WorldWork and Deep Democracy

Oleksandra Matushenko and Viktor Oksenyuk from the Kyiv Mohyla Business School in Kiev interview Max and Ellen Schupbach about their organizational leadership training programs, WorldWork, and Deep Democracy.

DDI Team at Kiev Mohyla Business School

PART 1: WHAT IS WORLDWORK IN ORGANIZATIONS?

Viktor: Okay, Let me introduce us. My colleague and I are part of the Kyiv Mohyla Business School [http://www.kmbs.com.ua] , which is creating a website for Ukrainian managers called www.innovations.com.ua, of which my colleague here Oleksandra Matushenko is the editor, I am Viktor Oksenyuk.

Our readers are top and middle managers from the Ukraine and from companies, local as well as multinational. They will read this interview and you can direct some examples in your answers for this audience. The main interviewer is Oleksandra, and I might add some questions too. We are thrilled to have you as our guests. Maybe you can introduce yourselves briefly, and we'll then add a summary of your bios on the web, once we publish the interview.

Ellen: I am Dr. Ellen Schupbach, a process-oriented psychologist and coach. And I am also the Executive director of the Deep Democracy Institute, which is in the middle of establishing a leadership, facilitation, and coaching program here in the Ukraine.

Max: And I am Dr. Max Schupbach, a co-founding member of Processwork and Worldwork and part of the executive team for the Deep Democracy Institute. Ellen and I are partners and colleagues and have our base in Oregon in the USA but are frequently travelling in many places where we train and consult groups and individuals in many applications of the Deep Democracy perspective.

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Alexandra: I want to point out that your paradigm on Worldwork is a very interesting one. First of all, to me it was a great surprise to find such interesting facts and information that you offer to the Ukrainian people and managers. In the Ukrainian market and Ukrainian society, too, the term Worldwork is rather new. So probably, we will start from the point. Why do you use the term Worldwork? What does it mean?

Max: You know, the origin of the model is rooted in psychology. Processwork, the mother paradigm of Worldwork, started out 30 years ago with making new connections between physical illness and psychology, which resulted in Process-oriented bodywork.

Then, Arnold Mindell, the founder of our school of thought, started looking at large groups that are in violent conflict with each other, and Worldwork was created: a term that suggests that every time when you work on a team or group issue, you work with the world as a whole.

As you know, Worldwork has evolved beyond a conflict resolution model into a paradigm that aims at researching the fundamental dynamics of social transformation. If they happen in conflict situations, in teams, in organizational and business development; all these processes can be understood and worked with using one unified paradigm. It turned out that the traditional scientific fields were insufficient for this task, and Arnold and Amy Mindell devoted their work life to creating a process science, which unites the core concepts from physics, psychology, anthropology, and mathematics into a unified framework.

One of the characteristics of the paradigm is its use of non-locality, which allows you to understand organizational processes and intervene on many levels. It gives the model a holographic character. Whether you work with a team of two or three people, or you work with a group of five hundred people, or if you coach just one single member of the team, you're still working with the whole organization and, through that, with the whole world as organizational problems are non-local: meaning, the issues an organization is facing are expressed on local and global levels and shared with the entire world.

Six months ago, a lot of people would have smiled patronizingly if you would have said that, considering it too unrealistic. Today, as we are in the midst of a global economic crisis that is worsening daily, nobody smiles anymore. It's a fact that you can read about every day in the newspaper. Realities change very quickly. You have a little country that has one problem, you have one bank that has an issue, and before you know it, you realize that the whole world has the problem. Now, everybody understands this.

Alexandra: Okay, and the Worldworker according to your words, that's also a worker that is influenced by the whole world, right?

Max: Yes. If you are Worldworker, you share the perspective that you yourself mirror the world that you meet and vice versa. Non-locality means that whatever problem is out there is also, to some extent, inside of you. I am you, so to speak.

A Worldworker understands that working on one's own process is crucial and working on an organizational process is as crucial and both have to happen over time. For example, personal relationships in a group are as important as companywide policies and vice versa. They need to reflect one another in order to have an impact. Leave one of these out and it will come up as a crisis through the other.

Alexandra: Where do you find Worldworkers?

Max: There are individuals that work on themselves in all walks of life, that think of themselves as Worldworkers. There are politicians that consider themselves to be Worldworkers. There are also business leaders and individual team leaders that consider themselves to be Worldworkers. And there are many grass root leaders and social activists that use aspects of Worldwork.

In my mind, to be a Worldworker suggests you have a particular perspective; that whether you are working on your "small" local issue, project, problem, family, small company, or on a "big issue" or large corporation, all voices and ideas, all information, and all relationships are important and must be taken seriously. And all changes are equally needed and important. If you work on a general global theme, you must not neglect the local issues that are present and vice versa. It's an aspect of the butterfly effect, so to speak.

Alexandra: So what is your role in the company. You make conflict resolutions, right?

Max: Yes, but not only.

Alexandra: Not only, of course. You try to make the team work more efficient.

Max: Yes, but not only.

Alexandra: Okay, could you make this clear.

Max: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you. That's all true what you said.

Alexandra: So what else is your role in the company, and mostly we are talking here about businesses.

Max: Well, from our paradigm we think that an organization can be viewed from various levels.

First, they can be viewed from a measurable reality level. The reality level is, for example, the number of brick and mortar assets, business process facts, numbers of orders, etc., human resource facts, the amount of people that work for it, bottom lines, quarterly profit statements, etc., and strategic decisions that are based on factual market studies. Each company will have its own goals and strategies, their own best practices, which they are trying to follow on that level. This is an important level and we frequently assist in this area also, with our various specialists.

