COWORKING:

Eyeopeners, conditions
and a Quick Scan
for working together effectively

Ton Voogt

Parthenon Publishing House
The Netherlands
www.uitgeverijparthenon.nl

Introduction

3.9. Cooperation skills

Are the goals clear? – Assessment of others – Assessment of yourself – Self-orientation – Tactics – Specific cooperation skills

4. Quick Scan in Cooperation Readiness

Interpreting the scores – Cooperation readiness profiles – Nine conditions for cooperation – General Action Diagram

5. Working with the nine conditions

5.1. Toolbox

The longer questionnaire – Cooperation readiness within groups – Cooperation readiness between groups – The nine conditions and the seven S's – Team effectiveness model

5.2. Deployment

From initiative to realization – Project leader's checklist – Leadership development – Protect altruism and cooperate – Chance

6. The management agenda

Volunteers – Levels of control

7. Establishing cooperation. Organizational examples

Working together: A story from the chain – Cooperation on the assembly line – Cooperation in a management team – The Jamewish case – Theories about cooperation

8. Cooperation in the future

Literature

1. Cooperation seen from every angle

Abe

The oversize steering wheel jerks from side to side. Abe Silverstein holds on to it firmly, letting his arms sense the unexpected deviations, then forcefully pointing the wheels back in the direction that he wants. The Land Rover hammers over a rocky road just outside the fence of the launch area. Alex, a member of the public relations staff, has told him about an interesting man who is staying in a camper on a hill just outside the launch site, who wants to remain there for a month to write a book.

Abe drives past the building where he came on his first days of work here to talk with the test pilots who were to be seated on top of rockets and shot far up above the earth. He parks at the foot of a broad, low hill. Stepping out, he climbs up toward the camper, seeing it better with every step. He hears his shoes crunching on the gravel. A light breeze rustles through the dry bushes. Abe looks around, sees no one. Walking up to the camper, he calls out and knocks on the door. No answer.

Abe, forty-five, is an engineer, the leader of the Apollo project that has the goal of bringing a person to the moon. He takes a few steps back and looks around. His gaze fixes on the launch towers, now just small stripes in an empty landscape. Years ago, he was the one who chose this area. Empty, flat, no one anywhere nearby. Good connections with highways and waterways, stable and consistent weather. There was a runway with two barracks. He was flown out here immediately after his second conversation with John F. Kennedy. In his mind's eye, he sees himself back in Kennedy's office, the president standing in front of him. "Abe, it will be your job to lead the project to put the first person on the moon. That person will be an American." Once again,

he feels the strength with which he agreed. The year was 1961. Even as a child, he had learned to say "yes" to undertakings that he did not yet have any idea how to carry out. He also says "no" often enough – a matter of intuition. This idea is within reach; that one is a fantasy. The challenge that Kennedy offered felt like it was within reach.

It was an ambitious objective. The technology applied in building rockets had been conceptualized but was at that time practically untested, and they were not yet being fired accurately over great distances. All the other technology would also still have to be developed. He has deep confidence in the developmental abilities of scientists and technologists, as well as confidence in the technical expertise of all the people who would become involved in the project in one way or another. His confidence was justified, considering how successful the efforts had been in recent years to deploy armies on two fronts, in Europe and in Asia, who had defeated their widely dispersed opponents. There was the technological development of the atomic bomb, thus confidence also in the possibility to bring together successfully a complex cooperative effort involving many different people, styles, disciplines, and organizations.

Crunching sounds, red hair, and a face with the tune "We Shall Overcome" passing from its lips. The man holds out his arm in a gesture of greeting; they shake hands. "Abe." "Michael."

In the camper, they look at photos: Abe, Kennedy, astronauts, members of congress. Books about leadership, about cooperation, about organizations. Piles of notes, handwritten and typed. A small portable typewriter on the table, surrounded by four coffee cups, one of them half full of cold coffee.

"I study what makes organizations effective," says Michael. "A lot of things: money, resources, systems, the support of clients and customers, but I focus on the internal cooperation. With Apollo, you had a good start. You have a clear goal, and everyone also wants to get there. Every American wants "one of us" to be the first one on the moon."

"It is also a very fragile ambition," says Abe, remembering the hesitation that many people felt when several astronauts died in a training accident. People's lives are in danger. He also still feels the pain of witnessing the assassination of John F. Kennedy. His dream and his unifying force were suddenly gone. Abe worried that there would be even more losses. Fortunately, many people had embraced the dream, and there was no lasting damage. "This important condition for cooperation is still satisfied," says Michael. "As long as every American sees an advantage in being part of this dream, he or she will also contribute to it."

People make mistakes
What can cause the most damage to this united effort?

"Only people make mistakes," says Michael. "Machines don't."

"Right," says Abe. "I build in quality checks, and then we double-check. The motivation to be one of our suppliers and to meet the deadline is so great that I constantly have to carry out quality checks. How can I get them to inspect everything to the max themselves, in spite of the pressure they are feeling? Of course I have faith in their good will. It is not a matter of motivation. We are constantly pushing out the boundaries of our capabilities. We have to innovate, and so in the beginning we are working with large uncertainties. Nothing can be done entirely right the first time we try it, but we learn from our mistakes. And that is only possible when we talk things over. In the final tests, human lives are at stake, and we can't make mistakes then."

Michael pours out two cups of coffee and sets three doughnuts down on the table. "Yes, of course you do everything you can think of. How do you actually get everyone to constantly have his eye on the safe final outcome?"

"Exactly," says Abe. "The official goal of the project is a man on the moon, but I myself am counting on getting everyone back safely to the earth." He recalls a rule that he picked up during his military

9

training: Bring everyone back alive. Work everything out to maximize the chances of bringing as many men as possible back home in one piece. "I've already lost one crew. On the ground during a test, it's true, but I don't want that to happen again. I can't let that happen again. What more can I do; what can I do differently?"

"Make safety the goal of everything that you do," says Michael.

"OK," says Abe, "go on." He can feel that Michael has ideas to share, and he listens attentively.

Dissenting voices

"Build more room for dissent into the whole organization, into every project," says Michael. "Let people question the reasons behind an idea. Let them question every statement, every claim, every so-called fact: 'Is that really correct? That's what you're saying, but is it right?' Then people have to hold their own assessments, and those of others, up to the light. Immediately sanction all actions that are aimed at gaining an advantage at the expense of others. Reward every action that benefits the total end result: asking questions, making comments, reporting mistakes, expressing uncertainties." Michael pauses for a moment, then adds, "That will not be easy."

Abe agrees. "Yes, the organization is in fact full of ambitious and highly competitive people, and that's what I'm after too – a fierce urge to score. Maybe I'm putting too much emphasis on individual performance; maybe I should aim more for group performance," says Abe, thinking out loud. "Of course everyone wants to show his best side, and there is a lot of competition too. It mobilizes personal energy. Contributing to this project brings the best in everyone to the surface – the desire to take part in something big and to be better off because of it. With internal checks and verifications we see to it that selfish acts don't detract from the total outcome."

Simple?

"How simple is your organization?" asks Michael. "How many layers of management? Can people easily get in touch with each other, and are they open to connections beyond their immediate group?"

"Hmmm ...," says Abe. "After a capsule caught fire with three astronauts in it, we found out that a man who had detected a problem during an inspection didn't dare to say anything. He was afraid to be seen as negative, distracting, or pedantic. He didn't expect his immediate bosses to listen to him. Anyone higher up was too far away, and he thought 'They won't listen either.' "

Abe realizes that he has solid answers at the ready when someone asks these kinds of questions. Sometimes that is appropriate, but now he is ready to listen. In his mind he scans the diagrams of management structure, and he considers the rules for communication. Are there too many layers? Is too much of the communication strictly formal? A project like this can only succeed when all the available knowledge is mobilized. In a cooperative undertaking as complex as this, only language that is straightforward and mutually intelligible will lead to good communication among all the participants.

Is there too little direct contact? Are too few challenging questions being asked? Abe built a completely new organization, working with a budget that had everyone thinking "That's not going to be enough." A planning center. Test facilities. The factories and special departments that design and build components can only do good work when those in charge reconcile all the differences in cultural background, age, scholarly discipline, and distance among the persons involved.

His eyes focus on Michael's. A straightforward guy. If only more people in my organization behaved like this. He takes a bite of the doughnut, a sip of coffee. "Thanks, and good luck with your book." A firm handshake. Abe drives away, and the camper disappears behind him in a cloud of dust.

11

After Armstrong and his men are back safely on the ground, Abe phones Michael.

"Now I'm satisfied – mission accomplished. Keeping everyone in my organization alert and focused on a safe outcome was a bigger fight than I expected. The goals are good, the rules are good, the individuals are good too, but it actually cannot be taken for granted that people will cooperate well. It's not that they don't want to, but cooperation will always be subject to a tension between getting what I want for myself and maintaining my relationships with other."

"Congratulations," says Michael. "Do you want to tell me about what you did?"

"Sure, it's nice that you want to listen to me," says Abe.

They make an appointment and hang up. Abe takes a bite out of his doughnut, and in his mind's eye he is back sitting in the camper again. Soon we'll sit down at a table at his home.

