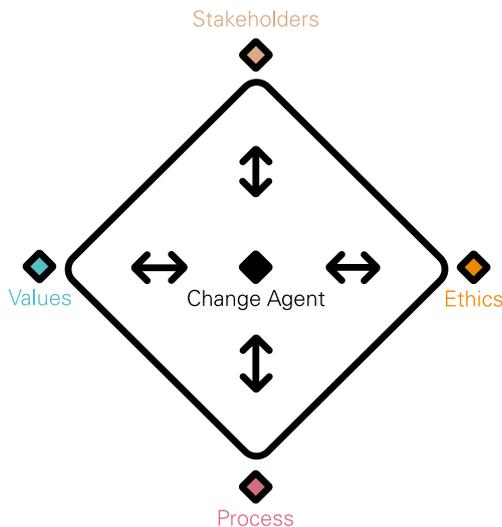


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## The Diamond of Responsibility



*The Diamond of Responsibility <sup>(1)</sup>*

### 1. Introduction

#### What makes us human? Is it what we value?

If we were to ask ourselves to come up with a quick review on what we value, what would we list? We would no doubt touch on some of the following aspects of life, amongst many others, that we:

- ◆ enjoy and love (the company of friends, the smile of a lover, a great film, driving fast, walking slowly);
- ◆ need or miss (our family when travelling, education, a good night's sleep for a young mum, freedom for a captive, decent food and a roof over our heads);
- ◆ admire or covet (Grandma's pearls, that new pair of killer heels, an edgy piece of art or an athlete's prowess).

We might also consider things outside of our immediate control that seem intangible and impossible, such as world peace, freedom of expression or an end to poverty.

Looking at the picture of our Earth and home which opens this piece, we might further pause and reflect on how inestimably valuable this, the third rock from the sun, is to us all.

Keeping that thought, let us turn our attention to a much smaller rock, found deep within our planet: the diamond.

### 2. Multi-faceted

#### From Rough Diamond to Pure Brilliance

Diamonds are rocks that we value and desire, and are, as the famous songs go, either a girl's best friend or forever. Their rarity, especially of the coloured stones, their hardness and their scintillating brilliance have, for generations, made diamonds synonymous with prestige, wealth and beauty. Diamond companies like De Beers have cleverly marketed these gemstones in more recent history so that we particularly associate diamonds with romance and undying love. In November 2017, a rough (uncut) diamond about the size of a tennis ball (1,111 carats) mined in Botswana and named "Lesedi La Rona" was sold to a London jeweller for US\$53 million - it is the second largest gem ever found. Not bad for an unassuming rock-like piece of carbon about 2.5 billion years old.

Despite their glamour, diamonds also have a dark side. Blood or conflict diamonds are harshly won and then smuggled to help finance and support unimaginable brutality, so the provenance of clean diamonds is now carefully monitored and certified. Some diamonds are even laser engraved to prove that they are properly sourced. Here, money begins to meet ethics.

Further, diamonds are also used industrially and in engineering as cutters and polishers, so have a very practical application alongside their captivating mystique.

For us, the diamond is the perfect symbol for a brilliant tool, The Diamond of Responsibility (see diagram above), which is designed to bring out the best in people and help make us all shine. Like true diamonds, humans often start as "rough diamonds." We are frequently flawed and are far from perfect, but our constancy can be tested to the limit through many blows, our integrity can be as hard as a rock, our focus as sharp as a solitaire's point and we can dazzle with brilliance and fire. If that all sounds like a bit too much hyperbole...well, please read on to find the reasons that explain our enthusiasm.

### 3. Change Agency

#### Agency (*n.*): action, power or operation <sup>(2)</sup>

In London parlance, a "Diamond Geezer" is a special man, a good bloke, someone you can depend upon and we frequently refer to men and women of an excellent and life affirming calibre as real gems. Our term for such a positive person is a Change Agent, a person who stands at the centre of our Diamond of Responsibility and who uses its



four main points (see below under section 4) with purpose, to guide and enable them in their change agency, as in the amazing example of Richie Sully, the Disney organ donor<sup>(3)</sup>.

