

# Modern Heroes

- An exploratory study of Norwegian Leader Talents

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Master Thesis in Strategy and Management

"This thesis was written as a part of the Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration at NHH. Neither the institution, the advisor, nor the sensors are - through the approval of this thesis - responsible for neither the theories and methods used, nor results and conclusions drawn in this work."



# Preface

*This thesis is the result of a journey, a journey that has taken us from east to west, from winter, to spring, to summer, a journey in the footsteps of our forefathers through the ski tracks of the Vasaløpp, a journey up and down the Merinohill countless of times and through the endless corridors of fruitful conversation to finally end up in this paper. It's been a journey that have opened up our eyes and a journey that we did not expect to make in the outset of this project. We are humble in regards to our accomplishment and our potential contribution. But we are happy that we have been able to work together and now present you with this paper. We hope that you find it interesting, uplifting and inspiring enough to at least have one conversation about the topic of positive psychology and leader talents with someone close to you. Because in the end we have found that people make people happy.*

*And so, let your journey begin...*

Bergen, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2011

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Bernhard Bergström

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Kjetil Selstø Hatlehol



# Acknowledgement

Asking ourselves the same question we asked our respondents: “Who would you like to thank for being where you are today?” The answer comes down to people.

A special thanks to our thesis advisor, Professor Knut J. Ims who put forward a topic that arouse curiosity and opened doors to a world of positivity and happiness. We are thankful for your guidance, advices and the conversations this spring that have contributed in us flourishing and growing as humans.

We wish to thank all of the leader talents. They have been of great inspiration and we would like to thank them for sharing parts of their lives, and giving us some of their time to talk with us.

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# Abstract

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- Authors:* Bernhard Bergström and Kjetil Selstø Hatlehol
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- Key words:* Positive Psychology, Leader Talents, Virtues, Intrinsic Motivation, Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Heroes, Flow
- Purpose:* To get a better understanding and identify a number of factors affecting who is and who becomes a leader talent
- Methodology:* Ten semi-structure interviews with a stratified sample of Norwegian Leader Talents
- Theoretical perspectives:* Positive Psychology in particular Psychological Capital, Motivational theories including Hierarchy of Needs and Crowding Out theories, Philosophy such as Aristotelian Virtue
- Conclusions:* Norwegian Leader Talents can be seen as Modern Heroes. They are in principal reflecting Aristotelian virtues such as Courage and Wisdom. They seem not to have grand plans, or value strong strengths representing transcendence. People are important both as a source of happiness, having a balance between work and private life as well as an enabling force, especially in form of strong leaders who have lifted up and given them responsibility early on.

# Summary

In this paper we ask: “What drives and enables Norwegian Leader Talents, and what virtues do they value?” Based on ten qualitative interviews with leader talents identified by E24.no’s 2010 Top 100 Leader Talents ranking and a theoretical background of Positive Psychology, motivational theories and philosophy we find that these Norwegian Leader Talents can be seen as Modern Heroes. They are in principal reflecting Aristotelian virtues such as Courage and Wisdom. They seem not to have grand plans, or value strengths representing the virtue of transcendence. Instead they are driven by gratification and the good life. People are important both as a source of happiness as well as an enabling force, especially in form of strong leaders who have lifted up and given them responsibility early on.

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*The gross national product does not allow for the  
health of our children, the quality of their  
education, or the joy of their play.*

*It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the  
strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our  
public debate or the integrity of our public  
officials.*

*It measures neither our wit nor our courage;  
neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our  
compassion nor our devotion to our country.*

*It measures everything, in short, except that  
which makes life worthwhile.*

– Robert F. Kennedy, 1968





# Chapter 1

## Introduction

---

*In this chapter the background for the study is presented. The core is to show why the trend of ranking leader talents and emergence of positive psychology is a suitable to look closer at and a fruitful area of research. We present our research question and the aim of our paper. Finally the structure of the paper is presented.*

---

*“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson -

### 1.1 Background

Every story should have a beginning that catches the reader’s eye and interest. That sets the mood and that makes us ready to be entertained and inspired. It can be as classical as “Once upon a time...” or “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” (Dickens, 1859), and so it has been ever since the old Greek storytellers called out “Sing to me, Muse” (Homer, 2011). Stories of the ancient times conveyed images of heroes and role models, of traits to imitate and to take after. In Norway and Scandinavia we had Norse Mythology, in Catholicism stories of Saints and divine angels, and from India come the Bhagavad Gita.

In these stories and heroes, traits were captured that reflected what was desirable in society and contemporary culture. Some as Aristotle, Plato and later on early Christian thinkers called these virtues. They were at first four being courage, justice, prudence and temperance. Later on they became seven when faith, hope and charity were added by Saint Paul.

For centuries they became the basics of what young people, at least western nobility, were taught and were motivated to strive for. Then in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, social sciences developed and in order to separate itself from what was seen as an oppressive view of the world, virtues were thrown out of the window. Instead everyone was to be seen as blank sheets when they were born and research focus was turned to actions and behaviors (Seligman, 2002:130). This has been reflected throughout leadership research as Yukl puts it: “More research has been conducted on leader activities and behavior than on any other aspect of leadership” (2006:441).

When this view didn't seem to answer everything, new research directions were developed. One of these has been transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Developed in the 1980s transformational leadership deals with the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership, in which personality has been a key word (Yukl, 2006:248). Personality is closely linked with characters and virtue, the difference being that personality only aims to be descriptive. The focus has returned to developing leader strengths and focusing on building value-based culture, teams and belonging. This kind of thinking has been supported in management literature by for example Arie De Geus who studied corporate longevity. He and his colleagues concluded that “most companies fail because they focus too narrowly on financial performance and pay insufficient attention to themselves as communities of human beings” (Middleton, 2003:55). And De Geus also point out that as a leader you must “let people grow within a community that is held together by clearly stated values” as a sense of community is essential for long-term survival (De Geus, 1997). Another finding relevant to this is Collins & Porras who has found evidence that, companies with a strong core ideology who opts to make a lasting contribution make more money than their pragmatic, short-term rivals in the end (2002).

At the same time as this is going on in management and leadership theory the world is revolving at an ever increasing speed. One example is Hamel, who in the beginning of the new millennia, reported that a Gallup poll of 500 CEOs had pointed out that the past 10 years winners were newcomers. 62 % said that newcomers had won by changing the rules of the game (Cascio, 2010). The global work market is demanding something different. Our economy, at least in the OECD, is becoming more and more knowledge intensive (OECD, 2010:54). More than 35% of those aged 25-34 years across OECD countries have completed higher education, a figure significantly higher than the average of 20% for those aged 55-64 years (OECD, 2010:56). In

Norway more than 27 per cent have a degree from university (SSB, 2009). In this having the right talent has become more and more important.

Richard Florida presented, in his book “The Rise of the Creative Class”, that the knowledgeable talents in society is an ascending economic force of increasing importance (2002). And this is not the distant future, but the present day reality. In PwC 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Global CEO Survey; a majority of CEOs (66%) fear talent shortages will strangle their company’s growth (2011). Wayne F. Cascio has said: “It will be crucial for businesses to attract and retain the best thinkers. Companies will need to build a deep reservoir of talent... to succeed in this new era.” (2010:15).

In a local business context, Norway’s largest company Statoil seeks to fill up their ranks with talents. They use the term “heroes of tomorrow” in their commercials on television and supportive community actions (<http://www.morgendagenshelter.no/>). In a global context Indian technology giant, Infosys Technologies Ltd. reported that out of 1.3 million people applying for jobs only 2% were found employable in 2006 (Cascio, 2010:17). There is a global demand that exceeds the supply of people with needed skills. Bakker & Schaufeli asks: “What can organizations do to attract and keep creative, dedicated, and thriving employees who make organizations flourish? Which working conditions inspire employees to be engaged, go the extra mile, and persist in the face of difficulties?” (2008:147).

The industry trying to identify and headhunt talents has exploded. There are new types of companies such as NOVA100, who asks talented students to recruit other talented students to an exclusive network that then get unique access to companies (Nova Networks, 2011). There is a whole new market for trainee programs and the classical companies such as MercuriUrval, Adecco and Manpower are doing better than ever (NTB, 2011).

One part of this has been a new trend to nominate and award the best student (Econa, 2010), the best young leader and rank the top leader talents of Norway. One such Top100 leader talents list was developed and conducted for the first time in 2009 by E24.no, one of Norway’s leading business news websites. The second year, 2010, they received over a 1000 nominations and they used MercuriUrval to establish some credibility to their process (Indseth, 2010). They define leader talents as leaders 35 years old or younger that have or have held considerable organizational responsibility including profit and/or personnel. This trend we find very interesting. Who are these leader talents? And how did they get there?

But let’s pause here for a minute.

Because even though we have seen some incredible development and even though the world's global consumption and GDP is exponentially growing, we humans don't seem to be happier. Even though real income has gone up 16% last 30 years, the amount of people reporting that they are very happy is down 36 to 29 percent (Leonhardt, 2001, Seligman, 2009). As Ernst et al. summarizes: "Almost everything is better now than it was 50 years ago; there is about three times more actual purchasing power... Progress has not been limited to the material; there is more education, more music and more women's rights" (2009:294). All of this becomes a paradox thinking that "The prevalence of depression among young people is shockingly high worldwide. Nearly 20% of youth experience an episode of clinical depression by the end of high school. By some estimates depression is about ten times more common now than it was 50 years ago" (Ernst et al. 2009:294).

We find that economic growth in the last decades in most economically developed societies has been accompanied by little rise in subjective well-being (SWB). Money seems to be of lesser importance than believed (Diener & Biswar-Diener, 2002). It has even been called a focusing illusion (Kahneman et al., 2006). Our lives are filled with more material wealth and hedonistic pleasures, and still we are not flourishing as human beings.

That is also why the birth of the third millennium also saw the birth of a new movement called "Positive Psychology". Positive Psychology is a movement that wishes to balance psychology's focus with healing the ill, to also look at what makes people flourish. Martin Seligman, one of the founders describes the situation as following: "The belief that we can rely on shortcuts to happiness, joy, rapture, comfort and ecstasy, rather than be entitled to these feelings by the exercise of personal strengths and virtues, leads to legions of people who in the middle of great wealth are starving spirituality. Positive emotion alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, to inauthenticity and to depression" (Seligman, 2009:19).

We also note that: "Highly fascinating is the fact that positive psychology has somehow given renewed life to the ancient discussion of what in old times were called virtues" (Wennström, 2009). And as we take interest in positive psychology, the historic lineage of heroes, the globalized talent hunt in business and the modern day trend of ranking leader talents we have found that there is a lack of knowledge about leader talents in a Norwegian context and the role that virtues play in a contemporary business context. Being master students in business with a foundation in strategy and management including; HR, ethics, psychology, we wish to make a knowledge contribution concerning the phenomenon of leader talents and positive psychology.

## 1.2 Research Question

If we want to investigate leader talents, there are many ways we could examine it. We have chosen a holistic approach to explore what lies in, before and around top leader talents. A holistic approach compensates previous critique that positive psychology has been over-focused on the individual (Diener, 2009). We have chosen to study young leaders in a Norwegian business context, as this has not been done before. Christopher Peterson et al. write: “A psychology of energy has been out of fashion in most academic quarters for many years.... but organizational settings are a natural home for inquiry” (Peterson et al, 2009:169).

Application of Positive Psychology in the workplace aims to make life “better” for individuals and increase organizational gain, in form of higher productivity and increased attraction of highly skilled workers etc. The danger of applying positive psychology to a work-setting is if one’s engagement with work becomes the primary source of identity, self-esteem and happiness (Warren, 2010; Gavin & Mason, 2004). In this paper we have avoided such a focus by highlighting that there are multiple building blocks needed to make a life worth living including work.

In order to understand leader talents, we will look at three elements: drive, enablers and virtues.

In this thesis, *drive* is viewed as what leader talents strive for and what motivates them. One part of this is to identify their goals and aims in life. Our belief is that humans and society is not governed by sexual and sub-conscious carnal impulses as conceived in Freudian thinking (Seligman 2009). Rather we believe that in opposite to this “rotten-to—the-core dogma”, humans can be driven by positive as well as negative motivations. These motivations are not repressing some “dark” force but are actually true expressions of the Self. To understand motivators is important in the hunt for and development of leader talents. It should also help us reflect how society can create flourishing people.

One part of this is to look at role models. Cascio (2010:22) has proposed one research topic regarding this: “How might an organization identify and develop leaders who can inspire and motivate both older and younger generations of workers?” We wish to follow Cascio and look deeper into motivation and leader talents as inspiration and role models.

In the spirit of communitarian philosophers such as Charles Taylor, we recognize that leader talents exist in a context and the importance of social institutions that affect them (Zsolnai 2011). Our view is that people are inter-subjective beings living in a relational context where the interaction with other human being is essential for development, identity and meaning. Leader

talents have a past, a present and a future. There might be people, institutions or other relational factors that have had a significant impact in their lives, and that have moulded them to where they are today. Accordingly, we look at *enablers*. In this thesis, enablers are defined as the relational support and humans who have enabled our respondents to become leader talents.

There are volumes of work examining how couples and families resolve conflict but very few studies examining them having fun and laughing together (Gable & Haidt, 2005). In the same sense there are a lot of studies about what a leader should do but very few studies about what drives them and what have supported them getting there.

Leader talents may, in a business context, be seen as the heroes and role models of our time. They have achieved extra-ordinary accomplishments. Being role models they have an impact on society and is looked up to by others, such as colleagues, media or young students. We define a role model as “a person regarded by others as an example to be imitated” (Oxford English Dictionary 2011). For some, leader talents may represent success and what society sees as prosperous abilities or virtues. *Virtues* should in this study be understood as “the act of living up to one's full potential” (gr. areté) originating from the Aristotelian tradition. It is of interest to identify contemporary virtues valued by leader talents, as we believe that young people of today might be inspired by them. This is supported by Garret & Morris who stated that: “The time is now ripe to build on traditional leadership development by giving greater attention to studying leadership strengths.” (2010:95).

Binding drive, enablers and virtues together, we formulate our research question as:

***What drives and enables Norwegian Leader Talents,  
and what virtues do they value?***

### 1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the paper is to understand leader talents in a Norwegian business context anno 2011 by bringing a case to the board and increase knowledge on the phenomenon. We do this in the spirit of Ed Diener (2009): “We need researchers who continually point out the limits to our knowledge and who continue to build a stronger scientific foundation”.

This is done through achieving the following three objectives:

1. To identify driving forces and motivation among leader talents.
2. To identify supporting enablers in the environment around leader talents.
3. To identify virtues in a modern business society based on leader talents

Our aim is not to add to, what we see as western society’s’ strive and perhaps negative trend to focus much attention on creating perfect people. We will not be trying to answer or draw conclusions on genetic inheritance or the strength of different drivers. We wish to present a differentiated and more insightful view of what drives leader talents. We also wish to lead a discussion around their role as being modern heroes – role models.

Figure 1 show our research approach.



Figure 1: Research Approach

## 1.4 The structure of the paper

After having presented why and what this study is about we will take you logically through our process. In this paper the key chapters are introduction (Ch. 1), analysis I & II (Ch. 6 & 7) and conclusion (Ch. 8).

For those aiming to skim through the thesis, you will in chapter 2 find a presentation of the theoretical framework and literature study behind this paper. This is to give broad brush strokes covering important literature in positive psychology, motivational theory as well as philosophy.

After that comes Chapter 3 and the frame of reference, which is more practical and specific, putting focus on relevant findings and specific points that will be used later.

Chapter 4 is about methodology and how we actually conducted this study and the choices we have made.

Chapter 5 includes the ten portraits we have created. Each and every one of them has been personalized and their point is to cover the most important points and key message from each interviewee.

These findings are then analyzed in Chapter 6 using the frame of reference found in Chapter 3.

Chapter 7 is a discussion that aims to go deeper and it includes some of our own reflections concerning leader talents as modern heroes.

Chapter 8 is summing up conclusions and future research and serve as a reminder of what have been done and what can be done in the future.



# Chapter 2

## Literature Study

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*The chapter presents in a broad way previous research and theories about positive psychology, heroes and role models, motivation and philosophy. The main idea is to show the existing knowledge related to our field of research.*

---

*“If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”*

-Sir Isaac Newton-

### 2.1 Positive Psychology

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

What is happiness? What is a good life? Which are the positive emotions and how do they work? What makes people flourish? Are there generalizable character strengths and virtues that can be classified in the same way as mental illnesses and deficits like the DSM-IV? And like Shane J. Lopez asked: what would happen if we study what is right with people? (Lopez, 2009:690). These are some among the many questions that have been posed within the psychological movement that calls itself “Positive Psychology”. Starting off with a historical background, we will go on to define positive psychology, then describe some of the key concepts and finally present some criticisms against it.

### **2.1.2 Background**

Even though there have been scientists and psychologists who have studied positive topics during the last 100 years such as Don Clifton, who studied human strengths, George Vaillant, who studies effective coping, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who studies flow and creativity (Diener, 2009:7). And even though there have been theory building within humanistic psychology amongst scientists such as Gordon Allport, who looked at positive human characteristics in the 1950s and Abraham Maslow who advocated studying healthy people rather than sick people in the 1960s (Gable & Haidt, 2005, Luthans & Avolio, 2009). Psychology has since WWII become a science focused on curing and preventing mental illness. There is a 14:1 ratio of journal articles on sadness compared to happiness (Myers 2000).

According to Csikszentmihalyi and Seligman modern psychology have been forgetting two out of psychology's original three missions: "curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent." (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000:6). In one metaphor, psychology has been about how to bring people up from negative eight to zero but it hasn't been so good at understanding how people rise from zero to positive eight (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

One explanation for this is said to be the founding of Veterans Administration in 1946, that supplied psychologist with a lot of patients to create a living from, and the National Institute of Mental Health in 1947, from which academia got large amounts of funding. Psychology became concentrated on repairing damage within "a disease model of human functioning" (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000:6). And "this almost exclusive attention to pathology neglects the fulfilled individual and the thriving community." Thus Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi desired a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000). So what is positive psychology?

### **2.1.3 Definition**

*Positive Psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions.*

- Gable & Haidt, 2005 -

*"Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living. It is a call for psychological science and practice to be as concerned with strength as with weakness; as interested in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst; and as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling as with healing pathology. It will rise and fall on the science on which it is based. Nowhere does this definition say or imply that psychology*

*should ignore or dismiss the very real problems that people experience. Nor does it imply that the rest of psychology should be discarded or replaced.”*

- Peterson, 2009 -

In the same spirit as Peterson defines what Positive Psychology Gable and Haidt write: “Despite these inequities, positive psychology’s aim is not the denial of the distressing, unpleasant, or negative aspects of life, nor is it an effort to see them through rose-colored glasses. Those who study topics in positive psychology fully acknowledge the existence of human suffering, selfishness, dysfunctional family systems, and ineffective institutions. But the aim of positive psychology is to study the other side of the coin—the ways that people feel joy, show altruism, and create healthy families and institutions—thereby addressing the full spectrum of human experience” (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

*“Positive psychology has not and will not provide a magic bullet, elixir, or wand to solve the world’s problems. The promise of positive psychology is in its success in rounding out the story of human nature. People suffer and people thrive. Weaknesses and strengths coexist.”*

- Lopez, 2009 -

So knowing what positive psychology is defined as and not, we would also like to include it’s perspective which is presented by Vaillant who says “It is impossible to describe positive psychological processes without taking a life span, or at least a longitudinal approach. "Call no man happy till he dies," for a truly positive psychological adaptation should unfold over a lifetime.” (Vaillant, 2000).

There is a profound obstacle when researching happiness and positive human emotions, experiences and strengths and that is the view that these are inauthentic. This pervasive view of human nature, which recurs across many cultures, is by Prof. Martin Seligman called the “rotten-to-the-core dogma” (Seligman, 2009:10). From ancient thoughts of “original sin” to Freud’s sexual fixation theories dominating the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there is a basic view that good deeds are only a response to repress or make up for the “underlying savage impulses” of our nature. “Motivations like exercising fairness or pursuing duty are ruled out as fundamental; there *must* be some covert, negative emotion that underpins goodness if the analysis is to be academically responsible.” (Seligman, 2009:11). So turning against this, Positive Psychology tries to build up another kind of research. This research can be divided into three legs: positive emotions, positive traits and positive institutions (Seligman 2009).

And it differentiates between a life full of pleasure (hedonistic) which is being successful in having positive emotions and ability to increase these, a good life, which is not to maximize positive emotion, but where you use your signature strengths to achieve real and authentic satisfaction, and finally a meaningful life, in which you use your signature strengths to benefit something greater than you (Seligman, 2009:249).

Let us now look briefly into the concept of happiness and lives of pleasure, goodness and meaning.

#### **2.1.4 Happiness**

One of the trends in positive psychology is a decided shift in emphasis from a more hedonic vision of a positive psychology to an alternative vision grounded in the Aristotelian concept of eudaimonia (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Parks, Seligman and Steen has gone further and identified three constituents of happiness in their literature review: (i) pleasure (or positive emotion); (ii) engagement; and (iii) meaning (Parks et al., 2004).

*“It is not just positive feelings we want, we want to be entitled to our positive feelings”*

- Seligman (2009:18) -

The first route to greater happiness is hedonic, increasing positive emotion (Parks et al., 2004). It can be defined in terms of the ratio of pleasure to pain in one’s life (Diener, 2000; Kahnemann, Diener, & Schwartz, 1999 cited in Robbins, 2008), where pleasure is the good feeling that comes from satisfying homeostatic needs such as hunger, sex, and bodily comfort (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000, Seligman, 2009:109). When people refer in casual conversation to being happy, they are often referring to this route according to Parks et al (2004). Within limits, we can increase our positive emotion about the past (e.g. by cultivating gratitude and forgiveness), our positive emotion about the present (e.g. by savoring and mindfulness) and our positive emotion about the future (e.g. by building hope and optimism) (Parks et al., 2004). The problem with a hedonistic happiness is that our range of where our emotions fluctuate seems to be heritable and genetically determined, so that even though we can boost positive emotions in our lives there are clear limitations (Parks et al., 2004). Fortunately, positive emotion is not the sole determinant of happiness, and one of the goals of positive psychology is to offer a broader conception of happiness than mere hedonics (Seligman 2002).

A second route to happiness involves the pursuit of “gratification” (Parks et al., 2004) or enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000). Gratifications are more activities (Seligman, 2009:109). It refers to the good feelings people experience when they break through the limits of

homeostasis, when they do something that stretches them beyond what they were (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000). The search for gratification engages us fully. It absorbs us and individuals may find gratification in participating in a great conversation, fixing a bike, reading a good book, teaching a child, playing the guitar or accomplishing a difficult task at work (Parks et al., 2004). It requires us to use our character strengths and even though these activities may be enjoyable, they are not necessarily accompanied by positive emotions, such as gratification from running a marathon that may include a great deal of physical pain and exhaustion (Parks et al., 2004). We will further on look at this when we look closer at the concept of flow.

The third route to happiness comes according to Parks et al. from using our character strengths to belong to and in the service of something larger than ourselves; something such as knowledge, goodness, family, community, politics, justice or a higher spiritual power (Parks et al., 2004). The third route is therefore about feeling meaning in life (McGregor & Little, 1998). It satisfies a longing for purpose in life and is the antidote to a “fidgeting until we die” syndrome (Parks et al., 2004).

This view on eudaimonic well-being can be described as “a reflection of a person who is flourishing in terms of his or her character strengths and virtues, including among other things: autonomy, mastery of the environment, personal growth, positive interpersonal relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance” (Robbins, 2008:100, C. L. Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Ryff, 1989). We will return to this concept later in section 2.5 Philosophy.

Therefore pursuing positive emotions can be called “the pleasant life”, seeking gratification “the good life”, trying to use your strengths for something larger than yourself “the meaningful life” and using all three routes for “the full life”. Previous research has suggested that those who lead the full life have greater life satisfaction (Peterson et al. 2005).

### **2.1.5 Flow**

Flow is a state of consciousness where an experience is genuinely satisfying and demand total involvement from a person in the present (Mihaly 2008:39). Mihaly (2008) talks about flow being an optimal experience where one feel enjoyment, and he defines it as “a sense that one’s skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, in a goal-directed, rule-bound action system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing.” (Mihaly 2008:71). Therefore, three conditions are needed to enter a state of flow (Nakamura and Mihaly 2009:195): 1) own skills that match the challenges in the experience 2) the activity has a clear goal and 3) the activity must give clear and immediate feedback on the level of performance. Mihaly (2008:71) also emphasizes the

intense level of concentration when in flow and that other thoughts and the sense of time becomes irrelevant. He says: “an activity that produces such experiences is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake” (Mihaly 2008:71), a view that is in accordance with Park et al. (2004) second route to happiness mentioned above. Flow is also a state where people can experience happiness, good life and growth of the self (Nakamura and Mihaly 2009:195, Mihaly 2008:74).

### **2.1.6 Criticism against positive psychology**

Positive Psychology as a movement has not been developed without criticism. Smith (cited in Held, 2004:39) concluded that, “Its success should result in its demise: Psychology in good balance would not need advocates for positive psychology”.