The quest

This book is full of answers to questions that I have asked myself. It begins with questions that I have asked all my life: How can I reach my goals when I need other people in order to do so? Others are not automatically inclined to help. How can I win them over? What do I have to do; what do I have to avoid doing? I read a lot, I look at what I myself do; I look at what others do and at the consequences of what I do. I get feedback. I coach others about building cooperative relationships in their private lives and in business. Cooperation gives us many advantages.

The fact that there are many laws that forbid various forms of cooperation can be seen as an indication that working together offers more advantages than working alone. Criminal forbids criminal organizations and conspiracies against others. Governments often forbid movements, associations, and some kinds of gatherings and meetings. Some governments forbid internet platforms that enable people to take concerted action with little lead time. Even subtle forms of cooperation like Facebook and YouTube can have a very strong effect.

Price-fixing agreements among competitors are not allowed. Open competition for the favor of the customer is a characteristic of the free economy. In contract tendering, carryback to the losers is not allowed. A nation may not favor its own business community too much.

Customers too can cooperate in the economic arena. That is not forbidden, and the consequences can be considerable. A call to boycott a company's products often changes management's attitude. On a US television news program in 1987, I watched two senators wield axes to demolish Japanese TV sets. "Buy only domestic products," was the message. In 1933 the Dutch government sponsored an ad campaign with the slogan "Buy Dutch and help each other." In 2012, Starbucks paid a large sum in back taxes in the UK after having used clever book-keeping tricks for years to keep their tax payments very low. In the end, the people of the country where they were doing business refused to go along with this trickery. In the 1990s there was an appeal to boycott Shell gasoline that gained broad support. The aim was to force Shell to find a more environmentally responsible way to dispose of an old offshore oil production platform. The boycott was very successful, and Shell changed its position permanently.

Looking into the concept of cooperation
So, can one actually make a study of cooperation and write a book about the quest for knowledge about it and experiences with it? A first round of Google searches turns up huge numbers of hits. A search on "human cooperation" gets 239,000,000 hits. For "organization coopera-tion," 24,200,000. For "cooperation skills," 97,300,000. The Wikipedia ar-ticle on "Cooperation" fills two A4 sheets of paper, with nine references and three links. I narrow my scope and work out those things that fall within the area of my basic assumptions, without concerning myself with all the other things that I might be able to find.

13

Do we restrict cooperation to our own group?

I grew up in a small village in the early 1950s. The village was divided into two religious groups, and my parents belong to one of them. We were not allowed to play with children from the other group, nor did we ever patronize their shops.

Excluding people from working together and living together is a very old and frequently applied means of sanctioning unwanted behavior. Just the threat of punishment is a means of correcting behavior; actual punishment is a tangible reminder of who is the boss. In the workplace, laying off and harassing employees are ways of sanctioning unwanted cooperative behavior.

An organization loses its flexibility when the power to set and enforce rules is monopolized by a small group. In companies, that group consists of the owners and managers. There are in fact some limitations imposed by laws and regulations, but when applied skillfully, these merely provide a pretty shell wrapped around the usual injustices. The power to set and enforce rules is sometimes well monitored and legitimized, as in a constitutional state.

Encouraging cooperation

Governments can also encourage cooperation. There are subsidies for associations, and a group of parents who want their own school can have some of the financing provided. A government may set up foundations to support specific causes and bring relevant parties together. Governments make mutual agreements about free trade and cooperation, and set up regulations that restrict that cooperation, all with their own interests clearly in mind. They cooperate only when it serves their own interests.

With other glasses, the world looks different

In the field of study that tries to understand organizations, two basic models are commonly used:

SYSTEM MODEL

PARTY MODEL

15
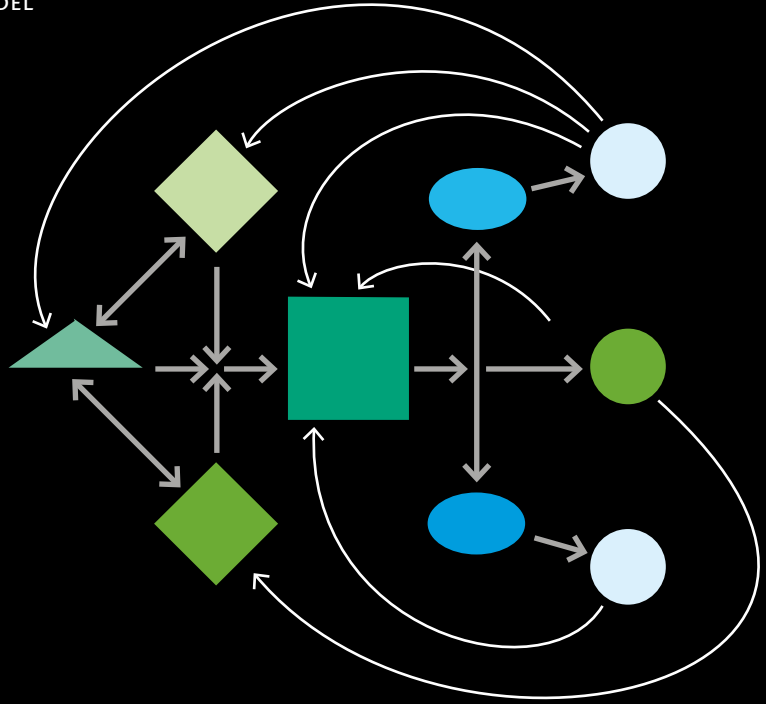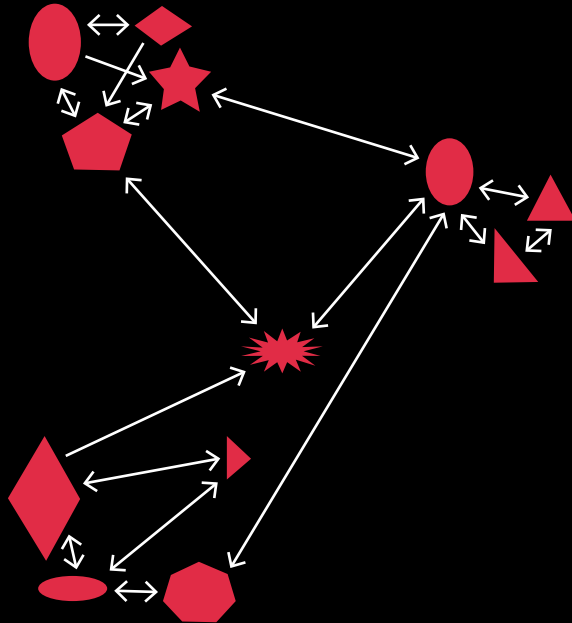
The system model – the organization as a whole is made up of parts that fit together.

The party model – the organization is a conglomeration of parties who pursue their own individual goals and interests and enter into arrangements with others in order to achieve them.

The system model
When someone wears the "system" glasses and looks at an organization, the focus will be on whether the parts fit well into the whole – whether they do or do not contribute to maintaining the whole. A system is efficient when all its parts fit together in just the right way. Efficiency will be high when there are few disturbances caused by parts that do not work together well. If conflicts arise between the entire system and its parts, then the survival of the whole weighs more heavily than the interests of any of its parts. A company that has many activities that differ in their profitability and too little money to keep everything going will often cut back to its core activities in order to allow the company to survive.

The party model
When we put on the "party model" glasses, then we see that people and groups of people stand out who express their own interests and establish relationships with others in order to work toward them. A new shared goal comes into being that contributes to accomplishing the separate goals.

Various questions arise when we wear these glasses. Can a common goal be found toward which everyone can work with satisfaction? How many differences of opinion and viewpoint can be accommodated in the cooperative effort? How stable are the agreements? What will happen if there are adverse moments?

Both pairs of glasses together?

Every situation can be examined through the glasses of either model, and each one gives a different view of things. Both models consider the whole as well as its parts, but each looks at things from a different point of view. The tension between the self-interest of each part and the interest of the cooperative effort as a whole has a different emphasis in each of the models. In everyday work activities the separate entities are directly tangible, just as trees can be touched even though a forest cannot. Individual notes can sound pleasant on their own, and a pattern of notes becomes music.

What things motivate people?

The first question was whether "working toward one's own goals" and "cooperation" are mutually exclusive. Is doing something for yourself less valuable than accomplishing something through cooperation, or is it actually worth more? The observation that a person is driven by two basic motivations – the motivation to develop one's talents and work toward one's dreams and goals, and the motivation to join forces with others – helped me to break out of the "one or the other" way of thinking. We can acknowledge both motives at the same time. I recognize the tension between these two motives in every choice and in all contacts. Dissent and conflicts I experience as normal, as part of our existence. The two models lie on the same line. The two basic motivations of human beings underlie the two models that people use to organize their lives and activities.

Is a self-oriented attitude important?

