

The spontaneous organization: A new paradigm of collaboration in natural harmony

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Abstract

Sustainable energy sources is one of the hot topics and a continuous subject of debate in our current era. The persisting focus on the subject of sustainable outer energy sources is in stark contrast with the effort and attention given to the pursuit of, and concern with, sustainable inner energy sources. The spontaneous organization is built upon sustainable inner energy. Unlike organization fueled by outside stimulation, the spontaneous organization fully leverages the abilities and inner motivation of the human individual. Meaning, happiness, joy, enthusiasm and inspiration are foundational to the spontaneous organization. Unlike organizations structured around adapted models, spontaneous organizations adapt uncontrollably to any given context, formed around autonomous intelligence of the human individuals involved. Apparent chaos over predictable dynamics and behavioral constraints.

Beating around the bush

New organizational models have been appearing the last decade, to give other options for people and organizations to organize themselves than the adapted, unchanged organization structure left from the Industrial Revolution. Other ways to work together than the hierarchical mode. People over processes. Pondering these other modes of working opens up possibilities in the individual and organization at large. Many organizations have adapted new ways of working and changed their values to align with the current mode of thinking.

And yet, even though these other organizational models and dynamics do reinvent the way we work, they seem all-together be running around the core, like the imagined electron which is never touching the nucleus. Beating around the bush (or the nucleus) instead of getting to the point. Here and there are the characteristics of the proverbial nucleus addressed, but never are they fully leveraged and put central in the depicted new way of working. This could be so because the proverbial nucleus, or *the point to get to*, is intangible and a touchy subject with the chance of getting your fingers burned. The spontaneous organization however addresses this intangible nucleus and gets to the matter of it.

The spontaneous organization is an ideal organization taking its self-organizing, self-managing and self-directing characteristics to their fullest expression, motivated by intrinsic motives and inspiration instead of external driving forces. The spontaneous organization is powered by sustainable nuclear energy, i.e. power from within.

Spontaneity, what's in a name

Leading a joyful and meaningful life is of primary significance for all involved in a (prospect) spontaneous organization. As the word 'spontaneity' takes such a prevalent role in the context of this subject, let's have a careful look into how it can be defined¹:

1 Definition from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spontaneous>

- 1 : proceeding from natural feeling or native tendency without external constraint
- 2 : arising from a momentary impulse
- 3 : controlled and directed internally : SELF-ACTING
- 4 : produced without being planted or without human labor : INDIGENOUS
- 5 : developing or occurring without apparent external influence, force, cause, or treatment
- 6 : not apparently contrived or manipulated : NATURAL

Spontaneity is an expression as a result of a momentary impulse which arises naturally. Spontaneity is therefor not originating from reason nor the rational mind, neither from external or artificial/technological stimulation. The essence of spontaneous behavior is intangible, unpredictable and not controllable.

The inspired organization

An organization doesn't really exist independently of your involvement. An organization is an abstraction which exists only when dealing with people, who are part of that organization. An organization exists because of the human individuals which are apart of it and when its underlying spirit is animated.

The spirit is the principal reason for the appearance of any organization. This spirit is the backing driving force which consists of an idea to accomplish and moral values. This idea to accomplish can be a goal, vision and/or supported by a mission. The moral values depict according to which agreed upon behavior the organization can accomplish its vision and mission. This is not a subject to take lightly – it's defining the health of the organization you are part of.

Within the organization there is a culture which is changing all the time. This culture can also contain left-over and obsolete concepts or procedural dynamics. This culture is sustained by the collective of the human individuals which are apart of the organization, and not by the spirit (which is up-to-date, albeit possible out of sync with the organization). Culture is developed by the individuals by translating the underlying organization's spirit to certain dynamics and arrangements.

Along the way individuals can lose touch with the organization's spirit and be totally surrendered to the culture, which might be running more and more out of sync with the organization's spirit, in so far that the connection or even impression of the spirit is lost. The latter means that the organization is on the loose without inner guidance; these organizations are adrift and under influence of outer forces, and therefor not in control (without knowing it or not). Staying rooted in the underlying spirit is essential for staying healthy and to not get let astray by superficial motive forces.

To be alive is common and yet what being alive is, is one of the biggest mysteries of human existence. What gives us life, what animates us, is intangible. All substantial things arise from that intangible force, the *spirit*, be it love, joy, inspiration, conscience, guidance or intuition. Meaning can arise when conscious connection is made with the spirit, which is the intangible nucleus.

The principal requirement for leading a meaningful and joyful life is to nurture the contact with your spirit individually and as organization collectively. Out of this quintessential force, the spirit, comes forth the ability to be spontaneous.

Information as the anti-thesis to spontaneity

In the seed of information is the will to be processed. The essence of information is to be consumed, like fish bait on a hook. The data held by information asks for processing. Its *raison d'être* is to be processed, to be taken in, to be absorbed.

The abundant widespread information comes with a cost, even though it might seem free. The cost is your attention, your attention to process and absorb the information, and the potential delimiting range of motion in the spectrum of freedom. Information comes therefore with a potential covert high cost to pay. Information is not neutral and it comes with a certain obligation.

The widespread information is demanding to be processed. Theoretically it is completely fine to opt-out, but in practice that is not accepted easily and is frowned upon. There's a certain covert demand and commitment in the available information, there are strings attached. In western society it is almost regarded as a *duty* to be up-to-date with the news all the time, and to be online while awake. Information is not free.

That being said, you might have noted that the more information and communication there is (be it in form of open information flow, meetings, notes and emails), the more these become hurdles to be spontaneous. The more external input has to be processed, evaluated, estimated and calculated – the lower the spontaneity. On the other hand, the less input has to be processed, the more spontaneous one potentially can be. External checking with other involved people (validation, approvals and authority) is impeding spontaneity. Complete sovereignty, authority and self-determination are required for the allowance of spontaneous behavior.