Perhaps the most outspoken researcher trying to overcome a potential rift between psychology and positive psychology is the late Richard S. Lazarus who in 2003 published an article “Does Positive Psychology have legs?” in which he states that: “There is nothing wrong either with urging the study of positive emotions as long as one recognizes that any emotion can have a negative as well as positive valence depending on the context in which it occurs. I view what many of the protagonists say, however, as far too simplistic to move us toward a solid understanding of the role of emotion in health and well-being” (Lazarus, 2003:107).

He proclaims an emotion valence problem in which positive psychology researchers have simplified emotions to be either negative or positive in and by themselves. Examples are:

- Hope – that differs a great deal from experiencing a potential existential threat like taking a cancer test. Where you hope it’s not malignant, but still feel anxious about the results compared to hope as wishful thinking when applying for a job hoping to get it still anxious about the outcome.
- Love – A positive emotion when shared but a great source of misery when unanswered.
- Anger – Usually seen as negative due to risk of destructive consequences. But anger is experienced as having a positive tone or valence when we act resolutely and forcefully against someone or something by standing up for ourselves rather than shrinking away fearfully and helplessly. The sense of mastery derived from this could make us feel wonderful (Lazarus, 2003).

Besides simplifying positive emotions there has been a critique of positive psychology only promoting a life experienced as a shiny-shimmering rosy fairy tale. Held writes: “The tyranny of the positive attitude lies in its adding insult to injury: If people feel bad about life’s many

difficulties and they cannot manage to transcend their pain no matter how hard they try (to learn optimism), they could end up feeling even worse; they could feel guilty or defective for not having the right (positive) attitude, in addition to whatever was ailing them in the first place (Held, 2004:12).

A final critique useful to mention is Samantha Warren's heeding not to let positive psychology become a prescriptive science. In which science moves beyond describing what relates to what and what affects what, to prescribing how people should live their lives. A view actually shared by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi who write: "The study of the relations among enabling conditions, individual strengths, institutions, and outcomes such as well-being or income might merely result in an empirical matrix. Such a matrix would describe, for example, what talents under what enabling conditions lead to what kinds of outcomes. This matrix would inform individuals' choices along the course of their lives, but would take no stand on the desirability of different life courses" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

So those of us who is studying and using theory built up in positive psychology need to avoid being caught up in an excitement to create simple slogans and draw overly generalized conclusions.

## **2.2 Positive organizational behavior**

In organizational research the "old" core concepts of organizational behavior (OB) has been work motivation, job attitudes, or organizational leadership (Luthans, 2002), some of these have been positive constructs such as positive affectivity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007:774). As positive psychology took off, and attempts were made to reemphasize the importance of a positive approach Fred Luthans pioneered by mapping out positive organizational behavior (POB). Its focus is on building human strengths at work rather than only managing weaknesses (Nelson & Cooper, 2007). Close to this is Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), which calls for the study of what goes right in organizations, laid forth by Cameron, Dutton and Quinn (2003). The POS movement seeks to understand human excellence and exceptional organizational performance such as positive organizational development or Appreciative Inquiry. A third part of this is the authentic leadership development. Authentic leaders are seen as persons who have achieved high levels of authenticity in that they know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others (Avolio et al., 2004). Just as Positive Psychology in general, POB do not advocate the abandonment of the study of dysfunction and suffering at work. It merely asks to balance out the attention (Nelson & Cooper, 2007).

For us the field of POB and PsyCap is of interest since they are occupied with the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (Luthans, 2002:698, Youssef & Luthans, 2007, Luthans & Church, 2002). The criterion of being related to performance improvement in the workplace and theory and research based and validly measurable differentiates POB from being the simple personal development idea found in the best-sellers and also much of POS which focuses primarily on constructs such as compassion and forgiveness as ends in themselves for today's organization (Luthans, 2002:698).

We should also note that there is a fine and somewhat controversial and arbitrary line between psychological states and traits/virtues (Luthans & Church, 2002:59). The POB capabilities are called state-like, since they are open to learning, change, and management in the workplace. The POB states can be developed through training programs, managed on-the-job, or self-developed (Luthans, 2002:699). This differentiates POB strengths from virtues, but as we will see these tend to overlap and they will give us a better insight in the workings of Norwegian leader talents.

## 2.3 PsyCap

Psychological capital or simply PsyCap is an outgrowth of Positive Organizational Behavior (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). It was developed as a higher-order construct trying to look at which POB capabilities could be developed and invested in to increase performance. Part of this is that the whole (PsyCap) should be greater than the sum of its parts (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:19). PsyCap is framed as a resource theory close but different to human capital (what you know) and social capital (who you know). PsyCap concerns “who you are” and “who you are becoming” (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:20). It can be defined as an individual's positive psychological state of development made up of (Luthans & Church, 2002:69, Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:3):

1. SELF-EFFICACY - one's belief (confidence) in being able to successfully execute a specific task in a given context.
2. HOPE - persevering toward goals, figuring out how to achieve them (identifying pathways), and self-motivated to accomplish them, i.e., has willpower and way-power.



3. OPTIMISM - positive outcome expectancy and/or a positive causal attribution, making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future, emotional and linked with happiness, perseverance, and success.
4. RESILIENCE - to rebound, to 'bounce back' and even beyond from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility.

Citing a number of sources Avey et al writes: “Each of the PsyCap components described has been shown to be conceptually independent and empirically valid “(Avey, Luthans & Jensen, 2009:682). Exploratory correlational studies have indicated correlations in the .30 range for all four psychological capacities and a .38 correlation between self-efficacy and performance (Luthans, 2007). Further studies have shown that hope, optimism and resilience have a positive relationship with performance, job satisfaction, work happiness and organizational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). An illustration of this is a study who found, using actual data for the utility analysis, that a 2.5 hours PsyCap training program with \$100,900 average salary engineering managers yielded a 270 per cent return on investment, or what can be called return on development (Luthans & Avolio, 2009:301).

Still, the potentially most significant, but still largely overlooked, implication for POB application lies in leadership efficacy according to Luthans & Church. Although the importance of a leader's confidence has been recognized in the leadership literature over the years, there have been few attempts to measure, research, and apply the proposition that a leader's efficacy will have a strong positive impact on followers. That is, the leader can serve as a positive model to enhance the efficacy and resulting performance outcomes of followers (Luthans & Church , 2002:62). And this is a highly relevant question for us.

## 2.4 Role Models and Heroes

Worshipping of heroes can be traced far back in history (Arnulf 2009:131). In Greek mythology, there was an era of hero worshipping like in Homer's epic poems *Odyssey* and *Iliad* where both Odysseus and Achilles were among the main heroes (Tollefsen et al. 1997:29). In Norse mythology, the epic texts called *Saga*, told the tales of worthy men who had performed heroic acts. All of these men, they were typically men, were looked upon as role models in cultures where war and brave acts seemed to be important. But what makes a hero different from ordinary humans? According to Arnulf (2009:132), the hero in Greek mythology is an extraordinary person. He is deadly and has to risk something, often in a dangerous setting, to be triumphed as a hero.

The word hero (from Greek) is defined as “*a person who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities*” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). Also in other languages, for instance Chinese, the word for hero (Chinese: 英雄) exist. It is linked to features like strong and excellent behavior, but in contrast to Greek the word also means wise and beautiful (Arnulf 2009: 131). Klapp (1949:57) argues that “a hero may be a person, real or imaginary, who is admired by others since he stand out due to his unusual merits and superior qualities”. Klapp (1949:57) also point out that heroes symbolize success, perfection and conquest of evil. It seems that heroes represent the better self of its group of followers and are often viewed as leaders. Even in Norwegian storytelling from the 19th century with Espen Askeladd, display admiration for qualities and outstanding achievements of people in the battle against evil forces, such as the trolls (Asbjørnsen & Moe, 1998). We will in this paper follow our initial definition of role models as someone who is regarded and looked up to by others.

### **2.4.1 Heroes today**

Today, the word hero is not used as much in management literature (Arnulf 2009:134). Arnulf (2009:134) argue that when Max Weber introduced the word “charisma”, it became quiet around the heroes and heroic leadership in leader literature. But the word is more frequently used in the Norwegian society today. In that sense, it is of interest that Arnulf (2009:145) has asked Norwegians about heroes and leaders. The participants in his study mentioned the following features of a hero: play important part in a difficult situation, they are vigorous, braver than others and persons with leader skills. We can see even today, people understand heroes to have courage, strength and operating in dangerous setting, just like the heroes of ancient times. Questions could be asked if Klapp’s (1949) points about heroes and their symbolization of success and perfection are more closely related to the modern heroes of our societies.

### **2.4.2 Virtues**

Role models represent virtues or “*qualities that were considered morally good or desirable in a person*” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). The first Greek philosophers asked “what is the good of a person?” (Peterson & Seligman 2004:46). In Platonic tradition, virtue is to live to one self’s best (Tollefsen et al. 1997:102). The Platonic virtues are courage, temperance, and wisdom. When these are in harmony, it gives the fourth virtue of justice (Tollefsen et al. 1997:103). Aristotle talks about virtues in his book, Nicomachean Ethics, where he states that “a virtue is an acquired skill learned through trial and error” (Peterson & Seligman 2004:46). Aristotle also connects virtues and happiness as he says that happiness is” activity in accordance with virtue” (Peterson & Seligman 2004:47).

Judaism and Christianity have also had an impact on what is seen as virtuous. Thomas Aquinas describes seven virtues where four is taken from Plato. These four cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, temperance, courage. The last three are the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, all found described by Saint Paul in the New Testament (Peterson & Seligman 2004:47-48).

### **2.4.3 Contemporary Virtues**

The social sciences of 20<sup>th</sup> century have tried to explain behavior of humans not as result of characteristics or virtues, but as a result of environment (Seligman 2002: 130). Seligman argues that in the age of postmodernism, virtues are commonly seen as convention and he points out the following features to be seen as desirable or good in US today (Seligman 2002: 133): self-esteem, great looks, self-assertion, autonomy, wealth, competition mentality, being special and unique. It can seem that these features represent success and perfection in a society where competitiveness and market set the rules.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) have done a classification of character strengths and virtues with positive psychology as a backdrop. Positive psychology search for goodness of human mind and behavior as mention earlier, and in their book, “Character Strengths and Virtues: A handbook and classification” (Peterson & Seligman 2004), Peterson and Seligman defines six virtues to be ubiquitous virtues found across cultures (Peterson & Seligman 2004:51). These are:

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1) Wisdom and knowledge | 4) Justice       |
| 2) Courage              | 5) Temperance    |
| 3) Humanity             | 6) Transcendence |

## **2.5 Philosophy**

Philosophy is a field of study where the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality and existence are discussed and reflected upon (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). It is presented in this thesis as a background for both the study of human characteristics and existence and what motivates the human race. Some of these motivations can be the triggers for happiness and a good life.

Aristotle argues that humans strive for happiness, eudaimonia, and that is has to involve human realization as acting and thinking creature (Tollefsen et al. 1997:139-140). Wright argues that Aristotle’s meaning of eudaimonia was that it is the product of a life well-lived (2010:144). Also the followers of the stoic school emphasized that the goal of human were to achieve happiness, which meant a life in virtue (Tollefsen et al. 1997:152). But we find others in history that had

different view of happiness. The tradition after Epicurus focused on happiness as pleasure (gr. hedoné) through life as a whole, not just in the present (ibid:154).

In modern philosophy, the thinkers of existentialism have focused on what makes life meaningful. Kierkegaard argues that a meaningful is to be a self (ibid:437-438). He talks about three ways or stages to live your life: esthetic stage, ethical stage and religious stage (ibid: 442). Nietzsche, another existentialist, emphasizes that humans create purpose in life (ibid: 526), while Heidegger argues that purpose in life appear in that we involve ourselves in the world (ibid: 529). Sartre focuses on freedom and that we as human are “condemned to be free” and must choose our self (ibid: 527-528). A general contribution from existentialism is the philosophic thinking of autonomy. People are the centers of their own lives. We are free to decide for ourselves (Nyeng 2003:255). Common to the modern existentialist and ancient philosophers are that they search for purpose and goal in life.

Steger and Dik (2010:133) define purpose as “*people’s identification of, and intention to pursue, particular highly valued, overarching life goals*”. This definition shares the belief of human reflection and acting from Aristotle and existentialism. But this definition disengages itself from Aristotle in the way that it doesn’t specify what the life goal is. According to Steger and Dik “Goals are motivational constructs, with specific aims marked by a desire to obtain particular objects, states, abilities, relationships, or pieces of information. Goals generally have a relatively brief time frame.” (2010:134).

## 2.6 Motivation

Motivation has been richly studied among psychologist for decades and believed to be a unitary phenomenon. The basic idea is that people are moved to do something when they are motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In the literature we find many types of motivation theories. Theories based on needs and content such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1954) is one type. Cognitive theories such as Vroom (1964), or goal setting theory (Locke 1968) are other ways of categorizing motivation. In this literature study, we focus on dividing motivation in two general types: external and internal oriented theories.

External motivation, also referred to as extrinsic motivation, is tangible rewards that may be given to a person as a result of his movement towards something. Monetary incentive is one example of a tangible reward, and in business context, extrinsic motivators seem to be of substantial importance. Intrinsic motivation theories focus on internal and value-based rewards. Ryan & Deci (2000) explain it as when a person is motivated to do something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable.

We will now look closer at these two different aspects.

## 2.7 Extrinsic Motivation

### 2.7.1 Hierarchy of Needs

In his famous hierarchy of needs, Maslow (1954) proposed that there is a hierarchy of needs that affects humans' behavior. These needs can be seen as motivators and the strength of a need depends on satisfaction of other needs (Haukedal 2001:90). The basic needs, such as nutrition and safety, are to be satisfied before one can achieve higher psychological pursuits or needs, e.g. altruism or meaning (Biswas-Diener 2007:309). The hierarchy of needs is divided in five levels: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization, where physiological needs are at the bottom and so on. Criticism has been given due to the theory's shortcomings in empirical studies (Wahba & Birdwell, cited in Haukedal 2001:90) such as progression within the hierarchy and that level of needs may diversify. Biswas-Diener argues on the other hand that Maslow's theory has received support from research on subjective well-being and income (2007). Criticism or not, Maslow's hierarchy of needs has given a substantial contribution to motivation theories and is well-used among practitioners even though some scholars have their doubts (Haukedal 2001:92). This theory might help us better understand what drives leader talents.

### 2.7.2 The two-factor theory

Another interesting theory is Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory. Herzberg addresses job satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors through a study of engineers and accountants (1968). He suggests that these factors work independently. On one hand you have motivators that may lead to satisfaction, e.g. responsibility and recognition, and these arise from internal condition of the work. On the other hand you have hygiene-factors that are extrinsic, and absence of them, e.g. salary and work conditions, may lead to dissatisfaction and demotivated workers. Even though the theory has been criticized and questioned for its generalizability (Haukedal 2001:99), it seems to be well-used in business context to explain and address job satisfaction and motivation.

## 2.8 Intrinsic Motivation

Existing definitions of intrinsic motivation vary considerably among scholars and are usually very loose, if not utterly vague (Thierry, 1990:67). Heckhausen has identified different conceptualizations of intrinsic motivation and behavior (1989:456-460). One is that intrinsic motivation is behavior chosen in order to feel competent and self-determining (Deci, 1971). Csikszentmihalyi explains it as cheerful enjoyment while performing a task or absolute absorption

in an activity (2000). While Klinger sees it as activities are autotelic, meaning without any aim or goal- activities but as a pleasure in it (1971).

### **2.8.1 The Hidden Costs of Rewards**

In his famous article “The Hidden Costs of Rewards”, Edward Deci looks at the huge production difference between well-managed organizational units and poorly managed ones (1976). He sees motivation from a cognitive view where people act goal-directed and try to achieve goals at the lowest psychological cost (Deci 1976). According to Deci: “A person is intrinsically motivated if he engages in an activity to feel competent and self-determining in relation to the activity. There is no external reward; the reward is internal to the person and takes the form of feelings he has about himself.” The need for achievement, or the need to self-actualize are all aspects of people's basic intrinsic need to feel competent and self-determining (Deci, 1976:62).

To test how extrinsic or intrinsic motivation coexist an experiment was designed in which subjects had to solve puzzles and while waiting for results they were measured if they continued with new puzzles even though not asked to do so. The experiment was shifted about with factors such as performance payments, threats etc. Deci found out that extrinsic motivation clearly affected the intrinsic motivation and positive feedback increased the intrinsic motivation. Deci display in his article that there is a hidden cost of extrinsic reward and he emphasizes the importance of giving more attention to intrinsic motivation in the study of motivation. Some scholar criticism has pointed out the absence of empirical support, but later studies by Frey & Jegen (2001) support the early discoveries of Deci that extrinsic rewards may undermine intrinsic motivation. Frey & Jegen’s theory is called motivation crowding theory, and show that there exists strong empirical evidence for extrinsic motivation having a crowding out effect on intrinsic motivations.

Developing from Deci’s article is the self-determination theory. Deci & Ryan’s theory focus on human inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs (2000). According to Deci & Ryan three psychological needs motivate people to initiate behavior that are essential for their self-motivation and well-being. These are competence, autonomy, and relatedness. A micro-theory of SDT is cognitive evaluation theory (Deci & Ryan 1985). The theory argues that we select task to perform based on how manageable they are. Cognitive evaluation theory looks at the need for autonomy and competence. It argues that positive feedback lead to feelings of competence and can enhance intrinsic motivation while negative feedback the opposite.

Another concept brought forth is over justification which is rooted in the theories of self-perception (Bem, 1967) and self-attribution processes (Kelley, 1967, 1973). According to this paradigm people have no direct knowledge of their motives, but infer them from their actions and contingencies. People are assumed to engage in post behavioral inferences about their motivational states in order to self-justify or explain their behavior (Kunz & Pfaff, 2002:281).

## 2.9 Drive – summarizing motivational forces

In his bestselling book, *Drive* (2009), Pink addresses the question of what drives and motivates people. This popular literature book identifies a new wave of thinking around motivation in western culture. Pink argue that there are three essential elements that drive people (Pink 2009: 204):

- Autonomy - The desire to direct your own lives
- Mastery - Concerns the need to become better at something that matter to yourself
- Purpose - The drive to do something that is part of something greater than ourselves

These have served as guiding principles when trying to understand leader talents motivation.





# Chapter 3

## Frame of reference

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*This chapter explains the concepts and specific theories we wish to highlight and use for our analysis. Core concepts are positive psychology, flow, motivation and finally PsyCap (psychological capital).*

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*“Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus.”*

- Alexander Graham Bell -

### 3.1 Positive psychology

#### 3.1.1 Positive emotions

One of the modern day pioneers within positive emotions, Barbara L. Fredrickson, has proposed the “broaden-and-build” theory about positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, Fredrickson & Losada, 2005:679). It has been easily summarized by Seligman who writes “Fredrickson claim that positive emotions have a grand purpose in evolution. They broaden our abiding intellectual, physical and social resources, building up reserves we can draw upon when a threat or opportunity presents itself. When we are in a positive mood, people like us better, and friendship, love and coalitions are more likely to cement. In contrast to the constrictions of negative emotion, our mental set is expansive, tolerant and creative. We are open to new ideas and new experience.” (Seligman 2009:45).

Other relevant findings about positive emotions is for example Watson et al. who found that because many positive emotions have distinctive social origins, people generally experience them

as they interact with others (Watson et al. 1992 cited in Sekerka & Fredrickson, 2010:87) and yet another one is that a person can be happy even though they don't have much in the way of positive emotion (Seligman 2009:45).

### **3.1.2 Work-private life balance**

Even though it has been established that stress can spill over into private life, it has also been found evidence that individuals who feel competent, who experience high levels of job satisfaction and feel challenged by what they are doing are rather experiencing work as invigorating and not depleting. These are not affected in their private life because of high tension jobs. Instead indications are given that thriving at work can actually have positive effects at home. Still the question remains whether it is a zero-sum relationship between the two (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007).

The typical situation of a work-family conflict is said to arise from simultaneous pressures from the work and family domains that are incompatible in some respect (Baltes et al., 2010:201). This has been explained by two different reasons: 1) Scarcity theory that assumes that the personal resources of time, energy and attention are finite and that devotion of greater resources to one role necessitates the devotion of lesser resources to the other role. 2) Conflict theory proposes that work and family domains are incompatible due to their different norms and responsibilities (Baltes et al., 2010:206). Companies can try to ease a balance by allowing flextime, telecommuting and family-friendly climate (Baltes et al., 2010:206) and individuals can cope by for example adopting the life-management strategy Selection, Optimization and Compensation. At the same time researchers coming in with a different perspective state that experiences in one role can improve the quality of life in the other role (Baltes et al, 2010:208).

### **3.1.3 Positive institutions and support**

Just as no man is an island entire of himself, so is none of our leader talents leading lives without interaction with others and the different institutions that are a part of "normal" Norwegian society. We would like to point out and look at marriage, family and school as these are institutions which may help us understand Norwegian leader talents better.

Marriage – It has not been fully disclosed whether happy people have an easier time of marrying happy, even though depressed people have a tendency to be more reserved and self-focused, or if being married makes you happy. But studies have shown that more happy people are found amongst married people than single people and this goes for both sexes (Mastekaasa, 1994). And marriage is compared to for example money strongly correlated with happiness. Throughout 30 years of research including 35,000 people, 40% of those married answered that they were very

happy compared to 24% of the divorced, singles and widows (Seligman, 2009:63). Married people are among the least depressed and this goes regardless of age, income or sex (Seligman, 2009:63). Cindy Hazan at Cornell University have researched why this is so and concludes that marriage is a unique institution in that it allows all three of her proposed kinds of love. (Seligman, 2009:188) It should also be noted that the happiest people tend to have rich social lives; they spend a majority of time with others compared to being alone.

Family/parenthood – The Search Institute of Minneapolis has defined 40 developmental assets important for children, both internal, what caregivers do to enhance the child’s psychological well-being, such as instilling a sense of self-confidence, and external, physical experiences from the world around, such as providing appropriate boundaries and support. A strong consistent relationship exists between the number of assets present in young people’s lives and the extent to which they develop in healthy ways. Children with more assets present in their life have been found to exhibit leadership skills, maintain positive health and demonstrate positive academic outcomes (Sheridan & Burt, 2009:552).

School - Even though there is limited research about positive psychology and school, it has been shown that that the teacher and classroom structure correlates to students’ engagement and participation which in turn may facilitate a positive SWB (Huebner et al. 2009:564). Having a curriculum that promote choice and autonomy, a teacher who promotes a task-oriented classroom ethos in a clear and predictable structure and an atmosphere that emphasizes goals that promote future academic aspirations is all desirable, while teachers who establish class structures that are overly controlling or give more attention to misbehaviors than good behaviors work counterproductively (Huebner et al. 2009:564).

### **3.1.4 Three aspects on Happiness**

*Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without effort. Then he feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his weakness, his emptiness.*

– Pascal, 1660 (Emmons, 2003:105) -

For many people the primary goal in life is to be happy. Yet research indicates that that happiness is most often a by-product of participating in worthwhile projects and activities that do not have as their primary focus the attainment of happiness (Emmons, 2003:106). Indeed it has been indicated that our range for positive feelings is something that we are born with (Seligman, 2009). Happiness is not about smiling, blindly ignoring you’re emotions but it is about life satisfaction and subjective well-being. The conclusion is that there are many different routes to happiness

(Seligman, 2009:262) Still, as earlier presented, there three major roads and to briefly sum them up:

- Pleasure life: The hedonistic life of pleasures. Here we find the bodily, momentary positive emotions felt through our senses such as beautiful imagery, smell, sexual arousal and the higher pleasures based on experiences that make us feel ecstatic, relaxed, joyful etc. (Seligman, 2009:261).
- Good life: The goal of Positive Psychology is not only experiencing passing subjective states of happiness for brief moments, but achieving an enduring state that life has been authentic and this relates closely to living a life with gratifications (doing things we like to do). The good life is said to be a life in which you have used your signature strengths to achieve rich gratification in the most important aspects of your life (Seligman, 2009:262).
- The meaningful life: To use your signature strengths and virtues to contribute to something much larger than yourself (Seligman, 2009:262).

The last aspect, the meaningful life, deserves some extra attention as recent empirical research has demonstrated that a strong sense of meaning is associated with life satisfaction and happiness (Emmons, 2003:107). Meaningful work is believed to improve work motivation and performance at the individual level (Steger & Dik, 2010:136). Or like Peterson & Park put it: “Any strategy that helps workers see where their activities fit into the larger picture should also increase their enthusiasm for what they do” (Peterson et al. 2009).

To get a better understanding of what a meaningful life is we can listen to the words of Steger & Dik who write: “Meaning in life refers to people’s perceptions that their lives matter, that they make sense, and that they unfold in accordance with some over-arching purpose.” (2010:133). One does not have to believe that there’s a Meaning of Life to believe that there is meaning in one’s life. Meaning consists of two primary components: comprehension, the ability to make sense of your experiences and purpose, people’s identification of, and intention to pursue, particular highly valued, overarching life goals. Purpose differentiates from goals which are “motivational constructs, with specific aims marked by a desire to obtain objects, states, abilities, relationships or pieces of information” in that their time frame is much longer (Steger & Dik, 2010:134).