Colman has ascertained that the behavior of participants in social-psychological experiments is much more directed toward cooperation, and because of this they achieve much better results than had been expected on the basis of thinking and calculation. The experimenters considered serving one's own interests to be a shortsighted activity that would not lead to success in the longer term. People find other

17

solutions that are better for others as well as for themselves. A person may sometimes systematically and automatically subordinate his own interests to those of others and be satisfied with this; someone else may not consider this to be satisfactory.

Getting to cooperation from "achieving one's own goals" as point of departure
I choose to start out from the position of my own talents, my own strengths, my own goals, and my own dreams and then to see how it is possible to join with others in building an organization that will also allow them to achieve their own ideals, goals, and dreams, without giving up my own dreams.

Conditions for cooperation
My central question is: What conditions influence me to choose cooperation, and when do I choose instead a self-oriented or competitive strategy? I have found nine conditions, and with many examples I have investigated what kinds of choices people make in order to avoid the tensions between the two motivations, to relieve them, or to accept them as a fact of life. Bella van den Berg upholds the idea that teamwork and self-interest are at odds with each other. She claims that having clear self-interests are more likely to form an impediment to teamwork that to promote cooperation. One motivation can become too dominant, and then it will be detrimental to cooperation.

18

More questions
Which conditions contribute the most to entering into a cooperative effort? Is it actually possible to influence peoples' attitudes? Aren't there very deep innate preferences that make cooperation possible for one person but that limit it for someone else? How is it possible that in a printing company that is slated to be closed down and where the workers have shut out the management, the work goes on flawlessly, the orders are processed splendidly, and at the same time negotiations are underway for an even better individual buyout? During this time

no one goes out to look for a secure job elsewhere. How can a group of hundreds of prisoners spend months planning a breakout without any indication of their plans leaking out? The breakout remains a secret even though all prisoners involved in it know that in the most favorable case a single prisoner will manage to escape and the rest will perish.

Everywhere? Especially in soccer

In 2008 a sports commentator analyzed Barcelona's loss and Real Madrid's victory as follows: "The best individualists play for Barcelona. The best team is Madrid. Barcelona's trainer, Rijkaard, was not able to take the strong egos and turn them into a team. Madrid's trainer, Schuster, did manage to do so. Six years later it is the other way around: Barcelona plays more as a team, while Madrid does not hang together.

Self-evident?

Cooperation is not always obviously the best choice. At this moment, cooperation may well be the worst way to go. It may be more advantageous to choose to compete, or to work only toward one's own interests, or to altruistically serve only the interests of the other party. On what basis can I decide that cooperation is the best choice? What conditions influence the choice – *my* choice – to cooperate?

What are your preferences?

Is the choice to cooperate in fact possible for everyone? Are some people not preprogrammed toward a different choice – for example, self-orientation? Is trying to influence others a hopeless task?

19

In the course of our activities, we all have the task of discovering what our talents, preferences, possibilities, and limitations are. Each of us evaluates these things differently. There are two extremes: one is "My genetic makeup determines my possibilities, which I will discover in the course of my work"; the other is "Whatever my talents and limitations may be, I do what I want to do and develop myself; I work toward my goals, I dream, and I see how far I am able to come. Even then I may push back my boundaries."

Personal preferences

Personal characteristics play a role. Take for example someone who is very strong in assimilation, in picking up and following external conceptions and observations, becoming absorbed in the outside world. In extreme situations, total assimilation can lead to the loss of one's own identity. Another person who is strong in accommodation, in ordering external concepts and the outside world according to his own insights, can lose out to a world that does not allow itself to be influenced.

Assimilation and accommodation are two basic processes in my contact and interaction with the world around me. Everyone ordinarily alternates between these two activities, sometimes engaging more in one than in the other. Strong preferences that are no longer subject to influences from outside lead to inflexible reactions to new demands made by one's surroundings.

How is cooperation anchored in every person?

In the history of humanity, it turns out that empathy and altruism have formed the foundation for developing stable organizations. Individuals and groups that have these behaviors have a greater chance of surviving. These are innate possibilities, so that most people experience them as commonplace.

In recent years there has been much research done on the activity in the brain when one "gives something without getting anything in return." When that part of the brain is activated, it also sends out stimuli that cause a pleasant feeling. In that place in the brain, called the "reward center," the order is given to produce a substance that makes feelings of "solidarity" and "love" possible. Another part of the brain is active when a decision must be made between conflicting interests.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in the place of another person and in doing so to answer the question "What would he or she be wanting now; what would he or she be thinking and feeling about something

that I am doing now?" It is a skill that is important in establishing and maintaining cooperation.

Is altruism fundamental?

Altruism is a necessity in animal species in which the young have no chance of surviving without protection. Individual animals will completely set aside their own immediate self-interest. Human beings can do this as well. When a Turkish airliner crashed just outside the Amsterdam airport in March 2009, various people took the initiative to rescue others, disregarding the dangers that were threatening them. During the 9/11 disaster in New York, many people rescued others without regard for the dangers that they were facing. But sometimes this behavior is lacking, as can be seen from reports in the newspapers. No one jumped into the water to save a man who fell in right in front of them; he drowned while dozens of people watched and did nothing to help. It is not so deeply ingrained in us that everyone does it automatically.

It is also not necessary for the survival of a group or a species. It turns out that when even a small minority behaves altruistically, that behavior persists and is not displaced by other behaviors such as self-oriented actions and competition. Altruistic behavior forges strong bonds, and the people who are bound by it will find each other and support each other. Even when ninety percent of the individuals think and behave otherwise, altruistic behavior does not disappear from a society.

Intrinsically altruistic?

Much research has come to the conclusion that the inclination that people have toward altruism and fairness has an inborn basis. Empathy and helping each other has a history that reaches back much further that the history of humanity. Very many examples of such behavior are known among animals. When an elephant is hit by a bullet or by an anesthetic dart, other members of the herd will trumpet loudly and will try to help the victim to stand up again by pulling it with their trunks or pushing against it, sometimes persisting for hours. Other members

21

of the species also offer to help when an elephant is wounded by an accident, and this is not restricted to help from within the animal's own herd.

Animals also help people. In 1996, female gorilla Binti Jua rescued a three-year-old boy who had fallen from a height of six meters into the primate enclosure in a Chicago zoo, as described by Dutch neurobiologist and brain researcher Dick Swaab. Even children younger than a year and a half help each other to achieve their goals, just as other young animals do.

In exceptional situations, this can become very obvious. E. Galea, a well-known investigator of airplane crashes, comments that "in most investigations, it turns out that people help each other, even when it is a matter of life and death. There are people who are prepared to help others; sometimes people are amazed by what they are able to do."

Self-orientation and competition also important for cooperation
Self-orientation is a very healthy behavior, the first behavior that a human shows. It is a behavior that can always be a point of departure and a fallback option. Another important behavior is competition, the struggle to be better or the best, often carried out in order to attain rewards or to avoid punishment. And the fourth behavior is cooperation, behavior in which people share the profit. Sometimes they may take less in the short term than they would if they were only thinking of themselves, because they see an advantage in the longer term.

Which behavior is necessary in society?
Altruism is so important that it makes a decisive contribution to the origins of stable organizations, families, and societies. But if there were no self-oriented behavior, there would be no breakthroughs in society. Without competition, everyone would remain at the same level. Without cooperation, there would be no stable exchange and trade.

In every person, the possibilities for all four of these behaviors are present to a greater or lesser degree. Sometimes there is remarkably

little of one behavior or a dominant preference for another, but there is enough that we can assume that in human groups all four behaviors are also present in individuals.

There are plenty of examples. With total confidence people will enter into relationships with people who are total strangers with whom they have no family ties. In times of crisis, we can recognize two reflexes: withdrawing oneself out of self-interest and isolating oneself from others, or searching with others for solutions that offer multiple advantages at the same time.

But choosing cooperation also means recognizing when cooperation is actually not a good solution. It turns out that even chimpanzees are able to distinguish between "now we do" and "now we don't" situations for cooperation. And cooperation with whom? Chimpanzees too make a distinction between someone who is a good partner for cooperation and someone who is not, drawing on their memories of past experiences.

Human nature?
Assumptions about human nature in classical economics turn out to be in error.

> *People act rationally.* A person often acts irrationally. Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a decision is usually not the only basis for a decision. Anxiety about losing can exert a great influence.
> *People are always out to serve their own interests.* A person can also choose to be of service to others.
> *People calculate the benefit to them in money and utility.* Even in survival situations, it often is the case that a warm relationship and personal development are more important motives.

23

Much research has shown that altruistic behavior and the power to empathize are genetically and neurologically anchored. Without empathy, without realizing what someone else might be thinking and feeling at any given moment, there can be no harmony among people.

Can cooperation be learned?

By rewarding desirable behavior and punishing undesirable behavior, we teach others and ourselves habits. Giving attention is an example of this. If I want to "freeze someone out," then ignoring him is the best way to go, and no one is likely to notice. But the person in question will no longer be able to function and will fade out of his own accord, or will become recalcitrant, which will only hurt himself. Punishment can also be helpful; together with rewards, it is part of the learning process for different behavior.

Punishment?