The Diamond of Responsibility is itself based on the precept of Personal Responsibility which we feel should guide everyone's actions:

**“Personal responsibility is an individual's open, wise and ethical engagement with the world, for the sustainable good of all”** <sup>(4)</sup>

A Change Agent is a catalyst for change, someone who makes a positive difference. In our view, it is not the skill-set of such an individual that is important, but their mindset, energised by creativity and curiosity. What is vital is their desire for change, their motivation to look at things differently and positively, as well as encourage others to act with a similar positivity. At the heart of The Diamond of Responsibility, the Change Agent gives real lustre, igniting development and transformation. In return, the four points continually focus and encourage the Change Agent's determination and supportive innovation.

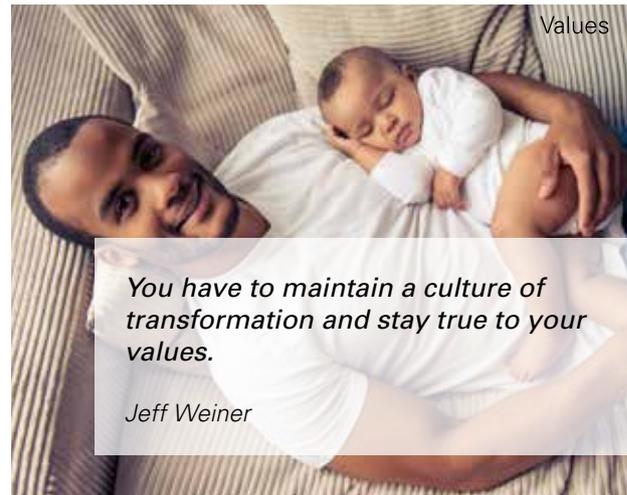


## 4. The Diamond of Responsibility

**The four key points of the Diamond of Responsibility are Values, Ethics, Stakeholders and Process.**

**Values** are the positive engines and guiding principles for our lives and behaviours which we absorb, mostly informally, from our own individually experienced environment, be that at home, in the family, at school, in our religious spaces or from our wider society. They are learnt

as we grow and become our cultural and interpersonal foundations. They are also deeply felt by humankind as there are common values that we share across cultures: honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion.



It is crucial for us, not only to know what our own or personal values are, but also to know what the espoused values are of the organisation or company in which we are active. From an organisation's perspective, it is essential that the organisation - large or small - not only has clearly stated espoused values but that these are also lived by the entire organisation, right from the board-room to the engine room. Values are drivers of action and can help to make organisations successful, such as in guiding them to view and understand the values for their particular, unique grouping of stakeholders.

Championed in schools, colleges and other educational establishments to underpin their culture, values are increasingly used by companies and organisations to support their licence to operate, ensure good client relations and to attract, recruit and retain the right people. It is worth bearing in mind that, if our values do not overlap or agree with at least some of the espoused values of the organisation we are working or volunteering for in some way, then that organisation is not our dream destination and there will be personal stress and conflict. Interestingly, from a company perspective, the firm should also take care that employees' personal values are not completely aligned with those of the organisation itself, as complete homogeneity would be stultifying to the company culture (think Andersen's Androids, the nickname for the employees of that failed consultancy) – so it is actually very beneficial if there is some disagreement and diversity alongside some overlap.



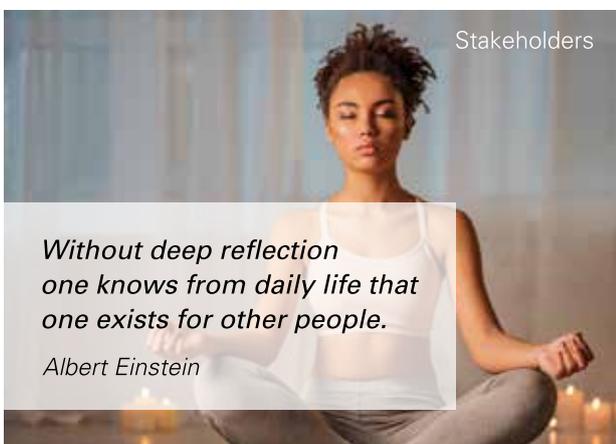
Ethics

*Our lives begin to end the day  
we become silent about things  
that matter.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**Ethics:** the word values means something worthwhile, but not all organisations, nor individuals, that have strong values are virtuous, as criminal gangs with their loyalty, honour and persistence prove. As a result, values need to be further augmented through the application of ethics which is the thoughtful and reasoned discussion of right and wrong, the light and dark that lie at the heart of all dilemmas. Ethics, which has its roots in our distant genetic history and, as a result, has a strong philosophical dimension, does need to be studied, discussed and considered, particularly as most dilemmas occur in the grey area between the often obvious extremes of right and wrong. Also, ethics shifts temporally and culturally: as an example, our attitude to mental health has changed from one where we treated sufferers inhumanely or as figures of fun, to one of understanding 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 classic stakeholder theory that these individuals and groups can be spoken with directly.