But then, we think there is another level, which we think is an emerging level. It's the dreaming potential of a company. It's not a known measurable potential, but it's the

potential that the company is just starting to become aware of. It is frequently perceived in tensions, in polarized discussions, or in a sense of being stuck; not moving forward, being out of the flow, inefficient team work, incompetent team members, etc. But also it can be found in excitement, new ideas, special connections, etc. All of these processes can be viewed as the company's process to become closer to its actual nature and break out of the limits of its present identity. So, tensions and conflicts are as important to us as excitement and new ideas. It's the dreaming of the company. By bringing in awareness, this dreaming can emerge into changes in the measurable reality level.

And then we assume that there is a third level, which shows a timeless vision, or a basic innate direction of the company, which will remain the same throughout space and time; although it will hopefully always find new exciting expressions. For example, you could argue that the direction or essence of Ford is based on the idea of freedom of mobility that should be a basic right for every American. This is a crucial aspect of the American Dream, the deeper vision upon which the American nation has been built and continues to be built. But the "right to move" goes beyond kinesthetic mobility. It includes social mobility and the hope that you can be who you want to be. It includes the right to leave a situation if it is not working for you and look for something better, for example in relationships. That is one of the reasons that divorce came first in the USA.

As long as Ford stays true to this basic direction and is able to make cars that suggest and reinvent this kinesthetic, political, and emotional "right to move" to the public [then] the field, or the larger collective, will relate to it positively. If Ford starts to forget it, there will be a corporate crisis that will eventually force Ford to find this original direction again and create a new, albeit temporary, expression for it. If Ford doesn't manage this, the company will fail and someone else will pick up that process.

For example, the beginning pioneering days in the US were difficult. The Great Depression was painful for many and created a particular attitude and lifestyle, a seriousness that was based on fear of another depression. The concept of mobility had to assist people to "move" through this period: to help them have more fun with their inner and outer journeys, with both their geographical and professional journeys. If Ford doesn't pick up on that and bring more playfulness into its cars, this process will eventually be taken over by other car companies that represent this process better. But the basic dream of mobility a process of moving into a better and more rewarding situation is essential and key to understanding this.

The present economic crisis is a good example for how we develop. Will we become depressed again and fall back in anxiety and survivalism? Or will we be able to use it as an opportunity to remember who we are, what is important in life, and move through with a sense of collaboration and optimism?

Does that make sense?

Alexandra: Of course, it does.

Max: So then, we think that all the problems that a company meets inside the company, it also meets outside in its relationship to the customers, its relationship to the suppliers, its relationship to the overall local and global market that's in it. These are all expressions of an organization and opportunities to stay true to its invariant direction or essence, while at the same time finding new and exciting expressions for it: dancing with the Zeitgeist.

We also think that all the tensions that appear in teams, or the tensions that appear in outer markets, have something to do with the emergence of the company or its drive to renew and rejuvenate itself.

And we think that not only each company, but also each local market, has its own inner vision; has its own inner direction and in that sense functions as an organization also.

So we're helping companies to get back to their innate direction, to their basic direction, which then allows the leadership to update its modern expression, create interventions, lead change management, and develop new strategies, new products, new services, new creative relationships externally with the customers or internally, for example, between the R&D and marketing departments.

So, this is the process we facilitate. Sometimes we facilitate the whole process and sometimes we facilitate just one aspect of the entire process. For example, sometimes we just work on one team issue and then it's like conflict resolution. Sometimes... what was the other thing you mentioned you ought to do what? You said conflict resolution and...

Alexandra: Conflict resolution and the process of teamwork management, of making this process more efficient.

Max: Yes, so sometimes it's a team building issue that creates more efficiency. For example, a team might have difficulties implementing their ideas because they go against the company tradition, which subtly paralyzes the whole team. A founding group, for example, always brings a basic strength to a company: a unique characteristic that makes the company partially what it is. In the course of development, the group learns how, from another perspective, this strength is also a weakness and how a perceived weakness can be actually a strength. For an organization to learn about itself, it will go through complicated moments in which these roles are associated with people or teams. Sometimes, this comes up as a strategy development issue, but once the organization remembers its direction, it can reformulate its basic relationship to the customers, which leads to entirely new strategies.

Sometimes we coach an individual or the CEO because the personal and professional growth of one person can be essential to the entire company. Sometimes we do customer relationship consultations. So we actually work within the entire field of the company but always with the task in mind of making the company more aligned with its basic direction.

Alexandra: Okay, as far as I'm concerned the basic vision is associated in your paradigm with organizational myth, right?

Max: Ah, that's very good. Amazing, you studied our writings!!!

Alexandra: So I'll probably ... I wanted to know why do you try to find this myth, because some companies even think that they don't have it because they don't deal with these kinds of concepts.

Max: Most companies, to begin with, declare that they think having an organizational myth is unimportant. But then in most companies there is one group that feels there is something like a spirit or idea that has created or moves the company along. Most business people we deal with are incredibly open to our ideas and often apply in them in really innovative ways that we didn't think of ourselves when we trained them.

Alexandra: So how do you try to find this myth or to combine this myth or to build? What methods, what mechanisms do you use for it?

