ABILITY TO ACT

ODE TO THE SEEKERS

Ability to Act wants to challenge us in our thinking and share perspectives on renewal and change. This call for action in response to individualism, neoliberalism and marketisation, resonates with my work on international higher education. In this time of ecological and health crises, geopolitical tensions and prevalence of nationalism above global cooperation and action, Ability to Act provides valuable insights and recommendations.
Hans de Wit,
Professor Emeritus at Boston College

If you share the opinion that (future) professionals have a responsibility to positively contribute to society, I would recommend this book. From an almost philosophical stance the authors shine a light on various dimensions of development of 'the ability to act'. This is – at least to me it was- a new, multifaceted competency. Although not the focus of the authors, I see many parallels with the education of healthcare professionals: knowledge, skills and attitude come together in competence. This book gives inspiration how to make competence flourish in the light of changing demands in a changing world.
Prof. dr. Nynke Scherpbier - de Haan,
Radboud University Medical Center

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Starting a book with a poem is a sign of something disruptive, innovative, and human. That's certainly what our century needs. This book addresses contemporary issues (education, innovation, an attitude of life, etc.) with new perspectives and approaches (mountains, authenticity, play, ...) that could inspire every single reader. 'Ability to Act' is an ode to do, is an invitation for each of us to imagine, meditate, think and more importantly Act for a better future.

Xavier Pavie, philosopher, Professor at ESSEC Business School, Director of iMagination Center.

We know that we need to change. To some extent we anticipate the direction. But many questions are open and we can enter a dialogue around them. Dialogues live from differences - and from a common ground to create the synthesis. This book offers starting points for such a dialogues.

Prof. Dr. Orestis Terzidis, Chair of Entrepreneurship and Technology-Management of the Institute for Entrepreneurship, Technology management and Innovation (EnTechnon) at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

POEM Ability to Act

desire
object
stagnant water
moves

dialogues of the self
they barely hit the mark
existence, origin or understanding
finger exercise

in the now
the how
circumstances
adapted

source of life
start and point of end
promises
slowly redeemed
where the snail bites off its own head

relationships
one owner
together

where
feeling
meets
understanding

sharpened
conciliatory
words
science of the long line
intuitively rational

pulled
by
the other
the self

old timer
fight for every meter
forward backwards
towards anything

experiencing
othering
the self
in bright air

to live
I now exercise
letting it in

Prelude

Eugène Vermeer

Since the dawn of time, man has been in close contact with his immediate environment and has focused on what was available in nature. The type of human with the best adaptation potential dominated and spread across the world. A new way of thinking, the cognitive revolution, as described by Yuval Noah Harari in the book *Sapiens* (Harari Y.N. , 2017), has contributed to the fact that modern humans have been able to maintain themselves increasingly well. Language and communication played an essential role in this. This led to shifts in socialisation and behaviour, taught humans to act more purposefully, make plans and, through cooperation, develop new techniques as well as exchange survival strategies. The environment was leading and human adaptation was mainly following its developments.

Since the industrial revolution, these adaptive skills have been increasingly called upon. In the current climate, we are living in with increasing global population growth and we are faced with complex issues concerning our living environment: food, environment, work and housing. The approach is made more difficult by the fact that thinking and working together is clouded by widely divergent social and economic interests. The speed and complexity of the developments and changes we have brought about, especially ourselves, mean that we are faced with new and profound challenges. There is a need to guide ourselves in adaptation by stimulating and developing skills, in addition to adapting our thinking patterns and ways of thinking. Are we able to take control in order to realign our thinking and acting with our source; our environment, and to redirect the Self in our evolutionary development? What is needed for a constructive adjustment, a step forward in this evolutionary process? How do we get back to talking about this, in dialogue with the other? We have to go back to our original motives of exploring our living environment, but certainly also in ourselves, in the role of thinking and acting. What do we need? What can we do ourselves?

Stimulating the courage to be different and authentic. From our instinctive drives, we initially seek safety in the group and its familiar patterns, and we want to merge into the whole. It takes talent and drive to dare to be different and to dare to distinguish yourself and still be part of the whole. From authenticity and autonomous thinking, we may be better able to activate critical thinking in ourselves and to deviate from group assumptions and influence. Through constructive critical thinking about the world around us we can better free ourselves from oppressive group pressure and collective assumptions that may inhibit an open-minded approach to renewal and change.

If we want to explore new paths, we will have to allow ourselves to be vulnerable, be bold enough to take the risk of failure and make use of the power of vulnerability as described in the book of the same name by B. Brown (Brown 2012). This forms the basis to explore, to have an eye for another perspective, to listen sincerely to the other. Only then can we more deeply exchange our real feelings without the fear of being different and thinking differently. 'Improve the world, ask a question!' is one of the precepts that Rutger Bregman describes in his book *Humankind* (Bregman 2019). The contemporary perspective is often focused on resilience and achievement, on profit and growth, on dominance and personal gain. This leads to a culture of judgement and growth at the expense of others. This is not growth and development from common interest by stimulating cooperation, authenticity and autonomous thinking, but growth and development at the expense of the other and our surroundings. This socially, politically and economically stimulated attitude irrevocably leads to pathological interpersonal relationships, between both individuals and groups. We only have to look at the growing figures for burn-out, stress, anxiety and hardening within many societies. Trench warfare is being fought between people on the basis of ingrained, hardened and imposed assumptions. It is time for an adjustment - a paradigm shift - in which attention is paid to communication, morality, creativity, critical and autonomous thinking free from fixed assumptions in sincere dialogue with our environment, and our fellow man.