Does punishment help to promote cooperation? It is possible to punish a person who now chooses not to cooperate, even though you yourself chose to cooperate earlier, by withholding cooperation in the future, but the person meting out the punishment will pay a price, either by losing real money or by experiencing a cooling off in a friendship. When there is no future for either partner, these sanctions will not lead to a greater readiness to cooperate. No, there has to be an outlook toward a boundless future, and also a common interest. Only then can punishment have a reinforcing effect on the cooperative effort. The costs of punishment are high at first, but once patterns of cooperation are well underway, punishment is hardly needed any more, and thus the costs of punishment decline because the mutual advantage increases.

Working with this book

First we will dive into the prehistoric past of people and organisms with a question that has long intrigued us: How did cooperation come about in the history of living organisms? "Taking care of yourself" is older; it is the first behavior of all organisms. Competition too is rather obvious; there is always something that is scarce, and then everyone will want to fight with others to get their share. But how then do cooperation and altruism come about? How did we get from "taking" to "giving"? These insights will be useful when we think over behavior that is necessary in order to arrive at an enduring and profitable cooperative effort.

Nine conditions for cooperation

My investigations have led to nine conditions that influence the choice to cooperate. They can be formulated as questions that someone might ask when he is confronted with the choice to cooperate or not to do so:

- What does it get me? Payback (chapter 3, part 1).
- What assessments do I make about others? Ideas about others (chapter 3, part 2).
- What opinions and experiences do I bring in? Self-image (chapter 3, part 3).
- Must I also be capable of being self-oriented, competitive, and altruistic in order to cooperate well? Behavioral repertoire (chapter 3, part 4).
- How great is my distance from those with whom I want to cooperate? Distance (chapter 3, part 5).
- How well can I comprehend the scheme of things? Simplicity (chapter 3, part 6).
- Does it matter how I create and maintain contact? Communication structure (chapter 3, part 7).
- How do I build up enduring cooperation in which I serve my own interest? Tactics (chapter 3, part 8).
- Which skills must I master in order to establish and maintain cooperation? Cooperation skills (chapter 3, part 9).

Quick Scan for Cooperation Readiness

An instrument has been developed to measure these nine conditions. After answering eighteen questions, you will have a preliminary indication of the readiness for cooperation in the organization that you are looking at (chapter 4).

The Quick Scan is the first step toward conversations with those who are involved about their readiness to cooperate (chapter 5).

The management agenda

How can we create these conditions so that others will choose to cooperate? You are invited to imagine that you are in the position of

25

a manager. Connected with this position are specific expectations and specific responsibilities (chapter 6).

Management literature is a reflection of management practice, and both are subject to constant change. Performing effectively as a leader now is very different from what brought about success twenty years ago. In 2011 the HR managers of the top 500 companies were generally in agreement that cooperation in an organization is becoming the most important success factor. Their report states:

On Collaboration.

Companies are not good at: enabling global teams to work more effectively, spreading innovation throughout the organisation effectively, preserving critical knowledge, identifying individuals with relevant knowledge and skills (fifty-five percent are not good at this, nineteen percent only somewhat).

What to do:
- encourage formation and use of cross-organisational communities around strategic business topics;
- build collaborative capabilities directly into business processes and project management activities;
- sponsor online collaborative events to source and refine ideas, and put funding and focus behind the best ideas prioritised by event participants;
- solicit and recognise fresh insights and new thinking from internal and external sources;
- use network visualisation techniques to highlight connections between individuals/work teams;
- create value through the systematic capture and reuse of individual
- work outcomes.

The task of a manager now lies ahead. How does he get to more effective and more efficient cooperation? How does he stimulate spontaneous

cooperation? In any case, it means that systematic and constant attention will be needed. A one-off "boost" is a way to begin, and thereafter cooperation will have to be brought regularly under the spotlight. Progress must be measured, and maintenance will be needed. A sample program can be helpful in developing one's own plan, beginning with awareness by all parties involved, followed by a program of improvements, and finally regular maintenance. Management provides goal setting, monitoring, support, and evaluation.

Experiences in building up cooperation
There is no set blueprint for establishing cooperation. Everyone will have to find his or her own way. There are examples of situations that did not work out all that well, and other examples of where the outcome was an improvement. It is to be expected that there will be problems along the way; we can learn from these, sometimes even with a measure of enjoyment. To this end, various examples and analyses have been collected, each with some connection with one of the nine conditions. There are also several designs for cooperation projects (chapter 7).

With that, I conclude my quest for a better understanding of cooperation; the results of that quest I now hand over to you, the reader. It has taken a lot of work to turn insights into practicable methods that can be applied by those who have not been able to set out on this quest themselves.

27

And finally, "Cooperation in the future" (chapter 8).

3. The nine conditions for cooperation

3.1. Payback

What does cooperation provide me? What does it provide the other party?
The proposed payback for entering into a cooperative relationship
determines whether the arrangement will be accepted. The actual
payback determines whether the cooperative arrangement will be
continued. What kinds of payback structures foster a choice to cooperate?

When contact with you provides me with something, the
chance will be greater that there will be more contact in the future.
I will seek you out again. When the other party has enjoyed a comparable
outcome, he or she will also seek me out. This effect keeps on working
into the future. If I want to increase the chances that I will have control
over my future, then I will engage in contacts that provide me something.

Which results will be sufficient for me to engage in a renewed
contact? Which goals do I want to realize in the short term, and which
in the longer term?

The other party must also get enough out of the arrangement;
otherwise, he or she will not go on with it. How can I contribute to his
success as well as my own, so that his success also contributes to my
success?

When each of us acknowledges the results that the other party
is striving for and we make agreements that ensure that the results
benefit me and the other party equally, then the chance will be greater
that we will continue to do business. The greater the prospect of a
result that is favorable for both parties, the more enduring the contact
will be.

This description may sound sober and calculating, and that is exactly
the intention. As much as one may talk and think in terms of flowery
and inspiring words that are intended to pave the way to a harmonious

your choice

I keep it all   we share

I keep it all

my choice

we share

payback

POSSIBLE CHOICES

your choice

I keep it all   we share

I keep it all

my choice

we share

	I keep it all	we share
I keep it all	🔴 4 / 🔵 10	🔴 4 / 🔵 8
we share	🔴 8 / 🔵 5	🔴 4 / 🔵 4

payback

29
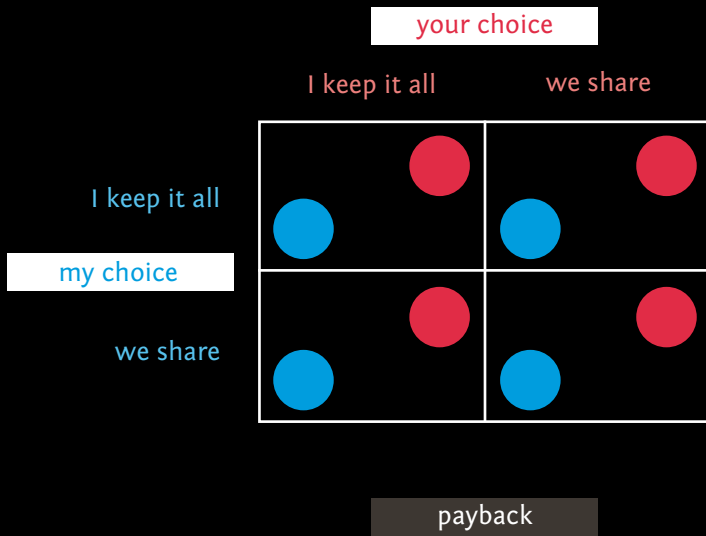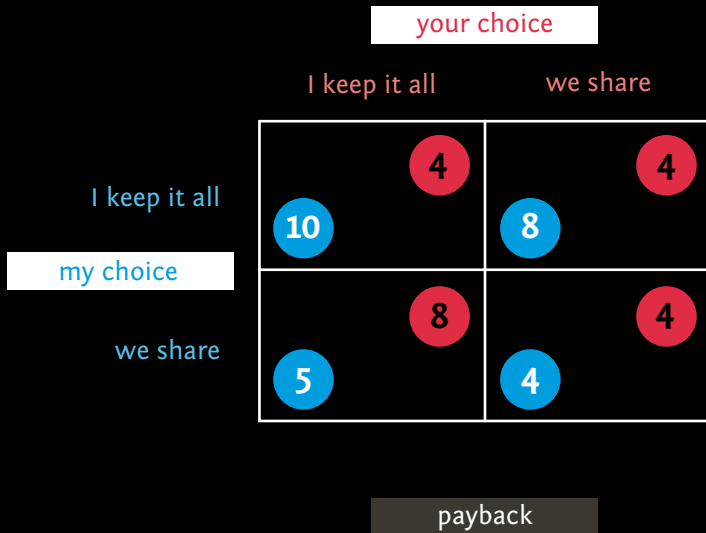
payback scheme. Paybacks can take many different forms. In business, it is easy to think in terms of money and numbers. When other motives are involved – friendship, love, challenges, development of one's talents, dreams that seek to be realized – you are constantly weighing the pros and cons. Am I going to get what I want from this relationship? Is the other party going to get enough of what they want? How much is "enough" can vary, depending on the person involved and the moment in time. Someone who is working for an idealistic cause and thinks "what I need doesn't really matter" can keep going for a very long time with only giving and not getting anything in return. At some other time and in another relationship, the same person may want "cash on the barrelhead."