Max: There are many methods. For example, if you facilitate a large group process with all the stake holders, essential moments will appear: situations where there is a genuine experience of connectedness and mutual understanding. The information in these essential moments contains the basic direction, around which the group is aligning itself. For example, while working recently with a group that belongs to a chemical company, the team united in a moment when they realized that what holds them together is not so much the vision of profit, not even the personal team relationships, but a common love for "going all the way," with great personal sacrifice to learn and understand better what is happening in the company and among them to improve everyone's life. In this moment, someone remembered the spirit of the founder, who was an example for that, and many early stories in which he sacrificed and risked everything to make a research breakthrough. It was a touching moment for the team to realize that, although they have taken this initial essence much further, they were still walking in the original footsteps, so to speak.

Another way to get to the underlying direction or organizational myth is to get the stakeholders of a particular issue in the same room and hear the various voices. And those various voices, they are like vectors, they add up, as Mindell writes in his *Earthbased Psychology*. Maybe one voice will say, "We need more crisis management. We don't have time now to think much about organizational direction, or vision because first, now, we need the crisis management in order to survive." That's a voice that has become popular these days. So you can look at this as one vector.

But then, somebody else might show up in the stakeholder meeting that says, "Well, we don't think that's a matter of crisis management. In our viewpoint, this is an opportunity for us to look at ourselves, who are we really? What do we do, and where do we want to go? Maybe there is meaning in the crisis." So this creates another vector. Let's put it like this, okay? They are like vector 1 and vector 2.

Then you have someone else who says, "Well, in my viewpoint, the main problem is that the various departments don't work well together. We should work more on the collaboration." This creates a third vector. Now, you can do vector mathematics. You have vector 1, vector 2, and then vector 3. They add up to a superposition, a sum so to speak, but the sum is more than the total of its parts. We think of this as the various vectors adding up to a combined joint direction: meaning, the organization at this point needs to do 1] crisis management and 2] work on the deeper meaning

and 3] work more on its relationships. If this can happen simultaneously, the effects of each will be enhanced and they will be seen as complimentary.

In one organization that we worked with, where these vectors turned up, one subgroup found that getting back to meaning and direction is the best crisis management because it provides the energy to move forward. But the subgroup that advocated crisis management discovered about itself that it was not just fact-oriented but that it was motivated by eldership, a caring for everyone and their daily lives. And finally, the collaboration people understood how they are essential to show these two sides that, in fact, they merge into one and turn a corporation into a living community.

Like in this case, Hewlett Packard comes, of course, to mind as an example for this. HP at one point tackled a crisis by cutting the salaries of the executives instead of firing people because they thought of themselves as being a family. This was very successful. One could speculate that Carly Fiorina violated this family consensus principle by pushing the controversial merger with Compaq, which ultimately cost HP lots of money and Carly her job. In other words, there is not an either/or about these directions. All of the directions need to happen at the same time. That's what superposition means.

Think of a music band; there's a piano, a saxophone, and a drummer. You look at the audience [and notice that] the audience doesn't like the music. *This is like today's economic situation. The world economy is not doing well and the markets are not happy.* So the band looks at the feedback from the audience and begins a dialogue. The drummer says, "It needs more rhythm here. If we only had good rhythm, we'd do fine." "No," says the piano player. "We have to quiet everybody down. Let me play a very nice piano tune." And the saxophone player says, "What we now need at the moment is imagination and creativity. Let me improvise on my saxophone."

Our answer is yes to all. We need to hear the whole band! The whole band is needed to deal with this crisis. We want to hear the band working out the tensions in a jam session because that is what jazz and life is all about. Out of this interaction, the audience or market will be able to participate emotionally and with enthusiasm as they hear the piano, drummer, and saxophone developing their song.

So that's basically what we do. Through this process, stories come out... These stories tell us why we need crisis management. Why we need more relationship. Why we need more meaning. In these stories that come forward, you can find the organizational myth.

PART 2: WHEN DO COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REALLY NEED WORLDWORK?

Alexandra: Okay, thank you. And the next question, do companies really need you when they have a crisis, or maybe they try to prevent it themselves and they call for your help and you come and help.

Max: Yes, that's a fabulous question. It contains a central issue: *Where do we look to decide if we are doing well as people, as a team, or as a company?* What part of our company do we believe is stable, and what part of it do we feel is unstable and open to fast change?

Most usually, the mainstream looks at the company and thinks the part that's really stable about the business is the amount of orders that are in the computer; the last quarter report, the share values over the past year. And we look at these and we say there is a building here and four team offices and 80,000 people that have worked for it and this is the most stable part.

The mainstream looks at relationships between people or departments and considers them less important and a less stable factor in their success. Connections between people, but also between the departments, seem less important to those that make the forecasts. We think connections are very important between people but also between departments which behave at times like autonomous entities.

From a Worldwork perspective, departments, like research and development or the financial department, can be viewed as humanlike beings with their own personalities, so to speak, who recruit certain people. It's like in a theater, the department has its own personality. That's why it attracts certain people to it. So, sometimes when we are working on interdepartmental relationships, we pretend to ourselves that the relationship between departments doesn't have much to do with the people that are in it. We treat the departments as human beings themselves that also need a voice and improved relationships. Many people think that this is more a fiction and therefore less stable than numbers of orders and bottom-lines. For example, research and development might think that it is the most important group, because without it, the company would have nothing to sell; whereas the sales people might think that their talent to relate to the customer is the key factor, without which nothing would be sold, even if were the best product ever. We know that both are right!!!

And then, vision and basic organizational myths, people think that's the least stable. But we use in Worldwork an opposite approach, counterintuitive so to speak, which is inspired by concepts from quantum physics. We say it's the opposite. The basic direction or superposition is the most stable. Relationships and polarities are second most stable: they remain fixed but exchange players. And then consensus reality, the level of facts and figures, is the least stable of them all. As I was saying before, this is now painfully clear to everyone with the current economic crisis. Consensus reality is much less stable than we think.