With this book we want to enter into a dialogue with the reader, share and challenge you in your thinking and acting, your ability to act. A guide to the development of the Self, based on attention to the perspective of the Other;

reaching yourself through the Other. If we realise the necessity of this and are able to reinforce it in upbringing, education and cooperation, we can set off. Taking this path is the first step towards change. We want to highlight different approaches from different disciplines to inspire, motivate and engage in dialogue.

sharpened

conciliatory

words

science of the long line

intuitively rational

Let's Play

About self-organising, change and learning in organisations

Jaap Boonstra

This chapter highlights how self-organising and collaborative play can help us prepare our organisations and ourselves for the future. Many people in organisations experience their environment as dynamic, and it is unclear what the future will be. Organising as a rational and planned process is then an illusion. Self-organising and collaborative play are appropriate when the environment is ambiguous and proven methods no longer work. Then organising is about a collective search process in which players focus on the future and carry out sustainable changes. By playing an active role in the change process, the change comes to life and a learning community is created in which people can develop their organisation and themselves.

Self-organising and collaborative change
In recent years people in organisations have encountered turbulence in the environment in which they operate. Globalisation, digitalisation, market forces, systemic changes, government measures, regulations and supervisory systems all contribute to dynamics previously unknown. This has led to changes in many organisations. The work of the professional is changing. There is more cooperation in networks. The interaction within and among organisations is changing. These changes are not simple as there are contradicting demands from customers and business partners and tensions between stakeholders within and around organisations.

Transformational change occurs in a situation in which people create new realities together and learn to deal with uncertainty (Weick 2003). This approach towards change requires the courage to confront an uncertain situation and acknowledge tensions. Then, in-depth change and innovation become possible

through interaction and learning. This will lead to a fundamental choice: the path of certainty and planned change aimed at stability and control, or the path of tension and uncertainty which contributes to in-depth innovation in our organisations and the world around us. In self-organising, people together give meaning to the situation in which they find themselves, searching for an approach to change that suits them and the situation.

For organisations in a dynamic environment that want to prepare themselves for the future collaborative play is a meaningful perspective (Boonstra 2018). This view implies that there are players playing together in change and enjoying it. The play perspective helps to initiate changes in organisations (Carr 2003). Players envisage the future, try to find their way in an uncertain world and make an effort to shape their future. This play perspective is not about planned change with predefined targets; it is about a collective search process, in which players work together towards organising, changing and innovating. In this way play provides a positive outlook on changing organisations as a collective learning process.

Self-organising and coping with uncertainty
For many people in organisations the environment in which they work and live appears to be a turbulent and unpredictable one (Stacey 2011). This uncertainty becomes manageable in the interplay with other players in network-like settings. Players from various departments and organisations enter an unfamiliar area, exchange their experiences of what is going on in their environment and explore their possibilities of responding to them. This process of exchange and interpretation requires openness towards each other and an unhampered view of what is going on in the relations between organisation and environment. Organisation and environment are not two separate worlds; hey influence each other continuously. This ties in with a movement to organise work differently, letting go of existing rules, putting the objective first again and allowing the professionals more space. The play perspective reveals that change is not the task of the individual, but rather an adaptive quality of many to collectively shape their environment (Mainemelis & Ronson 2006).

Self-organising and collaborative play imply that there are players who create context and have impact on the change they envisage. They enjoy tackling challenging situations in which they can develop themselves together with other people (Hendricks, 2014). People derive enjoyment from play when they can influence their own lives and well-being. A playing attitude calls for the creativity of the players, who challenge each other and develop scenarios that have no marked beginning or end. They enter into the adventure in the space they create together. Change as collective play means that players deal with unexpected events and unpredictable moments, while creating opportunities to develop themselves and enjoying doing so (Winnicott 1974).

Self-organising people can fulfil their ambitions together with others and continue to learn and develop themselves. Collaborative play arises in dialogue between people from different backgrounds who work together and challenge each other. They create new opportunities in an ongoing process. The fun of playing grows when players know how to create space together and are able to influence their lives and well-being. Self-organising and collaborative play may just be the most adequate way to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty in the world around us (Lobman & O'Neill 2011). Collaborative play gives satisfaction when players create a new future together and can learn from each other.

Self-organising, playfulness and culture
Self-organising is a way to deal with yourself and your fellow people. When collaborating together, people can express themselves and show their character and qualities, not only as individuals but also as a society. In play, people make choices about how they interact with each other. This creates social groups that create and maintain cultural norms and values together. In play we discover and experience the world around us, and we give meaning to what we see and find relevant (Huizinga 1938).