Language and spontaneity

Organized (collective) harmonious spontaneity can only be accomplished without communication in the form of the spoken or written word, i.e. without the construct of language. It's quite common and possible to act spontaneously individually. Two human beings spontaneously acting in harmony is a rarity, let alone a whole organization of, for example, 150 individuals. What is needed for *collective harmonized spontaneity* to arise?

When language-based communication is used to align with one another prior following the internal and natural flow, there can't be spontaneity. Language is then the antithesis of being able to be spontaneous.

Our thinking mind is in the intermediary realm of observing and acting in one hand, and inner dynamics on the other hand. The thinking mind can and will impact the natural flow and instigation, which arises from the inner world. In thought, complex dynamics are at play, including cultural programming, past experiences, education, religious views, etc. These complex dynamics can be considered as a complex dynamic software program which can extinguish the natural impulse to act. The thought dynamics of one person can differ quite significantly from another, albeit that the same underlying principles are at play.

The bigger the group of human individuals, the more difficult it will be to act spontaneously collectively, in harmony, when language is used to align the group's actions. When communicating using language it takes time to convey meaning, instructions, or other information from one another. Language is also error prone in that one individual can have a completely different inner picture or meaning built up, based upon the conveyed information, than another individual. The construct of language is therefore the antithesis of spontaneity.

A shared common underlying spirit and shared common moral values are needed for *collective harmonized spontaneity* in organizations. Inspiration and the natural impulse to act arise from the underlying spirit, the intangible source. The organization's spirit is a motivational force which originates the vision or dream, mission and ethics to pursuit and uphold. Behaving "in the spirit of"

is a common phrase, which in essence entails sharing the same underlying spirit as motivational force.

Commitment and involvement in the organization

An organism consists of a plethora of expressions of smaller forms of life, of which the cell is the basic structural, functional, and biological unit. In order for the organism to function properly there needs to be some synchronization and alignment between the collective of cells. When all cells are functioning in harmony, synchronously aligned to their common goal, the organism will be healthy.

Similar to an organism, an organization consists of smaller parts – human beings or *cells*) which are collaborating together for a common shared goal. But unlike an organism, the organization is an abstraction. *The* organization is not really existing and behaving as a living entity, in contrast with the human beings which together form the organization. The constituents of the organization – all the human beings working together as interconnected cells within the organization – *are* living entities, as are the separate cells of an organism.

In an organism, all individual cells are *involved and committed* to the success of the organism. *Involved*, because they are connected to the bigger organism which is striving to attain a certain goal. *Committed*, because their very existence depends on their dedication to the cause or activity as part of the overall goal of the organism.

This involvement and commitment of biological cells in an organism is a matter of course. This is not a matter of course when dealing with the cells of an organization, which are the human individuals together forming the organization. This is dynamic is strikingly illustrated by the fable of the chicken and the pig²:

A Pig and a Chicken are walking down the road.

The Chicken says: "Hey Pig, I was thinking we should open a restaurant!"

Pig replies: "Hm, maybe, what would we call it?"

The Chicken responds: "How about 'ham-n-eggs'?"

The Pig thinks for a moment and says: "No thanks. I'd be committed, but you'd only be involved."

In organizations, all cells, i.e. the individual human beings taking part of that organization, are involved, but not all cells are *committed* to the cause. Ideally, they are involved *and* committed. When an individual cares (wholeheartedly) about the cause, dream or vision of the organization, intrinsic motivation starts to kick in, besides external stimulation, e.g. salary or pressure. Being involved and committed is a matter of course in a spontaneous organization.

Cellular awareness in the organization

Each and every individual in the organization is involved by default, and potentially committed as well. The optimal operation of any organization depends on the optimal collaboration of each and every involved part, or cell. The optimal operation of every organization's cell depends significantly on its (self-)awareness and commitment to the organization's cause, vision, mission and ethics.

For an individual to sustainably act spontaneously, an environment is needed that corresponds to a high degree with the individual's inner motives, which consists of ethics, vision/dream and mission. Cultivating the ability to act spontaneously includes developing and nurturing the areas/faculties of conscious awareness, alertness, attunement to the inner guide/spirit, ethics and vision.

² Refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chicken_and_the_Pig for the fable

True commitment can't be forced but can only occur naturally when there's a match between the personal intrinsic motive forces and the organization's motive forces. In other words, if there is an alignment of the individual's underlying spirit and the organization's spirit.

All human beings have access to the same innate faculties, be it varying in degrees of development and maturity. It is both for the organization as a whole as the individual of paramount significance to know what the inner driving forces are, which are originating from their spirit. Examining the personal's driving forces, including mission and vision, will at the same time help the organization to get clearer about those, by the very examining process of the individual. Having and nurturing a safe supportive environment is essential for this process.

The aforementioned inner and outer examination in the matters of the spirit (individually and as organization) inevitable will result in *asking the hard questions*. Well, they are not really *hard* but rather ethereal and they are essential to your well-being, which is very much depending on your individual alignment with your essence/spirit. The answers to those questions can be uncomfortable to deal with, if they conflict with the desired outcomes which are aligned with your vision, mission and ethics. Being brave and addressing the pink elephant in the room are other emotional facets which will surface. Honesty, transparency and safety are essential for the organization to become spontaneous. It is required for a spontaneous organization to have all involved cells committed naturally to the organization's underlying spirit, else it can't be spontaneous.

Exploring and discovering one's individual motives and the organization's motives are resulting in higher levels of awareness, individually and collectively as organization. Cellular and collective awareness is what is all about when exploring intrinsic motives.

Being aware of how each cell's action is contributing to the intended direction (originating from the underlying spirit) is needed for meaningful activities. The clearer the organization is on every part of the organization about its goal, mission and vision and how they relate to one another, the higher the amount of potential energy can be released from each involved and committed cells' intrinsic motivation. Meaningful work above anything else. Cultivating cellular awareness therefor is of primacy when you want to become spontaneous, as organization and as individual.