Now, in Eastern Europe, people always understood these concepts much better, because as a Ukrainian for example, you always understood that. Many Ukrainians I have spoken with agree that the Ukraine has a deeper process of its own, that in one way remains untouched by the outer economical and political situation. There are outer more surface relationships, as existed, for example, during the Soviet Union. Now with the Ukraine entering the process of what I call second globalization, there are new relationships with a multitude of stakeholders. These outer relationships are important but change over time.

Underneath, there is a deeper Ukrainian direction, a Ukrainian vibe, so to speak, which remains constant. People might say, the Ukraine always was the Ukraine and the Ukraine always will be the Ukraine. If you go outside of this building, you can find something about the Ukraine that has never changed and never will change. If you

go out, you're in Kiev. You'll find this unique, special feeling in the air that you'll find only in Kiev: the spirit of the place, so to speak. It has nourished and inspired people over the centuries and brought forth many, many diverse creative expressions. It's like a music tune that can be played with and improvised in many different ways.

From this perspective, it doesn't matter so much who is controlling whom. You can have Americans controlling one thing. Germans controlling another. Russians controlling another. It doesn't matter quite as much. It's a stillness that you can feel in the air and a sense of miracle or promise of a miracle to come. That is how I perceive Kiev at least and this basic direction remains the same. This is the most stable aspect, in my view. Everything else is, in a sense, much more fluctuating and much less stable.

So that's why we try to help companies to get back to these basic directions and sentient qualities because we feel that's where their creativity, growth, strength, and power lies. So that's what's behind it.

Alexandra: Okay [very excited], thank you!!! I feel this also about the Ukraine. It's great to hear it like this. But as far as we're concerned, people sometimes don't want to cooperate because they can be irritated by the influence of different people. They cannot be happy with this intervention in their life, even when there is a crisis management. They can say, "We don't want this, really. We don't want to cooperate. We deny it."

What do you do? How do you cope with these problems? How do you explain? You can say, "Yes, that's very important. Let's do this," but they have other problems. They cannot be very able and eager to cooperate with you.

Ellen: If there's a company in crisis but then they're fighting against the idea of working on it. Is that what you're saying?

Alexandra: Yes.

Ellen: Well, there are a few things, I think. One is, we would think they are a role in the field. So that energy that they have, and that viewpoint, is a role in the larger field. We must be able to find this role in the global field and also in the local field, and it's probably also related to the problem they're working on at the moment.

So we would want to know more about it. We would work with them on it. What is behind the not working together; for example, hopelessness, rebellion against an oppressive situation, the need for more independence? It would be a group process because there must then be also another role that has a polarity. And so we would think those are both important and we want to get to the essence of each of them. We want to know more about each.

Alexandra: Okay, as I understand, there is some philosophy in your concept, right? What role does philosophy play in the paradigm and how does it help? Do people perceive it or do they perceive only some practical things, which they can use?

Max: It all ties up to what Ellen just answered there because it's in the background of that. I mean, the question… what I like so much about Ellen's answer, it responds to what you, Oleksandra, frame as one of the main problems of the consultant, which is not true only for World Work, it's true for all consulting. Every consultant feels she or he has to convince the business management on an ongoing basis that they're doing a good job in terms of the practical bottom line. Philosophy is accepted if it passes the

"Does it grow corn?" test, a question that the Native American Navajos used for all new directions and ideas. Of course, it's easy to see the blame in the business world, but we are all like that to a certain extent. We tend to worry first about our physical survival, getting our wood inside the house and our bacon into the kitchen, before we feel we can afford to have a philosophy. Why should corporations be different?

Consulting itself serves different roles. Very frequently, the role of consulting is risk management for the executive groups. They're using consultants to manage their risk about their own management behavior. They can talk to the Board and say, "Well, we have used well known consultants, so therefore our decisions were based on what we think was the best information available." This is partially meant to hide a leadership deficit and lack of vision and direction. We are niche consultants so if someone employs us we don't have to deal with that too much, only at times in the aftermath of what large consultancy groups have done to a company.

But what we're talking about is basically a general issue about the role of the consultant. It comes up in groups that say, "Why should we work on anything? We want you to give us the solution about how to improve the situation we are in." I think that is your question. Well, you said it in a much better and more scientific way.

The first thing, in my mind, is to understand what I just said, and I would love to repeat it. *This role is not unique to business but is ubiquitously found in all areas of life.* All of us. We don't want to deal with who we are and we don't want to think about where we are going as long as we don't have to. We want a pill from the doctor. We don't want to reflect on how healthy our lifestyle is. We want our job and car. We don't want to think about what it does to the environment. We sleepwalk through our lives and up to a point it works fine because the organizational myth and personal myth works on us anyhow.

Organizational and personal myths are like inner compasses. So, in a sense, people and companies don't need what we do. It just makes them stronger, more creative, and happier, and therefore better. But our tools are, in that sense, not necessary. Many will go through crises and many of them will survive anyhow because companies can't help following their organizational myth. Teams can't help but follow their team myth, and as you know, the boom-bust cycles also play a role. Many companies deal with issues with the same attitude that we have towards the weather: The sun is shining today, let's go out and play. It's raining, let's stay home and fire a few people.

So if someone says, "We don't really need you," we say, "Great! Thank you. Have a good time," because we try not to sell. Until now, we've been lucky. Too many people ask us to work for them, so we have never had to sell it yet. If someone says, "I think we no longer need you," we think this is a good moment to disappear.