Playing is part of our culture. It is about what we consider valuable and how we interact with each other. In all cultures we see children playing, and usually they play the same games. They experience freedom and fun and are not yet bound by the rules of the culture in which they are growing up. As we grow older, our cultural values start to influence the way we play. We fear that others may consider us immature, crazy, or wasting time. The fact that we think of playing as something childish is part of our culture, how we look at playing.

Art is a special form of play. For a long time, people devoted much time and energy on all kinds of art. It is quite probable that the earliest art forms played an important role in the social life of our ancestors and thus for their survival. By creatively playing and experimenting with all kinds of materials that were available, our ancestors made all kinds of discoveries, such as fire, the bow and arrow, and the wheel (Martens 2019). Play uncovers cohesion and promotes creativity and resourcefulness as well as giving us new ideas and solutions. Play thus contributes to survival and our collective consciousness.

Self-organising invites players to see the informal life of an organisation and understand play patterns. Not only is it about strategies, structures and systems, but also about the unwritten rules of the games and ingrained play patterns (Scott-Morgan 1994; Boonstra 2013). The perspective of play brings out cultural practices, stubbornness, interactions between players, political games and individual uncertainties. With actual in-depth change and innovation these aspects are essential in making changes successful.

The play perspective helps to understand existing play rules and play patterns in our culture and organisations and adapt them if necessary. Rules in organisations are indispensable in order to produce quality and maintain a certain stability. If existing rules and ingrained play patterns are the source of problems, it is necessary to bring them up for discussion and change them. Changing play patterns is also necessary in order to be able to respond to unexpected events and to make room for innovation. In this tension between stability and innovation, existing rules and play patterns are questioned. As a result, there will be a situation in which a number of players want to hold on the rules, whereas others will start searching for new rules and patterns. Players who decide that new rules are needed opt for creating space and starting new play, allowing for new rules to develop along the way (Bateson 1985). In this play, people work together and, in this process, they develop new approaches. At any given moment these new approaches automatically become part of new rules and patterns. This will lead to a flow of constant innovation. The perspective of play triggers recognition of play rules, preserves the strength of existing play and simultaneously searches for new rules and play patterns that may contribute to the future (Hendricks 2014).

Self-organising and learning are inextricably linked. While we organise ourselves and experiment together, we learn best how to understand and handle reality. We learn from our mistakes and are invited to change our behaviour. It is precisely when there are limits to space, time or materials that play gives us new ideas and solutions. Playing helps to prepare for the future and to deal with the challenges we face in our lives. We learn to deal with the unknown by trying something new (Martens 2014). We are intrinsically motivated in play because we enjoy it. There is room for wonder and discovering how things come together. People have fun playing because they gain new insights and learn new skills. Playfulness makes room to develop and apply new ideas. A playful attitude helps people adapt to rapidly changing circumstances by finding creative solutions to problems that arise. Playful behaviour can generate radically new ideas and those new ideas can lead to new forms of behaviour by which we approach the world. Playfulness is combined with a positive and optimistic outlook and an open view of the world (Lieberman 1977).

Self-organising, creativity and innovation
Creativity is about developing ideas and creating new views and behaviours that can be applied in new situations. Creative people are original thinkers. They have many ideas, can quickly change mindsets and come up with new combinations. It is interesting that great thinkers, scientists, designers and artists often regard their work as play and take a curious and playful attitude in everything they do. Creative people are not prisoners of habits or what should and should not happen. They can play with changing habits and introduce new ways in which we work and live together (Carr 2003).

Groups are often more creative than individuals because more ideas arise in groups and those ideas are combined. The most creative groups consist of people with different backgrounds and a diversity of knowledge, experience and skills. They give each other space, every idea is valuable, there is no competition and there is a great willingness to play together. Diversity in a team increases the chance of refreshing and useful ideas (Bateson & Martin 2013).

Creative people are not necessarily innovative because often they do not come up with a practical translation of their ideas. Innovative people usually rely on the ideas of creative people and translate them into practical applications.

Innovation starts with curiosity about how something works. Curious people are interested in new concepts and experiences and try to avoid boredom. By playing, they try out new ideas and learn what works and what does not. Innovation is about carrying out a new idea with a practical value that is embraced by others. Converting new ideas into successful innovation often requires tremendous effort. Innovative people are analytical, persistent and resilient. They take a positive attitude and are willing to play collaboratively (Hardegon & Sutton 2000). The majority of successful innovations are achieved without the explicit goal of cashing in on them. Innovation is the foundation of successful enterprises by developing new techniques, products, services and finding solutions to problems. Innovations change our world, the way we work and how we interact.

Self-organising as collaborative play is characterised by cooperation between players with people being able to take on varying roles and competition moving to the background. Collaborative play often starts with curiosity about what is going to happen. There is a sense of the unknown and excitement about the possibilities that the play offers and the space that is created for new ideas and perspectives. In the actual play people enjoy the movement that develops. Play experiences contribute to knowledge, understanding and skills. Shared experiences provide understanding of the working methods and culture that we have created together. This provides awareness of the power to change and the way in which we can bring about changes together (Eberle 2014). Innovation means finding new opportunities in an uncertain situation. The current situation is unclear, and the future is uncertain as well. When everything is subject to change, innovations are far-reaching and affect everyone involved. These kind of innovations require courage, initiative, and collaboration.