Consensus is emerging on four different categories of life meanings (Emmons, 2003:108): 1) Achievement/work – being committed to one’s work, believing its work and liking challenge. 2) Relationship/intimacy – a desire for close, reciprocal relationships and being altruistic and helpful. 3) Religion – having a personal relationship with a higher being, believing in an afterlife

and contributing to a faith community. 4) Transcendence/generativity – contributing to society, concern for future generations, leaving a legacy and transcending self-interests.

## 3.2 Flow

Flow may occur in across different activities (Nakamura and Mihaly 2009:200), and often is a “result from either a structured activity, or from an individual’s ability to make flow occur, or both.” (Mihaly 2008:71). Activities such as sports and games “provide goal and feedback structures that make flow more likely” (Nakamura and Mihaly 2009:196), but it could be found in any activity or happen spontaneously, like in a dinner conversation with friends discussing a topic where everyone is involved (Mihaly 2008:71). We will in this part focus on the flow of thought and work as flow.

### 3.2.1 Flow of thought

Here’s a quote from Plato on what happens when a person first discovers the flow of the mind:

*“The young man who has drunk for the first time from that spring is as happy as if he had found a treasure of wisdom; he is positively enraptured. He will pick up any discourse, draw all its ideas together to make them into one, then take them apart and pull to pieces. He will puzzle first himself, then also others, badger whoever comes near him, young and old, sparing not even his parents, nor anyone who is willing to listen...”*  
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008: p142)

Sports is an activity where our senses experience while in use, but Csikszentmihalyi argues that experiences may also be generated inside the mind and “every mental operation is able to provide its own particular form of enjoyment” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:117). One such popular cognitive activity is to read, while “solving puzzles is one of the oldest forms of enjoyable activity”. In brainstorming activities, the mind play with ideas and find it extremely thrilling and Csikszentmihalyi, continues explaining: “The emergence of new scientific ideas is fueled by the enjoyment one obtains from creating a new way to describe reality.” (2008:127)

### 3.2.2 Work as flow

To achieve an optimal experience at work, Csikszentmihalyi (2008:157) suggest that two complementary strategies are necessary. The work must be designed so that it resembles as closely as possible flow activities that demands all of your attention, like for example surgery. Secondly, it needs to help a person develop an autotelic personality, meaning to see oneself as a meaning. This can be done by training people to recognize opportunities for action, to exercise their skills and set reachable goals (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008:157)

### **3.3 Motivation**

#### **3.3.1 Goals**

Goals are an important part of life. Goals have been identified as key integrative and analytic units in the study of human motivation (Emmons, 2003:105). Goals are essential components of a person's experience of his or her life as meaningful and contribute to the process by which people construe their lives as meaningful or worthwhile. This is not to say that all goals provide meaning or even contribute to a sense of meaning, but goal attainment is a major benchmark for the experience of well-being (Emmons, 2003:107).

#### **3.3.2 People**

Looking at Ed Diener's cross-national studies of the sources of subjective well-being we can see that that only one factor consistently predicting subjective well-being in every country studied is social relationships. People routinely list successful close relationships among their most important life goals and aspirations (Reis & Gable, 2003:129). On the distress side of the spectrum, relationships are well-established as one of the most potent causes of human misery (Reis & Gable, 2003:129).

### **3.4 Positive Psychology and Virtues**

Peterson and Seligman's classification of character strengths and virtues (CSV) is a contribution to assess positive individual traits that enable positive experiences in a person's life (Peterson & Park, 2009).

Their classification focuses on "what is right about people" and put forward virtues and strengths that make the good life possible (Peterson & Seligman 2004:4). The six categories of virtues are based on historical surveys from moral philosophers and religious thinkers (Peterson & Seligman 2004:13). They refer on one side to Eastern thinkers such as Confucius and religious tradition in Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism, while western tradition on the other side. Here Athenian, Judeo-Christian and Islamic virtues have been part of the historic base for their classification of the six ubiquitous virtues (Peterson & Seligman 2004). Each virtue consists of several character strengths (Peterson & Seligman 2004). When classifying if a person is of good character, meaning he has a virtue, the person needs to display one or more strengths within a virtue group. E.g. if a person show kindness and love, he is classified to have the virtue of humanity. We will now explain each of the virtues and strengths.

Wisdom and knowledge is the first virtue and consist of five cognitive strengths. These strengths make a person able to acquire and use knowledge to achieve a good life (Peterson & Seligman 2004:95). The strengths are:

- Creativity is the “thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things” and it is not limited to only artistic achievements (Peterson & Seligman 2004:29).
- Curiosity is “one’s intrinsic interest in ongoing experience” (ibid:98).
- The third strength is open-mindedness and is defined as “the willingness to search actively for evidence against one’s favored beliefs... and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available” (ibid:144).
- Love of learning is “mastering new skills, topics and body of knowledge” (ibid:29) and proprietors of this strength are cognitively engaged (ibid:163).
- The last strength displaying wisdom is perspective and refers to “the ability to take stock of life in large terms, in ways that make sense to oneself and others” (ibid:105-106).

Next virtue is courage and involves four emotional strengths. These strengths entail the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, either external or internal (ibid:199).

- Bravery may vary across context (ibid:214), but is defined as the ability to “not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain” and include both physical and non-physical bravery (ibid:29).
- Persistence is “finishing what one has started and taking pleasure in completing task” (ibid:202).
- Thirdly, we have integrity that focus on speaking the truth and “presenting oneself in a genuine way, or being authentic, and acting in a sincere way” (ibid:29).
- The last strength of courage is vitality, which is to be feeling alive and displaying enthusiasm for any and all activities. People with this strength is seen to be energetic and high on life (ibid:209).

The third virtue is humanity. It is interpersonal strengths in the relationships one-to-one and “include positive traits manifest in caring relationships with others” (Ibid:293). The three strengths are love, kindness and social intelligence.

- Love is “valuing close relations with others” and occurs within a reciprocated relationship (ibid:293).

- Kindness is “doing favors and good deeds for others by helping them or taking care of them” (ibid:29).
- The third strength of humanity is “to be aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself” and is called social intelligence (ibid:29).

Justice consists of the civic traits of citizenship, fairness and leadership. The virtue is interpersonal, but in contrast to humanity it focuses on “the optimal interaction between the individual and the group or the community” (ibid: 357).

- Citizenship is the “sense of obligation to a common good that includes oneself and the groups of which one is a member” (ibid:357)
- Fairness refers “to an individual’s treatment of other people in similar ways” (ibid:361).
- Leadership in this context referred to as transformational leadership and focus on the ability to encourage one’s own group to achieve goals and preserve good relationships within the group (ibid:365).

Temperance involves four character strengths that protect against excess.

- Forgiveness is to give people a second chance and forgive those who have done wrong (ibid:29).
- Humility or Modesty are those who let their accomplishments speak for themselves and regard themselves to be fortunate to be in a position where something good has happened to them (ibid:435).
- Prudence is “a practical reasoning to one’s personal future that helps one to achieve long-term goals effectively by considering carefully the consequences of actions taken and not taken” (ibid:438).
- Self-regulation also has this protective nature as prudence and focus on being discipline and regulating what one feels and does by controlling oneself (ibid:29).

The strengths displaying the virtue of transcendence may be seen as mixed but they all focus on allowing “individuals to forge connections to the larger universe and thereby provide meaning to their lives” (ibid:519).

- Appreciation of beauty and excellence is the first strength and people who have this strength experience awe when in the presence of beauty or excellence (ibid:520).



- Gratitude is to take time to express thanks and being thankful for the good things that happens (ibid:29).
- Hope is linked to optimism and hopeful people “expect the desired outcomes to happen and acting in ways believed to make them more likely” (ibid:526).
- The strength of humor is interpersonal and humorous people makes jokes, are playful and bring out smiles to the faces of others (ibid:530).
- Spirituality is the prototype of transcendence and concern features as faith, purpose and religiousness who display nonphysical dimensions of life (ibid:600) and having belief about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe (ibid:29).

## 3.5 PsyCap

### 3.5.1 Self-efficacy

*“Unless people believe that they can produce desired effects and forestall undesired ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act”*

- Bandura (Luthans & Church, 2002:59) -

In 1977 Albert Bandura put forth a theory regarding Self-efficacy or Confidence that today has been adopted by PsyCap who defines self-efficacy as:

*“an individual's conviction (or confidence) about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context”* (Luthans, 2002:700).

Bandura's theory focuses on intrinsic motivation and that self-efficacy evolves as one acquires new skills and experiences (Bandura, 1995). It is based on practice, mastery and can be influenced by others. PsyCap efficacy is domain-specific, so you may be confident in some areas of life but unsure in others (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:36).

Bandura establishes that there are four major sources of self-efficacy First is the mastery experience where accomplishing a task successfully gives strength and belief in own abilities. Then you have social modeling where presence of others completing a task successfully raises the observer's self-efficacy. Social persuasion from others and psychological responses, such as stress, can also affect a person's self-efficacy (Bandura 1994).

So the best profile of someone with high self-efficacy would be the highly confident manager or employee who really gets into the task; gives whatever it takes to accomplish the task; perseveres when meeting obstacles, frustrations, or setbacks; has very positive self-thoughts; and is resistant to stress and burnout (Luthans & Church, 2002:60).

### 3.5.2 Hope

The most widely recognized research around hope has been carried out by Charles Richard Snyder. He concludes that hope not only reflects the individual's determination that goals can be achieved but also the person's belief that successful plans can be formulated and pathways identified in order to attain the goals (Luthans & Church, 2002:62). The pathways or way-power component allows for the rekindling of determination and willpower even when faced with blockages, as additional alternative pathways have been proactively determined. The resultant boost in willpower in turn motivates the search for still further alternate pathways in light of the realities of the new situation. This hope process allows blockages or problems to be perceived as challenges and learning opportunities (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). So in the end hope can be defined as:

*“a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally derived sense of successful: (a) agency (goal-directed determination) and (b) pathways (planning of ways to meet goals)”* (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 570 cited in Luthans, 2002).

Considerable research so far by Snyder and his colleagues indicates that this defined hope has a positive impact on academic achievement, athletic accomplishment, emotional health, and the ability to cope with illness and other hardships. The high hope person tends to be more certain of goals and challenged by them. They value progress towards goals as well as the goals themselves, they enjoy interacting with people and readily adapts to new and collaborative relationships. They are less anxious, especially in evaluative, stressful situations and are more adaptive to environmental change. Luthans & Church concludes “Such a profile would seem to be ideal for today's managers and employees” (2002:62). Problem, so far, have been a lack of attention in workplace research, something we might contribute to.

### 3.5.3 Optimism

As Luthans, Youssef & Avolio has written: “Optimism is one of the most talked about but least understood psychological strengths” (2007:87). Optimism is not the same as hope or confidence. Optimism distinguishes itself by its conceptual explanation of positive and negative events (Youssef & Luthans, 2007:779). Optimism adopts a broader perspective and can be defined as:

*“an explanatory style that attributes positive events to personal, permanent and pervasive causes and interprets negative events in terms of external, temporary and situation-specific factors.”* (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:90)

Christopher Peterson points out in a comprehensive analysis that: "Optimism is not simply cold cognition, and if we forget the emotional flavor that pervades optimism, we can make little sense of the fact that optimism is both motivated and motivating” (Luthans & Church, 2002:63). The

positive impact of optimism on physical and psychological health and the attendant characteristics of perseverance, achievement, and motivation resulting in academic, athletic, political, and occupational success is well documented (Luthans & Church, 2002:63). For example, optimists are easily motivated to work harder. They are more satisfied and have high morale. They have high levels of aspiration and set stretch goals. They persevere in the face of obstacles and difficulties. They analyze personal failures and setbacks as temporary, not as personal inadequacies, and view them as one-time unique circumstances and finally they tend to make one feel upbeat and invigorated both physically and mentally (Luthans & Church, 2002:63).

Not as well known, except to the psychological researchers in the area, is that optimism also can have drawbacks, dysfunctions, and costs. For example, physically well people tend to be optimistic about their future health and therefore often neglect needed nutritional and physical maintenance. In an organization, optimistic managers may become distracted from making the necessary action plans and follow-through to attain goals (Luthans & Church, 2002:63).

Others would say that organizational leaders with a high level of PsyCap optimism are risk-takers, but because they are realistic and flexible, they tend to take only calculated and necessary risks. Leaders with high PsyCap optimism emphasize the development of their followers. They take pride in the success of their followers rather than envying them and trying to take credit for their accomplishment as if they were their own. Rather than doing everything and making all the decisions for them, high PsyCap optimistic leaders enable, empower, delegate and trust their followers to achieve the desired outcomes. They know that their role is to be agents of change. They dare to dream for themselves, their associates and their organizations. They then enthusiastically pursue their dreams as they inspire, motivate and involve others (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:100).

### **3.5.4 Resilience**

*“It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all.” - J.K. Rowling (Seligman, 2011:103)*

Once again there are many different definitions, but one that recognizes the state-like nature of resiliency in simple, but accurate terms is (Luthans, 2002:702, Youssef & Luthans, 2007:778):

*“Resilience is the developable positive psychological capacity to rebound, to 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility”*

As you might notice PsyCap resilience has broadened the definition to also include not only the ability to bounce back from adversity but also very positive, challenging events (e.g. record sales

performance) (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:116). Just as previous concepts we can see that too much positivity can be hurtful and have a backside. But we also need to remember that development occurs because we are challenged, not because we have obtained a level of capacity and effort that does not need to be enhanced (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007:121).

# Chapter 4

## Methodology

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*Methodology is about choices, active choices made with intent to achieve the purpose previously laid out. Our exploratory research design is explained and motivated followed by a description of how data has been gathered and analyzed. This chapter ends up with an ethical discussion around confidentiality and a critique of the general limitations of the study.*

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*” You can never be with another person without holding something of his life in your hands”*

- Knud E. Løgstrup -

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present how we have gone about conducting this study. Maxwell present four critical components part of any qualitative study that we have to present (1996:65) and these are:

1. The research relationship that you establish with those you study.
2. Sampling: what times, settings, or individuals you select to observe or interview and what other sources of information you decide to use.
3. Data collection: how you gather the information you will use.
4. Data analysis: what you do with this information in order to make sense of it.

Added to this is a discussion of the credibility of research findings. Will the findings and conclusions stand up to the closest scrutiny? (Saunders et al. 2009:156) This is our aim even though we are aware of three things.

First is the potential decline effect that might be threatening scientific method according to Lehrer (2010), where we by entering this study through the background of positive psychology, have to acknowledge that we might be caught up in a subjectivity of wanting to present “significant findings” for a field that is now getting a lot of attention. And still we will choose to do this as we strongly believe that it shall not become only a research fad, but a lasting foundation in research.

Secondly, understanding what we previously know about positive psychology and motivational theory and accepting the early efforts of finding general theories applicable for every human we however reserve ourselves to join the view of Haidt in arguing that we might not perhaps be able to derive all things right from a few basic universal rules. But there is a case specific understanding needed (Haidt, 2006). We believe that we might not be able to describe what drives any human being within a single theoretic frame of reference.

Third and lastly, we adhere to Arbnor and Bjerke in their belief that methodology is not a recipe found in a cookbook, it is not decided by finding the one suitable method for the specific problem you wish to study (2009:8). Methodology is, as a “creator of knowledge”, actively choosing techniques based on reflections about what makes a study consistent and fitted for the task at hand (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009). This is also furthered by Johnson and Clarks notes that as business and management researchers we need to be aware of the philosophical commitments we make through our choice of research strategy since this has significant impact not only on what we do but how we understand what it is we are studying (2006).

This study is based on the assumption that research design in qualitative research is an iterative process that shifts focus back and forth between the different components of the design, assessing the implications of how choices in purpose, theory, research question, research method and validity effect each other and then modify to better function as one logical framework for creating new knowledge (Maxwell, 1996:4). Here follows an account of how we have gone about studying what drives and enables leader talents in Norway and what virtues they value.

## 4.2 Research Design

### 4.2.1 Purpose of Research

This study is of an exploratory nature. An exploratory study, according to Saunders et al., is a valuable mean to seek new insights and assess a phenomenon in a new light (2009:139). Since little is known about what drives leader talents in Norway in previous research our aim has been to uncover and probe what might be plausible. Using theories about driving forces, positive psychology and virtues we have gone forth to explore. We have not followed a straight research line, but we have had to adopt and choose theory and possible routes along our journey. This was predicted by Saunders et al. who states: “If you are conducting exploratory research you must be willing to change your direction as a result of new data that appear and new insights that occur to you. It is not absence of direction but a focus that grows narrower and more precise the further you go.” (2009:140). By having done this we hope to have left a few markers for where further research might be valuable.

### 4.2.1 Induction/deduction

Following an exploratory intent we are less interested in testing causal relationship, proving a plausible hypothesis and deducing if certain traits create leader talents. Rather we have an inductive approach in which we wish to build theory. We have had a wish to see what from more general theory can be applied to this group of people.

According to Saunders et al (2009:127) induction emphasizes:

- Gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events
- A close understanding of the research context
- The collection of qualitative data
- A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses
- A realization that the researcher is part of the research process
- Less concern with the need to generalize

### 4.2.2 Interpretivistic view

Understanding this and following Haidts thoughts presented in his book, *The Happiness Hypothesis*, we have an interpretivistic view that we as humans are social actors (2006). This means amongst other things that a person may interact with others from different social roles. It also means that we as researcher have to take an empathetic stance and try to understand the world as our research subjects see it (Saunders et al. 2009:116). Saunders et al. give us support in

that this view may be highly appropriate in the case of business and management research. “Not only are business situations complex, they are also unique. They are a function of a particular set of circumstances and individuals coming together at a specific time.” (2009:116)

### **4.2.3 Case study**

A research strategy typically used in exploratory research is case study. Robson’s definition of a case study (2002:178) is that it is “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context”. Seeing rankings of business and leadership talents as a contemporary phenomenon we believe these nominated Norwegian leader talents to be of value to study.

### **4.2.4 Qualitative or quantitative**

Trying to understand an unexplored area such as motivation and virtues among leader talents requires a method that in the context allows us to get the data we need in the most efficient way. Maxwell states that qualitative and quantitative methods have different strengths and logics and are not different ways of doing the same thing (1996:17). Instead they are best used to address different questions with qualitative research deriving its strength from an inductive approach that suits best in studies focusing on situations, people and words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 1996, Saunders et al. 2009:151). We seek to find out something not easily quantified and relevant in such a state as of today. Thus we have chosen to use a qualitative method for this study.

Joseph Maxwell supports choosing this method in his book *Qualitative Research Design* (1996) in which he presents five research purposes for which qualitative research is suited. Understanding meaning and context are amongst them. When it comes to meaning, choosing a qualitative study is well-suited when you are interested not only in the physical events and behavior that is taking place but in how the participants make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behavior such as how belief of what makes you happy and what drives you may be linked (Maxwell 1996:17). We are furthermore, like Maxwell explains, less interested in only collecting an account of events and actions to be assessed in terms of truths and falsities and more in creating an understanding for the part of the reality that we are trying to study (1996:17). Furthermore qualitative researchers typically study a relatively small numbers of individuals and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analysis as it makes them able to understand how meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which these occur (Maxwell, 1996).

Our primary source of data is qualitative in form of semi-structured interviews or dialogues with leader talents. This is a very common traditional technique for collecting primary information in



business research (Arbnoor & Bjerke 2009:181). We have focused on a mono-method as we have deemed that access to our research subjects is restricted and limited. This is based on them being senior staff and executive members of different firms and thus have very busy schedules and limited amount of time to be a part of our research.

An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people (Kahn & Cannell, 1957) and non-standardized interviews such as semi-structured ones are used to gather data, which are normally analyzed qualitatively, for example as in this case part of a case study research (Saunders et al. 2009:321). This also goes hand in hand with our exploratory aim for which semi-structured interviews may be used (Saunders et al.2009:322).

It is also worth mentioning that the word dialogue is from dia (through) and logos (words), and is characterized by the interplay between “talking” and “listening” that takes place on equal place on equal terms for the participants. The word is the instrument of the dialogue, and it consists of two mutually dependent elements: reflection and action. If a word loses its element of action, it becomes an empty language game –babbling. On the other hand if a word loses its reflective element it becomes an empty activity, action for action’s sake (Arbnoor & Bjerke 2009:135).

The dialogue has two purposes; to clarify the present state of matters and then to go beyond (Arbnoor & Bjerke 2009:136). In this study we have focused on the clarifying aspect, as we have an exploratory focus and not a more explanatory one where we test what affects what. In order to clarify, honest questions are best used. “To ask an honest question, you have to know that you don’t know. And when you know that you don’t know, you don’t use a direct method, because that implies that you only want to know something more thoroughly in the way you already know it” (Arbnoor & Bjerke 2009:136). That is why we have chosen to use open-ended questions.

### **4.3 Theory selection**

In order to do better understand leader talents we will look at them using a foundation of different theories. These include positive psychology, positive organizational behavior, philosophy and motivation. These have been chosen as they are perspectives that will work well as a “theory closet”. According to Maxwell using a high-level theory gives you a framework for making sense of what you see. “Particular pieces of data that otherwise might seem unconnected or irrelevant to another or to you research questions can be related by fitting them into the theory” (1996:33). There are others theories and references such as leadership, but transformational leadership theory and others haven’t presented us with a good fit for the holistic view we are seeking. Therefore these have been cut out from the project.

## 4.4 Selection of respondents

How do you find leader talents? It has been a methodological challenge to define and find a stable sample of leader talents. When seeing the difficulties in trying to define leader talents and finding these in Norway we have chosen to rely on another sampling made of this. Namely the business website E24.no's top 100 leader talents 2010 list.

They have based on 1000 anonymous tips together with MercuriUrval, a major headhunting firm and a jury, evaluated candidates on the following criterions (Indseth, 2010):

- Candidate must be 35 years of age or younger
- Must work in business
- Have or have had profit, personnel and operational responsibility
- Have shown results and efforts relevant to being seen as a leader talent

A weakness with the list of E24 is the overweight of business groups that are exposed to the media and therefore to be well-known by the public. We also observe that the list is dominated by male leaders and see this as a weakness in a gender equality view.

Once we had selected this list our next focus was on how many interviews would be a good sample for us. Guiding us in this we find that "Research using an inductive approach is likely to be particularly concerned with the context in which events take place. Therefore, the study if a small sample of subjects might be more appropriate than a large number as with deductive approach" (Saunders et al. 2009:126). In discussions with our research advisor we agreed that an acceptable number of respondents for a study like this would lie in the span of 7-14. In the end we aimed for 12.

Analyzing the list, trying to identify suitable subjects we did a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is typically used when working with very small samples such as in case study research, which this is (Saunders et al. 2009:237). Having a heterogeneous group of potential interview subjects we tried to make a maximum variation sample by dividing the broad spectrum of backgrounds into categories such as gender, industries, educational background and try to attain a number of respondents equal to those proportions (Saunders et al. 2009:239ff). We also made the decision to not contact more than needed but had a policy of contacting a certain number of respondents and as soon as one was unable we would substitute him or her with another potential contact.

## 4.5 Work Process

We have worked together as a pair of researchers. Throughout this research we have been taking notes from conversations. We kept a research diary in the first two months to ensure that we made progress and helped us in having a sense of direction just as proposed by Saunders et al. (2009:499). Early on we made a GANTT schedule and time plan to make sure we would finish on time (Saunders et al. 2009:45). And lastly we have used our university's web tool for group work "It's learning" as a communications portal and storage facility.

## 4.6 Data gathering

### 4.6.1 Literature study

In the beginning we read literature, researched databases such as Jstor, Bibsys, we checked references in articles such as Magma and from looking at lists of references we expanded our search into new areas where we found more that lead to yet more articles. This made up our critical literature review. Jankowicz (2005:161) said: "There is little point in reinventing the wheel... the work that you do is not done in a vacuum, but builds on the ideas of other people who have studied the field before you." This requires you describe what has been published, and to marshal the information in a relevant and critical way.

### 4.6.2 Design interview guide

Next step was to set up an interview guide for our semi-structured interviews (See appendix II). Having an explorative strategy it was meant to be broader rather than narrow. Our interview guide has acted as a guiding and not binding framework. It has consisted of six themes: Happiness/Flow, Vision, Inspiration, Motivation, Support and Ranking/Inspirational Speech. Within these we constructed a lot of open ended questions based on previous theory with the allowance of aiding the interviewer to dig deeper where he/she would find it interesting to go deeper in the setting.

### 4.6.3 Pilot study

There is a lack of previous studies into our field of research. There is not a lot of guidance on how to assess, construct interview guides and access data regarding motivation within leader talents. This may have different causes such as that it's relatively new line of research. Therefore we chose to do a small pilot study in order to increase the strength of our data collection methods. A pilot study, according to Saunders et al., is a small scale study to test the interview guide to minimize the likelihood of respondents having problems in answering the questions and

of data-recording problems as well as to allow some assessment of the questions validity and the reliability of the data that will be collected (Saunders et al. 2009:597). Conducting a pilot study gave us an opportunity to test a lot of our questions. It was beneficial as interview practice, to become more confident in interviewing and more able to steer an explorative dialogue.