Stakeholders

*Without deep reflection  
one knows from daily life that  
one exists for other people.*

*Albert Einstein*

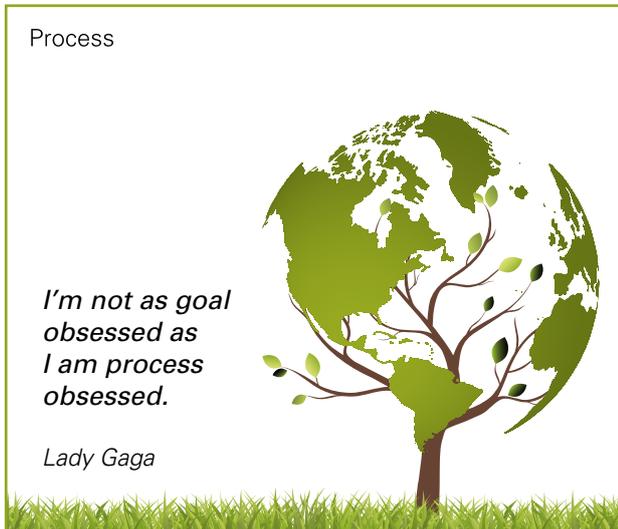
Our definition:

**“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”<sup>(5)</sup>**

We explicitly include the Environment as one of our stakeholders, even though it is frequently missed from company stakeholder maps, because our environment is essential for life on Earth, both now and in the future. Implicit in our definition are Future Generations, an unfathomable group whose very existence is in our hands and who will depend on our legacy.

Future Generations as a key stakeholder group adds a temporal dimension to our actions, underlining the facts that climate change and the detritus from our often unthinking profligacy (e.g atomic waste, batteries, plastic pollution in the oceans, space debris) will deliver them a very different world to the one we inhabit now. This makes Sustainability<sup>(6)</sup> a core aspect in our definition of Personal Responsibility above, even though Sustainability is itself very tricky both as a wicked problem and as an essential, evolutionary process.

**Process:** once we have identified our Values, are clear on our Ethics, know who our Stakeholders are and treat them according to the compass of our Values and Ethics, what's next? Most of us live under the benefits and necessary constraints of a fairly peaceful and generally harmonious society, under its laws and mores. In an organisational setting there may be extra standards that we follow, such as company rules or external guidelines like the ISO 26000 framework for social responsibility.



As individuals, most of us are entwined in a broad web of contacts and relationships. On the whole, we co-operate and act with responsibility towards our fellow humans, using trust and a spirit of compromise to support our interactions. This is a positive and life-affirming process: where it is missing, there is frustration and anger.

## 5. A Responsible Perspective

### Things don't change, we change <sup>(7)</sup>

From a responsibility perspective, we can:

- ◆ *recognise* our situation, and then consciously decide to ignore it. The problem with this strategy is that we will still be affected by the external processes, which is akin to turning our backs on an avalanche in the hope it will go away;
- ◆ *resist* at all costs, purely because we want to maintain the status quo with an "I'm all right, Jack" attitude [Note: there is a subtle difference between this and the active resistance we might use in the face of a perceived existential threat, such as in protesting against pollution, or we might have a longer-term goal such as underpinned Gandhi's peaceful resistance. See *lead* in the next column.];
- ◆ *re-frame* means taking the time to get another perspective or view on the situation: could new information help or force us to change our position?;
- ◆ *re-direct* is the first, active step to make a change or a difference, such as following a healthier diet and

taking more exercise to allay the effects of ageing, or deciding to go plastic-free at home;

- ◆ *support* is the next step that engages us with other stakeholders, such as supporting local, community activities;
- ◆ *lead* means we are using process as the cutting point of the diamond, and are taking action and leading, such as pioneering a safe speaking-up or whistleblowing system at our place of work. We are becoming Change Agents, lending a hand or showing the way.