An experimental model

In order to do experimental scientific research, one needs models that convert a complex reality into a schematic, quantitative, manageable, and distorted reflection of that reality. For our purposes here, a model must incorporate the tension that arises between "am I realizing my own goals to a sufficient extent?" and "am I able to do that together with the other party?". In order to realize my own goals, I need the other person. He or she also needs me. So how does the other person pursue his own goals in a way that he or she is willing to also consider my goals?

The payback matrix on the opposite page is frequently used for making choices.

The experimental procedure is as follows. A person has the choice of two options, "all for me" or "we share." In each round, each party must make a choice, with the two people making their choice simultaneously and without discussion. Neither person knows what the other person has chosen, but each is informed what his or her own payback is.

Each combination of choices has a particular payback amount assigned to it. We are looking for a structure of payback amounts that

your choice

I keep it all   we share

I keep it all

my choice

we share

	I keep it all	we share
I keep it all	1 / 1	10 / 0
we share	0 / 10	2 / 2

payback

POSSIBLE CHOICES

your choice

I keep it all   we share

I keep it all

my choice

we share

	I keep it all	we share
I keep it all	1 / 1	5 / 0
we share	0 / 5	3 / 3

31

payback

encourages cooperation and at the same time retains the possibility of an "all for me" choice, thus doing justice to the two basic motives.

First, we will try a few experiments. Imagine that the payback for each combination of choices is as follows:

Does this payback structure promote a choice of cooperation on the part of both persons? No, for me it is very attractive to choose to benefit only myself every time; that pays the best. The other person will either not begin with a cooperative choice or will quickly give it up. However, maybe you can think of situations in which this payback scheme would be acceptable.

Now imagine that the payback structure is like this:

In this payback structure, the advantage of "we share" is very small compared with the advantage of choosing "all for me." This payback scheme favors an "all for me" choice more than a "we share" choice.

Which paybacks in the matrix give the best expression to the tension between the two basic motives? Which payback structure promotes the best cooperation?

A payback matrix that is often used and that expresses the tension between the two basic motives and also promotes cooperation turns out to be:

> A question for you:
> *Which payback matrix corresponds the best with the actual relationship between you and another person?*
> That presents you with an interesting puzzle, and it is also one that you can present later to others with whom you work.

In real life, we are going to encounter each other more than a single time. Imagine that we encounter each other frequently and that we also wish to do so because of the advantages that we see in cooperating. We do not know ahead of time how often these encounters will take place. Thus one choice may be followed by many others.

The question is whether this payback is interesting enough for me that I will continue to cooperate with the other person. Maybe this will only be the case when the payback is different. When we accept this model as a schematic representation of our reality, then research into our behavior can be carried out.

Experimental evidence

With this model in hand, I have been put to work in companies that want to strengthen their internal cooperation. Part of the process of change consists of a training program that includes an experiment involving several groups of employees. Each group consists of two teams that compete with each other. The payback structure is set up according to the scheme that best encourages cooperation. With each encounter, each team discusses what its choice will be, and the groups announce their choices simultaneously. Everyone is able to see what each team has chosen and what paybacks have resulted from the combination of their choices as teams. This continues for ten rounds, and then a final score is drawn up.

The two teams in the first group are given the assignment to "earn more points than the other team." That is their payback goal. What happens then? With this "payback assignment," the first team that chooses "all for me" takes the lead and the other team is never able to catch up. The winning team is ecstatic. The losing team is surprised: "Surely cooperation is the best strategy?" It actually depends on the goal that has been set. The director of the company suddenly has a problem: the clever young woman who understood how she could best accomplish this goal by choosing "all for me" earns his disfavor because by doing so she puts her own goals in the first place.

33

The two teams in the other group are given a different assignment: each group is to collect as many points as possible in ten rounds. This assignment encourages a choice to cooperate right from the start. An assignment to achieve the maximum combined result in ten rounds has the same outcome.

The director and the employees asked themselves which assignments they are given in their daily work and what their payoff structure is.

Changing needs and changing goals lead to changes in cooperation
When can we say that there has been a "successful outcome"?

Let us not pretend that this is a simple question. A management library is full of books, and all those books are full of organizational mistakes and company successes. Pick up a book published in 1998 and there is a considerable chance that a company that was successful then no longer exists today. That does not mean that there are no good ideas to be found by combing the literature. There undoubtedly are, and something that you had not yet thought of, or something that you were not even looking for, may catch your eye.

That path leads to new solutions and innovations that are applicable to your own situation.

There is a Chinese story that charmingly expresses how something can be evaluated in entirely different ways when situations change:

> One morning, a farmer and his wife notice that their horse has disappeared. They bemoan their loss, privately and publicly. "What awful luck!" exclaim the neighbors. Several days later, the horse comes back, bringing another horse with it. "Oh, what good fortune that you now have a new horse! You are such a lucky family." Their son takes a ride on the horse, but he falls off and breaks his leg. He no longer can work in the fields. "Oh, how awful!" Several days later, the king's men come around to recruit all the young men for the army. They have no use for a man with a broken leg. "Oh what luck, how lucky you are!"

The story can go on for hours like this; just try it sometime.

In 2008, a Chinese leader was asked, "Is this financial crisis bad for China?" He answered, "In twenty years we will know."

Motives shift with the choice of new work
In a time that there are more people looking for work than there are jobs available, earning an income is an important motivator. One is prepared to put up with a lot in exchange for what the job pays. One example is the way that household help were treated in the 1960s in the small American town depicted in the movie *The Help*. A study done in 2011 shows that young people do not consider their salary the most important factor in choosing a work situation, but rather the opportunities for self-development. Also important are the added value for their résumé, the atmosphere in the workplace, the presence of inspiring colleagues, interesting projects, and a boss who provides inspiration and is easy to get along with.

The motives vary depending on the individual. When the boss proposes a lot of money as the payback, but you consider participation in interesting new projects to be more important, then the chance is great that you will not choose a cooperative relationship. The boss is surprised. He thought that he was proposing an attractive payback. What is he thinking? He might think, "Oh, he wants more money" and then decide to offer even more. When you once again refuse to go along, the boss may continue in his "financial payback" way of thinking. At some point, he reaches his limit and breaks off your cooperative relationship. In real life you would not let things go this far and you would have a frank discussion that you see things differently.

Are you the boss?
*Do you offer the people who work with you and for you
the paybacks that motivate them?*

How sure are you of that?

What do you do when it turns out that your thoughts differ about this?

Does your boss offer you the payback(s) that you need to feel motivated to go on working?

Payback cannot always be expressed in terms of money
What happens when we express the payback for cooperation in terms other than money? They way that we make agreements about paybacks makes a big difference in the way that people behave. Robin Upton proposes that we do away with money as the means of expressing the value of transactions. Instead, the value can be expressed in terms of what benefit you have received, and what the other has given, in words that describe how much time is involved.

An example:

> Dick has a computer problem. Tom solves that problem for him. In Tom's bookkeeping, he makes a note:
>> Fixed Dick's network problem. Took me two hours.
> Dick makes a note in his own records:
>> Tom got my computers going again. Saved me sixteen hours that it would have taken me to fix the problem myself.

36

When everyone describes the mutual exchanges in this way, then it becomes obvious what a service rendered actually means.

How do we come to agreements about payback that increase the chance that the outcome will be realized by everyone and for everyone?
A classic example from the field of military science is a study by J. Schulten in which he looks for the connection between the command practices of armies, whether the desired results are achieved, and the losses of materials and personnel. His study looks at the activities of armies in

World War II. It turns out that the least losses were suffered when the chain of command sought first to have agreement among all of the commanders about the goals. Then the operational units were outfitted with the resources that they themselves said that they needed.

In a business, things may proceed as follows: The CEO negotiates with the stockholders about the targets: turnover, results, and requirements. The CEO then negotiates with the various department heads: here is your target, and tell me what resources you need to achieve it. "Let me see the budget that you have there," says one of the department heads. "No, I want you to figure out for yourself how you are going to achieve these goals. Come to me with proposals and we will talk about them."

Apply this to your own work situation:
Which aspects of this example appeal to you?

Which do not?

How does your boss set goals?

How do you set goals when you are the boss?

Sometimes things go wrong

37

Good intentions, wrong assumptions, wrong goals, poor results
Years ago, when sorting mail was not yet entirely automated and was still to a great extent done by hand, the post office management determined that there were great differences in performance between the various teams, some twenty-five groups with around twenty employees in each group. Management wanted to improve the quality of the sorting process. The groups have targets for the number of pieces of mail that they are to process. Every day, some amount of incorrectly sorted mail is returned to the organization. The number of errors must be cut

down, but no one knows where the mistakes are being made.