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The will to realize the personal grandest vision or dream fuels the needed characteristics of the spontaneous organization, like courage, authority, responsibility, ownership, authenticity, curiosity and creativity.

The harmonious Borg

"We are the Borg. You will be assimilated". The Borg³ is a mass consciousness from Star Trek and assimilate almost everyone they come in contact with. As part of the Borg, you become part of the collective (the whole) and you lose all sense of individuality.

That is not *at all* a scenario that is aimed for with the spontaneous organization. On the other hand, being part of the whole (the collective) and retaining all sense of individuality at the same time, *is* the scenario to aim for.

3 See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borg> for more about the Borg

In a spontaneous organization the spirits of all individuals involved are aligned and in harmony and operating from the organization's spirit as one organism, without losing one's sense of individuality. All actions originate from the same source, expressed in various and diverse forms by the unique individuals involved in the organization. This is unity in action and should not be confused with uniformity in action, which is a thing to escape from. Natural diversification and not normalization. We are not the Borg.

Sustainable motivation

The only sustainable motivation is intrinsic motivation, which comes from within – inspiration. When all things don't matter, the only motivational force remaining is intrinsic life-force. The intrinsic life-force is the only force which will be there regardless of external motivation or stimulation.

Objective, external stimulation needs to be changed and up-scaled all the time to remain a sufficient and interesting motivational trigger to act. Higher salaries, higher status, appealing function titles, etc. It can't last and can't stay interesting. Internal, intrinsic motivations is ever-lasting. Spontaneity is driven by natural forces. Intrinsic motivation becomes stronger the bigger the dream is. The bigger the dream, the stronger the pull towards realizing that dream. It does not mean to be unhappy in the here and now though, but that is a different subject to address. Be bold and dream big. Dare to envision unheard of inner landscapes.

Intrinsic motivation is the only energy force which is sustainable, as it doesn't depend on external stimulation. External stimulation and energy sources are limited in essence, because they are part of the expressed and defined world, which is finite in nature. Hence, those external forces are not sustainable as continuous energy force, opposed to intrinsic and spontaneous motivators.

Intrinsic motivation, the force which is being naturally given to act, arises from within when you care, feel inspired, feel enthusiastic or feel joyous about something, be it a vision, an idea or a given situation. Intrinsic interest, dreams and vision can motivate, but also ethics – moral values in action.

Ethics can be a strong internal motive force. A healthy human being has moral sense, that is the natural inborn knowledge of the primary principles of moral action, *synderesis*⁴.

Doing the right thing is not something which has to be forced on one another, because of the innate sense of morality in healthy human beings. A mother rescuing her child regardless of her own life is driven by an inner motivational force.

To do the right thing, to do something which makes us feel enthusiastic about, to read or think about something which interests us, doesn't need external motivation to pursuit. Doing those things is a matter of course. The behavior is *spontaneous*, when not obstructed.

Spontaneous behavior is intrinsic and voluntary behavior opposed to externally instructed behavior. Someone acting of one's own will doesn't need other stimulation, like appraisal, food, money, to act – although it can boost the power of the act (because the additional stimulation or motivational force is supporting the anticipated behavior).

4 Refer to <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/synderesis> for a definition and <https://www.iep.utm.edu/synderes/> for more information

When one feels enthusiastic or inspired, one is intrinsically motivated. Committing to a cause needs in some degree alignment with personal motives and intention. When the vision of an organization is aligned with the vision of the individual, there is an intrinsic motivation to be part of the organization in order to reach that goal.

Knowing *why* you are doing *what* intensifies the daily actions because they have added value besides the literal and the obvious. The better all actions are aligned with reaching a certain ideal, the more meaning those actions will have for you. Literal actions are enriched with symbolic meaning, which is linked to the internal world. Those symbolically infused actions aren't merely driven by attaining the short-term effect or goal, but are synchronistically linked to the envisioned goal in mind. Symbolic actions are linked to the inner world and intrinsic motivation, which will give deeper meaning to things performed – when those things are aligned to a certain extent to your vision.

Meaning and spontaneity might seem unrelated at first sight but they are actually very much connected. Meaning can only occur when you can place the activity in a higher context of being on course with your mission, goal or vision. That motivating goal or vision originate from the same source as where spontaneity arises from. When the conscious connection to that source gets stronger, the more meaningful your activities potentially can be, and the better you can follow that momentary impulse which arises naturally from within. And yes, the higher the potential for spontaneity.

Obstruction of the natural momentary impulse

The natural momentary impulse can meet a lot of obstacles on the way before the impulse is expressed. Obstruction can occur when one tends to rationalize or reason too much – or to take reason and mental process too seriously.

Thinking in words is not indigenous to life, but is fabricated by humans. That is to say, language is a technology and is not natural. Language is therefore contradictory to spontaneity. The natural self-originating motivational force can be obstructed by constructions of language when attention is given to those constructs. When attention is paid to those constructs, they are put between the force and the manifestation of that force, the latter which is the act in itself. By giving internal language-based constructs our attention, they solidify and turn into obstructions between the natural motive force and the expression of that force. Paying attention is similar to paying money; attention is the spiritual currency. Spend it wisely.

The mechanisms of language and its dynamics with the internal motive force gets even more complicated when more human beings are involved. Allowing for spontaneous behavior to arise is even more of a challenge when social dynamics are involved. Other forces are at play when social dynamics are involved, for example the psychological phenomenon of *groupthink* in which “the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome”⁵. Culture and psychological phenomena occurring in groups potentially hinder spontaneity.

What's in a name

Words are tools for holding and transferring energy. Out of all possibilities, words narrow down that potential to a very limited object. The created and known words, syntax and semantics of a language shape the *range of potential forms* to be commonly experienced. Language acts as intermediary between the realm of possibilities and the experienced reality and is also the safeguard

5 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink>

and delimiter of the experienced reality. Language as mechanism lays the groundwork for the broker, the proxy, the intermediary and ultimate authority of consensus reality, because language constructs determines the *allowed known* and the *yet unknown* (but potentially knowable) to be experienced.

