



#1200

A method for OD after a prolonged period of emotional abuse and neglect

British Academy of Management, September 3, 2019

Joost Kampen & André Henken
09.00 – 10.30 am



Lived reality in emotionally abused and neglected organisations: examples
Why do OD interventions fail?

15 min

Introduction of a method for restoring normal organisational life

15 min

Cases Amsterdam fire brigade, University of Applied Sciences
Cases of participants

45 min

Reflection
What is different in this methodology compared to common intervention strategies?
How do you know that you are on the right track?
Does this methodology require special competences of leaders and consultants?

15 min

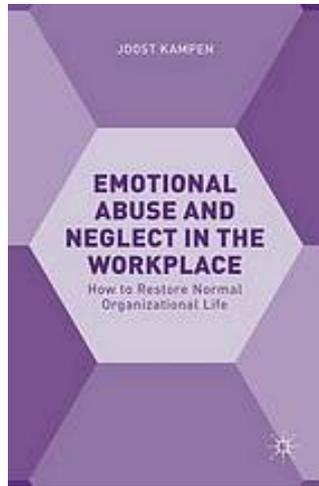
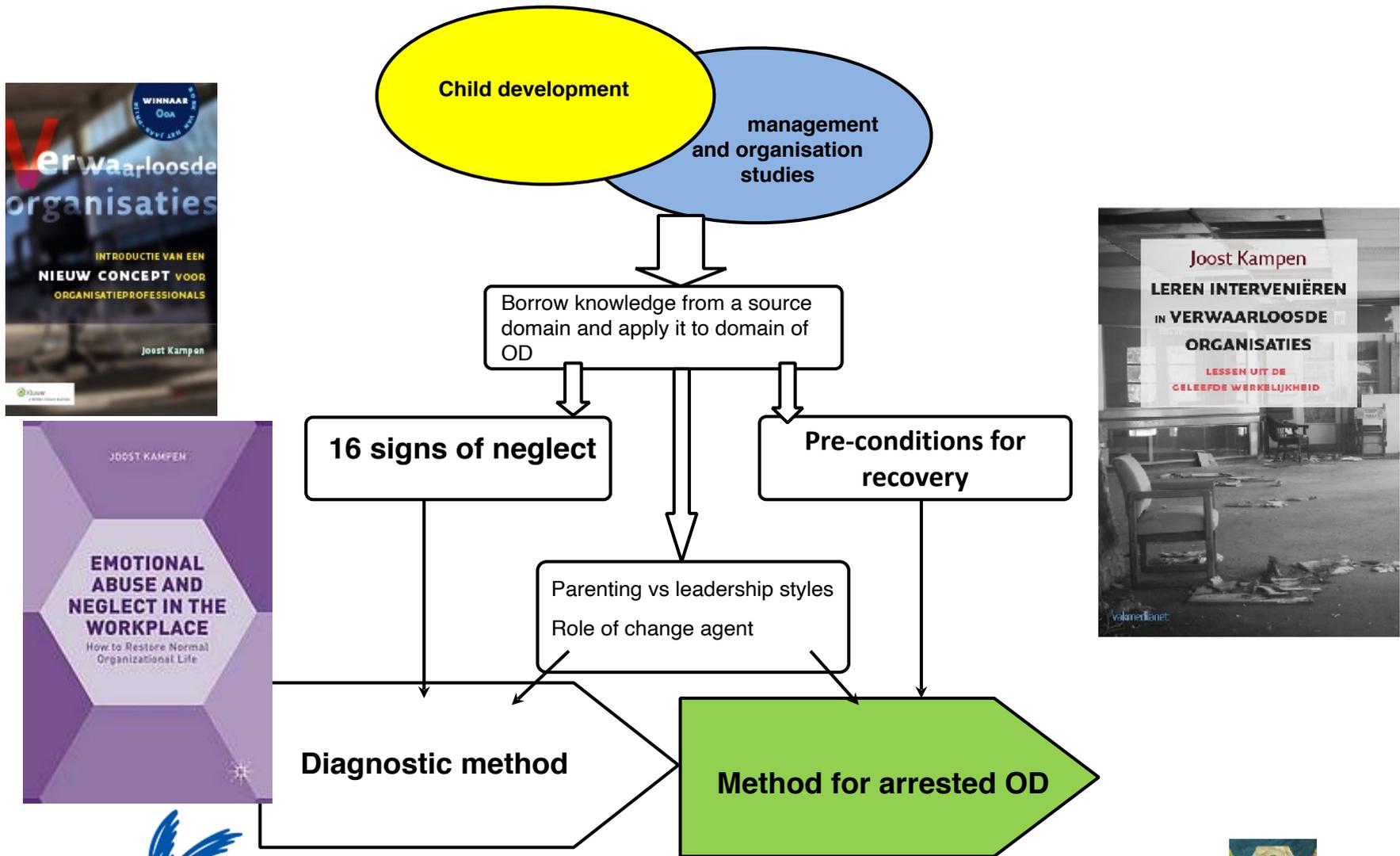


Why do OD interventions often fail?