Management comes up with a project that is supposed to improve things. As a first step, random selections of sorted mail are made in order to determine how many pieces of mail have been sorted incorrectly. This establishes a baseline. Competition among the groups seems to be a good means of reaching the goal of more correctly sorted mail. When the groups are in competition with each other every week for a prize to be given for the lowest number of sorting errors, then everyone will do his best and thus will make fewer mistakes. In this way, the overall level of errors will be reduced. Every week, the number of sorting errors is tallied for each group, and the group with the lowest score for that week receives a bonus.

On the first working day of the new year, the managing director gives an inspiring speech and presents the goal of reducing the percentage of errors. The quality manager explains how they are going to reach that goal. All of the groups want to win the bonus. Every week there is a team with the lowest error score, and every week a bonus is handed out. At the end of the year, some of the groups have earned a bonus ten times, others six times, but every group has earned a bonus at least once. At the concluding meeting, they are all quite proud.

The general manager, who attends the concluding meeting, congratulates the quality manager with this success and asks how much the overall level of errors has gone down. The project leader, who had not yet calculated that figure, excuses himself and starts to do his calculations. To his surprise, the average level of errors has not gone down. Completely baffled, he tells the outcome to the managing director, who also does not understand it. The competition had worked, everyone wanted to win, and every week there was one group with the least number of mistakes.

Before we go on, what do you think the reasons could be that the average percentage of errors did not go down?

. . . .

. . . .

. . . .

The project manager digs into the raw figures and finds several patterns. Here are some data; what patterns can you discover?

● ●●

week	Group 1	Group 2	Group3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Bonus group:
1	10	13	9	15	17	24	3
2	11	12	14	18	23	20	1
3	15	11	25	14	24	20	2
4	25	10	19	21	22	24	2
5	26	21	16	25	20	20	3
6	18	15	10	14	19	19	3
7	20	14	19	13	21	23	4
8	22	21	18	19	17	22	5
9	16	22	22	18	22	19	1
10	18	19	19	17	19	16	6
11	15	13	14	21	16	23	2
12	31	24	25	27	22	26	5
13	28	23	21	22	24	23	3
14	21	20	22	16	19	19	2
15	14	26	19	15	24	23	1
Average	17,9	17,6	18,1	18,3	20,6	21,4	

● ●

The average number of errors last year was 18.5. This year, the average number of errors is 19.3 – an increase.

● ●●

39

The project leader discovers the following:

1. After a group has earned a bonus, the percentage of errors in the weeks after increases.
2. Some groups show a decrease in their percentage of errors for several weeks. When that does not result in winning a bonus, the percentage of errors goes back up again.
3. Some groups perform consistently better than the overall average of the previous year.
4. Some groups perform consistently worse that the overall average of the previous year.

The project leader thinks these facts and figures over and concludes:

1. The weekly competition leads to a short-term attitude about performance.
2. The determination to perform consistently better slacks off after winning the weekly bonus.
3. The groups differ significantly in their average performance level right from the start. The less capable groups know that they have little chance of getting a bonus. Did they do better than they did the year before? No one knows, because no data are available for each group separately from the previous year.

He thinks about a different and better approach and proposes it to his boss:

1. A concrete task description to which management and the groups agree from the beginning:
   Reducing the overall level of errors to X% is the primary goal.
   Choose a longer evaluation period: an entire year rather than only a week.
   Give every group the goal of bringing down their average error
2. level relative to the year before.
   Another bonus scheme will be more effective:
   There will be a bonus for everyone if the general goal is reached of lowering the total average level of errors. This encourages the stronger groups to help the weaker ones.

There will be a bonus for each group that reaches their individual goal of cutting down their error level.
There will only be a bonus if these goals are achieved over an entire year.

3.   Every week the groups are told the latest average of total mistakes, the percentage of errors relative to their own target figure, and how others are performing relative to their various targets.

What do you think?

What will you do?

A change in circumstances: searching for new solutions that preserve existing cooperative bonds

Xi-Feng, a powerful woman who manages a large family's affairs, is one of the characters in *The Story of the Stone,* one of the classic works of Chinese literature. As long as the family enjoys prosperity and their income exceeds their expenditures, favors can be granted to everyone who is involved in the family's domestic activities, even the farmhands and servants. However, when the time comes that the expenditures exceed the income, it is best to take action. Taking back the benefits that have been granted in the past is not an option; it would completely undermine the trustworthiness of all pledges and thus put pressure on all relationships. The ties holding the family together would fall apart. Thus, other solutions must be sought.

Xi-Feng comes up with a proposal for everyone who has some part in maintaining the very large garden. Everyone can continue to live on the grounds and will get a part of the garden in which to grow vegetables or other crops that can be sold at market. They will contribute part of what they produce to the entire household, but most of it they can sell and keep the income thus derived for themselves. Everyone agrees with this offer.

41

When you want results, what will you contribute? Mending relationships
A distant relative of this same powerful Lady Xi-Feng suddenly dies, and Xi-Feng is asked to straighten out the household affairs. She prepares herself for her task and begins by looking into the bookkeeping. There is more going out than coming in and many irresponsible expenditures.

She decides to be the first person present the following day, with a few questions that she will put to everyone. What contribution are you supposed to make today? To whom are you responsible? How much are you going to spend today? To whom do you go for permission for those expenditures?

Anyone who shows up late gets one more chance, then they are shown the door. Anyone who does not know what he is supposed to contribute that day gets his orders immediately. Anyone who does not know to whom he is responsible is immediately assigned a person to report to daily. All expenditures must first have her approval.

After a week, everyone is clear about what his or her contribution is to be. Lines of responsibility are tightly and clearly defined. Expenditures are entirely under control again.

In order to go on choosing to cooperate, both partners in the cooperative relationship must experience the payback as fair. It is not necessary that both partners will benefit equally, but the value derived must be experienced as fair.

What is that like in the cooperative relationships in which you participate?

Enrich your self-image
Take the construction that you have made of yourself and add to it "myself achieving my goals" and "myself achieving my goals together with other." You will probably want to add another construct of your own: "myself as …".

3. 2. Ideas about others

> In order to get a grip on reality, we have to organize and schematize the many changing tones and colors into conceptual colors. Our activities require the behavior of others to be predictable. Which models do we maintain? And, just as important, are we open to new interpretations? There are many examples that give us opportunities to think these things over and to ask some practical questions.

Stereotypes are convenient

The images that I have of another person determine to a great extent whether and how I will establish contact with them and set up a cooperative relationship. If they ask me to set up a cooperative venture with a Russian company and tell me at the same time that Russians cannot be trusted, they I will behave differently that I would if I had been told, "In general you can believe what a Russian tells you." That is rather obvious, and there are very many other conscious and unconscious ideas that influence my behavior at the beginning of a cooperative relationship.

These presuppositions serve to create order in the multitude of new behavioral details that appear before me in a new encounter. Stereotypes are very useful when the environment, language, clothes, housing, and food differ markedly from one's own world.

Large companies often invite specialists in foreign culture to help them to properly understand others and to treat them with respect. The pioneering work of Dutch researchers Trompenaars and Hofstede is highly valued, as is their advice. The Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam offers business people who are about to go abroad some knowledge of the ways of thinking and the behavioral customs of others. Tests of "cultural sensitivity" can be found on the internet; these measure the tolerance for other customs.

43

Which opinions about others promote cooperation? Which do not?

If I have a generalized and fixed idea that I should not trust other people because they will do everything to mislead me, then I will interpret everything that is unfamiliar as a confirmation of my suspicion. The other person will have to come up with quite a lot of proof before I will think that I have found an exception to the rule. A cooperative relationship probably will not even get off the ground; I will probably not even take the first step of establishing contact. Especially the untested opinions that are taken to be generally accepted truths get in the way of a realistic view of what the other person does at any given moment.

Here are some short anecdotes and sketches as food for thought:

What role does money play?

Her boyfriend brings me to an appointment in an unfamiliar city, and we have a pleasant conversation. She works as a receptionist. The subject of "freedom" comes up. She says with conviction, "Money is freedom." She engages in all of her business contacts with a clear goal: getting as much money as possible. If it is possible to earn more money somewhere else, then that is what she does. Loyalty to a company? Forget it; she is loyal to her own goals.

Give in?

44

Imagine a situation in which I judge that the other person is completely focused on serving only his own interest and he will do everything to achieve that end. If the two of us end up in a situation in which we cannot entirely have our own way, but where achieving my own goal means that I have to convince the other person to give in or to look for a compromise, then I am not going to want to compromise. I will think that every compromise that I offer will immediately be seized by the other person as a means of getting more for himself. Therefore, I do not give in, do not offer a compromise, and do not accept a compromise. I do however end up with empty hands.

Is the boss in sight?

Imagine that I am focused on gaining an advantage for myself. I think that the best way of accomplishing this is to immediately have a conversation with my boss. He is not always around, so I negotiate with his subordinates. As soon as the boss shows up, I shift my attention, take leave of the person with whom I was conversing, and concentrate on the boss. The other person with whom I was speaking sees this and knows that the cooperative gesture with me was only a stepping stone toward the boss. The other person will thereafter restrict his contacts with me to what is convenient for him; he will no longer cooperate with any enthusiasm – at least not until he thinks that he can use me to get closer to the boss.