In the realm of language-based experienced reality, words are needed to be created to express and convey new forms, out of the unformed potential. When no new word is created or agreed upon, the form to be conveyed can't be conveyed in this realm of language-based experienced reality. Therefore language is both the instigator of new possibilities for someone, as well as the delimiter for global potential novel experience. Language also makes it possible to define culture and behavioral rules or constraints, shaping the frame of reference of allowed behavior. Spontaneity is challenged by that frame. Culture is the language-shaped global configuration of a specific group, with specific configuration making up the *person*, the individual of a group.

An organization's culture can be viewed as the cadence of remembered accumulated and repeated behavior and beliefs. There's no point in trying to directly change the dynamics of this phenomenon, but let's use it to our advantage on the way to spontaneity instead of allowing the culture to work against us.

For spontaneity to arise, the environment needs to be safe and supportive of non-default dynamics. That is not easy and comes with resistance. A common phrase is that humans are *creatures of habit*. That might *apparently* be so, but this is not completely true. Humans are *creatures of novelty*, even though we have learned and adapted non-natural tendencies.

Habits are a very convenient feature of our species though, as long we are operating in a world that is prominently experienced and perceived via our rational and thinking mind. That is so because generally we experience and perceive the world as something which is conventional, traditional, time-honored, repetitive and familiar, opposed to experiencing and perceiving the world as novel. Navigating such a familiar world with steady and unchanging intrinsic motivational forces (e.g. intention, vision, mission, beliefs) will result in repeated and similar behavior. The power of habit is such that repeated behavior stops being so much a conscious effort and becomes automatic, which is very helpful in our daily activities in the current world.

Changing habits, the cadence of past behavior, takes power and will. The cadence is akin the remaining effect of swirling around for a minute or two: everything is still spinning even though you are standing still. It takes power to keep standing still with the force of the cadence continuing. After persevering this challenge, everything stops moving and the cadence is brought to a standstill – the figurative habit has lost its backing.

There are two things which can change resulting in changed behavior:

- the experienced world stops being familiar and turns to novelty
- our motives for navigating the world change as an effect of changes in the inner world, for example as effected by insight, gained awareness, inspiration, spontaneity, understanding, changed vision, goal or dream, etc.

The two are reciprocally connected and effected. Changes in the experienced world can lead to other behavior, as changes in behavior can result in experiencing the world as original.

The line between programmed and natural behavior

The line between unconscious automatic behavior and conscious spontaneous behavior is not always that clear when that behavior is only observed from the outside.

To illustrate this matter, let's have a look at the murmurations of starlings. To us it might seem that the *habit* of a flock of starlings is to fly around sunset every day. After all, they do that every time. On the other hand, can it also be that the birds are attuned to the *natural rhythm*, which makes them fly every time around sunset, *instinctively*? And what is the difference anyway and why does it matter in our organizational context?

A habit can be defined as 'an *acquired mode* of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary', 'a *settled tendency* or usual manner of behavior' or 'a behavior pattern *acquired by frequent repetition*'⁶.

Do starlings fly every day around sunset because they *acquired* this pattern by frequently having flown around sunset? Or are they every time *inspired* to do so, triggered by a *natural impulse*? The latter is behavior as a result of being attuned to nature.

The former is behavior as a result of repetition, which in effect becomes the motive force (being the *cadence of the habit*). The latter is spontaneous behavior. Behavior which is exclusively the result of repetition is fabricated, because it is not substantiated by an intrinsic force – it is not *natural*. When behavior is motivated out of habit and not spontaneously by a natural impulse, the motivating trigger is extrinsic and not inspired and hence outside the realm of spontaneity. Spontaneity is only possible when the act is initiated naturally and originating from intrinsic forces.

Habits can be beneficial and supportive for the goal in mind. To be spontaneous doesn't mean to throw all habits overboard, right away anyway. Maybe you will at one point, maybe you won't. What does matter is to be consciously aware of the habits and consciously choosing the right ones which are supporting you. Who is in control: the force of habit, or you? Spontaneity can arise when we are practicing being more consciously aware and attuned to our inner guide.

When changing habits it is common to encounter resistance. This resistance arises from the force of the cadence of previously adapted patterns or habitual modes of behavior, which deviates from the proposed new intended behavior. The proposed new intended behavior is in dissonance with the habit and therefore is opposed by the cadence of habit.

Not all environments are suitable and supportive for spontaneity and many organizations might not yet be ready for spontaneity at large. To not follow the cadence of culture and habits takes will and conscious awareness. It takes strength to abide in the observation of the cadence – resulting in a particular tendency to behave by default – and not going along with it. It's not easy. It's way easier to just go along with it. But that's not fun because we all know where that will lead to, into the *known*. Excitement lies in the realm of the *unknown*.

The force of habit can be strong and when we are not alert, we might automatically be towed along by that force and behave habitually, in default mode. That default mode is not resulting in spontaneous behavior, but in predictable behavior. When we are alert, we can observe the cadence of culture and the force of habit and take a conscious decision whether we exhibit specific behavior or not. The exhibited behavior might be the same, but the inner process is quite different. One type of behavior is out of habit and without conscious awareness, the other is volitional and with conscious awareness.

6 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/habit>

Culture can also work *for* you instead of *against* you. Even though culture is an echo of collective behavioral traits and beliefs, it can serve as a teacher in disguise. Culture points the obstacles out to be taken away in order to become spontaneous. Conscious, alert awareness is required to be able to observe these cultural characteristics which are limiting the agility and responsiveness of your organization, and yourself as individual. Courage is needed to address those limiting cultural characteristics and to change to a new way by experimentation. Behavioral traits like continuous experimentation, keenness to become more spontaneous and courage to address obstacles will infuse in the culture of the organization as an effect. This is changing the culture by example, as a welcome side-effect of the exhibited behavior, and not directly as a goal (which is impossible).