- Traditional leadership programs
- ‘Improving cooperation’-strategies
- Focus on ownership
- Frequent turnover in command
- Strong legal status for workers
- Informal coalitions with workers council
- Group pressure
- ‘Bohica’-attitude

Interventions often do not fit the developmental stage

OD concept from another source domain



Emotional abuse and neglect in the workplace: widespread



Management fads and hypes



Deviant behavior

Counterproductive work behavior



Change fatigue



Intimidation



Resignation



Undermining



Emotional abuse & team ethics

Defining neglect in the workplace

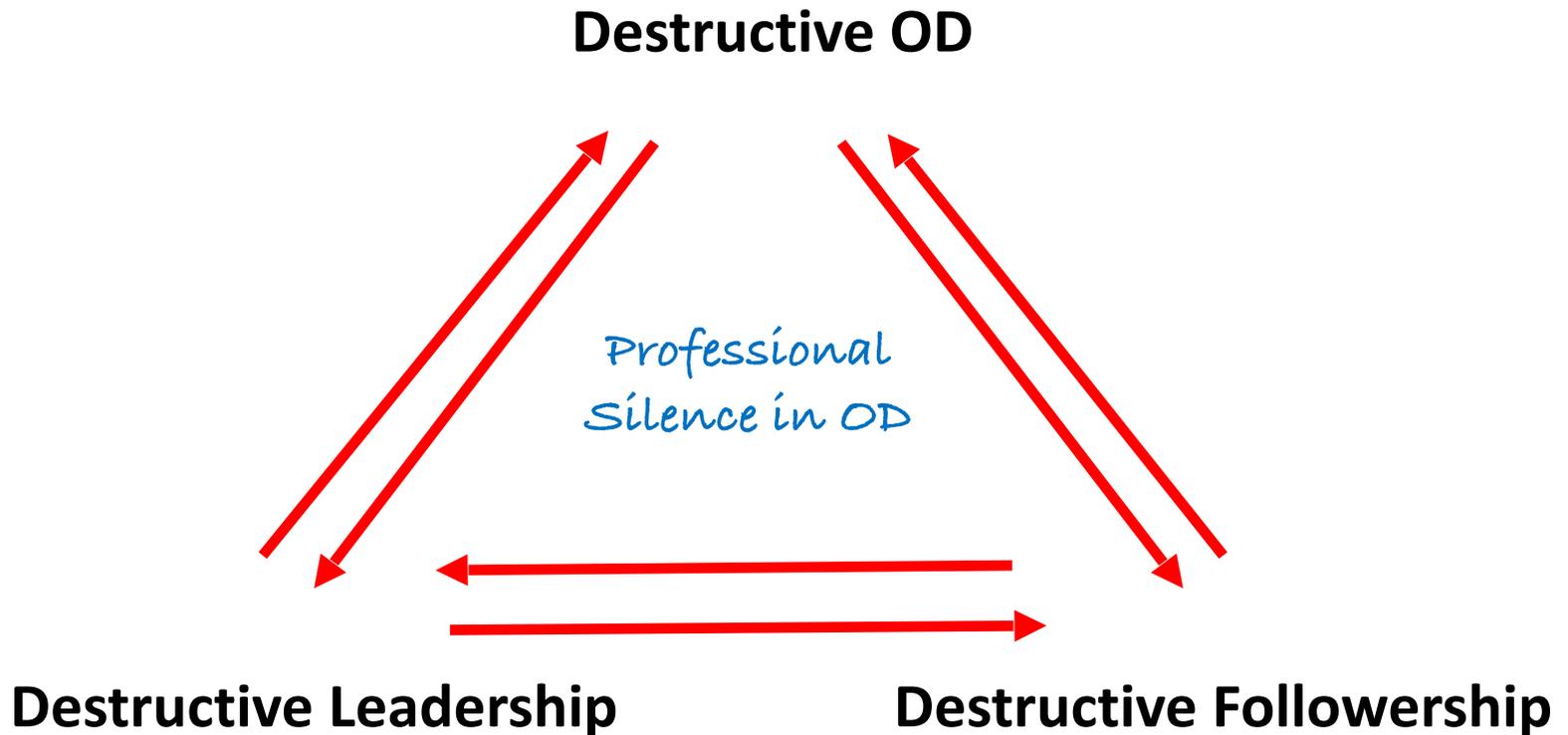
(Kampen, 2015)

Neglect in the workplace is the **prolonged** lack or absence of supervision and control of organisational development, which has led to patterns of harmful interaction between management and staff.

