

GenuineThinking®: Leadership from the heart; from identity to significance & impact

By Ernst-Ariaan van der Giessen MSc BCoG

Tags: #meaningfuleconomy #genuinethinking #DNAleadership #DNApurpose #leadingfromnature #Impactleadership
#Leaderswithcourage #blueprintforeveryrelationship #relationshipblueprint #ImpactDNA #7stepsDNA
Date: First Release January 2017 updated January 2024
Time: 10 – 15 min

In the rapidly changing world in which we live, it is crucial for individuals, teams, and organizations to reinvent themselves and instigate meaningful change. GenuineThinking, an integral model for leadership and management, offers a refreshing approach that transcends traditional management models. Drawing inspiration from my own experiences and observations, I guide you through the context of 30 years of expertise and the seven operational essential steps of GenuineThinking.

My objective is to inspire you and prompt a shift in your thinking. I encourage you to confront your existing thought patterns. I am convinced that we have entered a society that has relinquished primary and, consequently, essential principles¹, leading to mental, cognitive, and physical laxity. This has placed unity under pressure. Unity is imperative for activities such as building and bringing about change. By the term "laxity," I primarily refer to the inclination to fulfill personal needs, prioritize oneself and power, rather than fostering healthy relationships grounded in fundamental principles².



"Meaningful actions and making an impact begin with identity (DNA) and organizing around a promise and ambition. Transitioning from reacting to meaningfully governing. - Leadership from the heart!"

A PERSONAL JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

The origin of GenuineThinking® lies in my personal experiences. As a young boy, I already had questions, it seemed that I perceived things differently from others, and I vividly remember looking at the lights of an apartment building. I became aware that behind each front door light, people lived with their own stories.

¹ Primary and essential principles, encompassing thoughts related to creationism, the inherent need for togetherness, the ability to contribute, self-expression, and creativity.

² It is ethically debatable whether primary principles exist; however, every individual is spiritually seeking essence. I am convinced that a key lies within this pursuit. It is up to you to explore this further.

During my school years, I encountered an educational system that understood little about who I was, did not consider my individual learning styles, personality, and talents. A teacher told me, as a ten (10)-year-old, that I should be happy if I were to pass vocational education³. Unfortunately, this lack of understanding of tailored and talent-focused education is still widespread in today's educational landscape. We believe we are improving by allowing space for personal development, but we still push (young) people through a mold instead of encouraging critical thinking and triggering their talents. It is alarming to witness that many students in their education do not know what they want. The reality shows that many people end up in places they have not been trained for⁴. In the numerous conversations I have had the privilege to engage in, I see individuals trapped in processes rather than organizations that genuinely add value. And this, in a manner that demonstrates a clear balance between people, processes, and output⁵.

"Often, discussions about authenticity are framed in a manner that allows individuals to avoid taking responsibility. "

The awareness of this unfair balance laid the foundation for my quest for meaning and authenticity. I intentionally use the term "genuineness" instead of the word authenticity because, in my view, the latter is often misused. Let me clarify this with an example. Authenticity is frequently discussed in a way that relieves individuals of responsibility. Am I an authentic Dutch person? What defines an authentic Dutch person? Should I go back to the year 1477 when the Netherlands was formed, or should I trace my roots back to the year zero, identifying with people in a swamp? Or... I believe you grasp the point I am trying to make. Being authentic does not mean being real! It involves articulating your feelings in a way that often requires no more than being true to yourself. This is why I choose the term "genuine" – as you came into the world⁶.

During my studies in Ireland, focusing on Business Administration, I laid the groundwork for the GenuineThinking model. This seed was planted during my thesis⁷ on integrated marketing in the service sector. While writing, I discovered the significance of unity and an integrated approach for optimal service delivery. In 1996, I glimpsed a part of it but did not fully comprehend the essence of what I now know. As I write this, I am convinced that there are many more layers within the GenuineThinking model. Some of these insights I have addressed and shared during presentations and discussions with entrepreneurs, students, as well



³ This has had a significant impact on me, affecting both my self-image and perseverance. Teachers, instructors, and parents are the individuals with the most influence in this world, and that fact seems to be occasionally overlooked. While I appreciate the existence of vocational education, I believe that every educational level should prioritize nurturing talent and encouraging critical thinking over being solely output oriented.

⁴ For more information, explore sources such as Sir Ken Roberts, the philosopher Kierkegaard, and the principles outlined in "Designing your Life" by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans from Stanford University.

⁵ With a few simple questions, it is possible to expose a false identity within an organization—one that is not connected to the individual's inherent DNA.

⁶ I believe that upon entering this world as a baby, you bring forth a set of unique characteristics, talents, and values inherent to you. While embarking on a journey of self-discovery and learning is undoubtedly essential, the remarkable diversity among individuals is equally significant. We truly need each other on this Earth.