Conscious entrainment versus entrancement

As adults we can choose to what tune/spirit we attune ourselves, when we are aware of this possibility. Attuning ourselves to that tune which is beneficial to life and our individual spirit, vision and mission, is our responsibility. Nobody else can do that for us, because we are the only ones who is receptive to ourselves – to our being.

Children are attuned to the environment in which they grow up, and families are the most significant source of *a tune* to *attune* to. Even when not verbalized, or let alone be in conscious awareness, traits and internal mental processes are seeded in the child by the people closest to the child. The child is not the only one who is being affected, but all those within range of the sender. Albeit that the susceptibility might differ quite a bit, because a child is very susceptible compared to an adult. A child behaving at later stadium just like one of the parents is therefor not unexpected in any way, even without considering possible passed-on genetic traits.

Exposure to patterns coming from the outside world can potentially lead to *entrainment*⁷ to those outside sources. Unconscious entrainment to outside sources results in acquiring a mode of behavior that is involuntary.

We are automatically entrained to the cultural narrative, the default tune. We are told what is possible and what is not. What is happening and what is not. No need to think or question. We should all take the steering wheel in our hands, or the also figurative tuning dial of the radio to attune to the sound we really like and would like to be receptive to.

When we are on default mode, not knowing of other possibilities, we are entranced and entrained to the standard tune, which is very confined. *Entrancement* puts us into trance, under the spell of the wizard/DJ. Entrainment awakes us to possibility. Entrainment gets us into the spirit of it, into the cadence of life allowing us to act spontaneous in harmony.

Change-resisting and status quo upholding organizations

Changing organization structures and dynamics, be it the financial system, education, political system, law enforcement or a company, seems a hard thing to do. Especially societal structures and dynamics are difficult to change without a revolution. Maybe that is so because the people in power like to stay in power and aren't that obvious in society as they are in a company (besides the more covert shareholders). Societal structure and power dynamics are not that transparent. Usually the transparency of a company's structure and power dynamic is a lot higher, and the people who have mandate to drive changes are more visible.

When one (or a few) is pursuing another way of working than the default mode, it will take time and effort to gain support to adapt the proposed change. And that is only possible when the

⁷ Entrainment is the process of attuning oneself to the cadence or rhythm of a specific source.

stakeholders and people involved are *willing* to change for the benefit of all. Sometimes there are powers who are *actively resisting change* of organizational structures and dynamics because they are benefited in keeping it as it is – keeping the status quo. This is primarily of concern on societal level, where the powers and players involved aren't visible – like hidden shareholders of a company. Change in organizations is therefore in principle easier than in society, as there is a willingness to change for the better, as long as the organization's vision and mission, including ethics, are maintained.

A willingness to change by the people in power is needed to make any lasting and significant organization changes. That doesn't mean that change *has* to be initiated by the people in power. Change starts with you and you radiate change by example, which is infectious and can transform the environment from inside-out. When the radiation of spontaneity reaches the leaders of the organization, let's hope that they feel the inner call to boost that radiation and be a strong radiator themselves, by amplifying the signal.

Inner change comes first. And that is not something taken lightly nor is it easy. Inner change touches authenticity, belief systems, sensitivities, family patterns, ethics, etc. It's impossible to change bureaucracy by adding business rules and procedures. The very thing we are trying to change or improve is strengthened because we are infusing the thing with its essence, like a blood-infusion. When changing something we need to look at the underlying pattern or principle of the thing to be changed *and* the change to be introduced: how is the proposed change different? Does it lead to more freedom of movement, expression or spontaneity? Or is it another cloak of the same underlying principle of the very thing we are trying to change?

We need to operate from another starting point, another *modus operandi*, when we are aiming for the ideal spontaneous organization. Awareness of the principles of spontaneity is needed to affect sustainable positive change. Organization structure, rules, processes, behavior and dynamics can't be sustainably changed when we are operating from the same starting point from which the very thing to be changed originated from. Inner guidance, awareness and intelligence are needed.

Sustainable positive change can only become natural in any organization when the individual's intrinsic motive forces and the organization's underlying motives (originating from its spirit) become key ingredients in the operation of the organization. Cultivating cellular awareness in the organization is supporting this by awakening previously obfuscated intrinsic motive forces. Continuous improvement in this sense doesn't mean that every experiment must result in something better objectively regarded. No, what matters more is that the experiment resulted in growth, personally and collectively as organization. This also doesn't mean that the objective result doesn't count *at all*, just keep experimenting.

Spontaneous organizations are about getting real. No masks, politics or keeping up appearances. Those are adversaries of spontaneity. Truth and realness arise from stillness, the same source of natural intelligence and harmony. Deceiving is not possible in harmony with natural intelligence. Spontaneity and deception are incompatible and can't coexist. Spontaneity means to be receptive, not deceptive. Receptivity to the inner tune and the tune of the bigger organism, the organization you are part of. Listen to the tune to attune, in order to do the right thing naturally.

Organizational structures and dynamics took time to grow into what they are now and many people have been involved in the process. When a lot of human beings are involved in the organization, it will be difficult for one (or a few) to change the dynamics of the organization even though it might seem common sense to do something completely different. Together we uphold the dynamics and

way of operating by consent. Acquiescing to the default *modus operandi* is easier than doing something different, the latter which is by default not supported by the environment. Fresh views of a newcomer will diminish soon after being exposed and entrained to the existing culture. Like a spreading virus, the *de facto* culture and way of working will spread to the newcomer, after a potential period of immunity. *Resistance is futile. You will be assimilated.* Unless you won't, by attuning to the inner motive force and start radiating the intended change from within.