General advice for a pilot study is to use people from a familiar environment since this allows testing of face validity; that the questions make sense and convey an adequate request for data you wish to collect (Saunders et al. 2009:394). Therefore three students from NHH were chosen and interviewed. They were not known to us before, but they were chosen based on tips about people seen as potential leader talents in the student environment. This is relevant since NHH-alumni are represented on the top 100 list (Indseth, 2010). Thus the similarity of feature and educational background in the pilot test and study interview subjects could potentially show us the weaknesses of our research design. The weakness of this pilot study is that our data collection method wouldn't be tested on subjects with other backgrounds than business. This weakness we deem not to be significant as we conclude that our "real" interview subjects have higher educational background and that a majority are active in the business community.

The pilot interviews are very similar to those planned for the main study. Main exception is that they include more questions as to assess which questions would work most efficiently in giving us relevant data. The pilot interviews were semi-structured with a slightly increased focused on dialogue around the themes rather than a specific question order. The interviews were held with one participant, one interviewer and one co-interviewer mainly observing. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analyzing the questions.

#### **4.6.4 Finding respondents**

Having decided E24.no as our population of potential respondents our next task was to contact a potential sample of these. Just as Saunders et al. warned us getting access to our potential interview subjects was more difficult than expected and not in the expected way (2009). It was not getting access to the subjects that were tough but getting access to the E24.no list. They were updating their IT infrastructure and it seemed very difficult to provide us even though we emailed the responsible journalists. Once given, we were able to obtain both physical and cognitive access by emailing them. This was quiet surprising to us as Saunders et al. has said that managers tend to be busy people. Therefore, they are unlikely to allow research access unless they can see personal or commercial advantages (2009:6).

Emailing them a request for an interview together with an information paper (see appendix IV) and the coming consent form was the only communication by which we asked for an interview.

Sending the information paper about our research and how we would ensure them confidentiality was proposed by Saunders et al (2009:180). We asked if interviews could be held at interviewees' work place so that they would feel more secure in the interview setting. If not possible, we arranged another meeting place as calm and neutral as possible, still convenient for the interviewee.

The final result is that we emailed 16 leader talents and received a very positive response rate. 14 were interested, one did not respond, but we suspect wrong contact information and one declined based on personal reasons. In the end we managed to book and conduct 10 interviews covering most categories and industries found on the list such as business, educational background and location. This turned out to be a stratified sample somewhat overweight in the number of female participants, which is acceptable for our study.

#### **4.6.5 The Interview Setting**

According to Saunders et al. (2009:329ff) there are multiple considerations to be made when designing an interview situation. For example location should be convenient and give a sense of security. It is also recommended that extra attention is paid to decreasing anxiety and strengthening respondent's confidence in us as professional interviewers. We have been very clear and strict about keeping us to time frames given. Interviews have aimed to take one hour of participant's time. We have been at meeting locations on time. We have provided extra copies of the information sheet and consent form as recommended (Saunders et al. 2009:331). We early establish one main interviewer and one observer by the way we have chosen seats, interviewer being closer, sitting in a 45 degree angle and observer a bit further off to the side, with space to take notes. We have emphasized that there are no right or wrong answers and the reason behind that is that we have wanted to get to know the person and not his/her role as a leader. Interviews were held in respondent's mother tongue, Norwegian. This is done to ensure authentic meetings and a comfort in having use of as many natural words as possible to those we have interviewed.

Tools used have been two audio recorders, one to keep as backup. Strength of this has been that we don't only rely on memory. Weakness is that people might say things that are not well thought out. After each interview we also made post interview field notes.

### **4.7 Preparing the analysis**

Interviews have been transcribed verbatim, word by word (Saunders et al 2009:485), in order to not miss out on anything. We have used Word 2010 and Express scribe. It has been a time consuming task approx. 6-10 hrs. per interview. And later we have found the translation process

between Norwegian and English to be quite frustrating as we risk changing or losing the meaning in some things by translating them (Saunders et al. 2009:384). Here we have chosen to focus on capturing the essence rather than a word by word translation.

## **4.8 Analysis method**

Even if we have an inductive approach it has been said that in practice your research is likely to combine elements of both inductive and deductive method (Saunders et al. 2009:490). In our case we have developed a theoretical framework that we use and test against our data to see correlations as well as guide us when it comes to finding new theory building blocks.

Our analysis has consisted of three parts. First, we summarized each interview and built a comparable chart based both transcription together with field notes. Secondly, we have written and constructed a portrait or a so called “narrative” for each interview. Thirdly, we have compared interviews and tried to establish themes and common denominators.

### **4.8.1 Summarizing individual interviews**

Using excel we have summarized each interview according to themes and questions asked. After this we have had two-hour sessions where we have used brainstorming on a chalk board to analyze and get overview of each interview to identify the most pertinent points brought forth from each interview.

In this step we have also developed aliases for each person. Names have been chosen on the basis of being Norwegian, not a name found on E24.no list and with a meaning we believe the person impersonates for example Liv, a name which means life and energy. It was chosen for a candidate we felt were full of energy and that was something she mentioned she looked after in life, both in other people and at work.

### **4.8.2 Portraits**

We have created portraits that are broad accounts of our interview experience with each candidate. These have been structured in a sequenced way in order to convey each person’s unique personality and meaningful message to us as researchers (Saunders et al. 2009:497). We were inspired to create these by reading the article “The good meeting” by Knut J. Ims (2010). Creating portraits has thus been done to give you, the reader a face of each leader talent and maintain some of the personality that a use of a label would have diminished.

These have then been sent out per email to each candidate to conduct a communicative validation, in which they get to comment and acknowledge that they can recognize themselves.

This has been done in order to increase our sense of validity, that we have understood what they have been trying to convey to us.

### **4.8.3 Frame of reference comparison**

Finally, we have used our categorization without numeric coding to search for patterns and common denominators. Using this systematic approach reading through each theme discussed by all the respondents we have identified ideas and thoughts that have then been compared with the frame of reference.

## **4.9 Weaknesses and limitations**

A challenge working on the topic of role models is that it is difficult to avoid categorization, something that could be experienced as an offence and something we hope we have avoided. The same goes for differences among the respondents which are not emphasized as much as similarities, acknowledging this we have tried to maintain the integrity of each of our respondents. Another limitation is that we are two male writers and this might impact how we portrait and describe our interviewees. The following analysis may be affected by it, but even though our education has had its weaknesses regarding gender issues we hope to not have made any major mistakes and ask to be forgiven if found so.

Time to conduct the research has been limited. We have had one hour of interview with each person and such a time frame is not sufficient to immerse oneself deeply into each theme of our research. A more complete study of the leader talents would demand more time and use of other information sources than our interviews. A weakness is that we can't know for sure if their answers are true. A respondent may lie to us and give us false information concerning his own life and experiences. We haven't chosen to interview people around each respondent to verify the data. This we have not done since it would have stretched us beyond our capacity. It can also be hypothesized that it would have made it harder to find research subjects where that would have been possible. People can commit themselves to a study but to commit their employees or family might lead to influencing pressures. But we'll mention that such extra interviews with family, friend and colleagues would help to overcome any bearing of false witness. Even though our sources of information are limited, we strongly believe in our interviewees' answers to be honest and sincere. An important reason is use of anonymous answers and depersonalized data, which is described later in this chapter. This may lead an interviewee to open up and answer more honest than if his or her identity were attached.

## 4.10 Reliability

Reliability concerns if other researchers may replicate our study by use of the chosen data collection technique. It also implies transparency of the sense made from the raw data (Saunders et al: 600).

### 4.10.1 Replicability

We have used an interview guide, so to draw a comparison between interviewees may be conducted. The pilot study helped improve the guide through testing if all respondents answered in similar terms. The guide show interview structure and themes covered, but each interview has taken its own path. The reason is open ended questions and that every dialogue we have had is different. The use of two researcher and field notes is a strength concerning replication since description of interview setting and impressions are described (Saunders et al: 327-328). This is done so that other researches may understand the process we have had and it will enable them to reanalyze collected data.

But even though there is clarity in research process, we see that a replication would be challenging due to three reasons. First is that it gets more difficult to replicate as time goes by. Each interview is somewhat unique when it comes to them and us and where we are in life. If you ask a person about motivation in life, it may vary between today and ten years ahead. One example is that becoming a parent may change your attitude towards work. Also when respondents are referring to present world events like “the revolutions in North Africa of 2011”, their answers, e.g. about optimism in the world, may be different than a replication at a later stage. Demographic and politic changes may trigger different answers at different time in history. A second reason is that the interviews are conducted at different locations and workplaces. It has not been an equal environment in all interviews, but we have focused on meeting each of them at their home base where they feel comfortable and secure. We believe it to be important when answering openly about personal life. Third and last, the respondents are anonymous and would be difficult to locate at a later time. But a replication could be made based on a sample from the E24 top 100 list.

### 4.10.2 Transparency

An open ended dialogue demands simultaneous reflection and talking from the interviewee and is a process where he will try to reason his way to a definite answer. The challenge with such answers is that one may say something that is not relevant and it demands careful interpretation from our point of view. We have chosen to interpret each the raw data in a positive meaning and



not harming the respondent, see researcher bias. The sense given to the data is based on the wholeness of the interview.

#### **4.10.3 Participant bias**

In order to minimize the risk of our respondents feeling like they need or unconsciously should answer in a particular way, we have tried hard to ensure them anonymity. This is supported by Robson (2002).

#### **4.10.4 Participant error**

One thing this research is exposed to may be the participant error (Robson, 2002) of us catching what is on their mind at the moment. Perhaps their thinking has been affected by things such as “Blue Mondays” and actual world events like North African rebellions. On the other hand we believe that we have asked and tried to make clear that we are asking about more general and not so time-sensitive matters.

#### **4.10.5 Researcher Bias**

A researcher may create bias through his comments or non-verbal behavior (Saunders 2009:326). As part of a dialogue, we as interviewers have asked questions and made comments as the conversation goes forward. These comments may have affected their answers, but we have been conscious of not imposing our own beliefs through the comments. Comments have only been done to clarify and confirm the answers given by each respondent. Interpretation from interviewer is also a part of the researcher bias. Arbner & Bjerke (2009:161) point out that human beings do not act without interpreting reality, and the same is the case with us. We have met each of the leader talents with a blank sheet and colored a picture based on our conversation, not what is already known. We have also brought with us our own personal experiences into these meetings.

Every answer is seen from its most positive angle. We have based our interpretation on Ims (1992) ethical principles when interpreting data. These are autonomy, justice, do the other well, do no harm and interpret social data with care and humility. Each of our interviewees is different and has intrinsic value. It demands respect and careful interpretation. Since we have been two researchers present, a positive interpretation is more likely to happen due to four eyes observing the interviewee. Also following discussions of the interviews have revealed discrepancy in interpretation between us, and a positive interpretation has been agreed upon. One interview was conducted by only one of us, but it was very similar in answers to the other respondents. Therefore, we believe the interpretation given is valid and done with a positive spirit from our side.

After each interview, we had a field note discussion. It was done to gather information about settings such as facial expressions and non-verbal cues, impression of us as interviewers and to recap the main focus of the interview (Saunders et al 2009: 339). One shouldn't only use memory when interpreting at a later stage. These notes confirm and strengthen later interpretation of the data collected. The pilot study was another tool to test the validity of asked questions. By interviewing three business students, the pilot showed that we collected the data we intended to collect.

In the pilot study, every respondent understood the question of followership. But when interviewing the leader talents, many had difficulties understanding the question and an additional explanation of the question was needed. We interpret everyone to understand the questions after explaining, but we received inconclusive answers. The question of followership didn't measure its intent and lack validity. Therefore, we have decided to not include its answers in the analysis.

## **4.11 Validity**

Validity is said to be a goal rather than a product and it cannot be bought by a certain use of method but only be made implausible by evidence gathered by the use of these methods (Maxwell 1996:86). You need to ask yourself whether the findings really are about what they appear to be about (Saunders et al. 2009:157). As noted we are aware that the way people reason around happiness, driving forces and virtues may depend on current events and present state of life. But finding that there are signs of similarity on answering or at least in interpreting the questions we find it plausible that what we have found are valid results.

### **4.11.1 Communicative validity**

Ims (1987:183) emphasizes the need to test the validity of data by asking all the respondents if they recognize themselves or feel a stranger in relation to the given description. We provided all with a portrait where we point out their focus and main headings as we interpret them. Kvale (1995) also points out that "validity of an interpretation is worked out in a dialogue between patient and therapist" (Kvale 1995:9). To secure a communicative validity and dialogue, we sent e-mails where respondent were asked to give feedback on their portraits. Kvale (1995) calls this dialogue a communicative process, where truth is developed. This process has also been called "the single most crucial technique for establishing credibility (Guba & Lincoln 1989:239). From this we gained positive feedback such as "I think you have managed to capture the totality of the portrait" (Roald), and some smaller adjustments to be made. We wrote the portraits in English to ensure that participant validated a translated version of how we perceived them and if they recognized themselves in that. This ties in to the more general issue of translating interviews. We

have chosen idiomatic translation, which means that we have translated what we see as the topic and thought of the interviewees and not a word-by-word lexical translation (Saunders et al 2009:383).

#### **4.11.2 Generalizability (External Validity)**

A semi-structured interview can't be generalized statistically for all leader talents due to its qualitative research design with a small and unrepresentative number of cases (Saunders et al 2009:327). We have listened to Snyder and Lopez (cited in Held 2004, p. 17) who warns us that "in the excitement that may be associated with this new and invigorating approach, it may be tempting to over extrapolate so as to convey a sense of the progress that is being made. Therefore . . . researchers must be very careful to make appropriate inferences from their data." Thus by using the methodology we have used we can never provide general results for all leader talents (Arbnor & Bjerke 2009:338). But it can be used to hint and detect what might be true for such a population.

Within the group of 10 leader talents, we see a heterogeneous group based on different backgrounds and experiences. From a bird perspective, they might be considered to be a homogenous group since they share the role of being leaders in a business context. But as you get to know each of them, their differences are revealed in front of our eyes.

### **4.12 Research Ethics**

Ethics of proximity and Løgstrup's "The Ethical Demand" (1997) has been a guide in how to conduct a meeting with our leader talents. Trust is essential when answering open ended questions concern own life and beliefs. Løgstrup (1997) points out when trusting others; "we lay ourselves open... and surrender something of our lives to the person we trust." Our leader talents' trust towards us, demand a response where we are obligated to show care and respect for his or her personality. It is a relationship where we have gained information that may give power towards our interviewees. To meet the ethical demand, we see every answer given positively and from the best meaning.

We have also focused on informing the research subjects about the research, acquired permission to collect data, emphasized confidentiality of data and anonymity when presenting data.

#### **4.12.1 Informed Consent**

As creators of knowledge working in an ethical way it is important that we meet our interview subjects with respect and a moral concern for the autonomy and privacy rights of them. The basic requirement of conducting research in such a fashion is the necessity of obtaining voluntary

and informed consent (Fisher & Anushko 2008:99). Before each interview each interview subject has received a participant information sheet, outlining the basic information about the study, as well as a consent form acknowledging their voluntary participation (See appendix III & IV). The permission to acquire data, a consent form, has been signed by both researchers and the respondent before audio-recording the interview. These forms and information sheet have been designed according to Saunders et al.'s recommendations (2009:191f) It has been questioned whether an informed and voluntary consent can truly be obtained when it comes to studies based on open-ended question interviews, as such run the risk of unveiling information that was not anticipated at the outlook of the study (Fisher & Anushko 2008:100). This is a potential scenario for our study as we hope to understand deep personal motivation. To deal with this Fisher and later Haverkamp suggests that a re-consent strategy should be developed as well as preparations for how to manage a conversation that diverts from the research question (Fisher & Anushko 2008:100). To ensure ethical integrity in this sense we have chosen to allow all respondents to have access to some written material post-interview to allow a re-consent opportunity.

#### **4.12.2 Confidentiality and data handling**

Each interview has begun by stating confidentiality, anonymity, research purpose and a request to undertake the interview. All based on recommendation of Saunders et al. (2009:332). To make sure of confidentiality and anonymity, several action were taken. Access to collected data was only given to our research advisor beside ourselves. No names were mentioned in the interviews and we gave each interview a label. Audio-files plus transcription does not include any "real" names of the leader talents. In some of the interviews, company names have been mentioned, but these names are not included in the transcriptions of the interview.

When it comes to data processing and storage, we have kept files involving sensitive data password protected and encrypted. All raw data will be purged at end of our research by deleting all audio-files. Transcriptions are anonymous and can't be traced back to any of our respondents. Only one encrypted file contains the link between name label and real identity. We have also made sure that all printed material is stored in locked locker when not in use and to fulfill confidentiality we don't talk about interview subjects with others besides the research advisor.

Presenting data in the thesis report, we have chosen to give our respondents alias. This is done to give each respondent a face and at the same time secure anonymity of their identity. None of the aliases given are names that you may find among E24.no's top 100 leader talents list of 2010.

As discussed in Saunders et al. we have chosen not to present any real names, company backgrounds and there are no lists of who we have interviewed included in the report

(2009:189ff). The data of whom we have interviewed has been kept between us and our research advisor.

#### **4.13 Integrity and research quality of thesis as a whole**

We have aimed to be held to the highest of standards. For us this mean we have being professional towards respondents, consistent in our interpretations and open in our consent form. We have received feedback that we have acted accordingly, for example one of the respondents gave feedback right after the interview saying: “This was professional”

Being two researchers have strengthened our thesis in many ways. First, we have been sparring partners. Through dialogue and building on each other, we have had the opportunity to discuss and experience together as the path is laid. It has also given the ability to read and write more, but it also requires more time for coordination and a respect for each other’s thoughts and wishes.



# Chapter 5

## Findings

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*This chapter presents the qualitative data gathered through our interviews in form of ten portraits. The portraits are small stories captured as parts of the much bigger story called life. They are to some extent simplified models and images of each of our respondents. All names are aliases and no “real” names have been used for people, places or companies.*

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*“Every individual is a historian of his or her own personal experience”*

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -

### 5.1 Birger – Protect those close to you and help thy neighbour

Birger is an open, caring and reflecting man. Our conversation starts with a flashback ten years back when he listened to a tape on mental training and happiness. He starts to laugh.

Family and children is the most important in his life. For Birger happiness is having good experiences and spending time with his family and friends. Having fun and enjoying life gives him a drive. “Becoming a father changed my perspective in life. A good life for me is to live in Norway, make sure my family is safe, and secure a good future and education for my children”, he replies. “And I hope to be a role model for my children”, he says and seems humble of being viewed as a role model. Birger is grateful for his childhood and would like to thank his parents. They gave him boundaries, attitudes and fundamental values in life. “But the road is made up as you go, and from the age of fourteen friends affects your choices and where you might end up”, he reflects as we talk about support in life. He feels it was a coincidence that he and many of his friends at junior high where among the 10 of 25 graduates from junior high that graduated from high school.

And such coincidences he also sees in other parts of his life. To be in a leader position today is a result of coincidences and some luck he feels, but you need to do your best as opportunities are given. “I want to look back when I am 70 years old and be proud of my life, that I’ve made positive contributions to those around me. Not perhaps to save the world, but the small things in life. And I hope that to have a good conscience and know that I have inspired someone to make a difference”.

To see change happen for the better motivates Birger. Like when his company managed to turn around facing an economic downturn in the industry. Then he was inspired by colleagues’ abilities to make negative conflicts to have positive outcome. “Success is achieved by making others good”.

Birger has always been driven by change and he becomes a bit stressful if nothing happens. “No change, then make a change”, he says. “Many people have inspired me and I remember a speech by Göran Persson, former prime minister of Sweden. He said: Bring children into the world. It is the safest way to secure development, because young people think differently and demand change. Children lead the society in a positive direction.” Person is one of many inspirations for Birger because he has an ability to see the bigger picture. Knowledge and human insight are features he looks up to. Or people caring for the man that fell sick on the street the other day. “You should love thy neighbour, have a positive attitude and be polite towards others. I became angry when I saw people just passing that man without caring”, he says. We wonder what he believes is the most desirable virtues in today’s society. ”People should seek opportunities and don’t focus on problems. They should be open, nice to each other and care for those around you. It should affect you if you see bad things happen. Hardships can never be faced alone”, he replies. If Birger face difficulties at work or in life, he becomes focused and wants to turn it around. “I give it all I got, but never alone”.

We ask him about passion. “It is a strong word and requires deep level of engagement. I am uncertain if I have it, but I admire people how do have it, like relief workers. They make a personal sacrifice to help others.” The same passion he sees in his sister in law and her husband. They are environmental determined and has sacrificed a lot, e.g. a car and holidays abroad. And they care and contribute through charity work in their local community. “I respect them more than leaders of large companies”, he says. “If life is not good, then you should do something about it.”

Time flies when Birger is together with friend or colleagues discussing. Like in management meeting where they discuss strategically and long term. Then he feels happy and energized. “I like



to be seen as whom I am, not what I do for a living”, he tells us while adding that he is not the biggest fan of rankings.

We wonder what message he would give young students today. He says, “If you’re in high school: Be honest, dedicated, get good grades and work well. This is important since school lays a fundament in life. And then you should be guided by what makes you happy. Following your passion and you will end up where you want to be.” And Birger adds, “The road is made as you go. Be in continuously development and demand change”.

Thank you, Birger, for being honest, open and a source of inspiration!

## **5.2 Einar – The helper that chose his own path**

We meet Einar a hectic morning at work. It seems that a lot is happening this day. “Yes, we have a lot to do, but that is good for the company”, he tells us while we sit down at conference room facing the ocean. He has a spark in his eyes when he starts to talk about the workplace. “It is motivating to contribute and help others succeed. Just look at the young one working here. To teach them the game of business and contribute with the information they need to succeed. That is super fun! You know, it is more fun when the group succeed than if I do it.” Einar seems to enjoy being a facilitator and helping others. It makes him happy. He also finds happiness in mastering tasks and reaching goals. But happiness is first of all experienced together with others and on the journey towards the goal.

“I want to be in movement and experience change. Transformation and variation motivates me, but I don’t need to be world champion. In school, I was best or second best in both practical and abstract courses. This has given me opportunities to do what I am doing,” he points out when ask about vision in life. “To live a harmonic life and having fun is also something you should add to the list,” he supplies. Does he have goals today? Sure, he wants the company grow, create footprints in the market and make sure the company survives in the long run.

Einar has a positive view of the future, and believes society becomes better and better. The reason is human innovations and technological advances, e.g. clean cars. “Or look at what is happening in North Africa and the Middle East with information flow. Internet and social media has contributed to freedom of speech”, he says. And we can really tell that technology is a passion for him. He finds technology gadgets fascinating and especially its area of use and impact on society. How it influences on humans daily life, like when he uses his iPhone to control the sound speakers in the garden while having a barbeque, or sharing his playlist with friends. “I am so fascinated by these gadgets that I arranged to get the iPad shipped to Norway the same day it

was released in the U.S. So I use a lot of energy on technology and you should see my house. It's full of wiring and gadgets," he replies.

We ask Einar if luck is needed in life. "Of course you need luck, and some timing. Just look at Bill Gates. He studied at Stanford and had access to computers when it was about to take off." Einar believes that when luck is given; you have to manage the opportunity. And that means hard work, determination and competence. But he points out that we are lucky to be born in Norway. "In US, people take more risk and are much cleverer to handle failures. If you want to succeed, you need to take some risk. And if you fail, go on and don't let it affect you. No failure, no risk, and too much failure, too much risk. You need to find a balance and take some risk", he tells us. This is what he has done so far, taken risk. But he knew that he could always come home to his parents if something went wrong. And today he is grateful for the backing his parents have shown. He would also thank his economic teacher at high school for opening his eyes and giving him perspectives on the world. "I changed my world view after experiencing inspirational lectures about supply and demand", he says before saluting his first customers who believed in what they were doing and chose their company. "Customers are the engine for entrepreneurship in Norway, and nobody ever got fired for choosing IBM".

Einar has found inspirations while reading. Jack Welch's book "Straight from the Gut", show a man with good qualities and great achievements. "And it would be fun to meet Leonardo Da Vinci. He is inspiring," he says and adds the parent generation after WWII to the list of role models. From that generation he values their actions and behavior towards others. And the good Protestant code of ethics and attitude. We ask him what characteristic he values in his role models. "I believe it is the ability to make others perform for you. They are gentle, nice, unselfish, caring and see other people and give them recognition."

So if Einar were given the opportunity to speak to young students, what would he inspire them to do? "I would tell them to do your own thing; don't be content in doing what everybody else is doing. Use time on something you find meaningful, and decide if work is a job or a lifestyle. Then I would encourage them to take risk early in life and go abroad to get perspectives. It is important to believe in own abilities and skills, and speak up and let your meanings be heard. Have passion, and do as Steve Jobs points out in his speech at Stanford University, 2005; 'You've got to find what you love'. Because the source to happiness is the spark in life and you can see it in a sparkling eye."

Thank you Einar for sharing this moment with us and we wish you all the best!

### 5.3 Frode – Intelligent and wise

We meet Frode on a sunny Monday afternoon. Outside the snow is glistening but slowly melting away. Sitting inside one of their conference rooms, with the blinds close keeping the approach of spring out, we meet a man full of passion, who believes in competence and who cares for the people around him.