Be prepared

Prof. Kan Shi of the Chinese Academy of Sciences asks for advice in putting together a report with suggestions about "how to deal with other company cultures after the takeover of a European company by a Chinese organization."

Anxiety

Anxiety can make us hold back when entering into a cooperative relationship. Since 2005, the Dutch newspapers NRC Handelsblad and Het Financieele Dagblad have been publishing articles about China every day. The question is "How should we be thinking about China?" For lack of information, it is all too easy to hold onto positions that we have taken earlier. The general opinion in the Netherlands before 2000 can be summarized as "a communist dictatorship that took measures causing millions of Chinese people to lose their lives." Dissenting voices are not allowed. However, there are also changes taking place. After 1980, China opened its borders for trade with the rest of the world, and it now allows foreign countries to set up operations there. China is developing, and people's lives are improving. Strong countries also can instill anxieties. Anxiety is a "free-floating" feeling that can attach itself

45

to any word, thus also to "China." We want to move away from things that cause us anxiety.

19 January 2012. A strategic advice consultancy has placed an advertisement in the Financieel Dagblad, a Dutch daily newspaper. Time for a "Change of plans." We are cheered on with the text "It is rough weather outside. All the signals are red. The Chinese are taking off with the money …".

Fighting over everything

Imagine that I experience feedback about my behavior as the other person placing himself above me, much as my parents, teachers, and other involved in my upbringing did earlier. I do not engage with the content of their remarks, but rather focus on the inequality that the other person is bringing into the relationship. Every initiative taken by the other person is seen as an attempt to play the boss and dominate me. When how we interact with each other cannot be discussed in a balanced relationship, real cooperation will never be possible.

Correct relationships

There was once a time that there was great disorder in China. Rulers did whatever they felt like doing. There were no guidelines whatsoever for good mutual relationships. This is not that unusual, and every society has known periods like this. Kung Fu traveled around the country and preached a social order with a clear place for everyone in the big picture. Everyone would have a list of expectations and duties. Everything and everyone fits together like a complicated jigsaw puzzle. When everyone lives in accordance with this master plan, everyone and everything is in harmony. Every other person is completely predictable. You yourself are also completely predictable. Everyone will do that which is expected of him or her. There will be optimum cooperation and optimum contentment. A "utopian doctrine" is characterized by an elaborate body of rules and guidelines for every station in life, all in balance with each other. Those in power like to disseminate such doctrines, but

some people go their own way and look for relationships and associations of their own that fit in better with their goals.

How am I supposed to behave?
A young professional is full of pep and power. She expresses her opinion without hesitation and with considerable strength. The shock that this invokes in others she sees as weakness. Anyone with objections is seen as indecisive. She has no idea what effect her actions have on others who are accustomed to behaving according to the rules of perfect harmony. Those others have no idea how to get along with her; they just stick their hands up in the air in despair. When she is fired, it comes as a jolt and a disillusionment for her. Neither side can make sense of the other.

Harmonizing
A question comes up in a group: "What do we want to accomplish together?" Important question. Some of the participants make eye contact with others; others look at the walls or the ceiling or nothing at all. One person begins to talk, not yet knowing where he will end up. It is the beginning of an exploratory journey without a predetermined destination. At least it is a beginning. Then some of the others come on board, but others do not quite yet. Later on, everyone has joined in with the conversation.

I am responsible
An inexperienced manager interprets his responsibility as meaning that he is supposed to decide everything. When someone else is partly responsible, then he does not get involved. He announces the targets and confronts his staff with the consequences. For him there is not yet any middle ground between "dictate everything yourself" and "just toss it over the fence."

Can we trust others?

"What are your plans for the future? Are you going to invest some of your savings?" "Well, I'm going to assume that the government can change its policies at the drop of a hat. If I'm going to make choices that depend on the rules that the government follows right now, then tomorrow I could be unpleasantly surprised. So I follow a path that gives me maximum independence from these shifts. That path is to keep as much money and possessions as my personal property. To depend as little as possible on others. As much flexibility as possible."

Living with loans?

Avoid incurring debts; then you will not have to work for the rest of your life to pay them off but will be free to work or not, as you wish. This position has its proponents. Others are proponents of the opposite view: having debts is not that bad. They allow you to bring the future into the present and give you the means of realizing your dreams. That strategy can go wrong, but do we have to wait until we have built up enough reserves that we can get on with things? That can take a long time. Don't keep yourself free of liabilities. Those liabilities can surely be managed, since the future is going to develop in a positive way. It is in everyone's best interest not to make a mess of things. When everyone gets into debt, then things can get out of hand. What then?

48

Try working together with friends!

In an article in the China Daily, a semi-official writer makes an appeal that we should expand the circle of people whom we trust. Do not depend only on your family, but trust other people as well. Make friends, and make bonds with people whom you can trust. Get to know other people, and not just in China. "Blood is thicker than water," but you can often trust those outside your family as well. Not everyone is out to take advantage of you. Everything that you give to others will come back to you in one way or another.

When we seek to develop new relationships, new companies, and new organizations that are rooted in something other than family ties, it is more difficult to build up bonds of trust. People with the same language and culture will tend to flock together; that happens every-where in the world. But is that an adequate foundation for trusting another person? The mutual exploitation within these groups is often quite severe.

Breaking out of such groups is also difficult; just try sometime to develop work relationships outside of your own group with people from other groups. Shopkeepers sometimes manage to succeed at this, as do some tradesmen and professionals. Some thoughts that keep people confined in their own group are "Other people are very different from us" and "It is really difficult to work with them. You never really know what they want or what they mean."

Depending on others?

A consultancy firm aims to achieve individual targets that are coupled to bonuses. It turns out not to be possible to use group results as goals. The advisors do not want such an arrangement; they do not want their bonus to be dependent on others who they cannot influence. Others may even profit from efforts that are not their own and thus get a bigger bonus. Tension. The system works, for there are good people who get their bonus, and others do not. People in the individual bonus system take responsibility for their own failures and successes. An advisor who goes two years in a row without achieving the high target, but nevertheless keeps on making progress, asks his colleagues, "How long can the rest of you go on tolerating that fact that my performance is below the norm?" Another states, "If I haven't met my target by the end of the year, then I'll accept the consequences." Even the general manager comes out below the overall target for the company. "That is because of the poor performers." He does not concern himself further with them, so their performance does not improve.

Separate thinking from doing?

There are organizations in which the separation between strategy and implementation is absolute. The top managers discuss strategy, and when they have made their decisions, the department heads have their turn. They are given the assignment of putting the management decisions into effect, and the managers go their own way. Partitioning responsibility in this way in an organization leads to a lot of coordination effort later on and an ongoing need for corrective measures. Harold Leavitt has tried to tie together strategy and implementation. He offers ideas about how you can pick up on strategic sensitivity everywhere in an organization. It is something that is present in all levels and departments, but finding it is an art. Every management education curriculum includes an exercise that shows that whenever implementers are involved in defining problems and their solutions, the solutions will be implemented better and faster. When garage mechanics are involved in the process of designing cars, the cars last longer because they are easier to work on.

An easy "yes" now, a troublesome "no" later

A French engineer in the employment of an American firm travels around Europe and visit's the company's factories. He explains the latest guidelines about project management. Projects are to be carried out everywhere in the same way. In France, everything goes quickly; people absorb the information and give the correct answers. In Italy too. Also in Poland. No problem in Germany. But the Netherlands? "So much resistance," he says. "Questions, questions, and more questions! Why do we do this? Why do we do that?" He has sweat on his palms and he is turning blue with exasperation. "Always dragging their feet," he yells. He longs for clarity. "Are they crazy, or am I?" After several conversations, he begins to think differently about this bothersome behavior. By asking many questions, people are better able to understand ahead of time exactly what is intended. By asking these questions, they are able in new situations to find their own solutions that are in line with company policy. After two more conversations, he goes into the last training

session in the Netherlands armed with ways to encourage questions and then to look for the answers together. This approach yields much better and longer-lasting results than just reciting the rules. Back in the US, he is flooded with e-mails from a number of European countries, telling him that their real life experience often was not compatible with the rules that they had learned, and the method that they had learned by thus not so good. But from the Netherlands, he hears that the new insights and rules are felt to be an improvement.

A tradesman in charge: good idea?
Many managers are placed in a management position because they are good at their trade or profession. The best was always the best because he was the first one who knew the most answers in the quiz. He was an authority – someone who knows that whenever he opened his mouth, others would be silent. No training for a management position, but he has it anyway because he was already good at something else.

He is an engineer at a world-famous technical consultancy, forty-five years old. A fantastic career grinds to a halt. What he wants to happen is not getting done. He calls himself a "Sunday's child" and "lucky dog"; everything used to go effortlessly. There was never a wall that he could not climb over, dig under, or find his way around. But now he is stuck. His management job is a flop. No one will go along with what he wants, and everything is a confused mess. He doesn't get it; he has everything all lined up. "If only the others ... they just won't do it." He stays home on sick leave and cannot stop grumbling. "If only top management had ...".