Change as collaborative play
Self-organising and organisational change come to life through the interaction of those involved. In this interplay, people learn to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty in the world around us. Organisational change that is based on self-organising, works from a positive attitude, gets people moving and ensures connections between people. Change as collaborative play can be seen as a lemniscate of continuous movement. The play model for change addresses the playing field and the players, the play ambition and

play patterns, as well as those playing together to bring about changes and wanting to be players themselves. The play model is dynamic and can be seen as an ongoing motion (Boonstra 2019).
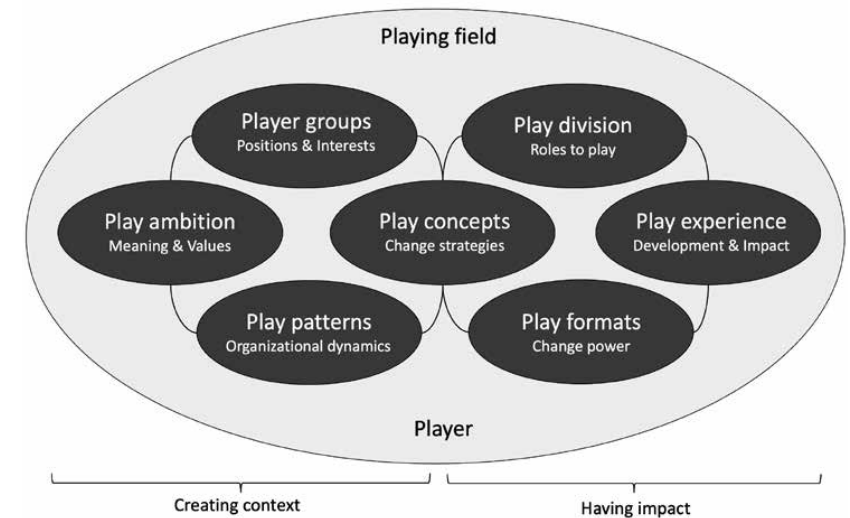

Figure 1. Organisational change as collaborative play

The playing field is about the environment in which organisations perform and what is going on there. For the players on the field, it is mapped out which parties are active and may have an impact on the performance of the organisation. On the left there is the play ambition, asking about the raison d'être or the importance of the organisation. The play patterns indicate ingrained cultural patterns and which dynamics are present in organisations. From the play ambition, the players and play patterns, a play concept gradually emerges for the approach towards the intended changes. The play concept concerns the most effective combination of change strategies. The play division and roles to play identifies the players involved in the change process and who can contribute to the change. Play formats are about useful activities and supporting actions to achieve progress and make the change successful. The last play element is play experiences. This concerns the way in which changes are experienced, how progress is made and which learning experiences can be shared with regard to successful organisation and change.

The play model is about creating a context for change and having impact to make the desired changes come true. When creating context for change the aim is to have sufficient understanding of the playing field, the play ambition, the players and the underlying play patterns. From this understanding it is important to arrive at a well-considered play concept for the changes people envision. The main challenge is to devise an approach to change and create a context to get things going.

Having impact means further materialising the play concept. The change becomes meaningful by selecting change strategies with suitable play forms and organising the division of play. In the play experience obstacles and results become visible that can be used to make progress. The main thing is that the players involved bring about a change by deliberately selecting change strategies and forms of play to achieve results.

The language of change
Change as collaborative play is based on self-organising and is not about a planned change in a stable environment with preconceived goals. This planned change method suits a situation with predictable events, stable structures, clear goals and proven methods. Most organisations have left this regulated world behind. Many companies experience their environment as ambiguous and paradoxical. In this dynamic world, developments continue to influence each other while it is unclear what the outcome will be. It seems as if everything is constantly changing, with some patterns continuing and showing some predictability and others suddenly popping up and causing turbulence.

Change as collaborative play is relevant when the environment is ambiguous and proven methods no longer work. This is a collective search process in which players work together to organise, change, learn and innovate. Playing provides a positive view of changing and innovating organisations as a collective process. Language gives shape to our thoughts and thus influences our acts. Change as play based on self-organising ignores the language of rational, planned change and introduces a language to give shape to changes in interaction (Boonstra, 2019). The difference between planned change and change as collaborative play is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Planned change and change as play

Planned change	*Change as play*
External environment Analysis of the environment to determine our own position and set a strategic course.	Exploring the playing field Adding meaning to the dynamics in the environment to create room to play.
Interest groups Parties that influence or are influenced in the working towards organisational goals	Players on the field Involve people within and outside the organisation who can contribute to a valuable future.
Change objectives Setting preconceived goals on managing change as a project steered on basis of time, money, people, means and result.	Visualise play ambition Collectively searching for the meaning, shared values, uniqueness and strategic position of an organisation.
Problem analysis Analysing an existing situation based on tested methods and expertise.	Analysing play patterns Collectively discovering events and the dynamics involved.
Change strategy Management choice for a defined and planned change strategy that suits the problem analysis and the pre-set goals.	Modelling the play concept Developing an approach in which players combine change strategies in order to come to successful changes.
Implementation plan Defining a plan to overcome resistance and implement changes.	Organising the play division Inviting people to join in and contribute to change, resulting in increased change power.