As we start of our interview by asking what makes him happy there is a small pause for thought and then Frode tells us that most likely it is having harmony between work and private life. If you're not happy at work then you're usually not happy at home and vice versa. They can also add to each other and in that lies some of Frode's motivation in being faced with complex challenges that you get to master, the bigger and harder the challenge the bigger the feeling of success. But most of all it is to have positive and happy people around him. He believes that in order to live a good life you need to be doing something you believe in. It's about feeling that you are meaningful for others, that there is someone relying on you and that you are contributing to others well-being. As an example Frode mentions that in meeting others "a smile may trigger another smile, a laugh another laugh" and that gives you energy which is important because just as he says "No one likes a grouch" (surpomp).

Another thing Frode dislikes is that there is too much discussion and not enough action when it comes to the problems of the world. Looking towards the future there are two things to look at. Part one deals with the world where there will be some major challenges regarding food, energy and cultures clashing. Frode believes that soon we will most likely see conflicts regarding food. Part two deals with Norway. Here we are well protected and rich; if you're born in Norway then you are born on "the sunny side of the street". We'll probably manage through the difficult times ahead. But we need competent leaders in the world who act.

For himself Frode don't have to reach the top and become such and such. It's more important to him to do really well where he is and to be remembered for having done a proper job. "It's not the end; it's the journey that counts." It goes back to harmony. To fill human relations with joy and to have the freedom to do and experience the things you desire. So far Frode has been trying to be positive and believes firmly in being authentic. When it comes to more present goals Frode desires three things: 1) Spend more time with family and friends 2) To develop the company in a direction that he feels he can stand for, what he believe to be best for employees and shareholders 3) Take care of the employees/work place, so that they are feeling challenged and that there's a good atmosphere.

One thing that really fills the room with energy is when we get around talking about passion. Frode says: “Passion is a wonderful word.” And explains that “You won’t make it anywhere without it”. It is something that you just have to have. Frode doesn’t have one single great passion, but it’s about being passionate about projects and the engagements around you. He explains: In our industry people might be a bit conservative, while we are a progressive company and then, when you meet resistance, you need to go up the organization to meet the right people. Stop writing, emailing and waiting, instead show your passion for them, that you really want it to happen. That makes wonders.

Being passionate is something that comes back in Frode’s role models such as Northug, who is also passionate even though he is not fully a role model due to his ego. Then there is Steen who is a good salesman who can create enthusiasm. Sales are important. You have to sell ideas, opinions and wishes. It’s about being able to create the kind of enthusiasm that makes a sponsor willing to pay 1 NOK for a logo and 999 999 to have fun and be part of something. Frode himself hopes to be a role model for some of the people around him at work and at home. Being a leader he sees himself as a carrier of culture and being aware of that he tries to always give a little bit extra of himself. “You have to be like, like Martin Luther King. Go ahead and really show that we can do this, I’ll be in front.”

And if you are hit by a bigger setback then you solve that by distancing yourself to get perspective, talk to others and trying to find a better angle of attack. For example: Sometimes you try to climb a mountain but find it too steep, realizing that you lack the proper equipment. Then you need to back down and find another route to the top, but you have to make it up there.

When asked whom Frode is grateful for today he points out two contributors. One is his parents – for his upbringing and learning to become independent while knowing that they are always backing him up. And then there are people belonging to the same organization – for the trust and responsibility that is given to young people early on, a culture where you are getting thrown into deep water.

Reaching the end and wondering what to bring on to the next generation Frode brings up two areas. 1) Workwise, the boring part, it is important to be competent. Stimulate your interest. Frode praises some of the foreign schools he has attended that encourages really knowledgeable people come in and lecture with enthusiasm. 2) Privately – Whatever you do, get good at it. There is always a need for clever people. And have fun. And that is what we have had in talking to Frode about these things. We find that he seems to be a person that cares for those around

him, a person who believes in competence and in being passionate. And so we left Frode and went out into the sun.

## 5.4 Ida – Hardworking and clever

Almost at the top of the building in the end of a corridor having a city skyline view Ida sits at the end of the table talking about how daring to buy an apartment abroad and seeing that it has worked out is probably the greatest reward she has experienced so far. Ida dreams of moving abroad and opening up a bakery and an ice cream bar when she's 50. She has no plans of working all her life even though she really enjoys her work today. Ida is a quick and loyal person who has lots of opinions and who rather achieves great things in groups than work alone.

Ida wishes to be happy and both make a career and have a good family, social life. Ida recognizes that it might be difficult in the long run, but so far so good. To be happy Ida needs to be with friends, experience new things or achieve good results even though that makes her more glad than happy. It's to learn new things and mastering them. And this goes both for private and work. In work it's to have good discussions with knowledgeable people. Privately it can be arranging a party that goes really well.

Ida is very realistic about hardships and setbacks in life. She is not very sensitive since she early in her life experienced a heavy loss something that makes Ida see the bigger pictures in life, something that makes her secure inside. When things happen she is not the one to fall down and start crying. Rather Ida takes a step back, writes long lists, looks at it constructively, talks to others and gathers arguments to turn it around or move on. When it comes to winning it really depends on who you compare yourself with. If you always do it against someone better then you will never be happy. It's better to win over your own goals. Being in business is tough, it requires backstabbing and talking behind others back and that is something Ida doesn't like.

Ida talks to me about weak leaders. Especially an earlier manager that felt threatened. That manager made Ida feel like she wasn't seen or lifted up. A good leader should instead be relaxed, a bit informal, including and someone that trust others and if you speak up you should know that he or she has your back. Then again, a lot depends on luck, things like results and what job you have. It's about being in the right project at the right time and meeting the right people. It's a lot of coincidences. Ida has not been very strategic so far. She has more focused on finding out what she likes to do.

She has however been driven to work with clever people and to work in teams and deliver. Success and reaching the goal you have set out is a great feeling. You want to feel that you have

done something or achieved something. Ida is also driven by recognition like getting good grades, positive feedback or seeing a change in salary

From being young Ida knew that she was good at school and being that good turned into a pressure about doing things and doing them well. As she was studying abroad and about to enter the job market in the aftermath of the dotcom crash she knew she needed good grades. Perhaps something that leads to wealth. Wealth makes it easier in life. It allows you to have spare time. It's a combination of doing things and having things. "Wealth is to afford to be free and enjoy your spare time".

Ida is not certain if the world will turn out a better place. There are a lot of wars, natural disasters and challenges with the climate. Norway might take a hit soon, but there will also be a lot of exciting things happening, a lot of technological developments according to Ida.

Being young and perhaps being a role model for showing that it's possible to turn around a heavy loss early in life Ida has had some people she is very grateful for. First of all there is her mother, who gave Ida a sense of duty. She taught Ida that learning was important and the value of being nice to others. Secondly it's Ida's husband. He allows her to be herself. "With him I can be open and we talk a lot about everything." He challenges Ida, like he for instance can point out a more ethical way for example when Ida wanted to invest in gaming machines for the apartment and he said no. Then there are Ida's high school friends who have known each other for a long time and they know each other very well.

Looking outside her life there have been a few role models such as Sissel Voll, the foreign correspondent who is known to Ida for being rough, skillful and daring. Then there is Beyoncé for looking good, being independent, of the same age and having reached quite a success as she went from group to solo career. Finally there is a previous manager. He was relaxed, strong, including and he was someone people listened to (pondus). He was the kind of manager that lifted others up and said good things about them

So as Ida summarizes and inspires me with three points 1) Work with things you have passion for because that will make you do a great job 2) Choose your boss – it will help you make a career 3) It is important with spare time – it gives you energy and makes you happier and more efficient. I can only feel grateful that we got to meet and share what hardship, foreign apartments and lifting up people can mean to a young leader talent.

## 5.5 Jakob – Go with the flow

Entering a bright and modern office we meet Jakob, a down to earth person, extrovert and energetic, to sit down and interview him in large conference room with he, himself bringing something for us to drink. Not only will he tell us about how he likes “social, open and honest people, who don’t play any games and who are themselves”, but he will act accordingly throughout the interview.

There are two things Jakob would like to get across to young people today and the first one is to maximize your utility. Jakob has always been goal orientated. When he was younger he admits that it might have been a little more focus on enjoying life and less focus on school. He has however always been a bit prestigious (ærekjær), so to be below average has never been an option. He continuously seeks new experiences while he also enjoys performing and reaching goals. It’s about getting that feeling, a sense of mastery together with others. Extrinsic motivations as extra money and bonuses are weak when it comes to exerting extra effort compared to having interest and wanting to win. But in the end it’s about maximizing utility, to make sure that you get the most out of everything with the least amount of input. He proclaims: “I work to live and I don’t live to work”. So if everyone would work all the time to do what is best for them according to the invisible hand by Adam Smith then that will create the best out of all worlds according to Jakob.

The second thing Jakob would pass on is something very important taught in “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho, that if you truly desire something and work towards it then the whole universe will work to fulfill your desire. Jakob has previously talked about that he right now has set up a goal to improve his leadership skills. Leadership is an area he is humble about and he sees it as a very complicated matter especially when thinking about the E24.no ranking as he recognizes that there is a lot more to learn. Jakob believes very much in leading by example. He gives the example of the spaghetti theory. If you imagine one boiled spaghetti on a table then you can’t go behind and try to push it, but you need to go ahead and pull it after you. That’s how the power of example works and being aware of this Jakob thinks about his actions as a leader. He takes responsibility for his actions and he knows that if he wants others to show up on time at work then he needs to do the same.

Since Jakob believes that you have to be determined and then stick with what you want compared to relying on luck then the following makes sense: “If I want to go to the moon that might be a little bit difficult, but if I want to become a better leader I can certainly accomplish that.” Besides will power, we also discuss setbacks and challenges and Jakob replies that those are

important. They are in some sense motivating and they give the positive friction needed to lift you to another level. And maybe all of this is the reason that Jakob don't give up easily. But he is hopefully seen by others as someone who is engaged, dedicated, loyal and someone who delivers on responsibility.

Besides the two main lessons Jakob points out that by living in Norway we are quite high up in Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and that is a good foundation for a good life. He himself has no "grand plan", no need to change the world or to become the most senior executive. He dreams of something rather quite ordinary. To go with the flow, to get a nice house, car, two kids and maybe a dog "It's to ensure that you at every point in time have it as good as possible." He also adds on that family and the people around him are included and that it's a necessity that they are well off.

While aiming for self-realization and to do that you need to feel challenged and you have to be able to use yourself. You need to get out of your comfort zone, travel and experience new things with others because the world is on a "1<sup>st</sup> class ticket ride to hell". There are conflicts, climate change and increasing egoism in the world. Especially the last thing is something Jakob wishes could be different, but there he faces himself in the door. On the other hand things tend to harmonize and as long as we learn from our mistakes and keep making progress then things will get better.

So if you manage to balance work, free time and family, if you manage to be with other people that give you energy and if you manage to keep being dedicated and true to yourself then you will be happy and someone who lives a good life. And with a baggage full of new wisdom we bid our leave and let Jakob head back to managing his company and being a well-known spokesperson in media.

## **5.6 Lasse – Football and to mean something for those around me**

A well-dressed gentleman meets us in the lobby. In his hand he holds a coffee cup describing his passion. "Football and Macclesfield", he says and laughs. "I am one of the few Macclesfield supporters in the world". His grandfather took him to his first football match as a child. And today, he travels once a year to see his favorite team with a group of friends. "Football is completely irrational, but there is always hope in football. That's why I love it". We wonder what motivates him in life. It is "Working with people, making a difference and influencing through decisions. It has driven me since high school when I discovered that it's more fun to decide than be disposed of by others". He likes to make others better and to solve problems together. One way of contributing to others development is through discussion sessions at work. Company



managers are given a study task based on some management literature, and a following group session is held for reflection on these topics. He also prefers to be responsible for own decisions, not just advise others.

For Lasse, it's not about getting to the executive level, but to make a difference. "Happiness for me is spending time with friend, and discussing big questions in life over a good dinner and some wine", he says. A good life is a balanced life where you enjoy the present and can work with exciting and contributing tasks. An inspiration for such a life is his father, who has balanced work and his hobby, which is travelling and enjoying good food and wine. But Lasse also finds inspiration at work among former colleagues. They have taught him seriousness, professionalism on workplace and to invest time to understand task and challenges. All qualities he makes use of today.

Lasse is also grateful for the support he experienced as a child. Growing up in a stable family where his parents backed him up. They provided a safe environment and gave him the best condition to succeed later on. "I have seized the opportunities given to me", he says. "For me it's about influencing my life, and to seize the opportunities that arise in the present." It's as poetic as the famous quote by Horace, the Roman lyric poet; "Carpe Diem – seize the day". But Lasse emphasizes that the road has involved coincidences. "What about today's goals?" we ask him. "At the moment I want to develop the company, and make it an attractive, good workplace."

The conversation flows over to the subject of money and rewards. He says that money gives you freedom and opportunities, but it isn't a driving force in life. The best reward you can give Lasse is honest and positive feedback. Like one of his previous employee who expressed a sadness when he left the company. "That's something you truly appreciate and it made an impression on me", he says. We wonder how he handles hardships. "Difficulties are a natural part of life and you shouldn't be broken by it", he says. In his answer we experience a determined and optimistic gentleman. Hardships are a challenge, but fixing a problem motivates him. In competition, Lasse wants to win and be part of the winning team. It's a good feeling and winning creates a lot of positivity, which is important when facing hardships.

We ask him if he have some advice for young people today. He says: "Seize opportunities. It is your choice and no one will do it for you. People often overestimate what they can achieve in one year and underestimate what they can achieve in ten years. I would recommend you to work hard, seize opportunities and you can create a great life for yourself."

As we walk to the lobby to say goodbye, his speech to the young reminded of Ancient Greece. Through seizing opportunities and hard work, The Olympians were crowned with laurel wreath for their victories.

## 5.7 Liv – Full of life

Once a week, Liv dances. It's an activity filled with rhythm and energy, and it demands focus and presence. The same presence is felt in our conversation and she glow a kindness when she talks. "I want to live in the present and have a job that gives me energy." Seeing results and achieving them motivates Liv. She thinks it has always been like that. It is about experiencing a feeling of mastery. Her caring heart is reflected through her present at work. "In my position you have to be everywhere. I'm a hobby psychologist, caretaker and problem-solver. My working day is about solving problems." Liv cares about the people around her. She takes responsibility for others, and wants be a good leader for those working around her.

A good life is to spend time with her family, which she truly loves, and balance it with time for herself. "I live a hectic life and need time to be alone sometimes, like when I am dancing or taking a stroll. It's my oasis", she tells us. Going to the super market in the evening is another place where she finds calmness. There she can let her thoughts flow freely.

Liv wants to achieve a balanced and happy life. A life she is experiencing at the moment. She mentions the fun weekend she had with good friends the other day as an example. She is inspired by their courage to choose their own path and capacity to carry heavy workloads. They show a sense of optimism and have the ability to see the glass being half-full. Liv is also very thankful for her friends' role as constructive sparring partners. Another role model is her mother. She had a very demanding job and still managed to balance her life. She made the right calls and was present for the family. Liv hopes to follow her mother's footsteps as a caring mother and role model for her children.

We ask her what she has done so far to feel energized by work and to balance her life. "A couple of times every year, I do a status report on how I am doing and if I like my work", she says and explain that her first job was at the time of the IT bubble. After working for a while, she realized that it wasn't much fun. "If something is not right, it's your own responsibility to change. If you don't get energized at work, you don't perform well." So she changed job and has since then done a status report to make sure that she enjoys her job. Another person at work that she would like to thank is the chairman of the board. He has given her the opportunity and responsibility to step up to where she is today. "He gave me the pep-talk I needed", she says and express a happiness that he didn't inform her completely what it would mean to take the job. Being a role

model at work is a part of being a leader. Perhaps for some of the young professionals, Liv hopes she can play a part. Not because of her achievements, but through showing them the possibilities that exist based on her career. However, they should be reminded that being where she is sounds a lot better and easier than it is. When we ask her how being a role model affects her, she replies, “I try to be open with complexities around me and I try to create steep learning curves for my employees.” As an employee and follower of a leader, she is responsible, sociable, loyal and a positive skeptic. “It took me a long time to switch to online banking, but I am fundamentally positive regarding change. At work people have different attitudes towards change. Some more resistant and some just dive in when change happen. But as a leader you shouldn’t change just for the sake of change. I have to be convinced that it is for the better”.

One thing she has learned so far in life is that you can’t be best in everything you do. “I think especially girls have that challenge. Some seems to have the “Good Girl Gene”, where you try to be best in all arenas. But you have to be realistic and aware that you can’t be best at everything”, she tells us. She believes that you have to make active choices about where and on what you spend your time and energy. And to achieve your goals, luck is needed. But she adds determination and focus as tools for achievements. “So what are the desirable virtues of leaders today?” we ask her. She replies, “To teach balance, give and take responsibility, have trust and the ability to be clear in communication. And also be hungry, curious and ambitious.”

The conversation changes topic and we start talking about winning and hardships. “I love to win but in a mature way”. Liv is not a bad loser. She describes a cabin trip with some friends and when they are out hiking a hill. It’s not a big deal if someone else race ahead, she is mostly happy to be out there. Some challenges are triggering, but going uphill fast is not one of them. Her message is that life has its ups and downs. “I have my status chat, but if the hardships seem endless, you need to figure out if you are in the right place”, she says. “Family and friends are great in that sense because they remind you of what truly matters. Hard times at work are not the end of the world”. She is very grateful for her husband who knows her and stands by her side. He gives stability. But Liv says she is very much an independent woman even though presence among family and friends is her passion in life.

At the end of our truthful conversation, Liv gives advices to young students. “I would recommend them to find out what you want to do and what you are good at. Don’t go with the flow or stay in jobs you don’t like too long. They should try to get a job that gives energy. And let go of that good girl gene. Try not to be perfect in every setting”. Thank you Liv!

## 5.8 Roald – Aiming to influence

We find ourselves sitting in a conference room called the dungeon. There is an oversized conference table that keeps you seated once you have been seated, no one can escape and most light is focused on the whiteboard. It's a room for focus and action and so maybe it is appropriate that it is just here that we get to meet Roald. Roald - a man who fills the room with images, visions and infectious laughter.

Roald dreams of one day becoming a senior executive, to in the end to have made some achievements that were meaningful and important. It's a "big hairy goal" that was something that Roald set up very early on as a student. Taking from a certain kind of literature you create an image of a really big goal and then you use it as a driving force. So far Roald has focused on building up valuable competence, getting an educational foundation that allows him to dare to speak up. Roald is not afraid to tell people even 3x his senior about ideas and things he believes in. It is important to do so and not be afraid and think that you don't know anything. When people at meetings put forth proposals to do a little, Roald speaks up and asks why not aim higher and do more?

But where does this all come from? Roald is not certain where his drive came from. He was quite young when he found out that he was rather gifted in school. Growing up in austere conditions in the country side, where you wouldn't get your Donald Duck comic book until the salary had been paid out, he begun early to exploit his gift. He would record terms and words on a cassette/walkman that he would replay while biking to soccer practice or on his way to school to rehearse and learn. Later on he would excel in math by counting all the exercises and then doing it over and over again to become faster and more precise. To win has been important. It's been a driving force. When Roald figured he wouldn't be great at sports he quit and focused at school. The one thing to avoid, Roald says, is to be average, it is even better to be bad then to belong to the anonymous in-between.

Roald reads a lot and he likes to work with concepts that can be improved and changed. Roald don't believe in being lucky rather it's about collecting the right information and having the killer instinct to use it so that you are at the right place at the right time because you saw that it was there an opportunity would present itself. You are in charge and remember that there is only one person with luck and that is Gladstone Gander (Fetter Anton).

Roald believes his superiors see him as a man to trust, someone solid and loyal. At times he might speak up and cut across, but he always tries to build a good relationship with his superiors because that chemistry is really important. Relationships overall seem to have become

increasingly important to Roald. The feeling of happiness has changed a bit from the early years where it was more to perform and achieve. “Happiness was to get a good score. Happiness is to get positive feedback. Happiness is to do well at work and getting respect for the work you’ve done.” Today on the other hand happiness is more relational and family-oriented. It is to see your kids smile and to get a hug from them. He remarks that getting kids is a basis for continuous happiness as there is continuous development there. Today Roald is very happy because of his family, two children and a wife that he loves very much. He and his wife are backing up each other all the time and they are both making careers together. As he puts it: “Without having found someone in life to talk so openly and freely with, I had never been able to do what I’ve done. Because there are so many times where you doubt what you’re doing. You go against other’s opinions, you take risks, and then you need someone to talk freely about it, someone to trust 100%.”

Development, change and innovation are themes that we touch upon multiple times during our interview. Innovation and innovative thinking is one out of Roald’s passions. “It’s really that which drives the world onwards”. Roald is very fascinated by how you can create new things by combining different science areas, thoughts, arts, cultures and ideas. Someone who is a role model in this is Røkke – the creative, the unafraid and the innovative. Another passion is sports like going telemark-skiing off-piste in a group and getting that incredible “rush” from going down a mountain side. This stands in clear contrast to Roald’s experience that some things you can’t learn through reading but you need to experience it. For example Roald previously had staff responsibility and he tells us that you get no kick in sitting two hours with a person 15 years your senior who has hit the wall and is burnt out. He has become humble when it comes about how to deal with tough things. The primary thing is to take a step back and reflect.

As we close in on the end of the interview we list down a few valuable virtues. Like being courteous, a good listener, having stability as a leader, integrity like the CEO of Google that dares to cross the will of China something that the CEO of Coke never would do, being creative in small doses and finally being yourself as a leader. And if Roald would inspire young people today he would give them the following thoughts: 1) Do your work, deliver 2) Find a “big hairy goal”, what you wish to be like 3) Believe in yourself and push it! (Give some gas) 4) Define your own future, aim high 5) Don’t rush in the beginning, but be patient. And with that we leave Roald, hoping that he manages to keep a good balance between work and spare time. Because as he himself said early on it’s about enjoying and living in the present. To have no worries and being able to have a good conscience about what you’ve done so far.

## 5.9 Solveig – A dedicated source of energy

Our next leader talent meets us with a smile and warm welcome. Solveig seems to be filled with happiness and energy. We feel an intrinsic glow when talking to her. “I have a high tempo, and sometimes it is too fast for some of my colleagues. They have called me, Duracell, a source of energy”, she admits, while she continues. “I think it is fun to work and I found out very early that I would work a lot. I like to take decisions and be master of my life”.

Solveig is very happy at the moment. She gets to do what she wants to do and enjoys it. Dedication and tempo is a good description of her relationship to the job. An example of her energetic capabilities was when the company formed teams to participate in “The Holmenkollen Relay”. Solveig was asked to join the team that was more in it to participate rather than to win. Instead of doing that she went on to form a team for those that believe in winning rather than participating.

In a relay good physical health is decisive. And that is something Solveig has a lot of. Her passion is to work out. She works as an aerobics instructor part-time and loves to go for a jog. I wonder what in exercising that triggers her. “It really makes me happy and it allows me to unplug. It can help you solve a lot of problems, especially when I go jogging. I do it when I need to clear my thoughts or let them run free. Everything is so much easier after taking a jog.” Reaching goals also gives her a feeling of happiness. “The feeling you have when mastered a task and achieved something together with others”. There is something great about being really focused on a specific work task. To work is her situation of flow.

Family and children are of great importance for Solveig. Making sure they have good health, succeed and are safe. She wants to be a good mother. Someone she is grateful to is her husband. He gives her honest feedback, and has the courage to speak up. “You can say he is a brake pedal for my tempo”. Her husband is also making a career and she can identify with and talk to him about everything. A similar brake pedal as a child was her father. He provided boundaries and inspired her to reach goals.

“Do you need luck to reach goals?” we ask her. “I don’t believe that much in luck. I believe you have to work hard and be willing to sacrifice”, Solveig replies. She doesn’t know anybody who has had a will to go far that hasn’t had to sacrifice some things for their work. Solveig’s work goals are to contribute, develop and see results. See that her colleagues and employees succeed. “For me it’s important to decide for yourself. A good life and a goal for me is to be master of my life and feel that you have some influence”, she tells us and continues; “I want to know my assignment and see clear what the goal is. To be challenged by others is great, like a fellow

manager here in the company. It gives me energy.” Others that have challenged her are previous managers. They saw Solveig and gave her opportunities. She learned that through delivering good performance, managers give you responsibility. “To be seen by others is extremely important and I am conscious about as a leader.” The best reward Solveig has received in life is positive feedback and recognition. Like when she received an award from the company owner for her contribution to the company. “That was motivating”, she says.

Someone how have really inspired Solveig are her friends. She believes it’s important to seek impulses and inspiration from different environments. “My friend have made me a better judge of character and given me perspectives”. Others who inspire Solveig are Barack Obama and Petter Stordalen. She sees them both as great spokesman and clear in their communication. And they have the ability to inspire people, an ability she sees as modern virtues of leaders today. “What else should a leader be like?” we ask her. “A leader should be energetic, not focus on own success but have the ability see people and make them good. It’s important to be yourself, have courage, sociable, be strong and communicate clear towards others”, she replies. But she doesn’t see herself as a role model in particular, maybe for some colleagues. It’s not something she thinks about a lot. “People notice you all the time, so it’s about being aware of your role in different settings.”