⁷ Bachelor Honors Degree, Galway Ireland, 1996.

as commercial organizations and churches. I had the privilege of delivering a TedX Talk for Johnson & Johnson on "Wholehearted Organizations" during their internal conference. And yes, it is indeed gratifying to be able to say that I have done a TedX talk.

FROM GRADUATION TO WITNESSING IMPACT TO NARRATION

Fifteen years later, after completing a master's in business administration and gaining various professional experiences⁸, the GenuineThinking model further evolved in 2008. In a time of global challenges, such as a financial crisis and emerging issues related to climate change, I realized that organizations almost always acted driven by fear⁹. Fear stems from an unhealthy relationship. This realization was my turning point, leading to further exploration of 'how' and 'what works.'

In my interaction with over 150 professionals, it became evident that they all expressed their thought patterns in a similar manner. When asked to draw their organization, they depicted it as an entity but struggled to articulate the vision, its location, or what bound them together. They were entangled in processes and could scarcely define their *raison d'être*. They shouldered responsibilities based on control (process) and output. This was quite confronting, not only for them but also for me. It demonstrated that what I had observed as a boy, verbalized as a student, had now been linked as a professional. The challenge then, as it is still now, is to effectively convey this to others.

The remarkable aspect of my experience with these men and women was that many of them genuinely reflected and made different choices. Some changed jobs because they felt unfulfilled, others contemplated their own beliefs, feeling a different moral responsibility than that of the company¹⁰. Still, others ventured into entirely new directions. And yes, a portion resisted change because they found it daunting. All responses were valid! It indicated to me that the impact of the model prompts reflection and leads to making different choices. The approach teaches you to perceive, experience, think, and ultimately make decisions differently. What, then, is fundamentally different?

"It takes courage to be genuine (not authentic)."

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AS FUNDAMENT FOR CHANGE

GenuineThinking© goes beyond purely transactional¹¹ approaches to achieve a goal. It begins with understanding your purpose. From this purpose, you organize the structure of the organization and set goals. It recognizes the principle that healthy relationships are the core of sound unity, whether it pertains to you as an individual, your team, organizations, or domains such as education or society as a whole. A healthy relationship means that you see yourself in the context of others, your environment, and the world. It starts from the relationship with oneself.

From this relationship with oneself, you engage in relationships with your environment, and they with you. This is the dynamic for which we are destined. Unfortunately, the current dynamic is often a

⁸ Engaged in development work in South America, contributing to the creation of the first mobile applications, and involved in business development across sectors such as construction, infrastructure, food, cosmetics, and media.

⁹ At that time, I was employed by two organizations, focusing on strategic development through scenario thinking and the restructuring of a business unit.

¹⁰ Examples include no longer wanting to work for indirect human trafficking (ICT and design work for activities like dating, infidelity, and prostitution), refusing involvement in addictive industries (gambling, mobile applications), transitioning from a managerial role to operational work, and exiting domains such as the banking sector and even a municipality.

¹¹ Transactional – carrying out actions to achieve a goal – involves input, process, and output.

reactive relationship driven by processes. It takes courage to be genuine (not authentic), to dare to explore and delve into the origin of your existence and to act from that core. In the Genuine method, you must articulate this in your own words. What is your *raison d'être*? What binds us together and why? Which values do I genuinely want to contribute? What is my promise to this world? This season? To myself and to the world (no matter how vast)? The reason you and your team need to document this is that it forces you to confront yourself. You are seeking an answer to the question, "What do I or we actually stand for?"¹²

"Money often prevents you from reaching your essence."

I recently heard from a man, no longer compelled to work for his income, that he now realizes his first 35 years of his career were actually quite selfish. His selfishness brought him many things but also significantly impacted many of his relationships. Now, he consciously chooses to act differently and operate from his 'purpose'¹³. He mentioned that it is easier for him now because financial provision is no longer an issue. However, he also feels happier and more content than before. He pointed out that money makes certain aspects of life easier but does not shield one from the challenges of life. Money often prevents one from reaching their essence.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PURPOSE DRIVEN AND GENUINETHINKING®

We live in a reactive world and dwell in a society where we conduct our affairs under external pressures. We respond to pain and, thereby, to a desire. In marketing, you learn to explore the 'pains' and 'gains' to arrive at a new value proposition. Follow my line of thought for a moment! What if you came into the world with a unique way of being from the very beginning? Your unique DNA is a bundle of talents, perspectives, and values that lay within you as a gift to this world. It might sound like a softer approach, but consider it for a moment, and I challenge you¹⁴. It suddenly places you in a completely different world—a world where you don't react but take action because you come to bring and contribute.