- Depersonalized interaction with no regard for human needs
- Absence of reciprocity and presence of self-preserving behavior
- The board of directors in a neglected organisation overestimates the organisation's capacities, does not gear its policies to what the organisation can handle, and fails to act responsibly and make itself available
- **Neglect of neglect** is a real risk, especially if the business results give no cause for alarm.

Toxic triangle of deficits

Kampen & Henken, Organizational Dynamics 2018, 47(4):241-249





Research method

Our research: method development (1)

- The theory of emotional abuse and neglect was developed/applied in more than 150 cases in both the public and private sector where we diagnosed signs of neglect
- We studied cases in the OD practice of our consultancy firm over a period of 15 years
- Each case lasted from 1 to 5 years. In 40% of the cases we monitored during 5 years, so we could see progress or stagnation in organisational development in a longitudinal way

Our research: method development (2)

- In each case at least two OD professionals were involved
- We kept a diary of observations, feelings, events and phenomena
- This made a longitudinal analysis possible
- Storytelling, on paper or in words, of some events in all detail to grasp the meaning of what had happened (Boje, 2001)
- We presented the results by means of papers and contributions to symposia
- 20 masterclasses of 5 days for 20 change agents each, entitled 'learning to intervene in emotionally abused and neglected organizations'
- The participants intensified our reflection over the cases and the method developed