She has experienced bad role models and weak leaders so far in world of business. Master suppression techniques and dirty tricks are tools these leaders have used. They have been disloyal in their agendas and they have lacked faith in own abilities. “It is sad”, she says, but Solveig has instead focused on being herself and not carrying around a hidden agenda towards others. “What would you inspire young students to do in life?” we ask her as the conversation comes to an end. “Find out what you want and find out what you are good at, because that will make you happy. If you want to succeed, then you need to work hard. They should know that it won’t be an easy road. And then I would tell them to seek inspiration and learn from many different impulses, and to have different kind of friends. I’ll end my speech with encouraging young people to figure out where they think they might like to belong.” Thank you Solveig for sharing some parts of your life with us!

## **5.10 Wenche – A good friend for those around her**

When Wenche sits down in the middle of the sofa we can tell that it’s been a long workday. Its late afternoon and we are the last stop before she can go home and arrange for having some friends over for dinner. Wenche is feeling a bit stressed about the crazy spring she is facing. There is a lot of work to be done and a slight bad conscience for those around her that she

doesn't feel that she has enough time for. But she reminds herself that she's in a good position because she really gets to do what she wants. Wenche is the leader talent who don't identify herself with the other people on the ranking even though she takes it as a compliment. She is the one who proves that you can go far by being gentle and nice. The trick is to find people smarter than you and showing them what you also can so that they can give you a chance.

Family and friends are really important and Wenche seem to be caring for a lot of people around her. She helps friends writing their résumés, she gives advice and being full of empathy people tend to open up to her. According to Wenche, it is important for people to be seen and to see others. An example of this is motivation from the joy of getting recognition from peers or close family. When Wenche was in junior high getting good grades to take home and impress her parents with was a motivating. "To suddenly get a measure on how good you were". Wenche has always worked a lot, she still does. She tells us how Monday mornings are the best. Wenche has become really good at what she does, so she doesn't feel that she has been affected by luck so far, rather she has been head hunted and found by coincidence. "If you are good then you need to show the right people."

And that is something Wenche seems to have done, but it hasn't always been easy. There are different types of hardships and Wenche definitely has experience from a lot of setbacks like colleagues not showing up at work, not doing their work as well and facing economic downturn. But Wenche never complains, she doesn't want to be a burden for anyone else. She is like a Dr. Phil for others but says that "No one knows my problems".

When thinking about role models and leaders Wenche explains to us that: "My biggest role model is this, lady, that have got three kids and become [prestigious position] at the same time. And still she is the coolest, smartest and most clever lady there is with a lot of time left over for her family and she goes on cool trips and in a way has it all and that is my mother". So to be like her parents never judging, always backing up, admiring and the biggest fans of their kids that is desirable. Wenche don't see herself as a clear role model. She has been asked to come back to her high school multiple times, but she questions why as she was probably the worst student. "I get that feeling that alright, now they think really high of me even though I was often sleeping in class, I never bought any of the books, I spent a lot more time on work than on school, something I really should have and I never eat breakfast" But she sees that they are still proud of her. And she knows that what worked was that she dared to show people that she existed because it doesn't help to be great in hiding.



As we talk about the future we can establish that she thinks very little about the world. Catastrophes have always existed, only difference is that today there is live media and news coverage to report it. Wenche have got blue and green recycling bags at home but they are not in use yet because Wenche concerns herself with people, in a caring sense.

And people are important in order to live a good life. A good life is to enjoy your work, to be healthy and have a healthy family, time for friends and a life full of listening and playing music. In Wenches life right now there is however a lot going on. When she goes from work the people in the US comes to work and starts sending her emails, so she almost can't keep from checking her emails in her bed so there is really not a lot of moments of flow and forgetting time. It's almost as hobby and work has melted together. But in order to unplug sometimes Wenche goes to the movies or enjoy flying since her mobile phone has to be switched off for a little while. She also enjoys working out, reading and watching some TV-series.

Wenche believes that good leaders are humane, reflecting, good communicators and people who are good at seeing other people. This comes from her experiences with weak leaders that have been jealous, conflict shy and very lousy communicators. So to sum up a key message you need to show the right people that you know things, you need to work a lot, throw yourself into deep water and be reminded that you don't have to play dirty. It works to be gentle and nice.

And so we let Wenche wonder off to hopefully find happiness as a feeling. A feeling that might come from being safe, relaxed and knowing that there are no worries.

**5.11 Portrait overview**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Unique message</b>
Birger	Protect those close to you and help thy neighbour
Einar	The helper that chose his own path
Frode	Intelligent and wise
Ida	Hardworking and clever
Jakob	Go with the flow
Lasse	Football and to mean something for those around me
Liv	Full of life
Roald	Aiming to influence
Solveig	A dedicated source of energy
Wenche	A good friend for those around her

Figure 2: Portrait Overview



# Chapter 6

## Analysis I

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*The core of Analysis I is to find interesting similarities and differences between the leader talents from the perspective of our frame of reference. It begins with themes regarding driving forces and motivation such as goals, happiness, good life, and extrinsic as well as intrinsic motivation. Then flow and virtues are discussed, followed by an analysis of the different factors regarding PsyCap. Finally enablers and support is identified.*

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*“It requires a very unusual mind to undertake the analysis of the obvious.”*

- Alfred North Whitehead (British Mathematician and Philosopher, 1861-1947) -

### 6.1 Goals

#### 6.1.1 Most leader talents don't have a grand plan...

When asked: What do you wish to achieve in life? (Hva ønsker du å oppnå i livet?) 9 of 10 answers that they do not have a grand plan or a long-term strategy. Like Birger “I'm not one of those planning to save the world” or Liv “I believe I'm not very strategically decisive. I live very much here and now. I don't have any "extreme foot prints" to leave behind” or Frode “The journey is the goal”.

There doesn't seem to be much drive coming from having over-arching goals and making lasting impressions in history. At the same time this does not mean that they don't seek meaning and that they don't have any goals. We find that it is actually more related to the first two life meaning

categories presented by Emmons; Achievement and Relationship. These are individuals concerned with doing a good job now and then being allowed to enjoy the present with others. Exemplified by Jakob's comment "I don't have one of those "grand plans" like getting a top job or changing the world. I aim to have it as good as possible at every point in life. I want to achieve something pretty ordinary: "A car, a house, two kids and perhaps a dog".

Even though we don't know where goals and ultimately purpose originate from or how they come to be, we know that having a sense of purpose is linked with happiness (Emmons, 2003). It is interesting to see that the answers have been so similar and perhaps differentiating from what theory states that people with purpose and feeling a meaning do better. On the other hand revealing your life goals may not be that easy or perhaps they have not clearly defined such a goal. One thing however we should be clear about is that most of them have no doubts that they can achieve their goals as we will look more at when it comes to luck and self-efficacy. And there are a few examples of having qualities and virtues related to achieving long term goals such as Ida "I like to look forth to going to work and at the same time I wish not to work until I'm 70. I've bought an apartment [abroad] that I would like to move to. Start an ice cream bar and a bakery, when I'm 50 and just live. Earn money and save now and then live and enjoy life later."

The one person that however does talk about long-term goals and wanting to make an impact is Roald who states "I've had a picture in my mind ever since I studied. It's a so called "Big hairy goal", where you set yourself an almost unreachable goal. For me it's been to become a top leader (senior manager). It's the goal I'm always striving towards. If I end up precisely there is not that relevant. But I constantly seek new challenges; I don't lean back and wait".

### **6.1.2 Gratitude of the present**

Almost everyone felt that they were happy and content with life today. We found indications that gratefulness is important like when Lasse says "I believe you should get those drops of happiness and feelings of being content where you are right now. You never know what happens tomorrow". To be content today and grateful for the situation you are in is coinciding with the emerging science of gratitude. Much thanks to scientists such as Lyubomirsky, Emmons and Fredrickson we know that feelings of gratitude have long term positive effects on life satisfaction (Watkins et al, 2009). It has also been found that it may also directly benefit mood by directing one's focus to good things as well as enhance social relationships (Watkins et al, 2009:442). This connects with Fredrickson's research and findings about positive emotions, from which we learnt that filling up with positive emotions, may broaden our perspectives as well as give us strength to better tackle challenges (Seligman 2009:45). So as Roald concludes: "There is something in the

phrasing enjoying the present. I believe to be hunted all the time, never have time to celebrate or reflect on your achievements, but always pursuing the next big thing is counterproductive. In order to have a good life you need to be able to enjoy and be glad about what you have achieved”.

### **6.1.3 ... But they do want to have made a positive contribution**

Even though leader talents don't seem to have grand plans, they want to make a contribution in the present. Birger: “I'm busy wanting to have made a positive contribution. Not having contributed negatively to anyone around me. It can be small things; it doesn't have to be any large scale projects. It is the daily things that matter. It's about when you will be laying there in bed thinking your final thoughts and knowing that you have made a positive contribution. It doesn't have to be a great one, but something. If no one has ever been inspired by you then you haven't really done it”. Solveig: “To me it is important to see that others succeed. That is why I work as a leader, to see other's work and see that they have really made it. That's fun and that drives me.” And Frode: “I believe in performing where you are. I want to be remembered that I did things properly.”

This once again is connected with the relationship and achievement life meanings. The difference is that these are not distant goals but present day goals right now. Especially noted should be the importance of family and having been contributing to them. Birger tells us: “Most important is family and children. That is what's in focus and that in the long run matter.” Liv, Solveig and Wenche mentions being a good mother. Wenche explains: “I just want to be happy. To have a couple of kids that thinks that I'm cool. Family is super important to me. My family is everything. I have a mother and a father that have been together since they were sixteen and seventeen.”

## **6.2 Happiness**

### **6.2.1 Being with others**

Family is not just a goal, a dream and a desire, but it is also something that is brought forth as a large contributor of happiness. Like Roald who says that happiness is smiles and hugs from his kids. Actually being with other people, having good social relations seem to be a big source of happiness. This has been part of the discoveries regarding positive institutions. Friends can be part of it. Birger tells us that happiness can be to eat brunch together with friends on a mountaintop as compared to being there alone. Colleagues as well, something Wenche emphasizes. Then we have opinions of more general nature. Einar: “When it comes to me, then I enjoy it a lot more if I'm doing it together with others than doing it alone.” And Frode who

describes friendly attitude and meeting others with a smile: “A smile leads to a smile, laughter to a laughter, which is the energy you need to handle uphill. Nobody likes a grouch (Ingen liker en surpomp)”

### **6.2.2 Balance/Harmony**

People are important and work is important, but we also find that having balance and feeling harmony in life between the two different spheres is highlighted explicitly by Liv, Frode, Jakob and Lasse. This has been studied previously and we know that there is room for tension between the two. What we haven't discovered is whether positive achievements at work can be transferred home and actually add energy to the equation. But one thing that came up that hasn't been covered in work-family research is time for oneself. We are told by for example Liv how important and appreciated it is to have some time to be alone. She tells us that sometimes she likes going to the supermarket late in the evenings just to unplug and have no worries.

## **6.3 Good life**

### **6.3.1 Content**

Having covered parts of the meaningful life, next part is to look at is the good life or eudamonia. It seems as though leader talents seek a life with content. A life based on doing things and using themselves. Ida mentions when asked what is a good life; “To feel that I have something interesting to do at work and feeling that I have interesting things to do in my free time”. And Jakob summarizes: “That there is content, that there are things happening. It is also to be challenged and to be able to use yourself. You need to have challenges, development and personal growth”. We see this relating to the positive psychology in which part of the good life is to seek gratification and use your strengths.

### **6.3.2 Achievements**

Gratification seems to be particularly important, sense of mastery and achieving fill both as a driving force as well as a happiness factor. Einar: “Of course the feeling of mastery is extremely important. To win, in regards to competition but also in regards to own goals, and expectations on own performance. I believe mastery is central at least to me when it comes to what makes me happy”. Ida talks to us about happiness at work being more achievement and having won compared to privately where enjoyment and fun is more relevant. Analyzing this with regards to the concept of gratification understood as referring to the good feelings people experience when they break through the limits of homeostasis, when they do something that stretches them

beyond what they were, we see clear similarities. Mastery is thus a relevant part of what drives leader talents.

### **6.3.3 Autonomy**

One thing not to be forgotten that we also have found is the importance of autonomy. They share the belief of people as the center of their own lives in accordance with existentialist of 20th century. Like Solveig puts it when it comes to what leads to happiness at work: “To decide for yourself. I have a work that I can influence a lot by myself. I lead myself. There are no others leading me”. This is also supported by Lasse who talks about the opportunity to work with exciting tasks, having influence and making things happen. This sense of being in control connects to self-efficacy and hope.

## **6.4 Extrinsic motivation**

### **6.4.1 Money and income**

Both money and wealth are important as they are hygiene elements and they serve by giving different degrees of freedom. It has been very interesting to see that this is the view held by most of the leader talents. Einar says: “If you don't have money, then money is important. But if you have money then you don't have to worry about the price tag in the super market. It's a convenience element in that sense that you can do exactly what you want” Frode: “It's a sort of hygiene factor. Having said that, money creates different degrees of freedom, to do what you want, travel, build a cabin.” And Jakob: “Salary and bonuses are not motivators, only up to a certain level. Once you get enough to get by, then additional on the top is not of any help, at least not to me.”

This becomes interesting in that it concurs with Herzberg's view on salary as a hygiene factor, but we have not been able to uncover either way if money has a crowding out effect. We have found that even large bonuses don't give “super kicks” but we have found that in the short run it can push you to work extra. Roald gives us an example of having wishes such as getting a car a house and creating economic safety for your family can push you to grit your teeth and work a bit harder and longer for short periods of time.

### **6.4.2 Wealth**

Wealth differs itself from money, not by a lot, but two aspects were highlighted in our interviews. One is health, both for yourself and your family and the second relates to living in a welfare society. Birger tells us: “Wealth means a lot. I'm not thinking of a life of luxury. I think more about wealth as the welfare society we live in. It means a lot to be able to live normally and afford

a vacation once in a while”. So we understand that leader talents are not only counting and valuing monetary conditions but also how other factors are affected.

### **6.4.3 Best reward in life**

If money is a hygiene factor, then which are some of the positive rewards and sources of extrinsic motivation?

- To receive additional responsibility: “You grow incredibly from it” – Jakob
- Positive feedback: “To be recognized for the work you have done and nothing else”  
Wenche,
- Feeling valued and cherished by those close to you: “I remember leaving my last position and there was a person who was honestly sad that I would leave them that showed that”  
Lasse

What we see similar throughout these is the experience of others mirroring your strengths and lifting you up. This is supported by Kaplan & Kaiser in how they recommend positive leaders to build others up (2010:108). Positive feedback increasing motivation is supported by Deci and Self-determination theory and this feedback structure seem to work as enforcing motivator for some leader talents.

## **6.5 Intrinsic motivation**

### **6.5.1 Intrinsic motivation - Success/results/achievement/challenges**

As mentioned gratification is part of a good life and it is also a driving force. “It's about achieving and creating results and to do it together with others, that is what motivates me” as Jakob says. Furthermore it has become evident to us that the way leader talents present achievement, mastery and challenges is connected with self-efficacy and the belief in one's own ability (Luthans & Church, 2002:59). It's not only like Jakob goes on to say that it's about: “The thought and idea about reaching a goal. The “I made this” feeling of reaching a goal and achieving”. It's also about perseverance and kick from the challenge like Frode explains “It's like running and seeing an uphill and getting the extra energy to get to that top”.

And this intrinsic motivational force has for most leader talents been the same, like for example Roald who says: “I have always been extremely driven by school and work. To achieve, to get respect from hard work”. And the drive to make things happen is also in some ways connected to change and development. Birger shares what drives him: “To change things and make things happen. Privately as well. Things can't just stay the same; you have to be on your way all the time.”



### **6.5.2 People**

Besides seeing that people make people happy, we find that the context of having people around in a work situation is motivating. Solveig says: "To work alongside other people gives you energy.". Ida mentions: "It drives me to be a part of a team and deliver" and Wenche who talks about having colleagues: "It's a real motivation, to have people you wish to impress". Maybe this is related to the role other people play in creating positive emotions or that together we can achieve more. We know that organizations exist because there are economical efficiencies allowing us to achieve greater things than what we can do as individual actors.

We should also not forget the drive of contributing to others previously mentioned. Like Einar exclaims: "It's motivating beyond limits to contribute to make other people succeed."

### **6.5.3 Leadership**

Leadership and being in a position to make a difference is another driving force. This is what Lasse has to say about it: "I believe that something that has always driven me is to be able to influence and make a difference. From being part of the student body to organizing our graduation board (russestyre) to aiming for management positions right after school."

But then again we find that being a young leader is not always easy. Jakob says: "It's an extremely complicated matter, to lead others and achieve goals through them. I'm very humble facing the complexity of it all. People have so many different driving forces. So there's a lot to learn". And sometimes it's the opposite of a driving force exemplified by Roald: "You don't get a kick from sitting two hours with someone 15 year your senior that is burnt-out."

### **6.5.4 Do motivations change?**

No, the experience and answers received show no such signs. When asked if motivation has always been the same we get answers like: "I guess so" (Frode), "Yes, it probably has" (Birger) and "It has always been there... No, not always... I don't know. I believe it came about during High School. Before I was a quite a modest person... focused mainly on school" (Lasse). As mentioned before how goals come about is largely unknown, but there is an inherent belief within the positive psychology movement that discovering your strengths and your gratifications may help you change your direction and what you are motivated by.

### **6.5.5 Winning and competitiveness**

We find that our leader talents show the whole range of competitiveness. From being very competitive, one says "To win has been a driving force. I don't ever want to be seen as average. I hate average. It's better to be bad than average, it's too undefined." To more modest "I'm happy

to win. But remember that you cannot be best in all arenas” To not being competitive at all “I have no desire to compete, what so ever. When people wanted to compete and win at PE...(sigh) I just don't have it.”

The finding is thus that there seem to be no correlation between being a competitive person and being a leader talent.

## 6.6 Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (2008) says that flow happen in activities where skills match challenges; there are goals; rule-bound structure; feedback provided; and deep concentration from the person. In the leader talents we find that some have experienced flow, but not the majority. Ida represents the majority when she says “I don't think I have that.”

The leader talents seem not to be preoccupied with flow, and most of our conversations end up with things they do to unplug such as watching football (Lasse), or a film (Wenche) or running (Solveig/Ida). But those who has experienced find it either at work like Jakob describes it: “It can be work. Where you have to solve problems, create something and really use yourself. Then you can really end up in a trance where time flies.” Or it can happen in conversation or as flow of thoughts: “When I work with very technical challenges and puzzle together” (Roald).

Some of the talents have experienced what Csikszentmihalyi (2008) refers to as spontaneously flow in dinner conversations or the vision conversation Lasse had one time at work “...had an amazing leader meeting... lifted to a visionary level with what we wish for this company. An amazing discussion.... it was just such a rush.”

One of the activities closest to Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) definition described among them is dancing that Liv is practicing ones a week where she is present and “... concentrated on the technical and in constant movement”. It is an activity she enjoys, but she rarely blocks out her surrounding and thoughts 100 % and sees it as an oasis to get energized. We see that not blocking out other thoughts is not consistent with Csikszentmihalyi (2008:71), but her dancing seem to demand so much of her attention that it would wrong to say that it is not flow.

## 6.7 Virtues and being role model

In our analysis of virtues, we make use of Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of character strengths and virtues. First we will put forward answers given by the leader talents on the topic of being role models. Then we look at the virtues they value.

### 6.7.1 Role models

None of the leader talents see themselves as a role model in society and a typical answer is "No, I don't think so, but perhaps for someone". And if so it's potentially for their children or their colleagues. At the same time most leader talents tend to be aware of the role they possess or that they are given other people's attention. Dealing with this some put higher expectations on themselves, like Ida or try to act as good teachers, like Roald. They also try to lead by example as Jakob puts it: "It's about the power of leading by example. You can't say one thing and do another... spaghetti theory, which is: If you have boiled spaghetti that you put on a table, then you can't try to go behind it and try to push it forward. You have to walk in front and pull it behind you." Frode also describes well the power of leading by example: "You have to be like, like Martin Luther King. Go ahead and really show that we can do this, I'll be in front."

Having asked who their role models are, about perhaps being a role model for others and how this affects them, we find that there are signs that leader talents present role models that have traits and virtues that they themselves might like to have, do have or see as desirable in society (see appendix V). Roald mentions a major CEO and traits around making it to the top. Wenche describes people that care for others and warning examples of those who don't. And Solveig describes qualities consistent with good speakers.

### 6.7.2 Virtues and Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV)

Below we have summarized the answers in a chart showing leader talents and which virtues they value. A first comment is that there is no common virtue that everyone describes in their role models and/or say explicit. But we see that they all do in fact have one common virtue as we look at the wholeness of all interviews and that is courage (see appendix VI for classification of virtues based on our interpretation). The following comments are in prioritized order based on the similarity among the leader talents starting with the highest.

<b>Virtues</b>	<b>Birger</b>	<b>Einar</b>	<b>Frode</b>	<b>Ida</b>	<b>Jakob</b>	<b>Lasse</b>	<b>Liv</b>	<b>Roald</b>	<b>Solveig</b>	<b>Wenche</b>
<b>Wisdom and knowledge</b> – cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge										
<b>Courage</b> – emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal.										
<b>Humanity</b> – interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others.										
<b>Justice</b> – civic strengths that underlie healthy community life										
<b>Temperance</b> – strengths that protect against excess										
<b>Transcendence</b> – strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning										

Figure 3: Virtues from data (Chart is based on data and answers from the interviews)

Courage: All of the leader talents value it, and most answers are given under questions about their own role models and desirable virtue in society or leaders (see appendix VI). The most mentioned strength is vitality or being passionate, and four talks about it in their inspirational speech.

*Vitality and Passion -*

“Passion: It's a wonderful word. You won't make it anywhere without it” (Frode)

When Roald and many others use Petter Stordalen as role model for vitality, they emphasize his ability to motivate and being enthusiastic.

The strengths of bravery and integrity are also frequently mentioned, but none talks about persistence, which is to feel pleasure in completing tasks. But we observe from earlier in the analysis that many leader talents do value completing tasks and seeing results, so the strength may live within some of them.

*Bravery -*

“I'm not afraid of speaking up to someone three times more senior than me, you have to mean something and you have to have balls to believe in it. You may not be certain, but neither will the ones at the top be, you sometimes just have to believe in something.” (Roald)

### *Integrity -*

One of the leader talents expresses integrity well by saying “I want to meet people at home for who I am and not because I’m on the list of leader talents.”

### *Authenticity -*

We observe them as authentic and honest, and it is a strength many seem to value in others, just like Frode explain it “You need to be authentic, real. Don't be positive unless you mean it. You really have to mean it otherwise you will stand alone when the tide is turning.” Something we also see they emphasizes in a business context “not using sharp elbows or knifing someone in the back” (Ida) or “I want to develop the company I'm responsible for within a direction I can represent” (Frode).

Humanity: Seven of ten bring up this virtue. The majority of answers weight it as a desirable virtue while some see it in their role models. All three strengths are mentioned, but kindness sticks out to be the theme underlying most answers and that is what Birger describes as being basically positive, which is to be open, honest and nice toward others. Einar says “The old buzz words of unselfish, nice, kind and caring people. That really care about others” and Ida says “To be nice, kind, funny and social”. We can see that this perhaps goes back to authenticity of being true to oneself and others as well as the joy and happiness social relationships give people.

### *Love thy neighbor -*

One episode that describes the desired humanity in society is the one Birger tells us about loving thy neighbor. “The other week I saw a person fall down in the street and you saw at least ten people walking by without caring for this person. You know that it's someone on a harder walk of life, but to see that people just don't care. That makes me angry.”

Justice: This virtue is related to their role models and as desirable in society. Seven out of ten talks about justice in one or another way. The strength of leadership (transformational) is most mentioned and is a strength they have seen in previous supervisors or role models. Only one mentions fairness as a desirable strength, which is to treat other people in similar ways.

### *Leadership -*

Ida illustrates her earlier bosses and their style of leadership as being relaxed, but still strong with lots of authority by saying: “They were including and not afraid of lifting up others and say good things about them. That is something leadership wise that I try to mimic.”

Wisdom and Knowledge: Which strengths they highlight are widely spread among the six of ten that talk about wisdom and knowledge. Role models seem to have this virtue, but Love of learning as a strength is not mentioned by anybody specifically as we analyze the data. However some, like Roald read a lot and has given us book recommendations, also found in appendix I.

*Education and hard work -*

Competence, to stimulate your interests and to know things are advices Frode brings up in his inspirational speech. “My education lies as a good foundation. I've got a reputation at being very good at what I do.” (Roald)

“Work hard” as Wenche puts it in her speech, and to be curious “You will go far by being ambitious, hungry and curious” (Liv).

The last two virtues are only mention in seven answers and we see them to be of less importance for the leader talents then the previous four.

Temperance: All answers (four) displaying temperance are about being on the list and humility/modesty is only the strength mentioned. It seems to be a strength they obtain and our impression is that many of them are humble to be regarded as a leader talent.

Transcendence: Three leader talents mention it, where two answers are desirable strengths, while Liv see hope in her role models (friends). The question of hope will be analyzed further under Psychological Capital (PsyCap) below.