The Diamond of Responsibility is aimed at all persons, including those individuals who lead companies and organisations, in order to harness the energy from their core stakeholders (such as employees or suppliers) in three temporal ways:

1. *Prequel* for responsible initiatives or processes such as Corporate Social Responsibility or the Sustainable Development Goals (the 17 SDGs), to bring in ideas and action from outside;
2. *Equalizer*, to help disseminate existing Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility or Corporate Citizenship ideas throughout the company so that they really become part of the organisation's DNA and evolution;
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 <sup>(8)</sup>.

All of us, whether working in an organisation or not, should not underestimate the power of small but incremental changes. The idea of nudging, or softer persuasion, means we can start a small and focussed initiative that can quickly have a surprising impact.

Rough diamonds, found in nature or in our society, are often not much to look at yet their exterior hides huge potential. Once we have worked on the four points of values, ethics, stakeholders and process explained above, then we will have cut and polished our own diamond selves enough to become a Change Agent - and rock the world.

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 robust, valuable and, over time, excites wonder.



## A. Footnotes:

(1) © I. Hopkins & B. Skarstam, 2012

(2) Hanks, P ed. Collins Dictionary of the English Language (Collins, London & Glasgow, 1979)

(3) At a time when health agencies are struggling to find organ donors, an extraordinary example of selflessness is that of Richie Sully. Having seen Robert Leibowitz's social media plea via a T-shirt worn in Disney World, Richie donated one of his kidneys to Robert. They were complete strangers. The operation took place successfully in New York, January 2018.

(4) © I. Hopkins & B. Skarstam 2012

(5) © I. Hopkins & B. Skarstam 2012

(6) "Sustainability is a guiding principle which supports the innovation, creation and fostering of value to fulfill the needs of our stakeholders, wherever present, now and across time."

© I. Hopkins & B. Skarstam 2013

(7) Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854)

(8). A failure in values, ethics and stakeholder understanding was clearly shown by the collapse of the Presidents Club, a London fundraising organisation, in January 2018. An undercover reporter from The Financial Times exposed the male-only dinner as a place where captains of industry groped and propositioned the young women employed as waitresses or hostesses. This episode showed incredible arrogance as well as stupidity, especially in the fall out from the explosion of sexual harassment cases that tore through Hollywood in 2017. It seems we still have a long way to go.



## B. Resources:

If you would like to explore the ideas behind The Diamond of Responsibility further, or support your change actions with more arguments, please take the time to investigate the key resources set out below.

*(Note: the written materials are listed alphabetically, not in level of importance as they are all excellent).*

You can, of course, make contact with us at Reshape Sverige or Responsibility<sup>3</sup> Ltd for more recommendations and ideas (see D. Contact p. 10).

### VALUES

*Book: Gentile, Mary C. *Giving Voice to Values* (Yale, 2010)*

*Book: Mayo, Ed *Values: How to Bring Values to Life in Your Business* (Greenleaf, 2016)*

*Article: Parks, L. and Guay, R.P. *Personality, values and motivation* (Elsevier, 2009),*

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222513052>

*Film: *The Last of the Mohicans* (Dir. Mann, 1992)*

*Film: *The Shape of Water* (Dir. del Toro, 2017)*

### STAKEHOLDERS

*Book: Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, De Colle*

*Stakeholder theory: *The State of the Art* (Cambridge, 2010)*

*Film: *Wall-E* (dir. Stanton, 2008)*

### ETHICS

*Book: Manikutty, S. *Being Ethical* (Random House, 2011)*

*Book: Thompson, Mel *Teach Yourself: Understand Ethics* (Hodder, 1994, 2010)*

*Film: *12 Angry Men* (Dir. Lumet, 1957)*

### PROCESS

*Book: Halpern, David *Inside the Nudge Unit* (Penguin, 2015)*

*Book: Jennings, Marianne M. *The Seven Signs of Ethical Collapse* (St. Martin's, 2006)*