Interventions	Introducing play concepts
Actions taken by change managers to put the change process in the desired direction.	Useful activities and supporting actions performed by the players together in order to progress.
Monitoring	Experiencing play
Measuring progress and adjusting the change when the results are lacking.	Getting experiences in a change process, reflecting on them collectively and learning from them.
Change manager	Players
Managers, staff members and advisors with a steering role in the change.	Everyone can take initiatives and, make contributions to a change, and learn from it.
'Homo economicus'	'Homo ludens'
Man as an economic being who makes rational considerations and only wants changes if that is advantageous.	The playful person who enjoys to play, collaborates with others, contribute to transformational change and helps to create a collective future.

In collaborative play several aspects are discussed: how the play is played, who the real players are and how much room there is to play in carrying out transformational changes. In change as collaborative play, everyone can participate and play a role. The players enjoy the challenging situations in which they can develop themselves together with others. People enjoy playing when they can influence their own lives and well-being. A playing attitude calls for the creativity of players who challenge each other and develop scenarios without a clear beginning or end. They embark on the adventure in the space they create together. Change as collaborative play means that players deal with unexpected events and unpredictable moments and that they create opportunities to develop themselves and enjoy it.

Self-organising, change and communication

Organisation, communication and change are linked. Self-organising is not about hierarchical top-to-bottom communication where the highest in rank commands others to take action. Contradiction is then not obvious or will be punished. There is no room for other innovative ideas. Self-organising and collaborative change are also not about convincing others of the necessity and correctness of the change. Nor is it about tempting employees with an enticing vision of the future by charismatic leaders to get people on board with a change where the leadership acts as a guide. Changing from self-organising involves multilateral communication across the boundaries of departments and hierarchy. Boundaries between the organisation and the outside world are also blurring when customers, citizens, financiers, partner organisations and administrators are involved in the communication. The aim is to find solutions to difficult issues and to shape cooperation to tackle these issues. In this search process, those involved identify events and patterns and they themselves look for direction in the desired change. Meaning making is part of the communication process. In self-organising, the players look for new meanings and possibilities to shape the future.

In most organisations, all sorts of stories circulate about changes and players who have played or are still playing a role in them. In these organisational stories, players assign meanings to situations, express discomfort and enthusiasm, enter into relationships with others and make their work meaningful. There are stories about people who have put their necks on the line and what happened, about special change agents, heroes, victims, friends and enemies. These stories provide insight into play patterns that are often felt to be elusive. Organisational stories indicate what is happening in an organisation and are thus important for selecting and implementing the play concept (Breuer 2007).

Stories are also useful in defining and working towards changes in organisations. They can provide insight into relationships, undercurrents and hidden emotions. They can also help to put the change into words and motivate players to participate in the change. A change story is a story of events that are combined with each other. A good change story stands alone and has a beginning, middle and an end. The story has narrative elements with a storyline containing a development. The story is authentic,

true and appealing. Change stories often contain a personal element and evoke associations and emotions. Change stories can help clarify a future perspective, show you what you represent and are committed to, illustrate change processes, support learning and bring about new ideas. Change stories give context and meaning to a change, and are created, told and passed on in co-creation. Making change stories together generates energy. They make what people experience and encounter understandable and tangible. Stories combine impressions, experiences, emotions, images and ideas. People who play with stories give meaning to their situation, their future and the road they see ahead of them. That is why stories provide direction, encourage action and invite others to join (Smid et al 2007).

When learning lessons and collecting stories players together make history. They interpret events from their world and give them a conceptual meaning, thus connecting practice and theory. This is what makes learning histories so robust: the practical stories give images and colour; and the concepts give understanding and insight. Based on these kinds of meanings, players develop ways to deal with events and (re)write their own history together. Whether they succeed or fail, those ways will become part of the change history and culture of the organisation (Schein, 2016). Reflection on the introduction of change contributes to a cultural awareness of why things turn out the way they do and how a professional can deal effectively with the business environment (Engeströn 2001). Sharing a change history can help spread knowledge and experience. But sharing success stories may pose a danger if practice and theory have not reinforced each other enough. Success stories that are too shallow can cause damage. If the approach was adopted indiscriminately, the chances are that it will not fit in with one's own work situation at that moment. A change history can also lose value if too much generalisation to other organisations is attempted. The concepts then have an apparent simplicity that no one can object to, but they lose nuance if complexity is neglected, and context the obstacles are lost sight of. Nonetheless, meaning and history can help make an organisation more effective and agile in change. Moreover, stories can inspire others and encourage people from partner organisations to participate.