The ideal spontaneous organization

The ideal spontaneous organization moves instantly following its natural impulse and responds immediately in perfect harmony with its inherent spirit. All individuals who are part of the organization act as one organism, with keeping their sense of individuality. Every part of the organization, each cell, is everywhere in the organization, being one in essence/spirit.

Imagine you are running your ideal company. Just think of something, it doesn't matter what (neither for what reason). In that company, everybody involved knows exactly as much as you do, thinks the same, is driven by the same motivators, is sharing the same moral values, is as intelligent and aware as you are, and all have their specialties. In your imagination you can switch your central point of perception to each and everyone involved. You all share your essence: the same intelligence, being and spirit.

Just imagine it – no worries about the details. Now I have a question for you: are there any managers, bosses or team leads in your organization? And if so, *why*? Are there any meetings, internal e-mails, information tracking software? If so, *why*?

Continuing with this imaginal company, when I am everywhere as different roles, I don't need to ask approval to do something, I don't need to have meetings, track abstractions of energy flows (i.e. in the form of information), I don't have bosses nor am I the manager or boss of somebody else. When I *do* image those, though, I need to boost my abilities to imagine beyond the known. Imagination is a power that can be used to conceive of novel things, but can also be used to stick to the known and predictable.

Continuing again, in this imaginal company the decisions are taken independently and spontaneously and the whole organization moves accordingly and instantly – spontaneously. Everybody (which is in essence me, being the spirit of the organization) does the right thing in any given situation. The *right thing* being the thing I consider to be the right thing, all things considered. The organization is operating in and on the same underlying spirit, containing the vision, mission and operating on the same ethics. I can confidently loosen the reins of any outer control. In this imaginal situation, there is even no need to track and handle information, nor the need for conversation using language – there is communication in the true sense of the word. Communication in the communion in spirit, which doesn't have spacial dimensions and therefore language can't exist (which needs spacial dimensions). Changes in the movements of the organization arise from within, as inspiration and intuition, after being made aware of input coming in through the senses or spontaneously arising from within. The former is responding to something out there, the latter is the initiating or instigating mode.

Maybe you guessed it already, this imagined organization is pointing to the ideal spontaneous organization. Not just as something which is imaginal and stays in imagination, but as an ultimate aim of endeavor.

An *ideal* is a conception of something in its perfection and at the same time an ultimate aim of endeavor. Entertaining and pondering an ideal can animate a concept into something which feels almost tangible and feasible, which in turn can lead to feeling inspired and motivated from within. Entertaining an ideal is therefore a powerful way to tap into a sustainable energy source, originating from *the ungraspable and intangible within*.

The ideal spontaneous organization described as such is still an abstraction. It is up to you to ponder upon this ideal and to turn this abstraction into something animate and concrete, allowing the spontaneous organization to form into ever higher spontaneous shapes, given the context you are in.

The intangible and essential guide of your organization

Pondering about your organization as ideal spontaneous organization and discussing this within your organization, can lead to inspired action to change the organization's dynamics. The ideal can serve as a compass for the direction to go to, with the ideal in mind. It is also a check whether you are on track towards realizing that ideal, eventually in the here and now.

The ideal is not so much a question of *how* as it is about the *wow*. The *wow* inspires, the *how* rationalizes. The ideal spontaneous organization is completely guided by its underlying spirit, driving all behavior of the organization. Tapping into the spirit is essential for being part of a spontaneous organization. The spirit is the guide.

The ideal of the spontaneous organization, regardless how far out that seems to be, functions as a calibrating method. The ideal serves as a way to determine how to proceed further. The grand scope of the ideal is a guiding method for making sure that the correct course adjustments are made which are leading towards realizing that ideal in the here and now. The far out ideal will guide you into the right direction. The ideal therefore has a guiding purpose, the importance of which is not to be misunderstood. Big dreams have a strong appeal, the ideal visioned in the big dream pulls you like a magnet.

For the spirit to be a useful guide, it needs to be animated. First and foremost the (re-)animation process of the organization's spirit is to give it attention by talking about it within the organization. Reanimate it by exploring and adventuring into the essence of the organization and to let those discoveries be more and more part of the daily operations in the organization. Up to the point that the spirit is experientially animated by the attention given to it, so it can serve as a guide for the organization.

Likewise, it is of paramount significance that you individually give attention to your inner guide by listening to your inner voice, your inner motive forces. Attune to your essence and consciously tap into your energy source. Collective harmonious spontaneity can only be exhibited when your spirit is aligned to the spirit of the organization. It needs to be entrained to the same tune in order to harmoniously act spontaneous on collective scale. And this can't be done forcefully, nor is that desired, but this will be a natural entrainment when there's a *natural compatibility* between the two,

The life giving force, the spirit, is natural in origin. The spirit is therefore by default attuned to nature. Aligning ourselves to our individual and collective spirit at large will attune ourselves to nature. Which will eventually result in our being in harmony with nature.

With a primary focus on reestablishing a conscious connection to our individual and organization's spirit, we spontaneously attune to natural forces, and nature in general. Spontaneous behavior is rooted in nature. By consciously reconnecting to nature, using our inner guide, we just might get

intuitive knowledge about our natural environment and how our planet earth is doing. And maybe, we just might be inspired to do the right and natural thing in harmony with mother nature⁸.

This guiding principle of the spontaneous organization is significant to uphold. Without this guiding principle, you will get lost at one point and will end up turning away from the ideal. The guiding principle of the ideal will be beneficial for life, it is *pro-life*, and will lead to *natural harmony*, that is harmony without external control or manipulation. Natural order and harmony. The guiding principle can't be disregarded if you are serious about the ambition to strive for the ideal.

Plugging into the same source

When jacked in into the same underlying spirit, all cells or individuals are operating on the same grounds. This is the configuration and driving force of the collective consciousness, powered by shared moral values, mission, vision and intent. The spirit underlying the collective is the origin of the natural creative impulse. Everything which is natural is unique. All human beings are in essence unique and have a unique expression, even when jacked into the same collective spirit.

