

The Art of Seeing

"A THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RESHAPING NOT JUST BUSINESSES BUT THE VERY NATURE OF YOUR LEADERSHIP ITSELF."

"AN ESSENTIAL ADDITION TO ANY BUSINESS SCHOOL SYLLABUS. VISSER MERGES NEUROSCIENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND BUSINESS CULTURE INTO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS."

"IN TODAY'S FAST-EVOLVING BUSINESS LANDSCAPE, THIS BOOK IS A LIGHTHOUSE. IT HAS HELPED OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM."

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Your Leadership and the
Transformation of
your Business

Walter H. Visser

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Published: See&Be, 's-Gravenhage, The Netherlands

ISBN: 9789465310183

Cover picture: nl.pngtree.com

2022: 1st Edition

2025: 2nd Edition

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TO DEAREST KARIN MY LIFE PARTNER AND
OUR BELOVED CHILDREN, KELLY AND ROB

The Art of Seeing

To see is not merely to observe,
But to feel the depth where futures swerve,
Where leadership emerges from the now,
And teams create what once was just a vow.

In every glance, the future expands,
A world of chances held in our hands.
Not just the shape, the plan, the time,
But the endless paths that we can climb.

What is the essence of our act?
Is it the plan, or the impact?
The steps we take, together strong,
Each decision a building block along.

To see is not to stand apart,
But to recognize what we can start—
In the depth of teamwork, firm and swift,
Creating worlds with every shift.

In seeing, we grasp the art—
The power of action, never to depart.
Endless possibilities await our stride,
And the future lies within our guide.

~

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FOREWORD

If we take an outside-in perspective, it's undeniable that the world is engaged in a transformative process that will change people and businesses forever. The 50-year-old paradigm of shareholder primacy is making way for a more purpose-driven multistakeholder business model that serves not only shareholders, but adds value to all stakeholders including people, planet, and community.

Over the years, we have optimized our systems to maximize shareholder value and, despite the fact that we have taken one billion people out of poverty¹, we have reached the tipping point of a broken world creating an unsustainable business perspective. Just extracting or receiving and not giving back is no longer sustainable. Time is limited and we need to migrate to a different way of being, starting with ourselves and our organizations, to finally include all our stakeholders, systems, and wider environment. Many CEOs still have this shareholder centric view on running their businesses. However, a vast majority of them know that what they are doing is not sustainable.

Young millennials and Gen Zers already adopted a different mindset in support of these new values, and I believe that businesses need to change. In this era, questions from the seventies arise again, like what do you see; how do you see

1 Polman, P. & Winsten, A.S. (2021). *Net Positive*.

yourself as a leader, and how is your organization contributing to a better world? In this book we will address these questions from an ontological point of view considering the contemporary values of the 2020s, that again shifted as compared to the values of generations before. The values of the 2020s can be characterized by mental health, resilience, and adaptability. Work-life balance, flexible lifestyles, remote work, and an increasing concern for sustainability and authenticity are defining trends.

“THE NEXT BIG INNOVATION PROBABLY WON’T BE
A NEW TECHNOLOGY, BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING”¹

Breakthroughs are not achieved by working harder or by trying to do better. They require a different way of looking and a different state of being. Teams that are authentic in their self-reflection and dare to look at what is missing, have access to breakthroughs in results and to sustainable changes that provide a significant competitive advantage.

Based on years of practical experience as a family man and a business leader, I created a practical book that guides you on your journey to discover and realize a new way of being for yourself, and that acts as a pathway to fulfilment through authentic self-expression and conscious leadership.

This book has two storylines. Paragraphs in the grey boxes are

1 Lotto, B. (2017). *Deviate: The Science of Seeing Differently*.

flashbacks reflecting my personal struggles and successes in life. It illustrates my lifetime process to seeing things the way they really are. It is also a testimony to how my resistance to being vulnerable finally cost me dearly, in both my personal and professional life¹. In regular text is a guideline for managers, leaders and teams to help transform themselves and subsequently their business into a more sustainable, humanized business in a powerful way, based on an ontological approach.

Last but not least, I would like to express my great appreciation to Majella McCone, who meticulously read the manuscript of this book and suggested countless changes to make it good English.

Now let's have a look where this all started.

From hypersensitive to career maker

I was the first born (1958) after my parents were married for seven months. My mother was twenty-two and raised in a Christian family. As an unborn baby, I must have felt being unwanted at first. In hindsight, I believe that, as a newborn, connecting and creating a safe and intimate relationship with my mother must have been challenging. If so, this would have been traumatic² impacting whom I became to be. As a child and later an adolescent, I was hypersensitive and uncertain in my interactions with other people. As a young adult, I had to shut off part of this hypersensitivity as a coping mechanism to protect myself. So, I have been going through life with limited self-reflection, mistrust towards other people, and

1 Brené Brown (2015). *Daring Greatly*

2 Heller, D.P. (2017). *The Power of Attachment*