



The art of leading with love

A couple of months ago, Ulrik Nerloe visited EGN's live studio, opening the very first (and global) webinar of the fall – a season of webinars that all encircle the overall theme, 'empathy'. The headline was "The art of leading with love", essentially the same title as Ulrik's latest book, "THE ENERGY PATH – The art of leading with love"

Read on as I talk to Ulrik about what leading with love really entails. How are the concepts of love, energy, and leadership connected and which thoughts go into the phrase, 'whole people create whole organizations?'

I, myself, can't help but think about the words 'love' and 'leadership' as concepts belonging in two quite different areas – yet I'm imagining that there's great potential for creating something valuable and innovative if you're able to combine the two in a practical context. I reach out to Ulrik to learn more – about him and the thoughts behind it all.

I ask Ulrik to tell me a bit about who he is.

"That's actually one of my favorite questions", Ulrik responds. According to him, our approach to this exact question can sometimes be a bit off. Because instead of telling other about who we are, we start explaining what we are. Our title, job, role, and the like form the basis for the introduction of ourselves more so than who we are as human beings.

Conversely, Ulrik tells me: "I'm a holistic person, I'm an emotional person, I'm a dreamer and a philanthropist." That said, Ulrik is a mentor, international bestselling author, entrepreneur, and founder of the company, 'Unified People'.

Likewise, Ulrik has adopted the title, 'Chief Energy Officer' – a title that embraces the essence of Ulrik's mission which is – and to quote him: "To create awareness about the fact that everything is connected, everything is interdependent and, in the end, if we dive into quantum physics and try to understand that – it simply reveals that everything is energy."

I notice that Ulrik uses the word 'energy' – a perhaps somewhat difficult word to comprehend. We recognize it from different contexts in life, but it's neither something that you can feel nor touch – it's intangible and abstract. In the worlds of sports and music, it's much easier for us to understand the concept of energies, Ulrik tells me. As an example, he points towards the

football matches from the Euros this summer where we definitely witnessed a strong sense of consciousness and focus on energies. In the corporate world, however, it's a different story. Here, people have yet to fully understand what energy means.

"And that's exactly what I bring to the table in every company I work with. Because in the end, for me, it's not about what people are, but who people are and working with them as human beings", Ulrik stresses.

He directs attention towards the concept and presents three separate energy circles.

"First, we have the personal energy that I'm responsible for", Ulrik explains. "I can make a decision as to what type of energy I want to bring into my day." The surrounding circle is the social energy, and Ulrik continues:

"So, when we connect as we do now, a social energy emerges between you and me. It's based on my personal energy and your personal energy, but the social energy is created the moment you and I connect."

The global energy is created based on the social energy that exists between us. Ulrik continues:

"And when we start to form a social energy that's based on love, positivity, solicitude, intimacy, curiosity, creativity, recognition, respect, and, above all, trust, then something unique will occur. After our conversation, you'll hopefully be filled with energy and your surroundings will notice that which means that our social energy will become part of our own global energy – the energy we share with everyone else."

In my mind, Ulrik describes a form of invisible chain – a chain that begins with our own personal energy that we're in charge of ourselves. Our energy is then linked to someone else's which forms the basis for a mutual social energy. From here, a connection is created to a bigger, global energy. The energies are, in other words, interdependent.

"Exactly", Ulrik says and adds: "The energy we share, makes us dare and care."

Love, energy, leadership

But how are energy and leadership behavior connected to the concept of leading with love, I ask Ulrik.

Ulrik left the IT industry and started his own company because he was fed up with bad leadership. Luckily, there are a lot of great leaders out there, but if you look at the bigger picture when it comes to leadership, there's still big potential for development just waiting to be released, Ulrik claims.

Especially trust is a paramount factor. Historically speaking, it's no wonder that no soldier would dare to risk his own life if there weren't 100% blind trust towards the Commander, Ulrik underlines – he creates the link between energies and leadership; because if you lead based on what you are, that is, based on accomplishments and pats on the back, well, you only connect role-to-role. If you can connect human-to-human, you'll begin to lead through who you are. And that's exactly why it's so important that you put your heart into everything you do.

“We’re called ‘human beings’, but today we’re more ‘human doings’ or ‘human becomings!’”, Ulrik states. Many people are stuck in the past or walking around waiting for the future and completely forgetting to be in the present moment. And leading with your heart is much more about being connected, being present – it’s about seeing a person in their entirety. Because whole people create whole organizations.