The expression of each individual cell might be quite different from another cell in the same organism, but simultaneously being driven by the same underlying spirit. When we judge outer expression or appearances on their observable attributes exclusively, we might overlook the shared essential characteristic of the force which is powering that expression. By the looks of it, an appearance might be completely separate *from and to* another, but actually belonging to the same organism (which is sharing the same underlying driving force or spirit). The connecting factor isn't one of appearance but one of entrainment. Entrainment to the same spirit, the driving force of the individual unique expressions. Or in other words, the plethora of appearances are powered by the same driving force – apparently unrelated or unconnected but driving by the same internal motivation. The uniting factor is invisible and indivisible.

This picture is quite out there, wouldn't you say? But note that similar dynamics can be observed partially when looking at animals whom operate in groups, shoals or swarms. They remain their individuality but can also operate as seemingly one organism. Like harmonized *organic Borg*. Operating from a collective consciousness when appropriate, while individually remaining their individual consciousness and identity. We, as human animals, have the same capabilities as those group of animals show, even though we seem far off from those capabilities at the moment. We are born from the same source, nature, and that is also the realm of inspiration and intuition and where spontaneity arises from.

Reason d'être

Every organization has a motivational trigger to be existent. During the inception of the organization, the instigator had a goal, wish or vision to accomplish. This can be whatever, from becoming a billionaire to saving the world by developing free energy devices. There is a motivational trigger, no matter how material, how (un-)conscious, greedy, sustainable, green, altruistic or spiritual the underlying motivation is. The instigator is motivated to do those things which are supporting the attainment of that goal. What those things potentially can be is framed by what is considered the right thing to do, by moral values / ethics. All things which are supporting

8 Mother nature is depicted by Gaia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaia>), a personification of Earth. For new developments in the area of Earth as a living being, see Gaia Theory (“The Gaia Theory posits that the organic and inorganic components of Planet Earth have evolved together as a single living, self-regulating system. It suggests that this living system has automatically controlled global temperature, atmospheric content, ocean salinity, and other factors, that maintains its own habitability. In a phrase, “life maintains conditions suitable for its own survival.” In this respect, the living system of Earth can be thought of analogous to the workings of any individual organism that regulates body temperature, blood salinity, etc.” – from <http://www.gaiatheory.org/overview/>)

the attainment of that goal are in principal welcomed, regardless whether those stimulants come from within or without, again given certain moral values. The instigator is motivated by an impulse and starts the movement having a certain goal, vision, mission in mind supported by ethical values.

It could very well be that the initial motivation for setting up a company changes to something else along the way. Maybe it changed from “*getting rich*” to “*making sustainable shoes available to everyone for an affordable price, leaving as small a footprint as possible*”. Vision and mission are prone to change and will be shaped from within the organization, by all involved and inspired by the spirit from within.

In the spontaneous organization the survival of the vision, mission and ethical values weigh heavier than the survival of the organizational structure. That is, formless and spirit over form, expression over expressed, spontaneity over repetition.

When the spontaneous organization is driven further to its imagined ideal, the closer the experienced world seems to take the characteristics of a shared lucid dream. Holding tight to the form of the organization, including everything associated with that, when the vision and goal are fulfilled, doesn't make sense. Clinging to old expressed forms when the spontaneous world leans more and more to novelty is adversarial to novel expressions. Clinging to forms won't be sustainable when there's alignment with nature and its inherent spirit. Spontaneity leads to novelty, which leads to essence.

Best practices versus spontaneity

Maybe you have heard already about new ways of organizing work and organization design which is responsive instead of reactive. What brings the spontaneous organization to this mix? The spontaneous organization is a new paradigm and the ideal spontaneous organization is so *far out*, that the ultimate appearance and dynamics of such an organization are unpredictable, yes spontaneous. The goal is an ideal what motivates to the core of our being, which has the same origin where spontaneity arises from, that is, natural intelligence. The spontaneous organization takes meaning, inspiration, inner guidance, intuition, joy and pleasure, individual expression and growth, individual and collective intelligence as key components and therefore brings an inside-out approach to existing approaches. What lies behind the horizon is unpredictable when following the principles leading towards a spontaneous organization. What lies the horizon is a result of taking on the characteristics of being spontaneous – that means it can't be planned.

What sets the spontaneous organization apart from any other type of organization is its guiding principle. The guiding principle refers to the inherent guide in everybody and in any living organization⁹, which is the quintessential spirit. From that intangible source arises spontaneity, insight and direction: guidance. Spontaneous organizations are guided by this inner guide.

In our effort to improve as human beings and organizations, we analyze successful environments, extract patterns or principles (i.e. rationalize) and create a blueprint or model to create another successful environment.

When extrapolating success factors, patterns or habits, the tendency is to look at observable effects or appearances. The tendency is to disregard everything not perceivable by the senses. This means that the effects are taken into account and intrinsic factors (the causes leading to the effects) are neglected. Why is this so? Maybe it is so because those intrinsic factors are ungraspable,

9 A living organization is when there a sense of the underlying originating spirit and its kept alive by being attuned to it.

uncontrollable, unpredictable and irrational – that means that those intrinsic factors are not compatible with rationalization and therefore are overlooked while extrapolating observable patterns.

Nothing wrong with looking at examples in the outer world for inspiration, but eventually they will impede your ability to be spontaneous. Best practices are only best practices in hind-sight and therefor a thing of the past. It is about the ability to do the right thing in the given context. Cultivation that ability is what in the prospect spontaneous organization is the cultivation of cellular awareness. Models can be helpful, principles of best practices as well – but they have their limit when you are aiming to be a spontaneous organization. Principles are effects of the insight coming from intelligence. Why bother with the effects and not look at the cause. Therefor the aim should be (if you are aiming to be spontaneous) to cultivate awareness and intelligence and be causative instead of following. To be spontaneous creative instead of predictable repetitive.