But it's a big issue, right? If it's going good, people see no reason to work on their stuff because it's going good. If it's a crisis, people say, "We can't afford to work on things." And if it's in between, people think they have so many conflicts that they can't really focus on anything else. These are three normal things, and I personally have them also, but I want more in addition.

Business can play an enlightened role in society as a whole. Companies can be so much more creative and fun and cool if they pick up their potential. Life is a blast, not

an exercise in survival and profit maximization. Part of our philosophy is to facilitate the change of that whole mindset, keeping the good parts and working on the less useful ones. For example, the present economic global crisis could have been avoided. We predicted it three years ago. It could have been avoided by one simple thing: more relationship between the stakeholders.

There was too much isolation between all the stakeholders. Everybody did their own thing. Nobody talked to anyone else. It's a leftover paradigm of the, so to speak, Cold War where we had two power blocks that were competing with one another over their influence in the rest of what was called the "Third World."

The basic thing was, "I'm going to do my thing. I'm going to compete with everybody else, and I'm going to see if I can gain an advantage over the next one."

But now, globalization has changed this. Suddenly, we no longer have just two blocks that are our only options. There are many possible partners that people can connect with. Before it was either "you do it my way" or you can join the other side and be even worse off. But now, we have more options. It's a new kindergarten. [laughter.] One child says, "I no longer want to play with you because I don't like you. I'm going to play with her." And now you stand there, realizing the other child no longer has only the choice between a West Bloc kindergarten and its rules, or an East Bloc kindergarten with its rules but a choice between at least 14 other children and their kindergartens, each with their own toys and games. So that has changed everything. We need more relationships and people don't have relationships. They don't know how to make relationships. The business world especially has a big issue there.

Alexandra: So we are talking about very high levels right now, right? The cooperation between organizations, between countries, between leaders. What is your experience in high-level cooperation. Did you take part in some of them and what were the results?

Max: Yes, not only in high-level corporations but also high-level government.

Alexandra: Government. That's very interesting. Could you say more?

Max: Yes.

Viktor: Which governments?

Max: Some Central European governments and some Asian governments and one Middle Eastern government, so to speak.

All governments share, up to the point, a similar problem, which is… let me see if I can say it without irritating too many people…

We look at the government and we can see most governments, in a sense, have an inner problem, which is that they don't follow immediate feedback. For example, a company must follow market feedback. In this respect, governments should run on more of a for-profit principle. If you are a company and you have a bad third quarter,

somebody is going to come to you and say, "Hey, friend, this is not going well. Tell us why and what you are planning to do about it or else we're going to change you."

But if you are a politician and you're in the United States, you have something like a four-year contract. In Russia it will soon be six years. No sports club gives you a four-year contract. If you have a bad year in a sports club, they're going to change the manager.

But in politics, there's a basic principle. Either you get elected for four years, and then that's it, or if you're a government official you get elected for life. This is not a very efficient way of leading, obviously. So government has to change. Government needs to become more fluid over time. It will have to follow the basic evaluation principles of the for-profit sector. We're going to see that in the future.

But the larger issue behind this is not the government. The larger issue is the everyday person who looks at the government and thinks that the government should solve its problems. You can say the government is still acting in an old way, with bureaucracy and wanting to do things its own way. But it's really the voters that are just sitting there and allow them to act like that because they don't want to deal with taking responsibility and leadership for their communities.

This is why the Deep Democracy Institute is a leadership development think-tank because this is the fulcrum with which to change the world, in our opinion. Social contracts, as stipulated by Rousseau, are central in the functioning of Central European and Japanese capitalism and economy, and they have also entered political life in the US. In my view, they eventually should be expanded by the concept of group process, which is more fluid and adaptable. We don't need social contracts, with all the fights that ensue if they appear not be kept. We need stronger social relationships.

We are seeing this now, as population dynamics and economic situations make these social contracts impossible. Many regret this and believe it's a negative result of globalization. I welcome it because I am pleading for a *Second Globalization*, where real live relationships that are continuously worked on replace the old social contract concepts.

PART 3: WHAT IS DEEP DEMOCRACY?

Alexandra: Could you please, in this context, explain the term "Deeper Democracy" because it's Worldwork in your conception that's interesting.

Ellen: Well, first of all it would be the basic scientific definition, as I would say it, which is the concept or the idea that all voices and awareness styles are important and valuable, all the voices in the field. But this is more than just all the voices that you hear. It's also voices that you don't hear. It's also feelings, things like an atmosphere that you can feel and sense but that you can't actually even speak a word about. So many things that are sort of present in our everyday world but a lot of them are marginalized quite a bit.

So, Deep Democracy is a principle and a practice that tries to listen and open up and hear all of the different aspects of our reality that are influencing us and then

bring them out and show what is more central in a given context and what is more marginal and bring awareness to that and try to process it.

Alexandra: Sounds great! But what instruments do you use for this Deep Democracy? How do you manage to make these things, to hear everything, every voice?

Ellen: So what methods? It's a great question. Well, there's many.

I think the first thing I want to say is when you say "what instruments," I think the first instrument that each of us has is ourselves and our own awareness. And we have many practices that work on learning how to use your awareness, like Max was talking earlier about different levels of awareness:

One is, we're aware of measurable things. I can see you. You can see me. We can talk about words that are objective.

Then, there's also subjective experiences that we have like, I might feel something. I might have an experience even of temperature, for example. I might be cold and you might be warm.