51

Picking up on weak signals
Researchers have observed that there are clearly-defined tipping points in natural systems at which a substance suddenly goes from one state into another. For example, at one moment you have water; at another moment the same substance is ice. The pond is clear at one moment and has turned cloudy at another. These changes are sudden and complete.

One day, duckweed covers half of the pond, and the next day the entire pond is covered – it only takes one generation of reproduction of the duckweed plants. Maarten Scheffer applies this concept to societies and organizations. He focuses in particular on finding the tiny clues that signal large and sudden changes that are approaching. He mentions:

1. A slower recovery after a disturbance is the most important indication that a coherent whole is under so much tension that an entirely new situation can come about.

2. There are always small disturbances in any organization, but the shifts remain between certain limits. However, when these shifts become larger and show more variation, this indicates large tensions and the possibility of a sudden change in the situation.

3. When the coherence of the group becomes very strong and there is less and less variation, a change may be imminent.

Here is how we may apply these principles to willingness to cooperate:

1. When disturbances in the cooperative effort become more difficult to resolve than they once were, it can be an indication that there is an overall change in the willingness to cooperate. It is no longer a matter of an isolated incident.

2. When disturbances become larger, more frequent, and more diverse, that too can be a sign that the overall willingness to cooperate is wearing thin. Interventions that are only aimed at recovery from a disturbance will not be enough.

3. It is normal for anomalies to appear in open processes and organizations. Mistakes may be made. Arguments suddenly come up which others thought had long since been resolved. Behavior surfaces that had long ago disappeared, or suddenly there will be new behavior that has not been seen before. When this dynamic of divergences from the norm disappears and there appears to be perfect harmony, that can be an indication that a play is being performed on the surface, while at a deeper level there is no coherence or a different kind of

coherence is coming about. This situation can arise in teams that are under considerable pressure to produce a specific result.

The phenomenon of "groupthink" was first described in connection with the decision-making process in a government study group that was preparing to make decisions about a possible war in Vietnam. All signals that did not fit in were ignored. The decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was based on a picture that came about after doing away with all signals that did not fit. Forensic research that focuses on preparing a well-organized case runs the risk that an orderly case will be created by leaving out information that does not fit. This also happens in organizations where there is heavy pressure from the top to tell exactly the right story and anyone who steps out of line is punished.

Whenever these "soft signals" are ignored, our interpretation of the behavior of others can be completely wrong, and surprises are possible.

Think it over:

- What is the usual average time that it takes to solve a problem in your organization? Keep track of this figure over an extended period.

- What is the frequency, intensity, and diversity of disturbances? Are they increasing quickly or staying relatively constant?

53

- Are all of the usual anomalies disappearing in your organization? Is everything becoming absolutely perfect? What has happened to the normal human imperfections?

In a powerful TED talk in 2012, Margaret Hefferman makes an appeal for building openness to dissenting views into organizations: www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree.

In a movie, a scientist gives a lecture before the president of the US about sudden and total changes. The signals heralding these are very small, and in isolation, they seem to be unimportant. The movie shows how researchers monitoring isolated measuring instruments detect tiny changes in the Gulf Stream carrying warm water to the North Pole. Suddenly the forces maintaining the flow are no longer strong enough and the Gulf Stream reverses, carrying a large volume of cold water from the North Pole toward the south. A deep chill rolls out over America, and a tale of heroic deeds begins to unfold.

Influencing the expectations of others

When the global financial crisis began in 2008 because the banks had insufficient margins for the money that they had lent, the question that was on everyone's mind was "Why didn't we see that coming?" The hype that had gone on for years, pumping up hopes of more and more now and more and more later, obscured the ability of many people to see the risks. The risks that there were had been disguised beyond recognition; they were presented as minimal. This was a "first-rate tactic," as when we make decisions we weigh the avoidance of risks more heavily than the chances of success.

The others want what?

Expecting that other people are going to think just as you do about things will get in the way of cooperation. When getting involved in a cooperative effort, people have the tendency to follow their own preferences without thinking about what the preferences of the other party might be. Self-oriented and competitive behavior is likely to be recognized more quickly and more accurately than cooperative or altruistic behavior.

There are also cultural and national differences. Competitive behavior and cooperation are valued differently in the US than in the Netherlands:

	US	Netherlands
competitive	++	+
cooperative	+	++

Psychological models create expectations about cooperation
The assessments that we make of other people are influenced by the psychological conceptual frameworks that are passed on to us at school, during courses, and by training exercises.

In 1920, only a few people used words like "father complex" or "resistance" or "unconscious" or "repression." At that time, knowledge of Freudian theory was still limited to a small inner circle. These are now common household words, and many psychological concepts are familiar to a broad public.

It is useful to describe a few examples of conceptual models that are used in curricula and training programs for leadership and management.

The MBTI is a typology that assigns people a position on each of four dimensions:

a. More inner-directed or more outer-directed.
b. More attention to detail or more attention to overall patterns.
c. Decisions are made based on logical reasoning or on relationships.
d. One organizes one's own future or picks up on whatever comes along.

55

After filling in a test, you get a profile with letters that express your position on each of the four dimensions. Everyone has a different approach to cooperation, depending on his preferences. Someone who considers relationships very important in making decisions is more likely to choose not to cooperate with people who do not like him.

People who base their decisions more on logic can enter into cooperative agreements because the advantages are great enough, even though the relationship may be more difficult to manage. More about this subject may be found in books about MBTI; see for example *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MBTI#References_and_further_reading*

Drawing on Freudian theory, we know that narcissistic leaders are very good at convincing people to work with them. If they get to the top of an organization, the influence of their personality on the organization can be so great that they run their organization into the ground. Manfred Kets de Vries analyzed leaders in organizations, asking, "What things help us recognize narcissistic types? What causes people to be so strongly attracted to working with them?" A list of typical behaviors and attitudes can be found here: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissistic_personality_disorder#Symptoms*

Everyone who has ever followed a leadership training course has learned the very insightful model of Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard about situational leadership. It has two dimensions: an assessment of whether the person can independently organize himself and his work, and an assessment of how skillful the person is at this task – is he or she a beginner or a master?

Depending on these assessments, the leader chooses his behavior, which can vary between attention to the task at hand and attention to organizing more independently. The model is also very useful for assessing cooperation potential.

	master at this task	beginner at this task
high self-organization	Takes initiative; explains things; reports progress; solves problems independently; provides information and calm	Comes right away with questions; looks for ways to get to work independently the next time.
lage zelforganisatie	Does task carefully and reports when it is completed; time and quality need to be monitored.	A dependent attitude about learning; wants prior consultation about every activity.

The Team Role Inventory model, devised by Meredith Belbin, is a frequently-used model that gives insight into one's own preferences and tools to deal with the preferences of others. Belbin's model gives each role in the team the significance of a constructive contribution – a contribution that is more appropriate at one moment in the work process than it is at another. The leader has the task to assign a place to each of the various contributions. A brief description of this model is found here: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_Role_Inventories*

57

Another model that is often used to determine the basic personality is the Big Five. The five dimensions turn op in many studies: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. While the test is often used in selection of and advice about individual personnel, it also gives insight into preferred styles of cooperation. *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits*

Objective observation

The image that we form of others influences any possible cooperation with them. The line of thought thus far in this chapter has been: examination of our insights, accepting them, and then changing them. Others advocate a radically different solution. They want us to completely switch off our "interpretative and normative mental frame of reference" while we are observing. Then we shall see things and people as they really are. Meditative techniques that strive to attain a state of perception this is completely empty and free of evaluations is one expression of this way of thinking. Other more everyday approaches seek to create an open mind. Someone with an open mind has an inquisitive attitude – asking questions not only with regard to what others do and think but also about his or her own behavior and thought patterns.

> Questions you could ask about yourself:
>
> > *What are you better at, asking questions or giving your opinion?*
> >
> > *Do you feel more comfortable with someone who asks you questions or with someone who simply gives his or her opinion?*

Enrich your self-image

Add to your self-construct:

myself as open to others

myself as skillful at getting along with others

Make up a few phrases of your own: "myself as ...".

3.3. Self-image

"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change." CARL ROGERS

From the beginning of your life, you experience how another person behaves in reaction to you. You draw your own lessons from this, and you form your own opinions about the world, about yourself, and about what is possible and impossible for you. These lessons are often not put into words in any detail, but they are accessible, often in short slogans. They become evident mainly in reflexes in the patterns of how you get along with yourself and with others.

The choices I make appear to be free choices that depend on the chances and the threats in every unique situation. My behavior, however, is often a reflex in response to an instantaneous recognition of a template. Sometime I realize later that my choice was not all that appropriate. Is that a problem? No, it is just the way our brains work.

What does the inner conversation look like that I carry on with myself? Are there repetitions in the dialog? What consequences does it have? What can I do to bring about more animation in my dialogs with myself?

How can I find out what my program of lessons is? (Oh really? Why should I?) How can I untangle myself from my reflexes, my own program with rules about myself – rules that can be conducive to entering into cooperative relationships or in fact can impede doing so?

Your turn now
Pick up your pen and write down the four most important experiences that you have had with cooperation that come to mind right now:

1.

2.

3.

4.