Bridging the gap

There seems to be quite a gap between the organizations we are all too familiar with and the ideal spontaneous organization. How to bridge this gap, if possible at all?

Every journey is inspired by a specific destination (vision or dream) in mind and it starts with taking the first step. Taking the first step is not a frivolous nor trivial one. It's *serious business*. Taking the first step towards a spontaneous organization requires courage and willingness to confront inner and outer tensions. Following it through requires determination, curiosity, vision and inspiration. Reaching the ideal of the ultimate spontaneous organization requires impeccability, foolishness (in the sense of *crazy wisdom*¹⁰) and living magic, where synchronicity is a matter of course.

When an organization strives to become a spontaneous organization, cultivating cellular awareness becomes preminent. Getting underway starts with pondering your organization as a spontaneous organization, talking about it, reanimating the organization's spirit, addressing the areas of cellular awareness.

Central in the process towards the spontaneous organization is joy, meaning, truth and yes: spontaneity. Let yourself be guided by spontaneity and creativity in order to become more spontaneous as organization. The state of doing is more important than the actual form it takes.

There are two movements to be made in the organization on the road to being spontaneous. One movement is on individual level, the other is on organizational level. Both the individual and the organization need to get clear of their mission, vision, inner motive forces (inspiration, enthusiasm) and moral values. In order to get clear about this it is paramount to connect with the underlying animating force, the ethereal spirit, of both the individual and the organization.

While in the process of becoming a spontaneous organization it is useful to have teachers/guides available. The teacher/guide mediates between individual and team, team and team, individual and individual, and is known with the inner and outer world dynamics and the guiding principle of the spontaneous organization. The guide/teacher is a temporary role and not a permanent one, nor is this wishful in the long run. As the organization proceeds and matures further, the guide will become more and more an observer. The ideal spontaneous organization only has the inner guide as guide, and not an external guide or coach, as that which will impede agility and swiftness and will hinder spontaneity.

10 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_madness or [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fool_\(Tarot_card\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fool_(Tarot_card))

Be positive to change. Even though the proposed change is uncomfortable. Experiment, measure, analyze results and experiment again. Experiment continuously. Aim all acts to be an experiment, which allows for novelty to arise. Experimenting shows the way to novelty and spontaneity, as continuous experimentation is continuously trying to discover something new. The way of getting into the unknown (the *act itself*) and the *result* of that act (the *re-act*) are novel and spontaneous in a spontaneous organization.

Embrace and leverage characteristics which assist spontaneity, like playfulness, authenticity, experimentation, creativity, novelty, intuition, kindness, among others. Being efficient is not so much an item as effectiveness is, on the way being spontaneous. Efficient spontaneity doesn't exist, besides in language, as shown here.

Allow for exceptions, which are basically the rule in spontaneous organizations. Exceptions are the rule, instead of an exception to the rule. Allow the unexpected, the tailored, the customized – don't restrict by rule. Built IT systems likewise, as supporting and not restricting, until IT by itself becomes an obstacle for spontaneity.

Regardless your position in the organization you are part of, you can get aligned with the ideal of the spontaneous organization by contemplating this ideal. In addition, find out what drives you, what you find inspiring and motivating and what your mission is in life, if you like that terminology. Start dreaming big. Get clear about your moral values.

If you are fulfilling the role of leader in your organization, great. You can have by default and in potential more impact when driving change. Your goal is to envision your biggest dream, to inspire and to align the organization you are leading with that dream, if in any way possible. Find other thought leaders in your organization who are enthusiastic about the ideal spontaneous organization, get people on board with the idea. Spread the idea and invite people to ponder how your organization might look like as spontaneous organization. Inspire from within and kindle the inner spark.

When you are fulfilling another role in the organization, you can still have significant impact. Inspiration radiates. Talk about your idea of your spontaneous organization, radiate your vision. Embody the characteristics of spontaneity, be real, be you without concessions. Be impeccable.

From here to the spontaneous organization is a journey of adventure and exploration. And hard work, meaning getting rid of limited and narrow views, programmed concepts and behavior constraints, assumptions, the conceptual external authority, cultural concepts, and more. It also means embracing change, trust, courage, being yourself, trusting others, listening to your inner voice, intuition, enthusiasm, inner motive forces, dreaming big and acquiring a new mode of thinking¹¹.

In essence...

The spontaneous organization is going back to our natural abilities and our conscious connection with life, with nature and our natural tendencies of creativity and novelty. Spontaneity arises from the unknown and that is our playground, where novelty is common.

11 Our current mode of thinking is limiting. New words and concepts can be assimilated, but the mode of thinking can hardly change. Changing the mode of thinking to be more aligned with nature (which is spontaneous), implicates less causal thinking (one thought leading to another), a more meta mode of thinking (observing the different channels of thought and their constituents) and silence to let original thoughts arise out of nothing (a thought having no apparent progenitor).

The road towards a spontaneous organization isn't limited to the effects on the organization in itself, nor does it fit in the work-life versus private-life paradigm. Following the road towards a spontaneous organization will have foundational impact and effect on all individuals involved. The focus changes from looking outward (including letting reason being the ruler of our actions) to listening inward and letting the guiding principle be at the foundation of our individual and collective behavior.

At the heart of the prospect spontaneous organization is cellular awareness, and the cultivation of it. The intelligence of the individual is the collective intelligence of the spontaneous organization. The *harmonious Borg is one and all*.

To be harmoniously acting spontaneous, individually and collectively, and aligned with nature, requires loosening the reins. It means being guided and propelled by our inner intangible but essential force.

Out of this entrainment to nature and to our individual and collective spirit arises natural intelligence and spontaneous behavior to express novelty. Spontaneous creation with us human beings in between the conception and the perception of the expressed novelty.