Then, there's the other level that we're trying to use. It's about noticing moods and group atmospheres or inner atmospheres. So the individual instrument: I can work on my own instrument by practicing and noticing which awareness style am I using now. Now I'm noticing something in the objective reality. Now I'm sensing something subjective. Now I'm noticing an atmosphere. That's a practice to notice which level you're aware of. What am I marginalizing and what am I centralizing in a moment?

I think, knowing that as your own instrument, this instrument that you have, your own awareness, is what you use to work with a group. And then notice the signals. Like, there are many things you can do with your awareness by noticing signals on the various levels and then focusing on them.

Max: Let me give you an example.

Alexandra: Oh, okay.

Max: Ellen describes our facilitation approach so well. For example, you ask us a number of questions here. And those questions have content to them. You can look at this nearly like a business meeting, for example, since this is a business school. You ask these questions about content. Then we try to give content answers. But at the same time, there is also a level of excitement that you feel in facial expressions, the amount of movement, the voices that are present. Like, think of a party, there is a mood or feeling of being in a party, you can tell is this a fun party, a boring party, or a good party. How? If you would have to describe it, you cannot describe it. It's subjective.

For example, you are tracking our signals and we are tracking your signals. I saw that both of you seemed less interested in the relationship between government and

population and voters. Maybe I was wrong. But I thought you were more interested in the whole topic of organizational directions.

So we focus on that, because that's where the energy seems to want to flow. Then I'm thinking if this were a business meeting, I would think this is an important part. For example, let's say you guys are a company, then I would think, well, that's interesting. I would think that I am working with a company that gives me good feedback in terms of organizational vision and how to become stronger as a company. Good non-verbal and good verbal feedback. We listen to both but believe that non-verbal feedback tends to be more stable or reliable, more fundamental.

Alexandra: That's interesting, can you say more?

Max: For example, this plays a big role in contract negotiation. We just worked with two groups on a contract where we advised on the basis of non-verbal signals because they're much more reliable for predicting how a negotiation will go than what people actually say.

Alexandra: Without signatures.

Max: Exactly. Signatures are only useful if they are based on non-verbal signals [indicating] that the people actually are fully involved with what they sign. You have to remember, I'm Swiss originally. So, in Switzerland we have learned you can sign any contract because it doesn't really matter because you'll always find a lawyer who'll talk you out of it. [laugher]

But to go back to our example a minute ago, so, I would think well, you're people who are interested in finding your original vision and how to become stronger or more impactful as a group. Maybe that's also true for the two of you personally.

And then, let's say there is a vision that's another vector, which is, let's call it for now "politics," that you're at the moment less interested in. That's not quite true but let's suppose, okay? So, then I would think, okay, to begin with we must go with the positive feedback. We must say how to make the two of you stronger.

Viktor: Yes.

Max: Okay. Then I would think, as a first step, you have to help this company to become stronger, the two of you to become stronger, for example, in the business school: how to further your professional development.

As a second step, further down the road, we have to help you to understand that if you neglect the larger social role that your company plays—each company plays a political role—it will weaken you in the long run. Maybe in terms of professional development, I would be prepared for you to become more explicitly interested in how your professional development helps your country or region as a whole, how you contribute to the collective evolution. I am aware that there are many historical reasons why this is less interesting in the Ukraine for the time being and why it is important to enjoy the freedom to further and develop individual journeys and impact. Does that make sense?

Alexandra: Yes, very much so. Could you just play this game with our prime minister and president also?

Max: Okay, great!

Alexandra: They really need this. They cannot cope with each other at all and that's why Ukraine has its political crisis, actually, right now.

Max: From the outside, if you travel now in Europe, frequently you hear that Ukraine has a political crisis between the president and prime minister that cannot be resolved. Yes? And frequently, you hear that's a problem. And obviously, from one perspective it is very complicated. From another perspective, however, you could argue that this is the best thing that could happen to the Ukraine. Shall I tell you why?

Viktor: Please explain.

Max: Because, look, the Ukraine for a long time had an interesting relationship with Russia. First of all, during the Soviet era some people would say the Ukraine was under Russia, politically under Russia. Economically and intellectually that was not quite true. Economically and in terms of its own role and power the Ukraine has been, in many ways, a strong vector and a leader within her own rights within the Soviet Union.

For example, as you know better than I do, the bulk of the space technology that was used by the Russians for space exploration came from the Ukraine; a lot of the Soviet think-tank was in the Ukraine, a lot of technical development and intellectual development happened in the Ukraine, and there was a lot of agriculture in the Ukraine. And the Ukraine always had the ability to relate to Russia, on the one hand, as a brother and to Europe, on the other hand, as a sister, which made Kyiv a very special place. You know what I mean?

Alexandra: [Nods quietly]

Max: However, politically the Ukraine was under Russia and Soviet style politics, which meant that only one opinion was allowed. I worked in Eastern Europe, Poland and Lithuania, 15-20 years before Perestroika. I worked in Russia before Perestroika, never in the Ukraine [before now], but I remember there was a common experience that you had to be careful you didn't say anything about the governing opinion in the moment, and you had to be careful that you did not agree with anything that might be against the governing opinion a year later. You couldn't even say you liked what was happening now because, in a month the party would change and with it that opinion and then it was on record that you liked it and then you were out. This creates a mindset that you can't have a disagreement or even an outspoken agreement, for the matter.

And now, the Ukrainians are watching two leaders that are in constant disagreement with one another. They can have two opinions and the country is doing fine. It's going great. It's okay to have different opinions. It's beautiful. It's educational. Enjoy! It's wonderful. I really mean it.