### **6.7.3 Communication**

A virtue or strength that is not part of CSV classification is communication. It seems that many of the leader talents emphasizes that leader should have the “capability to be clear and precise” (Liv and Jakob) and “to communicate well” (Wenche). Stordalen, Barack Obama and other inspiratory leaders are mentioned as role models and represent the ability to communicate. We further discuss this in chapter 7.

”People that are good speakers, good at engaging people, like Petter Stordalen” (Solveig when talking of role models).

### **6.7.4 Summary**

Looking at the unity of the virtues, our empirical data show that three of the Aristotle’s virtues; courage, justice and knowledge & wisdom, are valued. One of theological virtue, charity/humanity is also present in the response from our leader talents. Courage is most appreciated, but these four make up a clear group. They also put forward an additional virtue, communication, as desirable.

## 6.8 Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

### 6.8.1 Self-efficacy

Our impression is that the leader talents have a high level of self-efficacy. They manage to accomplish many task, doing it successfully (or they wouldn't have been trusted with leader positions) and experiences mastery in their life (Bandura 1995). "At work it is the feeling of mastery. If I have thrown myself into deep water, which I often do and realizing I can make it. "(Wenche). Leader talents also seem to believe in own abilities like Roald "To be best or nest best at whatever I do, that drives me".

We can observe some social modeling trough the leader talents' enjoyments of seeing others succeed and "help others to do their job a little bit better" as Lasse puts it. We have not found social persuasion to be a source of self-efficacy among them, but the majority seem to have positive self-thoughts and being resistant to burnouts. This is seen in Liv's statement "it's my own responsibility to change and move if not happy in current situation"

In general, we have an impression of these leader talents to being confident and believe in own competence, and this is in accordance with PsyCap self-efficacy (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio 2007).

### 6.8.2 Luck (Hope)

To get an indication of hope among our leader talents we asked if luck was needed to succeed with their goals. Seven out of ten don't believe in luck or say that they don't need it. To reach your goals, they say that you have to be determined, work hard and believe in yourself. Like Solveig so delicate puts it: "I don't believe it has that much to do with luck. I believe that you have to work hard, really hard. And you have to believe in what you do. You have to be willing to sacrifice some things. I have worked from early morning till late at night, ever since I started working."

In the eye of Frode "luck and bad luck is often used as an excuse", and as Roald says "there is only one person who has luck and that's Gladstone gander (Fetter Anton), the rest of us have to use common sense to get somewhere."

Those who believe in luck still believe in determination and hard work, but as Birger say: "Where you end up is a matter of coincidence." And then you have Einar "Of course you need luck... but of course there's an element of timing. Why are Bill Gates and Steve Jobs and Larry Allison the leaders of the most valuable companies in the world? It's because they studied at Stanford, they studied where there were computers when the paradigm shift begun. Once you have been

lucky, then you have to manage it in a sensible way. Perhaps it's there that hard work and determination comes in.”

The leader talents' goal direction and determination is in accordance with Luthans (2002) and even though not said under luck they express own enjoyment of interactions with others and working in collaborative relationships. Their similarities with Luthans (2002) indicate the leader talents to be high hope persons.

### **6.8.3 The future (Optimism)**

#### Not so bright

There is a common recurring answer in that we are right now at the moment very lucky to be living in Norway like Lasse who says “We are insanely privileged to live in Norway” or Frode “We live in a peaceful part of the world, rich with natural resources. We are born on the sunny side (har det som plommen i egget)”. But they are not so certain about the future of the world.

Ida says “I believe there will keep being a lot of natural disasters, war and dictators. I believe Norway might have to take a hit” and Roald comments “I believe the bubble will burst and the forecasts shows that we will then actually be underdogs in contrast to the countries that we have exploited.” And a third goes “The world is going down the drain first class. There is enough to worry about with the climate, the environment and an increasing egoism if I'm to moralize myself.”

There is only one clear optimist among the ten and that is Einar who says: “I'm positive. I mean that technological advances bring positive change with it... If you look at society then you can see how it's getting more open, see Arabia and Northern Africa now. Governments can no longer stop the information flow.” The view that change and development is positive is however something he is not alone about and according to Luthans, Youssef & Avolio (2007) consciousness on the role as agents of change is found in high PsyCap optimistic leaders.

#### Development is positive

Liv says: “I have a basic positive view on change. I don't believe at all that things were better before.” And Jakob goes on to say “I do believe things will work out. There are so many that like to be worrisome. Things have a tendency to harmonize themselves and I believe the world is steadily getting better. Every step we take is a development. As long as we are able to learn from what we do and draw experiences then we will make it forward”. In his statement we can see perseverance in the face of global difficulties and a belief in development as positive. Birger



concur in saying that “Of course there are many dooms day prophets, but I believe people have a survival instinct. We have survived for thousands of years, so we will find the solutions.”

Optimistic leaders dare to dream for their organizations and themselves (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio 2007) and Frode displays an optimistic dreamer for the world when he says: “We are in need that competent people lead the development of the world. We are dependent that we stop endlessly discussing and start acting. In some sense democracy is a problem sometimes, we are a bit too democratic sometimes (laughter)”

Many of the leader talents are also concerned about developing employees and take pride in the success of their followers like Solveig says “To me it is important to see that others succeed. That is why I work as a leader.” Or Birger “To build lasting success, you have to make other people good. To help others develop and become good.”

We felt energized and invigorated in our meetings, an ability optimistic leaders tend to make others feel. All of the examples given above illustrate to us that many of the leader talents seem to be what Luthans, Youssef & Avolio (2007) call high PsyCap optimistic leaders.

#### **6.8.4 Setbacks and hardships (Resilience)**

Among our leader talents, seven of ten go about setback and hardships in a constructive way. Typical route is to take a step back and get perspective. Ida tells us that she tries to find solutions by making long lists and talk to others such as close friends or husband. Frode emphasizes the need to get some distance and preferably by talking to someone “to find a better angle of attack. Like when you try to climb a mountain but find it too steep, realizing that you lack the proper equipment. Then you need to back down and find another route to the top, but you have to make it” as he explain it.

Another way of resilience is to do something else for a while like go running (Solveig). For some it spurs to do better and prove themselves like Birger “There is this internal driving force unleashed, I put in everything I got.” And for some, ignorance and just burying it seem to be the answer “I’ve worked in some (places) where I have really felt setbacks. Colleagues not showing up, not working as well as they should or that it goes badly economically. I don't talk loud about it at all. I try to solve it by myself.”

We find them to have the ability to bounce back from adversity and possess some degree of PsyCap resilience. To pick up the pieces and move on if they don’t succeed, something Einar admires the Americans for being so clever in doing.

## 6.9 Support and Enablers (positive institutions)

When looking at support and enablers around the leader talents, there are differences between them on what kind of support they put forward as important. Everybody mention family as an important support in the past and/or present. But it varies on the others non-family enablers such as friends, superiors, teachers and customers. Some of the support has been crucial at an early stage in life, like family, while others, such as superiors and friends, are of importance in the present and/or in the future.

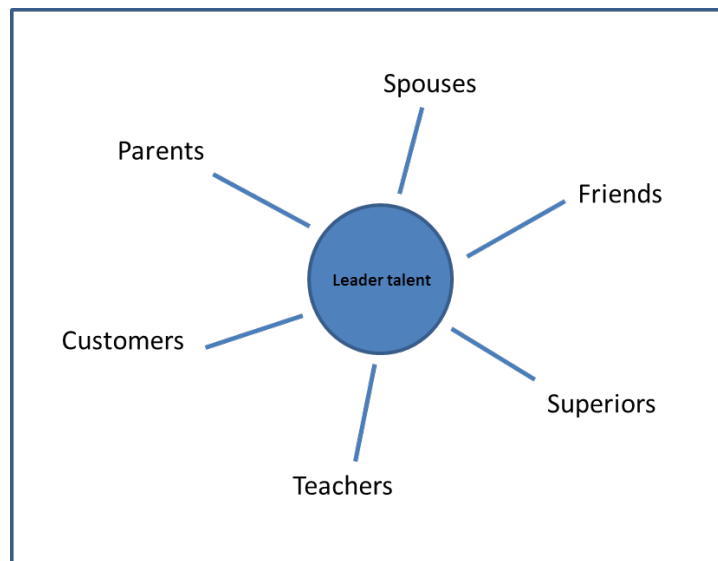


Figure 4: Support and Enablers

The sun in figure four illustrates all of the enablers surrounding the leader talents. We believe these six enablers have made or make the leader talents shine in their current positions. We will now take a look at each of these enablers

### 6.9.1 Parents

Family seems to be of great important and we have identified three types of support. First you have the attitude people get from its family. “I believe your childhood is extremely important. The values you internalize and that is something I'm very aware of now that I'm a parent myself. Parents mean a lot until your 13-14 years old” (Birger). Also learning from own parents can be seen as internalizing values such as Ida explain it: “That I carry a sense of duty, responsibility for doing things. That learning is important. To be kind to others.”

Backing is another type of support that Einar brings up, “I'm lucky, got good backing from home. Knowing that if everything went down the drain, I could always come home and at least you wouldn't starve.” Wenche see her parents as the third type of support, fans: “Mum and dad. They cheer on me all the time and are my biggest fans. That has been extremely important.”

What is interesting to see is that many of them say they have experienced support from parents as a child and these leader talents have been ranked for exhibiting leadership skills, a finding that is in accordance with Sheridan & Burt (2009).

### **6.9.2 Spouses**

Some add their spouses to the list of enablers and as with parents they experience backing, but also the opportunity to speak and share openly about themselves. “My wife, we have achieved this together, we have two careers and we have backed up each other always. She is someone to talk openly and freely with. Many times you doubt yourself. You speak up, you take some chances and then you need someone to talk to, someone to trust 100%, and to have some continuity in it.” (Roald). For others, such as Liv, spouses represent stability “... my husband that I met at school have given stability. He knows me extremely well.”

Spouses can also play the role as challengers or to set limits in their love one’s life “My husband corrects me a bit. He dares to call on me and set limits, dares to be tough when I’m tough. And he makes me stretch a bit extra all the time. To have someone to discuss with in private, you know it is there you get the honest truth.” (Solveig). A common feature mentioned by those talking of their spouses is that they contribute to happiness, an effect we know marriage may have. This study has however not looked at the strength of happiness between the respondents, so we can’t tell if married talents are happier than single, although that has never been part of our plan.

### **6.9.3 Friends**

Ida explains that discussions happen when with friends and they are seen as constructive sparring partners who know you: “I have a big group of friends from high school (VGS). We spent a lot of time together, discussed a lot, a lot of things going on. I like them a lot since we know each other well and they are different from me.” It also seem that you can count on your friends as Wenche says “My friends, there always there. Even if they still don't understand what I work with.”

“Family and friends remind you what really matters. I'm lucky to have so many funny and interesting friends (since high school) that can give some self-confidence back when you need an eye-opener that there is always so much more. Friends give the chance to have job dialogue with a good dynamic to it,” Liv says and display that friend may be an oasis to energize oneself in a hectic life.

#### **6.9.4 Superiors**

Superiors are seen as support among some of them. Common themes are that they have all thrown the leader talents into deep water and challenged them, such as Solveig says: “I've been lucky to have people who have seen me and given me opportunities, like my boss, who has shown the way.” Or as Liv says when she talks about the board director who gave her responsibility early on “he gave me a real pep-talk. I didn't understand what I was getting myself into, but I'm glad I didn't cause then I would never have done it (laughter). To have someone with a lot of experience and a "yes you can" attitude in his support.”

Encouragement and supporting have helped some leader talents, but also the fact that their superiors have believed in them such as Frode explain: “People in the house (company), not only closest boss. There is a culture, but also individuals that have said 'I believe in you, are you interested in doing something like this?' They are really good at giving young people responsibility for reasonably big things.”

#### **6.9.5 Teachers**

Teachers play a role in facilitating subjective well-being at school (Huebner et al. 2009), but Einar's economics teacher who gave him the perspective of supply and demand is an example of the impact a teacher may have on students after school is over. Wenche on the other hand talks of a teacher that motivated her to go into the field of work she is in. For others such as Jakob, there are no particular teachers, but more the passion they have shown that have enabled and helped: “those that have influenced the most are those that are engaged and that have that burning desire. That can pretty much make any boring theme incredibly interesting.”

#### **6.9.6 Customers**

Just as some need bosses and managers that see them there are other forms of support of a perhaps more invisible nature. For one of our respondents it was customers. Customers that dared to go beyond and take some risk on someone not so established and recognized in the market. This aspect we don't find in the literature chosen for this thesis.

#### **6.9.7 Master suppression techniques and weak leaders**

While on the one hand having identified six enablers and supporters, we have on the other found that some mention previous leaders as blockers or not providing support. These leaders seem to have felt threatened by the leader talents or they have tried to push the leader talents down. “A few years ago I had a boss, where things didn't work out at all. When I analyzed it, I believe he

felt threatened by me... I disliked it a lot to have a boss who didn't lift me up. That felt more challenged by me and that was trying to push me down all the time.”

Or the leader, as one talent puts it, that doesn't care about others: “You have those leaders that are busier to take care of themselves. Playing disloyal games and using master suppression techniques. There is a lot of it in business. There have been in all the companies I've been in. It's sad because it is often used by weaker people. Weak leaders that don't have any self-confidence, those that use dirty tricks to make it.”

Another talent adds to the others by talking of leader who don't communicate or avoid conflicts. “I've experienced a lot of leaders that suck. I have experienced female managers that are jealous on me, afraid for their title, that feel threatened by other strong employees. Male managers that have been so bad at communicating... and that are afraid of conflicts.”

The leader talents, mostly women, talk of weak leaders who use master suppression techniques towards their employees. This is something we will return to in analysis II (ch.7). It is however of interest to mention that we didn't ask direct questions on weak leaders, but it was brought up spontaneously under the topics of role models and support.



# Chapter 7

## Analysis II

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*In Analysis II a discussion and a deeper analysis is presented around our key findings such as the value of a high PsyCap and the virtue of courage. The thematic focus goes from being on motivation to virtues, to enablers, ending up with a discussion regarding whether Norwegian Leader Talents can be seen as modern heroes.*

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*“It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment”*

- Marcus Tullius Cicero -

### 7.1 Degree of similarity amongst leader talents

In analysis II we will primarily focus on the similarities found between our respondents and what we see as common denominators between our leader talents. This is important as it is the main focus of the objectives of our thesis. When thinking about why we have received quite a lot of similar answers, allowing us to make this analysis, we believe that one reason could be their educational background which in many ways are similar with university degrees at top-ranked schools. There are however differences between the talents that we should not forget about; these have been presented through the portraits in chapter 5. Key differences that we have experienced are most likely explained by their interests and what field they are working in or have worked in.

## 7.2 Work hard

The leader talents are driven by the joy in mastery, they like to achieve. To be an expert and possess competence are part of that. You are to work hard and be the best at what you do right now. Money is seen as a hygiene factor, and we wonder if it's due to a high income level? Another interesting finding is that motivation doesn't seem to have changed over time, meaning that they have an experience that their motivation has always been similar. Could this unchanged motivation be linked to the importance of values taught in their childhood?

When it comes to winning and competitiveness, there are no clear indications that you need to be a very competitive person to become a leader talent. To master and know things are important, but we find the whole range when it comes to being competitive towards others. Maybe a popular belief in today's business society, but we don't see a correlation in these leader talents.

Happiness is in living the good life with some elements of pleasure life, but to do and to seek gratification is part of the equation. Balance is important between different spheres of life. So as we look at theory of seeking the pleasure life, the good life and meaningful like we find the two first to be present among the leader talents. Something that seems to be in line with today's society's values of seeking wealth and adventures and enjoying the present.

## 7.3 No grand plan

It is interesting that we find that leader talents (except for one) are not living with a grand plan. It's simply missing. They want to contribute right now and to have made a positive difference on the whole, but there are no plans or talk about a higher meaning with life. Could it be that people don't like to reveal their big goals in life? Is there a norm of not talking of individual contributing to society at large and that you should only focus on the self? We would say no because they do for others besides themselves. So maybe the key is actually: "do your best now" and you will succeed. Trying to view this from Maslow's hierarchy of needs we would argue that even though leader talents are trying to reach the top in the present, it is hard to identify at which level they are at. On the surface they seem to be pretty high up and at the same time the presence of self-actualization is not dominant. Maybe it can be understood as when people get higher and higher their desire to go further is reduced. Perhaps the most important questions are what implications do these not so long-term goals have on expressed desires about having a more long-term perspective in society?

Being part of something greater than oneself is also reflected in the virtues valued and emphasized. Transcendence is lacking and maybe it is an age factor to it. We see signs of a shift



when people start families from more achievement to a little more caring, so it could be that the virtue of transcendence would be more present at a later stage in life.

## 7.4 Virtues

What is emphasized and prominent amongst strengths and virtues is courage and vitality. These are individuals with a lot of life and energy in them. They are enthusiastic. They transmit, seek and cherish energy in many ways. They are doers. They are quick and professional. And they are leaders who feel and express empathy. Feelings seem not to be well studied in management literature; one could ask if leaders with feelings are seen as weak? We dare to say that among our leader talents such weakness is not found, and feelings rather have a role of support and facilitating flourishing leaders.

Clear and communicating well. That is what they see as important in modern role models and good leaders. This was presented to us as equally important as the other established virtues. In the present we are not fully certain what is meant with communication in this context. We see from the data that clarity and some charisma may be part of this, perhaps linking it back to the ancient study of rhetoric. We ask ourselves if the technological changes causing information overload such as computer science, internet and more available news have triggered a demand among people of clearer message sending in a society. It may also be that the ability among leaders to encourage and support is important today. Could this be due to the autonomous work setting in Norway today? We believe it can be a partial explanation, and an arena for further studies.

## 7.5 High Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Just as leader talents are filled with energy, we find that they seem to be people with high self-efficacy, hope, and optimism, and perhaps if not resilient so at least prepared to see resilience tested. Most of them don't believe in luck but that they create their own destiny which is what PsyCap hope talks about. It is said in theory that high PsyCap should lead to good performance. We do not know why they have high PsyCap, but we somehow seem to believe that there is a link with the support and enablers around them. One reason for this belief is that they experience positive feedback and recognition. Their self-confidence seems to have been boosted in the support from others and also through their work and helping of employee or friends. Experience of that success is accomplished through hard work could be another explanation for good self-confidence.

## 7.6 Enablers

Through past, future and present times we find that people are important. They all have different backgrounds and we find that having a good family is not a must even though most of them talk about it. What we do find is that leader talents are social people and that the interaction with other human being has been and is important for development and meaning, not in that they are extreme networkers or up and about all the time, but people seem to make people happy.

If we look at it we see it almost as a wheel or a sun with six rays that light the leader talents up.

- Parents – They are important in the childhood and as life-long supporters. The emphasis some put on parents as imparters of knowledge and values is interesting and illustrate the great impact parents' attitude have on the young.
- Spouses – Husbands and wives contribute as conversation partners and a reliable basis in their lives. And it is interesting that some highlight a marriage or relationship as a collaboration where one work together to achieve. The support could also be one important source of the authenticity leader talents glow.
- Friends – It is no surprise that friends play a part, but the stability and their presence as partners of dialogue is intriguing. Such as with spouses, friends are always there especially among those who don't have a spouse.
- Superiors – These are people who believe and lift up the leader talents by giving them responsibility and challenges. It is connected to positive feedback and the much valued recognition it gives. As they say, the best reward in life is to hear others appreciate your contributions and presence.
- Teachers – They may have contributed in the sense of inspiration and being eye openers for some leader talents, and it could be that previous teachers have laid a foundation for success among several of them. It is interesting that some view the school to be a place of inspiration, a thought that seems not well shared with many young students today.
- Customers – This is an interesting category and it is similar to superiors in that they represent people that lift leader talents up and give them a chance. Difference is that customers or clients are an unidentified group in the literature we have read and perhaps that is due to the limitations of positive psychological presence within business context.

Despite hearing more and more that you can achieve it by yourself we find that most of the leader talents are grateful for loved ones close to them and that you really need others in your life. The value of positive feedback support give seems to sum up all the enablers.

One group of enablers that is not present or brought up are siblings. Brothers and sisters could have a significant impact on choices and act as support through a long life. But it may be a trend in society that friends have taken a portion of siblings' role as support. This is only speculation from our side and therefore a topic in need of research. However we have one example of siblings playing a role, from one leader talent seeing his brother as inspiration.

## 7.7 Weak leaders

Leaders are important. But leadership is not always easy. Maybe it is because young leader talents get more of it at a relatively young age, but maybe it is a view shared by more experienced leaders as well. What we however found very interesting is the presence of weak leaders, which several of the leader talents have experienced. These are leaders that have tried to block, suppress or not uplift leader talents. There has been use of master suppression techniques and we can only begin to wonder how many prospective leader talents who have been halted by leaders not being strong. Thinking about it however we wish not to label or say that these leaders are unintelligent or born on the wrong side of the moral scale. Instead we wonder what made them weak and perhaps it's the situation. If every manager tries to use his or her strengths to achieve the best possible result for themselves and hopefully the unit they are supposed to lead then it is not too farfetched that when a leader talent appears and threatens to surpass them that they suddenly begin to block them. This is not to say that it is a morally acceptable behavior, but as we try to understand the weak leaders a renewed focus should also be put on followership research. How should you actually behave as a follower? Should the leadership style and type of manager affect how you work? Or is it simply the managers' responsibility to accept all employees just as they are and help them in every way they can?

Another observation is that it is mainly female leader talents who mention weak leaders. Why is it so? We know from ancient time that most heroes were men, and historically the majority of leaders have been men. Is it so in 2011 that leadership still is a construct connected to masculine features and that a leader should possess masculine characteristics? We don't believe so and a lot of research is now focusing on women in leader roles, one example of this is the UN online discussion Women in Leadership Roles (Women Watch, 2007). Being aware of the complexity of the matter we deem this exploratory study not to be the place for in-depth analysis of the matter.

## 7.8 Are Norwegian leader talents modern heroes?

Moving from the anti-role models of weak leaders back to leader talents, we are beginning to believe that they are a form for modern heroes. They are not the ancient type of heroes running in front of a battle line, gladiators, Olympians seeking danger, fame and trying to save the world. No, these are regular humans with capacity and will to do well and take care of those around them. They hold strengths and passion enough to be inspired from. They are humble about being role models, but they do not embrace the title of being called so. In reality they act as role models and they cannot anymore escape the spotlight that has been put on them. Their actions might speak for themselves even though we have not gotten to know these. But the fact that they are visible and on the top 100 list based on others recommending and looking up to them, shows something that they might not even know themselves.

However we should perhaps question the trend of ranking people. On the one hand it is great to be able to see and be inspired by these kind of individuals on the other hand we should perhaps let them keep their identities hidden just like Clark Kent in order to let them make a real difference or we should perhaps allow the image of them to be a bit deeper. These are not the competitive, elbow-out, clear cut super humans without family and friends completely focused on a grand plan career goal. They are our modern heroes reminding us about the same virtues and values that may be desirable for our 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

# Chapter 8

## Conclusions

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*In this chapter we summarize our findings in regards to our research question and we present a model to illustrate them. We present our hope to be able to follow up this study in 30 years. The implications for academia are laid out as well as some recommendations for the organizations of tomorrow. And last but not least suggestions for future research are divided into three directions.*

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*“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes”*

- Marcel Proust -

### 8.1 Conclusions

In the outset of this study we asked ourselves: *“What drives and enables Norwegian Leader Talents, and what virtues do they value?”* One question now remain: what have we actually found?

First of all, leader talent as a concept is deceiving in that they would all be alike. We have found that there are quite many different paths you may take, but there seem to be similarities and generalizable patterns in how they approach the world. At first glance you would conclude that leader talents are doers and very much a product of western thinking. But let’s look at it more closely.

Through our line of questioning regarding what drive leader talents we have found two interesting points. Primarily we have found that the sense of mastery and gratification are major driving forces. These can be related to the concept of Flow presented by Csikszentmihalyi. These

leader talents seek the good life, in which you use your strengths doing the things you like to do. Their lesson to us is to work hard while also aiming for a balance between work and private life.

Secondly, we have found that our respondents do not show signs of having any grand plans or strategic goals. This is reflected in a recurring non-presence of transcendence or over-arching goals. They do however want to make positive contributions to those emotionally near and people close to our leader talents are what truly matter. This has made us consider whether these leader talents are a result of our society's image of what success is.

What drives leader talents is interesting, but we have also tried to understand which virtues they hold and have helped them to achieve what they've done. We have found that the main virtue valued is courage functioning in unity with wisdom, justice and humanity. Understanding how virtues affect each other and work together in unity is important. Courage without wisdom may for instance result in foolishness. But in our respondents we find that it is about persevering, daring to act even when thrown into deep water. And they really show vitality, meaning enthusiasm and energy in their actions and presence. We conclude that they are people of action, doers. But that is not all.

So what else have we found? We find signs that leader talents have high PsyCap. They are in our eyes people with high self-efficacy, hope and optimism. Regarding resilience, they show signs of having reflected or having plans on how to deal with setbacks. Another interesting thing is that clear and charismatic communication is something that comes back time and again as something valued and looked up to in the same way as more classical virtues. We therefore suggest that this type of communication should be named as a contemporary virtue. At the very least it deserves further research, like what kind of communicative aspects could be defined with a moral component making it viable as a virtue?