I had the privilege of speaking with several entrepreneurs, and what I learned from them is that the questions I posed about who they are and why they do things are crucial to them. "Not enjoyable to explore because it touches upon your responsibility" was one response. Interesting, isn't it? They express that they can conduct their business from who they are, what they perceive, and in what ways they can make a contribution. Here you may see a beautiful connection with the term "purpose driven economy – meaningful economy"¹⁵. Purpose is often translated into what we must do and arises from a fear of facing problems, while, when we begin to see ourselves in a healthy relationship, issues will automatically be addressed. GenuineThinking® is based on insights from spiritual, ecological, human, and business sciences, with the core focus on relationships emerging from natural DNA directed towards unity.

GENUINE RESULTS

¹² A session can already establish a significant direction for a team and organization, indicating the causes of imbalance. It is noteworthy to observe how many management teams and leaders are reluctant to engage in this. The primary focus tends to be on the process and goals.

¹³ The man is still weighing whether it is based on purpose or stems from his DNA, hence GenuineThinking.

¹⁴ A successful entrepreneur from the Quote 500 remarked, "Ernst-Ariaan asks you questions and prompts you to contemplate issues that you might not want to hear, but they are indeed necessary."

¹⁵ According to the author, Kees Klomp, the ecological, social, and individual costs of the current economic system have escalated to such an extent that it constitutes an existential crisis. Therefore, it is imperative to seek a completely new economic narrative: the Meaningful Economy. The Meaningful Economy connects our (individual, human) existence to the (universal, natural) existence. Ecology serves as the design principle in this context.

Thinking from and utilizing the GenuineThinking© model has yielded remarkable results, ranging from innovations in education to advancements in the construction and food sectors. On a personal level, it empowers individuals, enabling them to work from their talents and qualities. For teams and organizations, it means cultivating a shared culture centered around the organization's raison d'être, fostering a balance between people, processes, and products. Growth, profit, and a sense of relaxation naturally ensue, resulting in lower absenteeism, reduced turnover, a natural branding and appeal, heightened intrinsic motivation, and, consequently, a genuine culture within the organizations.

"Which transformation begins, and am I willing to temporarily let go of control?"

An ecosystem emerges where people consistently thrive and contribute. Why is it then that this is not yet widely embraced? Entrepreneurs I spoke to articulated it well, I believe. The ideology has not been widely disseminated, and it involves a 'heart' decision that demands courage.

Courage because you cannot predict beforehand what will happen. Will people leave? What transformation begins, and am I willing to temporarily let go of control? It requires individuals to release existing mindsets, along with management styles and processes. It demands companies and organizations to scrutinize their own raison d'être. This is challenging because there's a significant likelihood of being entangled in issues related to processes and capacity."

THE GENUINETHINKING® MODEL – "A BLUEPRINT FOR EVERY RELATIONSHIP"

The GenuineThinking model stems from the belief that an individual, a team, an organization, and a society should operate from their DNA¹⁶, with beliefs, values, and skills that lead to healthy relationships. This approach fosters unity at its core, promoting a unifying effect. Working from essential principles helps maintain unity and connection, ensuring impactful outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the origin – the context – of the GenuineThinking© core model. This understanding is crucial because solely using and implementing the model may turn it into a mere method, lacking 'life' – devoid of relationship. The strength lies in building relationships and, consequently, unity. Extensive research has been conducted on trust in organizations and relationships. It is evident that without trust, there is no unity. Therefore, it is crucial to think, design, create, organize, structure, execute, and lead from a perspective of relationship and unity. This unity forms the core of the GenuineThinking© core model, making it a blueprint for any form of relationship!

"A blueprint for every form of relationship!"

¹⁶ DNA carries genetic information on how an organism functions and develops. Organizations consist of people, and together we contribute to each other and to every part of this world. This is why I argue that an organization should be a combination of DNA rather than people in processes. There is an imbalance between people, processes, and products.