Alexandra: Actually, we could have a disagreement. We could criticize American presidents.

Max: Please do, I'll join you.

Alexandra: I don't want [to] now.

Max: Okay.

Alexandra: Maybe, I would want it if I didn't have the freedom to do it.

Ellen: But you can.

Alexandra: Yes, I can.

Ellen: You have the right.

Max: Yes, yes, yes.

Alexandra: Okay, but referring to business structures, if you really help the company and it can appreciate [that and] it can take all the good from this cooperation and help, is it possible for this company to go on with a coaching, using your methods [and] your instruments, but without your help?

Max: Of course, yes.

Alexandra: Oh, it's possible?

Max: Oh, yes, of course.

Alexandra: So, if now just one time for you to come there to show them everything, yes, to teach them to use these methods, then you go, right? And they don't need your help anymore because they can do it themselves?

Max: Well, that's a great question. There is a yes and no answer to it. First, as I mentioned before, nobody needs help. Most companies will start a process of remembering their essence once they are in a crisis. It's as natural as with people.

        But then, let me try to explain in terms of a person. Let's say you would come to one of us and say [that] you would like to be coached. And we would say, "What's your problem?" Then you would say, "Well, I have a career issue. I've been here for several years, I've been working hard, I've been smiling at the right people, I'm wearing the right clothes and everything, but I feel my career isn't progressing. Can you assist?"

        Then you might have a coaching session. In the coaching session, let's say, in one or two sessions, you will get help with dealing with your inner critic, which has been working against you, and you will have a new experience of energy and a new direction. For example, in the above description a person who describes his problems in that way might relate too much to the company structure and culture at the expense of neglecting their own inner creativity and ideas, since they talk about relating in the right way to the outer situation and don't mention relating to their own inner experiences. Some people will now say, "Great! Thank you! Fabulous! I like to be independent. I like to do my own thing and it worked perfectly. Good bye."

        Other people would say, "That's very interesting. Now I want to do this also a little bit here and a little bit here. It's fun to get to know oneself better!" This person will want to know more. They will want to do work together a little longer. Maybe you end up coaching them for a year in other areas and out comes not just the career move within the company but a deepening of their whole leadership style and eldership.

        And then other people would say, "Well, that's actually very interesting, the method that you are using for me to get closer to my potential. I want to learn more about it so I can use it myself on an ongoing basis."

        This makes sense for a person, doesn't it? The same is true for companies.

We have some companies that get very interested. I'm thinking of three companies right away that have picked up our method, studied it, learned over a period of two or three years, and are doing very well with it. One, is a coaching institute, one of the world's largest coaching institutes, which is using and integrating this method now in their own organizational development.

But another group that's using it is a US building company that, over the years, has expanded internationally. They give us credit for their development, their new ideas, and the harnessing of their creativity. They say that it is thanks to our methods that they have expanded their products and services. They're very nice to us, so they act always as if we were really important in their organizational development.

Often we work only one time, and most are pretty happy with what we do and feel they have a solution. Frequently executive teams like to work for a few hours and solve the problems at hand. Then we don't see them for maybe three or four years and then something happens and they ask us again. Too much consulting or coaching can weaken the self-confidence of leadership teams, so these types like to work briefly.

Alexandra: But your paradigm combines so much knowledge, as far as I can see; political science, psychology, physics, business administration, and sociology; which is amazing. How can you manage to find specialists? Probably, the experts should be highly educated people but you have more than twenty offices over the world, right? How do you manage your human resources? Do you teach them by yourselves to be a coach, or where do you get these people?

Max: It's a great question. I'm going to say the first part, maybe you would like to say the second.

Ellen: Okay, yes.

Max: Well, it's interesting because we work on the vector principle too. For example, you've noticed that you asked all the business questions. And you noticed that I answered most of them, because my temperament goes more in the direction of working directly with the whole business.

Ellen, for example, is identified as a coach. She is more interested in the personal, professional, and spiritual development of people than in organizational impact. That's what I love about her. Also, I notice the moment she starts to talk, the atmosphere changes, no? It deepens the feelings and balances the excitement of the action part.

Alexandra: Yes.

Max: I know because she also is my coach. She is. She has a doctorate in transpersonal psychology; and she is able to work with very, very different people; government people, business people, artists; and they find a place where they feel at home, where they feel accepted, and where they feel they can go deeper into all the things that aren't quite working and she works with that. So, she's very good with that. You know what I mean?

Alexandra: Yes.

Max: So, not all of us have to be good everywhere. We complement one another. We have different people that have particular areas in which they start to excel, and that's why we're in the Ukraine. We hope to develop a professional community here from diverse backgrounds and with a wide a diversity of special interests that will join us in our research. For us, it's not only about delivering services to a company, it's a research project too.

Alexandra: So that will be the next steps in Ukraine, I understand.

Max: Yes. We have started a program this year and we're excited about it because we love the Ukraine and Kyiv is amazing and the Ukraine is amazing.

Alexandra: Oh, thank you very much.

The last question, which is interesting to all of our managers: as I've read in one of your articles, you said that companies having a great team and relationship, they cannot be influenced by depreciation, by some crisis, but we can see that a lot of companies, not maybe a lot of companies, but there are companies with great team and great structure but we can see the crisis that we have now and all of them are influenced by it. So, what percent does it help to really be able not to react, to be invulnerable to this?

How many percent can you guarantee that this company really, you can say, will not be influenced by crises: you have relationships so your success is guaranteed? Because a lot of managers, they hesitate because they understand, as you said first of all, they think, "What management? We should think about our finances. No relationships. We don't have time for them."