Knowing what leader talents strive for and what virtues have helped them to get there does however leave out one very important aspect that we have also wanted to look at, and that are the enablers. Understanding and believing that human progress is partly a result from the interpersonal context you have lived in we can conclude that enablers are needed, but it seems less relevant in which form they come. When we talk about enablers we talk about people, people that lift you up. It doesn't have to be family, but family is one form of enablers together with friends revealed through this study.

What other types of enablers does our empirical data show? In the workplace we find that people who believe in you and lift you up are relevant. These make out the strong leaders and they are opposite of the weak leaders, who use master suppression techniques to hold back leader talents.

We have also found a new group of enablers in customers and external stakeholders that have courage to go outside normal business practice and give some of these leader talents the opportunity to flourish.

Combining and looking at how virtues, driving forces and enablers work as a whole we see that they do affect each other. Virtues correspond to what driving forces and goals that are present and one can ponder to what extent these are affected by the enablers. In some sense you're virtues may probably be reinforced and strengthened by being surrounded by some kinds of enablers.

Looking at the title of this thesis, we ask ourselves, can we call these leader talents for modern heroes? After discussing we deem that these Norwegian leader talents are to be named modern day heroes within a business context. They carry virtues and capacity of becoming great inspirations to society. We do recognize that there are certain elements that will strengthen this position if they are further developed, but we have great hope for their capacity to make a lasting and good impact.

Our conclusions are summarized in figure five:

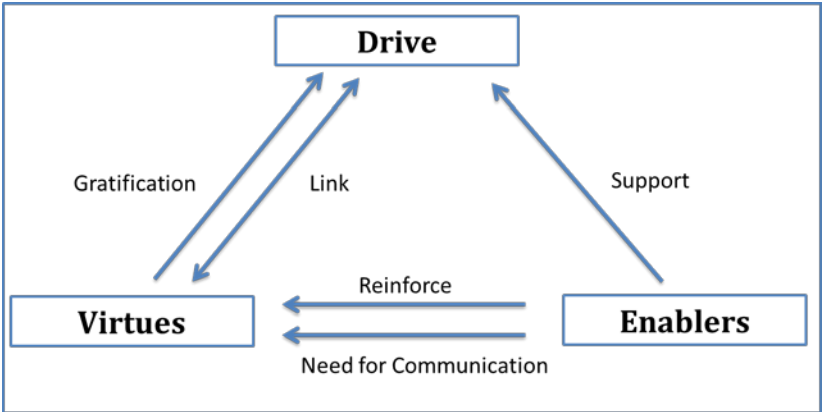


Figure 5: Drives, Virtues and Enabler Relationships

In figure five, we see a link between virtues and drive. Where your strengths and virtues are, affect what drives you to some extent through gratification. Enablers may act as a support in reaching your goals. Enablers may also reinforce your virtues, helping you to identify and develop them. And finally, the context of having a larger number of people surrounding them increases the value of communication, which may therefore be argued to be investigated as a virtue.

## 8.2 Modern heroes in 30 years?

And if we may be so lucky and if it would be doable we would like to reconvene in 30 years and interview the same candidates. This would allow us to see if their driving forces have changed and perhaps a hint of what is determinant for long-term happiness.

We also believe that they as modern heroes have further still to go if they wish to keep their title. Because even though they may be modern heroes today the heroes of the future will have to grow into Guardians of the Planet. The Hungarian professor Laszlo Zsolnai argues that we need business leaders and a system that is driven by sustainability, a care for future generations and pro-sociality which is to be for others (Zsolnai, 2011).

We hope to meet you all there!

## 8.3 Implication

This study makes an academic knowledge contribution regarding Norwegian Leader Talents. It offers support to the research field known as Positive Psychology and its implications is both that of a renewed focus on strengths and virtues within management, but also perhaps ideas how society helps and plans to allow its citizens to flourish. One can, for example, begin to ponder whether or not schools are designed to help students recognize their strengths and areas of gratification.

Another implication is that our study gives an introduction to leader talents in a Norwegian context. How they may be and how they function in some areas. One may of course wonder if they are unique compared to other groups and if so what makes them unique. It might even be so that there's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy at work. Because once you've been identified as a potential leader talent, then you are given more responsibility and credibility enabling you to go further. In our minds this is not the case. Instead we see vital engagement and perhaps it is like Einar said it's not only about being lucky, getting the opportunity, but having the will, engagement and competence to do something with it.

In the end, beyond wishes of academic impact, is a hope that this study have sparked and helped those we've met to increased self-reflection and self-awareness about what makes them happy.

## 8.4 Recommendation to tomorrows organizations

Besides making a knowledge contribution to academia and hoping to have had a positive impact on those we've interviewed, there are some things found that perhaps would be useful



recommendations for tomorrow's organizations and how they may address and deal with potential leader talents.

First of all comes autonomy, give them responsibility and believe in them. The attitude of managers needs to focus on lifting employees and young leaders up.

Secondly we know that our leader talents are driven by the good life and balance between work and spare time. Considering this we recommend, besides allowing a flexible job situation, that organizations design work situations that include good frames for gratification. Monotonous and dull tasks can be complemented with freedom to use your strengths. Seligman uses the example of a person packing bags at a supermarket with social skill as primary strength. This person is encouraged to make the encounters with him/her the best moment of the customer's day and is allowed to spend a moment extra if needed (2009). It might sound simplistic, but in order to help other people flourish we need to encourage them to use and hone their strengths.

Now it's not only managers and business leaders in the companies of the future that needs to act. If people make people happy and different types can act as enablers then we can without formal programs try to tie together mentor relationships and form supportive structures as friends.

Finally, we recommend companies to also act supportive in the design of procurement evaluations, as this has a lot to say for the future of Norwegian entrepreneurship. One problem identified is not that there aren't enough entrepreneurs, but maybe not enough customers thinking twice. One can only wonder what the inefficiency costs for over-estimating risks with using smaller suppliers are in the market.

Listen to these recommendations, but do not forget Warren's warning of what can happen if we make work the primary source of identity, happiness and success (2010).

## 8.5 Future Research

“As for the future, your task is not to foresee it, but to enable it.”

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery (French Author, 1900-1944) -

Looking towards the future we would like to point out three possible directions of where to go next. These include research focusing on improving definitions of leader talents and communication as a virtue, explanatory research about PsyCap and virtues and finally using the same holistic view but with a more refined method

First of all, how to define leader talents? We have used E24.no's top 100 leader talents ranking of 2010. This is not perfect and it is a work in progress. Recognizing that trying to group and divide

different workers have inhabitant risks we still believe that there is lots to gain from defining leader talents more thoroughly. In this it will be especially interesting how to deal with the medial exposure factor, since heroes and role models should hopefully be known and at the same time not fame seekers. There is also a need to define and look more at communication as a virtue. Which are the strengths in it and is it possible at all to call it a virtue?

The second direction would be to quantitatively look closer if having a high PsyCap is general for leader talents and an explanatory factor in who becomes a leader talent. This research is helped by previous operationalization of the different concepts and it would strengthen knowledge known around positive state-like strengths. The same explanatory research could be executed around transcendence and the lack of over-arching goals. Is there something related to being a top leader talent and rather focusing on the result now than having a long term goal and a grand plan?

Lastly, we feel that there have been limitations to how much data can be collected through 60 minute semi-structured interviews and it would be a direction to take by making an in-depth study including more meetings in which themes were over time explored further and further. It might also be interesting in the same way to study leader talents and include people around them as to understand better their role as role models. This would also increase the reliability in the data you gathered. An interesting question in that sense would be under what conditions are enablers supporting and helping leader talents to flourish?

Throughout this research there is one thing that has become clear to us and that is that there is a bright and intriguing future for those daring to study positive psychology in a business context. And we look forward to reading future results and contribution to a field still in its infancy.

Thus we conclude this research adventure. We hope that yours has just begun.

...The End

*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,  
talented and fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?*

*You are a child of God.  
Your playing small does not serve the world.  
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other  
people won't feel insecure around you.  
We were born to make manifest the glory of  
God that is within us.*

*It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.*

*And as we let our own light shine,  
we unconsciously give other people  
permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.*

- Marianne Williamson



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# Appendix I: Ideas, tips and recommendations from Leader Talents

## Books:

- Jack Welch – “Winning” (GE- CEO)
- Elin Ørjasæter – “Lederboka - hodejegerens beste tips” (Perfekt leder)
- Jack Welch – “Straight from the Gut”
- Steve Jobs – “Commencement adress at Stanford, 2005” (“You’ve got to find what you love”)

## Tools:

- Bi-annual status report. Check with yourself two times a year if you are satisfied where you are.

## Tips:

- “I used to record words and phrases on my Walkman to rehearse while biking and doing other things. In high school I did all math tasks and then I would do them over and over again to become more precise and faster at it.”

# Appendix II: Interview guide

## Introduksjon (Ca 5 min)

Hilse velkommen og takke for at vedkommende stiller opp.

TILBY NOE Å DRIKKE og Spise (Kaffe, vann, brus)

Kort presentation av oss: Navn, alder, studium (5.kull/STR)

Fortelle hensikten med studiet. Gi en bakgrunn til hvorfor; Rangering, E24.no etc.

Fortelle at det er en samtale – vi ønsker å bli kjent med deltakeren

Spørre om respondenten har tidligere erfaringer med intervju/samtaler som dette

Deltakerinfo –

Informationspapir – Frivillighet, hensikt, hvordan vi vil bruke, ingen rett eller galt svar

Samtykkeerklæring

Struktur av intervju

5 temaer, 5-15min pr tema, ca 60 min totalt (har du noen tid til overs?), åpne spørsmål

### 1. Lykke, flow (~5 min)

A) Hva gjør deg lykkelig? Tenker på først når du hør glede. Lykke og glede (Happiness)

B) Er du lykkelig?

C) Hva er sann glede?

D) Hva er et godt liv for deg?

E) Hva anser du å være oppskriften for å bli lykkelig i dag?

F) Hvilke aktiviteter får deg til å glemme tid og hvor du er fullt fokusert? (Flow)

### 2. Mål, Mening med livet, visjon (~10min)

A) Hva ønsker du å oppnå i livet?

B) Hvordan har du gjort dette hittil?

C) Hva har du for målsetninger (mål) i dag/for øyeblikket?

D) Hvor mye flaks (hell) trenger du for å oppnå målet ditt?

Eller trenger du flaks og hell for å oppnå målet ditt? (Hope – observere deltakeren sin reaksjon og atferd)

E) Hva tenker du om fremtiden når det gjelder verden rundt deg? (Optimisme)

### 3. Motivasjon og Drivkrefter (Drives) (~15min)

A) Hva driver deg? Eller Hva gjør deg motivert? (Eks: Nysgjerrighet)

B) Hvis du tenker tilbake på livet ditt, har det alltid vært slik? (denne drivkraften) (Eks:VGS, Universitet)

C) Hva er din lidenskap? Fortell om den

D) Hva betyr penger/velstand for deg?

E) Hva slags belønning har du satt mest pris på i livet ditt?



F) Hva tenker du om å vinne?

G) Hvordan håndterer du motgang? (Resilience)

#### 4. Forbilder (inspiration – Rolemodels) (~5min)

A1) Hvilke forbilder har du? *(Forbilde)*

A2) Hva setter du pris på ved dine forbilder?

B) Hvilke karaktertrekk mener du er de mest ønskelige hos ledere/mennesker i dagens samfunn? (moderne dygder) *(Samfunn)*

*(Vi ønsker å undersøke hva er de beste evner/karaktertrekk hos mennesker i dag)*

C1) Ser du deg selv som et forbilde? (Jfr ledertalent) *(Person)*

C2) Og hvordan påvirker det deg?

#### 5. Støtte (enables) Faktorer som muliggjort (~10min)

*Vi ønsker å forstå konteksten de ha kommet fra, dvs menneskene rundt dem.*

A) Hvem vil du takke for at du er der du er idag (alt. Den du er)? (Gratitude)

B1) Hva slags type støtte har du opplevd? Hva har hjulpet deg?

(Personer, aktiviteter, opplevelser, institusjoner/organisasjoner)

B2) Kan følge opp spørsmålet ved å se på følgende stakeholdere:

Familie/hjem

Venner

Lærere / mentor

Kjærester

Arbeid

C) Hva slags type etterfølger (follower) tror du andre mener du er? Hva tror du selv?

*(Follower (etterfølger) er det motsatt av leder)*

#### 6. Topp 100 ledertalent lista

A) Hvilke egenskaper/kjennetegn hjalp deg til å komme på listen?

B) Hvordan opplever du å bli rangert blant topp 100 ledertalenter?

C) Hvordan håndterer/takler du at andre ser deg på listen?

Siste spørsmål:

Hvis du skulle holde en inspirerende tale for unge studenter, hvilket budskap vil du gi dem?

#### Etter intervjuet

Recap over temaene: Lykke/flow, Visjon og mål i livet, motivasjon og drivkrefter, forbilder, hvem man vil takke/støtte i livet, ledertalenter, inspirerende tale

Ønsker du å si noen ting mer/fylla ut med?

Takke for at vi fikk låne tid av vedkommende

Fortelle om de neste stegene i forskningen

# Appendix III: Informed Consent Form

## Samtykkeerklæring

**Tittel på masteroppgaven:**

Moderne Helter - Ledertalenter i norsk næringsliv og drivkrefter

**Forskere:**

Bernhard Bergström, Masterstudent, Norges Handelshøyskole

Kjetil Selstø Hatlehol, Masterstudent, Norges Handelshøyskole

- |   | Ja                       | Nei                      |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Jeg bekrefter å ha lest og forstått informasjonsskrivet for den nevnte masteroppgaven over, og har hatt muligheten til å stille spørsmål.        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Jeg forstår at min deltakelse er frivillig og at jeg har mulighet til å trekke meg når som helst underveis, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Jeg godtar å delta i dette studiet.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Jeg godtar at intervjuet blir tatt opp ved hjelp av båndopptaker.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Jeg godtar bruk av anonymiserte sitater i vitenskapelige publikasjoner.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Navn på deltaker:**

**Dato:**

**Signatur:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dato:**

**Signatur:**

Bernhard Bergström

\_\_\_\_\_

Kjetil Selstø Hatlehol

\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix IV: Information sheet

Masteroppgave ved Norges Handelshøyskole – våren 2011

## Forespørsel om å delta i masterutredning om ”Moderne helter”

Av Bernhard Bergström og Kjetil Selstø Hatlehol

### *Introduksjon*

---

”Et forbilde sin rolle er å inspirere andre mennesker til storhet”

Å tiltrekke seg og få frem talenter, har blitt viktig for bedrifter og Norge som kunnskapsnasjon de senere år. I psykologifaget har man i over 50 år fokusert på mental sykkelighet, og for å balansere dette fokuset har et nytt globalt forskningsområde vokst frem, kalt positiv psykologi. Her er fokuset å finne og drive frem talenter, hva som motiverer mennesker og hvordan man kan oppnå et godt liv. I grensesnittet mellom denne retningen og næringslivsforskningen eksisterer det fortsatt kunnskapshull. Eksempler på dette er en forståelse av moderne karaktertrekk som kan lede til en eksepsjonell innsats, og til hvilken grad støttende omgivelser har betydning for talenter. Vi ønsker gjennom denne masterutredningen og med din deltakelse å gi et forskningsbidrag som kaster lys over noe av disse kunnskapshullene.

Vi er mastergradstudenter ved Norges Handelshøyskole, med fordypning i strategi og ledelse, som gjør en studie av Norges fremste ledertalenter våren 2011. I den anledning lurer vi på om vi kan få låne litt av din tid, ca 60 minutter, til et dybdeintervju. Du er utvalgt som potensiell deltaker siden du er rangert av E24.no som topp 100 ledertalenter i 2010. (<http://e24.no/her-er-norges-hundre-stoerste-ledertalenter/3791130>)

Intervjuet vil dreie om målsetninger, drivkrefter, forbilder og ønskelige karaktertrekk.

Formålet med studie er få en forståelse av hva samfunnet ser på som de moderne dyder. Den tar også sikte på å få frem ledertalentenes drivkrefter og faktorer i deres omgivelser som kan ha vært støttende for dem. Denne kunnskapen kan vise seg å være relevant for morgendagens organisasjoner.

### *Bakgrunn for tema*

---

I Norge er det en voksende trend med rangeringer basert på suksess. En grunn til dette kan være ønsket om å finne egnede ledere for fremtiden som vil være med å bidra til at Norge forblir et av verdens mest velstående land. Ledertalentene kan også oppfattes som forbilder for andre i næringslivet. Det er derfor spennende å lære mer om morgendagens ledere og de moderne dyder som de representerer. Ledertalentene kan også bidra til en forståelse av hvilken retning samfunnet ønsker å bevege seg.

I etterkant av finanskrisen har det vært en diskusjon om bonus, insentivordninger og hvordan bedrifter kan få frem ekstraordinær innsats blant ledere. Denne har avdekket at det finnes fortsatt manglende kunnskaper om hva som driver og motiverer ledertalenter. Vi håper at denne masterutredningen vil kunne gi et bidrag til forståelsen av lederes drivkrefter.

Hvis vi har vekket din nysgjerrighet, har vi et ønske om å få gjennomføre et intervju med deg der vi kan ha en åpen og uformell samtale omkring disse temaene.

## Masteroppgave ved Norges Handelshøyskole – våren 2011

### Metode

Intervjuet vil vare én time, og vi vil bruke båndopptaker og ta notater mens vi snakker sammen.

Det er frivillig å være med og du har mulighet til å trekke deg når som helst underveis, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Du kan også la være å svare på spørsmål som blir stilt. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle innsamlede data om deg bli slettet. Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og ingen enkeltpersoner vil kunne gjenkjennes i den ferdige oppgaven. Opplysningene anonymiseres og opptakene slettes når oppgaven er ferdig, innen utgangen av 2011. Begge undertegnede studenter samt veileder professor Knut Ims har tilgang til innsamlet datamateriale.

Vi håper samtidig samtalen kan bidra til egen refleksjon.

Etter intervjuet lager vi en oppsummering av samtalen, og du vil få mulighet til å komme med innspill og bedømme om du kjenner deg igjen. Videre vil resultatene analyseres og benyttes opp mot relevant teori. Oppgaven ferdigstilles og planlegges å bli publisert juni 2011. Du som har deltatt vil få tilsendt en kopi.

### Henvendelse

Dersom du har lyst til å være med på intervjuet, er det fint om du svarer på denne e-posten og leser den vedlagte samtykkeerklæringen. Vi blir sammen enige om tid og sted for intervju. Samtykkeerklæringen underskrives på selve intervjuet.

Hvis det er noe du lurer på, er du hjertelig velkommen til å ringe oss eller sende en e-post. Du kan også kontakte vår veileder Knut Ims ved Institutt for Strategi og ledelse.

### Forfattere:

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### Veileder:

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# Appendix V: Inspirational Speech

## **Birger:**

To university students (main message):

1. You need to be focused on being guided by happiness and by what drives you (get a job you like and a meaningful workday)

Younger students (e.g. High School lay a foundation in life):

2. Be honest
3. Be dedicated
4. Be aware of your grades
5. Do your work well
6. Follow your passions

## **Einar:**

1. Go your own way – and not being so content with doing what everybody else is doing.
2. Use time on doing what we find interesting and fun.
3. You have to decide whether you want the work as a job or as a lifestyle.
4. Take some risk early in life
5. Go aboard (out of Norway) and opening your eyes.
6. Believe in own abilities and qualities – not just stand around waiting for someone to ask you, but...
7. ... speak up – You get nowhere by being gentle
8. Find the spark – sparkling eye!

## **Frode:**

Competence (work) – stimulate your interests. Know things, to really know things is really important.

Private:

1. Whatever you do, get good at it. There will always be a need for knowledgeable people
2. Have fun

### **Ida:**

1. You have to work with things you truly burn for, are engaged in.
2. Choose your boss
3. Important to have some spare time – to have activities, something you like outside of work, so that it is not all about work. Because then I believe you won't be as efficient and happy.

### **Liv:**

- 1) Choose a job that gives energy - we are all triggered by different things, but you spend so much time working. No job is an eternal joyride, but after every downturn there is an up.
- 2) Know yourself – talk to yourself about what matters to you and...
- 3) Find your thing – when you do you will excel at it. Save yourself 10 years in the wrong job, by daring to not be caught in the dreams of others.
- 4) You will go far by being ambitious, hungry and curious

And remember, you don't need to be best in all arenas!

### **Jakob:**

1. The invisible hand by Adam Smith: If everyone would do what's best for themselves then the world would be the best possible one (maximizing utility)
2. The Alchemist, if you desire something great enough then the whole universe will work to make your wish come true. Do what you want and if you want it enough it will happen. If everyone does that, it'll turn out a good thing.

### **Lasse:**

1. Most important: you have to grab opportunity. The choice is yours and there is no one who will do it for you.
2. "Most people" overestimate big time what they can achieve within one year, but underestimate what they can do in ten years time"
3. If you are willing to stand up and grab the opportunities and work hard for more than 10 years than the possibilities are endless.

### **Roald:**

1. Do your work and do it damn good – You have to prove that you can deliver. Do the extra work, stay the extra hours to build the foundation needed to deliver.
2. Set up a vision over who you wish to be
3. Believe in yourself and go for it (to give some gas)
4. Don't rush, but be patient in the beginning
5. And in the end find the things you have passion for

### **Solveig:**

1. If you want to succeed, you have to work for it – There is no easy way.
2. You have to pay the price to choose a career. I don't know anyone of my friends who have made a career without sacrificing something down the road.
3. Find out what you want.
4. Find out what makes you happy and then the money will come afterwards.
5. Find out what you are good at
6. Find out where you belong
7. People are different and understand that, that is important. Let people be and respect others as they are created.

### **Wenche:**

1. Show that you are good. You can be the best there is, but unless no one knows about it, it ain't worth anything. Take contact with those you believe are good within your field and tell them how good you are
2. Show, don't tell
3. Work hard
4. Bite off more than you can chew (to dare)

# Appendix VI: CSV

The table is a classification of character strengths based on data from interviews.

	Birger	Einar	Frode	Ida	Jakob	Lasse	Liv	Roald	Solveig	Wenche
--	--------	-------	-------	-----	-------	-------	-----	-------	---------	--------

**Wisdom and knowledge** – cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

Creativity		X						X, D		
Curiosity	□	□					D			
Open-mindedness	D					X				
Love of learning										
Perspective (wisdom)									X	X

**Courage** – emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal.

Bravery				X			X	X, D		□
Persistence										
Integrity		□			D			D	D	
Vitality	D, □	□	X	D, □	X, □			X, Δ	X	X, D

**Humanity** – interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others.

Love							X			X
Kindness	X, D	X		D	D				D	D
Social Intelligence				D	D				D	

**Justice** – civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

Citizenship	□			X			D	□		
Fairness								D		
Leadership	X	X	X	X			D	Δ	X, D	

**Temperance** – strengths that protect against excess

Forgiveness and Mercy										
Humility/Modesty	Δ			Δ	Δ	Δ				
Prudence										
Self-regulation/self-control										

**Transcendence** – strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

Appreciation of beauty and excellence										
Gratitude										
Hope	D						X			
Humor				D						
Spirituality										
	<b>Birger</b>	<b>Einar</b>	<b>Frode</b>	<b>Ida</b>	<b>Jakob</b>	<b>Lasse</b>	<b>Liv</b>	<b>Roald</b>	<b>Solveig</b>	<b>Wenche</b>

**Explanation of symbols used in table:**

X = Their role models

D = Desirable virtues

Δ = Answers concerning being on the E24 list

□ = Answers from inspirational speech



## Appendix VII: CSV Observations

The table shows our own observation and we have made classification of character strengths based on it.

	Birger	Einar	Frode	Ida	Jakob	Lasse	Liv	Roald	Solveig	Wenche
--	--------	-------	-------	-----	-------	-------	-----	-------	---------	--------

**Wisdom and knowledge** – cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of know

Creativity	S							S		S
Curiosity		S		S		S				
Open-mindedness							S			
Love of learning			S	S	S			S		
Perspective (wisdom)			S							

**Courage** – emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal.

Bravery				S			S	S		S
Persistence		S	S			S			S	
Integrity	S				S			S		
Vitality		S		S	S				S	

**Humanity** – interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others.

Love	S						S	S		S
Kindness	S						S			S
Social Intelligence										

**Justice** – civic strengths that underlie healthy community life

Citizenship				S					S	
Fairness	S					S				
Leadership				S					S	

**Temperance** – strengths that protect against excess

Forgiveness and Mercy										
Humility/Modesty							S			
Prudence										
Self-regulation/self-control										

**Transcendence** – strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

Appreciation of beauty and excellence						S				
Gratitude					S					
Hope		S								
Humor			S							S
Spirituality										

S = Our observation

	Birger	Einar	Frode	Ida	Jakob	Lasse	Liv	Roald	Solveig	Wenche
--	--------	-------	-------	-----	-------	-------	-----	-------	---------	--------