Self-organising, change and decision making
In self-organising, people need to make decisions while working together and every change process involves decision making in its realization. In order for a change to succeed, it is necessary that the progress is monitored, play formats and activities are geared to each other and communication about the change is not interrupted. The coordination of activities in the change process requires constant attention. This involves many decisions, such as considering whether to accelerate or decelerate, make resources available, use additional play formats,set up communication, and make results visible. These decisions require the engagement and change expertise of key people in the process.

In many change processes players behave strategically. They not only have a substantive point of view but also carry out the decision-making play. Consciously or unconsciously, they behave in such a way that they can cater to their own ideas and interests as much as possible (Bruijn & Ten Heuvelhof 2007). This raises the question of how you play decision making. Players who do this well are able to recognise the strategic behaviour of other players and can discover alternative strategies themselves.

In self-organising they discover, as they play, what the ideas and interests of the other players are. It is wise that players do not commit too early to what appears to be an obvious objective. A pre-formulated objective deprives people of the space that is needed to be effective in finding solutions together and it blocks learning processes. It is much more effective to broaden the goal because in broad objectives more players can recognise their own interests more easily. Players who are leading a change would be wise to put multiple themes on the agenda and ensure that interesting topics are there for all players involved. Then it becomes attractive to take part in decision making and change. If many parties are involved in the decision making about the change, a difficult dilemma arises: on the one hand information is needed to come to a good decision about the direction and approach to the change, on the other hand information is rarely undisputed. The way out of this dilemma is for players to negotiate the accuracy of information. If each party has their own perspective on a problem and has relevant information, it is in this negotiation process that mutual understanding and support for the change can be achieved (Wainaina 2013).

In a change process, open decision making is of great importance. There is open decision making when players have introduced a large number of

problem experiences and have jointly constructed a play ambition and a play concept. It helps if options are kept open so that there are still opportunities for each party in the future. Open decision making contributes to cooperative behaviour if there are opportunities to influence the outcome and approach a change process. If players themselves have an influence on the change, this creates much less resistance. The play of consultation and negotiation and of give and take naturally continues when working towards changes, especially with open decision making. Open decision making means optimal sharing of information about progress and paying attention to the play experience and emotions during the changes. Results are shared and there is room to discuss tensions.

Self-organising, change and conflict resolution
Self-organising means taking risks. This includes constructive confrontations in which players address and adjust to each other by playing with interactions and meanings. For a change in professional values, cooperation is necessary, but this need for cooperation is not always obvious. Making tensions manageable starts with strengthening mutual acceptance and developing trust. This can be done by looking for common interests, emphasising mutual dependence, showing appreciation for the other person and defusing any aggressive atmosphere. It helps if players see tensions as a shared problem, or rather as a meaningful reflection of the issue they are facing; this makes it more attractive to search for a solution together. If there are personal irritations and emotions, it is necessary to discuss these in order to reduce tension and foster cooperation. Movement takes place when players take an interest in each other and each other's position, motives and emotions and in their shared experiences and ideas (Boonstra 2013). In every organisation conflict will emerge during a change process. The essence is to recognise conflicts and solve them by means of specific activities. A view that helps to identify conflicts is to look specifically at four potential conflict areas within and among player groups (Mastenbroek 1993).

In organisations, people need other people's performance to achieve results themselves. Instrumental relations concern the way in which the work in organisations is divided and activities are coordinated. Frictions may arise in opinions about the way of working, and also technical matters, the availability of information systems and the use of other tools. Conflicts in instrumental

relationships often involve structuring work processes and organising decision making, such as streamlining business processes, clarifying tasks, redesigning work processes, optimising supporting processes and giving space for self-organising. The rule of thumb is that it is best to optimise and clarify work arrangements and create understanding of the contributions of every group to the common goal.

People in organisations use all kinds of resources, such as budgets, staff, time, space, tools and interesting activities. In the decisions about these resources specific exchange principles are often applied. Players depend on each other because when distributing scarce resources groups want to be part of the larger whole and at the same time want to assert their interests. Negotiations call for open behaviour because a decision must be made about the use of means. Players therefore come up with proposals for allocation of resources, substantiation of their claims with arguments and attempts to invalidate the claims of others and respond to them. This can lead to frictions in the shape of persistent deadlock, worsening personal relationships, tensions between groups and loss of control in the organisation. Activities to make these problems manageable are used in conflict management, in which rules are agreed upon, boundaries set in behaviour towards each other, interests identified, a shared interest is sought, and a concerted effort is made to obtain more budget from outside the organisation. The rule of thumb is that it is best to deal with negotiation conflicts.

Emotions develop among people in organisations, often group-oriented in the form of positively or negatively charged identity of groups, sometimes also personal in the form of sympathy or antipathy. Cooperation in groups often creates a team spirit and mutual loyalty. These emotional ties can become so close that a group develops its own identity and distances itself from other groups. This is often visible in the language used to talk about their own and other groups, symbols and stereotypes. Frictions in instrumental and negotiation relationships almost invariably feed frictions in social-emotional relationships. To make these frictions visible and manageable conflict, motivation and learning activities are often used. It often helps to show people how social and emotional relationships are fed by organising the work and distributing resources. Specific support activities are more openness to and acceptance of each other, adjusting one's own behaviour,

making uncertainties open for discussion, learning to express feelings and deal with them, and clarify mutual dependence to arrive at a joint result. The rule of thumb is that it is best to mediate or reduce social and emotional conflicts.