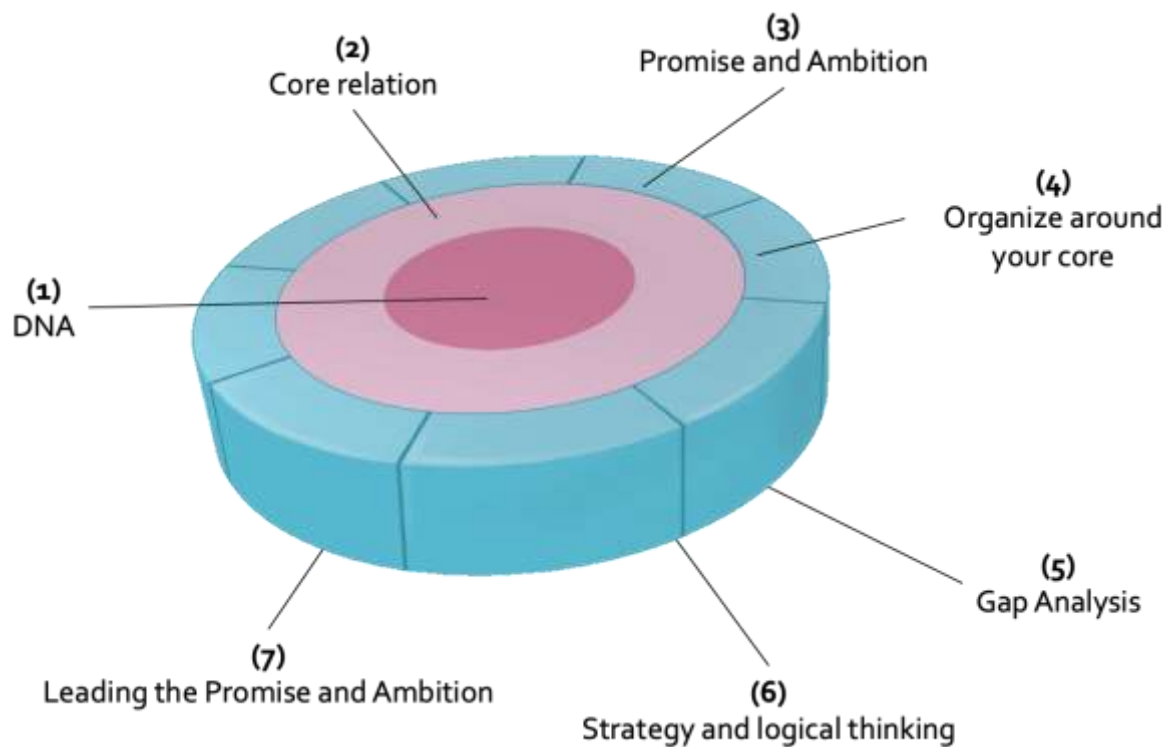


Figure Core model GenuineThinking© - www.genuinethinking.org

The GenuineThinking© core model provides seven consecutive steps. These steps can be applied in a start-up, up-scale, change, and existing organization, as well as at each individual level up to large groups of people. Each relationship is linked to doing justice to its *raison d'être*.

Creation Phase

1. **DNA:** Identify your core values, beliefs, and motivations. Understand your 'why' and what you want to change.
2. **Core Relationship:** The power within you and the organization aims to add value to others, a group of people, and society. Understand who the people are and keep them focused.
3. **Promise and Ambition:** Formulate a promise to yourself and to the customer. Define an ambition that reflects a long-lasting relationship with yourself and with the customer.

Organize and Structure

4. **Organize around your core:** Build your organization around your core values, the heart of your identity, and thereby the promise and ambition.
5. **Gap Analysis:** Understand where your organization currently stands compared to your promise and ambition. Note that this is not a judgmental process.

6. **Strategy and Logical Thinking:** Develop a strategy to bridge the gap and make progress. Pay attention to the balance between people, process, and product.

Lead and Act

7. **Leading the Promise and Ambition:** Lead people and manage processes based on the question 'how do the questions, the situation, and the activities contribute to our promise and ambition?'. Focus on authenticity and healthy relationships towards all stakeholders.

You might think that based on my story, the first phase is the most important. And this is true! However, if you ultimately do not organize around your promise and ambition and lead accordingly, it won't succeed. You will then remain a process-driven organization that measures itself against external results. This is not a Genuine organization but rather a thermometer organization, assessing its own actions within its own domain.

I wish for you and your people an organization where passion, talents, and added value are naturally utilized, thereby achieving results that contribute to the world.

Wishing you a beautiful and genuine exploration journey.

Ernst-Ariaan van der Giessen | GenuineThinker!

INFORMATION

If you want to learn more about the GenuineThinking® model, the entire process, or be inspired to demonstrate leadership based on authenticity, I invite you to visit the website www.genuinethinking.org or FlyingPenguins.com.

It is time to pave the way for a meaningful and sincere approach through Genuine leadership. And yes, it requires courage! Placing people in the right positions within your organization, fostering a positive contributing culture, reducing absenteeism due to a sense of 'freedom,' minimizing control, and striking a balance between people, process, and product. Unity emerges!

We verzorgen lezingen/ ThinkTank sessie/ workshops voor leiders, teams en soms voor managers (afhankelijk van verantwoordelijkheidsniveau). Neem graag contact met ons op!



Regards, **Ernst-Ariaan van der Giessen**
E-Mail Team@genuinethinking.org



© 2013 – GenuineThinking / FlyingPenguins. All rights reserved. If you want to use and re-distribute the Genuine Model please inform us and be so gentle to give credits to our organization. It is our mission and believe to create healthy relationships and hence we are pleased that you are enthusiastic. For aid and materials and invitations please connect with us. All breaches will be handled by our legal partner LegalNetLink.