Max: Depreciation and crisis influence all teams and companies, especially on the consensus reality level where we **measure** reality. Having access to other experiential levels brings new energy and can turn a crisis into a well of rejuvenation.

Look, metaphors obviously have their limitations but they help sometimes, to begin with, to understand the problem. I'll give you a metaphor and then I'd like to give a practical answer. A metaphor would be to say, "Think of a team or company on a river on one of those floats. Some floats are small, they have one person or a small group on them. Some are big and have 90,000, 100,000 people." We're working now with a German group that has 120,000 people. It's a pretty big group, so it's a big float. Some companies are small. They have maybe 5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, a couple of hundred people on the float. Things are going good. The river carries a lot of water, all is well, the people on the floats have plenty of fish, and the emerging market has been good for a couple of years. You don't have to do a lot. Ukraine was a little bit like this.

Viktor: Some months ago.

Max: Yes, some months ago because suddenly people said, "Oh, Ukraine is very nice. Let's put money there."

The water rises, it's going very good. You don't have to work overly hard on the rows, and once you catch fish, everybody's happy. Okay? And then at times, there is a little problem. You might get a little fish here and a little fish there but it is not quite as abundant as before or you see another float is going a little faster than you. Then you develop inner tensions and look for a culprit. You say, "Well, it was your fault. You

didn't row fast enough." But generally, everything is good, and then suddenly, someone hears something. "You hear that?" And the other guy says, "No, there was nothing."

There's something like "woo-woo" in the background. Then it's quiet. Then, "You hear that again?" "No." And then suddenly, "Hey, it's getting a little louder." And then suddenly you realize it's the Niagara Falls coming. You know Niagara Falls? [Everybody nods...] Niagara Falls. Now we're in the middle of the Niagara Falls. What do teams do?

Some teams will say, "It was your fault. I told you so." And they suffer, first of all, from the Niagara Falls. Their float will possibly break apart and the team might sink.

Some teams on some floats will realize this is a very difficult situation but we still have a team that can work this through, and if we can make it through the Niagara Falls we will come out as a team that's stronger, deeper, and more connected than any team that's ever been around. So, this is really an opportunity. It's not necessarily an opportunity we've been looking for or that we appreciate, but we appreciate the process between us during this time. We even risk that a couple of our people will be swept off the float. And if that happens, we're going to be really sad, we're not going to pretend we don't care. Nevertheless, it's an opportunity to come back to, "What motivated us in the first place to float down through the river? Why didn't we just sit back home? Why did we ever want to create a company?" There must have been a vision in the background of more than just making a few dollars. Where is this journey headed, and how good is the float we built? This can be a truly rewarding process.

Going back to this then helps the team to get back. Why did we get on the river? How will that help us now to get through the Niagara Falls? If you have a manager on board that says, "Listen, I can't work on relationships because I'm too busy to keep these two pieces of wood together for the whole float." Then I would say, "Yes, please, do your job. Don't focus on team spirit. We appreciate your work. This brings forth the team spirit." If you have an accountant that says, "Hey, I have to get those financial statements in. I can't [work on relationships]." I would say, "Great! Don't. We appreciate the fact that you get those numbers to us. Thank you for your precision under pressure."

However, if the executive committee, the captain, so to speak, says, "We don't want to work on it. We don't care where the river takes us. And we don't care about who is on the float." Then the company has a serious problem. But the company doesn't have that problem just now. That company had that problem all along. It's just coming out now, under the pressure of the crisis. In the United States we say during the boom, "if the flood rises, all boats swim." Yes? You say that too?

Viktor: Yes.

Max: During the flood, all boats swim. So a lot of companies, during the flood, swim. Not because they have a particularly strong direction that they're going towards. Not because they have a particularly good boat. They only swim because the water rises. Most likely, if the water goes down, that type of boat will stop and crash. Part of me is at peace with this.

Alexandra: Thank you very much. Will somebody ask questions?

Viktor: Maybe you want to add something to this interview. Maybe we did not ask you something very important. Some comments? Maybe not?

Max: I have one. I have to tell you something. This is, in my view, among the most interesting and best prepared interviews I have ever taken part in. I want to give you congratulations. This says a lot about your business school. This says a lot about you and your business school, that you do your homework and that you're coming forward with these very deep and wonderful questions. I think that says a lot about who you are.

Alexandra: Thank you very much.

Max: You will have a great career. Mark my words.

Ellen: I would like to say, too, coming to the end, I feel moved and inspired both by being together here with you and with the group and by... it sounds strange but I feel you have evoked through your questions and through the presence here, things that re-inspire me about our vision and the work that we do and so it's been an enriching experience.

Max: Yes, your interest helps us to appreciate more the whole thing.

Alexandra: We are really inspired after the interview.

Viktor: Unfortunately, we should leave you because... it was wonderful conversation really.

Max: Thank you for having us.

Alexandra: Thank you, it was a pleasure and the insights... this interesting and deep conversation.

Max: If we can support you, the two of you, in any way in your work, please let us know.

Alexandra: You've already done it.

Max: But if you can think of anything practical, we'd love to do it.

The Deep Democracy Institute provides worldwide diverse and multidimensional Leadership Training Programs. They are designed to teach skills and attitudes to unfold the potentials of organizations, teams and communities. We teach leadership models that include expertise in facilitation, organizational and personal development, coaching, and self-management using an awareness based approach. This allows us to develop these programs in collaboration with participants based on their cultural beliefs, organizational direction and personal style.

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