Relationships between player groups are also characterised by guiding and steering each other's behaviour. Groups often try to consolidate their position in relation to one another, especially when frictions arise from the other three aspects of the relationships. The use of power relationships by groups themselves requires a cautious strategic play of political manoeuvring. This is characterised by more or less disguised behaviour aimed at building and maintaining status and prestige, strengthening one's own sources of power and expanding one's own dominant position. This behaviour is quite common within organisations, but it becomes more destructive when it involves a power play where one's own position is strengthened by weakening the position of other players. This play is directly related with the three aspects of relationships described earlier. In power and dependency relations, the tension between people's own autonomy and mutual dependency takes a central position. This tension also seems to exist in the other three aspects. Power relationships can also block solutions to frictions that occur in social and emotional, negotiation and instrumental relationships. If the power and dependency relationships are a blockage to solutions, the use of power and conflict management are obvious tools, with supporting activities such as entering a dialogue and enhancing reflective learning. It is to best settle power conflicts.

Self-organising, change and trust

Trust is needed to be able to work together effectively during change. Trust in the mutual interaction and roles people play can be built by helping players to recognise, understand and act on events in the business environment (Schein & Schein 2018). Four related activities are involved. First of all, open communication, in which observations and experiences are shared and tensions and emotions can be discussed. Sharing emotions, ambitions, uncertainties and experiences unveils what binds players together. Secondly, there is the distribution and clarification of player roles, in which the individuality, the needs, the strength and the influence of the different players are recognised and honoured.

Clarity about everyone's role in change and clarity in contributions and responsibilities contributes to a good play division, good interaction and making the process enjoyable. The third activity is the development of values and norms within a team of players. Shared values and norms add strength and direction to activities. This means that team members invest in each other by exchanging personal biographies and important personal events, and by being open to each other. The fourth point to pay attention to is the way in which problems are tackled and decisions are made. In these four activities the team members get to know each other, build up trust in each other, agree on the working method of the team and develop values and norms for leading team members and other players in the organisation.

When discussing problems and searching for solutions, the players create a common basis and develop confidence in their interaction. This is done by regularly reflecting on how the players identify and analyse problems, as well as how they seek solutions and make decisions. In order to be able to trust each other and to work together, time must be available to invest in relationships, communication, working methods and decision-making. This does not necessarily have to be done beforehand; time can also be used later. This requires players to pay attention to their mutual interplay and not let this be submerged by the inevitable changes.

Openness and honesty are essential in interaction, certainly in the case of a profound change where everything that seems self-evident appears to be turned upside down. Players in change create clarity in unclear situations. They are honest about what they themselves do not know and invite others to share experiences. In this way they create equality in collecting and sharing information. Together they engage in a search for the meaning of an uncertain situation. In this search process, it is also important to recognise and appreciate the emotions of others and their own (Van der Heijden & Huy 2008).

This approach links up with the concept of 'fair process' (Chan Kim & Mauborgne 1997). Fair play is characterised by involving people in decisions that affect them. There is understanding for the feelings of others and space to express emotions. A fair process develops when those involved have the opportunity to share experiences and to interpret the situation; if there is room for expressing and sharing emotions, the people involved can

influence the process and its outcome, and the decision-making process is transparent. The process is perceived as fair by the players involved when the final decision is clear and considered just and when it is clear what the decision means for the individual players and what is expected of them.

Self-organising, change and learning

Players involved in self-organising learn from changes they are involved in (Argyris 1999). By sharing positive play experiences players gain insight into the play and their own role in it. Sharing positive play experiences works in different ways. It encourages players to consolidate the success achieved and helps to maintain networks. By sharing success, players themselves remain enthusiastic and transmit this enthusiasm to others and encourages them to participate in change. The exchange of play experiences can be stimulated by creating a learning space in which the players involved exchange experiences and reflect on them. Professionals from partner organisations can be invited to participate, especially when they are part of a common change.

It is not only positive play experiences that are valuable. Obstacles also deserve attention, just to make it clear that those negative experiences are not there by chance or should not be there. Understanding these experiences better potentially leads to new action perspectives. A certain imperturbability is necessary to open up the unmentionable in the undercurrent for discussion and to enable people to learn from it (Engeström 2001). This is certainly the case if the people involved feel that they are personally accountable for failures present or past.

In the case of collectively experienced failures, it is very likely that situations are covered up and ranks close, whereas it is openness that is actually necessary for us to learn from experience gained. Sometimes it takes time. This is especially true when there is a break with the past (Kubler-Ross 2008). Profound changes can be an upsetting experience for those involved. Players in change are not deterred by this and devote time and attention to discussing emotions and developing new values. They have the peace of mind to embed the change in working practices and underlying values.