*Book: Kidder, R.M. *Moral Courage* (Harper, 2006)*

*Film: *Karate Kid* (Dir. Avildsen, 1984)*

*Film: *Exam* (Dir. Hazeldine, 2009)*

## CHANGE AGENT

*Book: Hall, Edith *Aristotle's Way* (The Bodley Head, 2018)*

*Book: Norberg-Hodge, Helena *Ancient Futures* (Random House, 1991, 2007)*

*Book: Raworth, Kate *Doughnut Economics* (Random House, 2017)*

*Book: Yousafzai, Malala *I am Malala* (Indigo E-book, 2014)*

*Film: *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom**

*(Dir. Chadwick, 2013)*

*Film: *Howl's Moving Castle* (Dir. Miyazaki, 2004)*



## C. Translations:

### Personal Responsibility definition: other languages

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

© I. Hopkins / B. Skarstam 2012

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 zodpov dnosdtí každého jednotlivce je otev enost, moudrý a etický vztah ke sv tu 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 åpne, kloke og etiske engasjement 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.

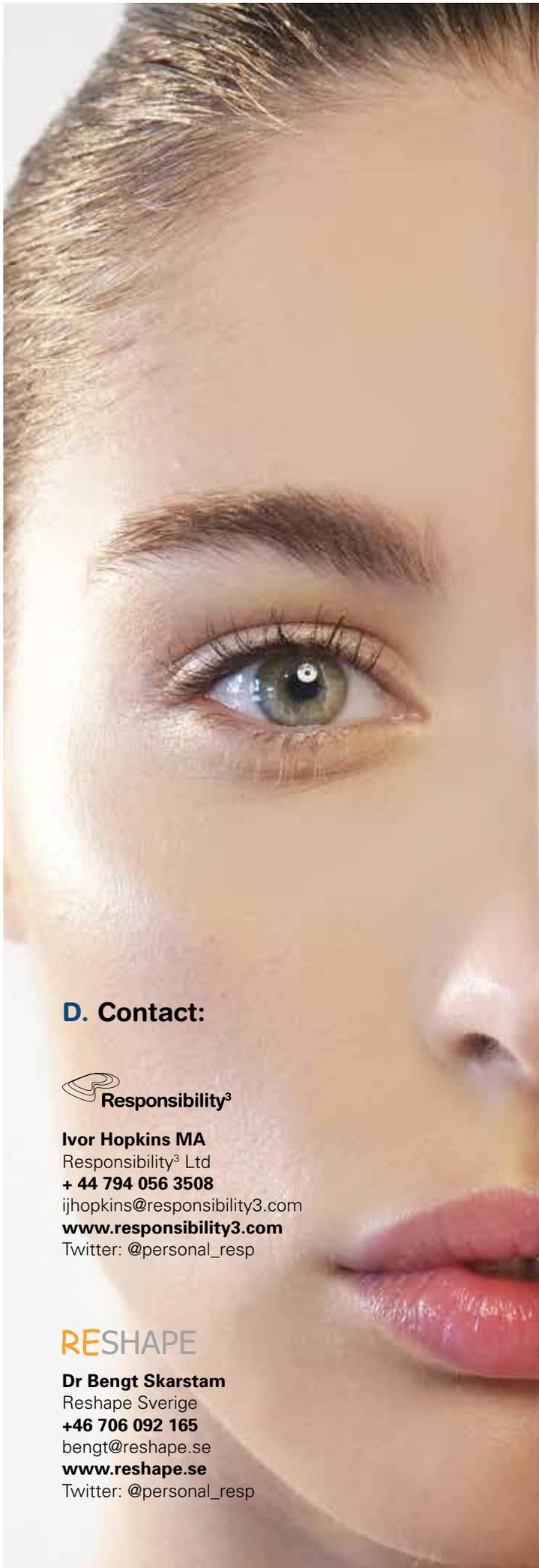
یلع ع قینبملا مالعل درفلا قلماع یه دیصخشلا دیلوؤسما  
عمجل قما دتسملا قدی افلا لجأ نم، قالخال او قما حلاو حاتفنلا

Προσωπική ευθύνη είναι η ανοιχτή, συνειδητή και ηθική δέσμευση του ατόμου με τον κόσμο, για το βιώσιμο καλό όλων

### With BIG thanks to all of our translators:

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If you would like to add your language’s translation to the list, please send it in to us - see D. Contact p.10.



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