Again, Ulrik directs attention towards the football matches during the Euros.

“Just look at what happened there!”, Ulrik says. “When the poor Christian Eriksen collapsed, an extremely empathic moment occurred where each individual released love and positive energy, unconsciously. At the same time, the team had the courage to be vulnerable in front of the rest of the team. They cried on live television. And I’m not talking about making people cry on a leadership level, but that we should dare to stand up and be human! It’s this form of connectivity it’s all about.”

The performance of the football team gave us a magical experience and is an ideal example of what love can do, Ulrik believes – and I can only agree.

Sustainability

The interesting part is that, right now, there’s so much talk about sustainability, but if we don’t learn how to just ‘be’, we’ll never be sustainable, Ulrik claims and continues:

“To be sustainable, we must master the art of learning and to be that we must master the art of being. Research shows that 98% of our behavior originates from our subconscious mind and most people are up to 95% unconscious of that behavior. For as long as that’s the case, we have a long way ahead of us if we want to be consciously sustainable.

For that reason, it all begins with a fundamental understanding of just how big an impact we have on our own lives if we’re able to find the love within ourselves – if we learn to lead with love instead of being our own biggest critic.

To support the argument, Ulrik brings up a study from Cambridge. The study reveals that some of the most prominent characteristics found among some of the world’s greatest leaders who’ve created the most desirable results are, in fact, related to the ability to make people in the organization feel seen, recognized, and loved. When we feel safe and enjoy being at our workplace, we’re much more attentive towards the possibilities around us. When we begin to feel that we identify with our workplace, we’re much more prone to put our heart into it”, Ulrik underlines. And we’ll be much more agile as well.

“Lacking agility, resistance to change and so forth – it’s simply wrong! It’s a misunderstanding, it doesn’t exist. But not being able to identify with the settings you find yourself in, not feeling recognized or free to be who you are and not having the courage or feeling safe enough to say: “I don’t see the point in this” – that’s the reason we see resistance to change”, Ulrik explains.

From ‘work/life balance’ towards ‘life balance’

Most people are probably familiar with the expression ‘work/life balance’. An expression which refers to a balance between two aspects we label ‘work’ and ‘life’. Many articles have been written about this concept and I must admit, I’ve used the expression myself without giving it further thought. But Ulrik finds it somewhat problematic. He dives into the concept and brings forward

some interesting thoughts that I hadn't even considered.

"A lot of people say: "I'm one person at work and another when I'm at home." Wauw, how to choose?", Ulrik asks. "Imagine the energy it takes to foster two roles everyday instead of just being."

Once again, Ulrik directs attention to the tremendous potential that exists within us. "Experimentation beyond imagination", as Ulrik's colleague, Laust Lauridsen calls it, is an expression about seeing beyond our imagination to discover the great potential that rests in us as human beings. But it's a fundamental transformation that requires a change in our approach.

"And that begins with acknowledging that, yes, for years, we've claimed: "Don't mix feelings, emotions, and business. They don't belong together", Ulrik says and continues: "But work/life balance is a complete misunderstanding. It's life-balance! We're not supposed to divide between what is private and what is work when everything is connected. Rather, 'balance the flow is life' is how we should look at it", Ulrik concludes.

It occurs to me that when we use the expression 'work/life balance', we do, in fact, make things more difficult for ourselves by creating a rough separation between two aspects of life that are naturally interlinked. We separate life and work as if work isn't part of life – but where do most people spend most of their time during a regular week? At work.

One might wonder why we don't see more people talking about it this way – when using the expression 'work/life balance', we're only fueling the concept of having two separate areas in life where we're supposed to care for two different personas; the one we are at work and the one we are outside work. Most people can probably agree that it's not always easy to just forget about workrelated matters once we leave the workplace – whether we like it or not, sometimes, we bring some of the 'baggage' from our day home with us, positive as well as negative. That simply proves that work is an undeniable part of life in its entirety.

But it seems that years of expectations as to how we're supposed to act keep repeating through generations and become stored on our human 'hard drive'. Expectations that reflect the before-mentioned idea that 'feelings and business don't mix' – but we must learn to allow the emotional aspect, Ulrik believes. And we need to understand the energies that exist between us and tie us together. In other words, we must put our heart into everything we do.

Would you like to learn more about Ulrik and his mission, values, and work? Go to Unified People's webpage [here](#), where you'll also find the links to Ulrik's books.

By Ida Sofie Reher

Marketing and Communications Coordinator, EGN Denmark



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