Recognising and sharing positive experiences with change and innovation can in itself be valuable and stimulate play enjoyment. It can help people become more powerful in their work, gain more understanding of the issues they are faced with and awareness that relationships with others have been reinforced and that some people feel better (Senge 2006). This result does not follow from the outcome of the innovation, but rather because of the process that has been completed (Shepard 1974). Professionals who feel that they are making a meaningful contribution to a valuable society gain self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem increases when they can use their professional qualities in relationships with others who are important for them. Self-confidence grows when intellectual, emotional and physical capacities can be used to gain new experience and to form inspiring relationships that contribute to balanced professional development. In this way a continuous momentum of professionals working on revolutionary innovation emerges. A condition for success of this innovation is good interaction between professionals, managers and directors. The often-difficult relationship between these players receives a positive new impulse by not suppressing experiences, but appreciating them. After all, true innovation does not only occur when the winds are favourable but also by struggling with people and with issues. Cashing in on learning experiences by means of both success and failure is a minimally expensive and highly effective way to develop, share and disseminate new working practices and values.

Self-organising, change and ownership

Every professional in an organisation can initiate change and have an impact in a change process. This is not linked to a formal position. Rather, it is about making the effort and finding it worthwhile to risk yourself and your contribution in the process. Professionals in organisations have an impact from their commitment and the social contribution they make. Almost all professionals look for meaning in the work that is performed every day. Players in organisations develop a sense of professional values and are willing to commit themselves to this. They are people who follow their ambitions and sincerely feel that things can and must be done differently. They work on change based on commitment and personal motives. This is a powerful source of change and innovation in work systems where they work together, enter into relationships and give meaning to the world around them (Bartkus 1997).

Ownership develops through interplay in self-organising teams and can develop through multiple qualities and roles. From involvement in the

exploration of the playing field, players can understand clearly why change is needed and what the change can contribute to. Through contacts with different players, players in change can develop ideas for improving service. Players who participate in developing a vision of the future and formulating meaning make themselves owners of the ambition and direction of the change; they want to work with it.

The use of expertise can lead to ownership if it is used in the search for solutions or the realisation of innovation. Players with process expertise on change strategies, knowledge of play formats and communication like to participate, especially if they are called upon to use their expertise. Ownership can also originate in emotion because players firmly believe in a new idea, such as self-management by customers or a network organisation that is central to society. Negative emotions, such as those arising from problems with customers or professional shame about the quality of service, can also lead to people taking the initiative and showing ownership. In general, ownership develops when people play an active role in change. That is why it is useful to look at roles that can be fulfilled in change and how self-organising can be shaped in continuous interaction of the players.

Players who want to bring about change are socially aware. They talk with colleagues; understand the underlying values and norms and they are interested in what motivates people (Weick, 2003). They know about the play patterns and know how things work. This allows them to connect with the emotional world and ambitions of fellow players and how to direct the energy of people in their environment towards the future. They are not afraid to show play patterns and discuss them. In order to bring about change they bring people together and organise interaction that makes innovation possible. They build trust and have faith in people's strength. Above all, they are aware that change requires teamwork, and they are prepared to invest in it. In this interaction they give others space and start talking to test their perception and upgrade their concept of change.

Players who have an impact on change know themselves, understand what has shaped them and know which values they find important (Coffee & Jones 2005). Self-awareness and awareness of values are in knowing your own preferences in change strategies and play formats (De Caluwé & Vermaak

2003). The use of a power strategy and the use of power as a form of play usually come from a sense of duty. When using power, players in change know how to control themselves. Planned strategies aimed at changing systems and structures are rooted in the ambition to do well and the conviction that things can always be made better. Negotiation strategies and activities aimed at conflict management are often the result of a nuanced view of reality that is always multiple and where multiple players have their own interests and ambitions. Self-aware players know how to combine these interests in a shared ambition. Motivational strategies and play formats to strengthen motivation are often based on the idea that people should be stimulated by an inspiring vision and good communication. Learning strategies with associated play formats to strengthen learning assumes that people are able to develop together in learning processes.

Self-organising and playfulness
Being playful is an attitude, a way you face life (Eberle 2014). People differ from others in the degree of playfulness they adopt in their way of thinking and behaviour. This difference has to do with education and personality (Bateson & Martin 2013). Stuart Brown (2009) describes various play forms that people use to give substance to playfulness:

– The *explorer* is excited to discover new things. This can be done physically by visiting new places and leaving their comfort zone, mentally by reflecting on events or learning about new themes, or emotionally by being open to new feelings through meditation or art such as painting, dance, music and literature. The explorer broadens their mind, which stimulates playfulness.
– The *artist* takes pleasure in producing works such as paintings, sculptures, dance, fashion, but also in activities such as gardening, developing new working methods, and designing houses, bridges or new products. The artist likes to show their creation to the world. It is about creating something that is fascinating or impressive and that touches on beauty.
– The *inventor* wants to find a solution to an existing problem or create something new that makes life easier. The inventor plays with thoughts and materials, comes up with new combinations, makes new products, sees if something works and how something can be made better or more beautiful.