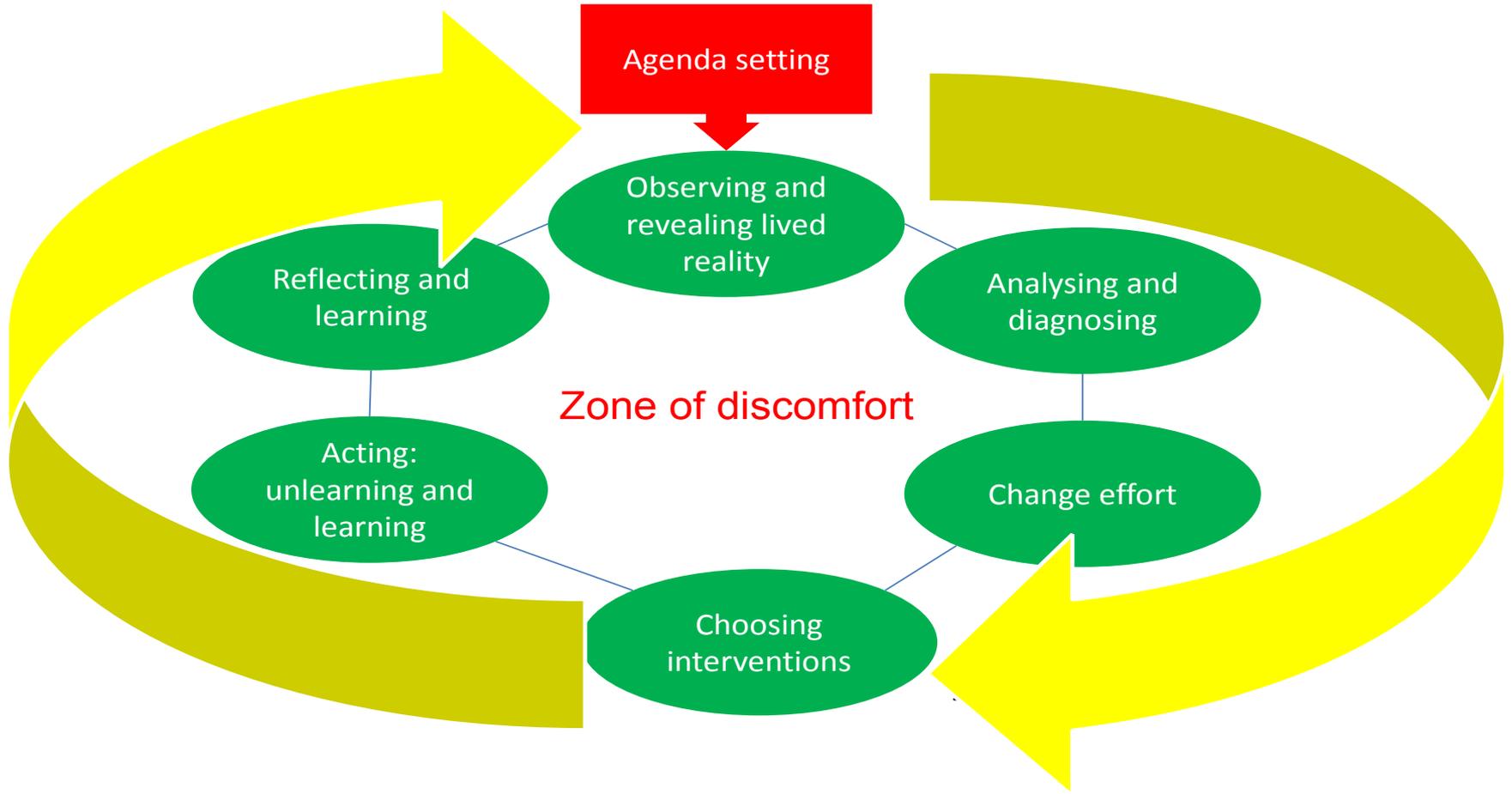
A Method to Restore from Arrested OD

Baseline



- Members of management are in the lead: they are responsible for OD;
- Start in the lived reality (IST), not a desirable future (SOLL);
- Embedded learning in daily organisational life.

Learning cycle of OD Kampen and Henken, 2019



Analysis of the lived reality



1. What are the prevailing customs and traditions, rituals, what goes without saying?
2. What are the dominant unwritten rules, how are they maintained, how does a new employee know when he or she surpasses such a rule?
3. How is use of language?
4. Is there a common history? And are the shared experiences and the stories told important?
5. How strong or loose is group cohesion? Open or closed to the outside world?
6. How are new employees welcomed, received? When are you one of the 'guys'?
7. Can employees receive feedback, do they give feedback to each other, to the supervisor?
8. How does the informal relations network look like? Are there informal leaders? Do colleagues also see each other outside work?
9. To what extent do workers accept supervision?
10. How are new developments dealt with? How do members of the organisation cope with setbacks?

Case: Faculty of Applied Science & Technology

Facts & Figures

- 6,000 students
- 450 employees
- Dean
- 4 Institutes
 - Engineering & Design
 - Built Environment
 - ICT
 - Life Sciences, Chemistry and Chemical Technology
- 3-5 teams per institute, each with a direct supervisor
- 15-20 fte lecturers per team



Organisational problem



- Underperforming faculty (low ranking in student satisfaction, critical audit report, internally orientated)(2010)
- Defensive routines dominate OD

To the new Dean's surprise no one seems to care! He was astonished. We are educating students, the next generation, our leaders for the day after tomorrow. We should do our utmost to do that as best as we can!

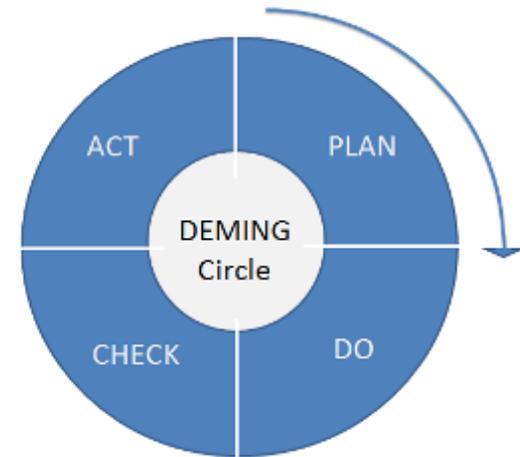
Leadership?



Levels of management function independent of each other:

- Board of governors sets ambitious goals
- Top of Faculty is managing performance indicators
- Senior management is defending the specific interests of their education cluster
- Supervisors are facilitating the lecturers and organising daily routines
- Lecturers defend their 'professional space'

Organisational reality: deviant behavior



Reflection participants

Case: the Amsterdam fire brigade



International media



Amsterdam fire chief Leen Schaap 'had death threats from staff

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44858538>

Amsterdam's fire chief took on 'white male culture.' His employees tried to have him killed

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/07/17/amsterdams-fire-chief-took-on-white-male-culture-his-employees-tried-to-have-him-killed/?utm_term=.ab394a541c43

Amsterdam fire chief appointed to tackle 'macho culture' sent 'death threats from staff.'

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/07/17/amsterdam-fire-chief-appointed-tackle-macho-culture-sent-death/>



Analysis of the lived reality of the fire brigade



- Turn out barracks and office are worlds apart
- Destructive behavior was never bounded by managers
- Taboo on every form of criticism
- Change from 24 hour to 8 hour timetable is frustrated
- Mayor appoints new commander in 2016
- Assignment: tackle the 'white male' culture and modernize operations

Examples of destructive behavior



- Selling jewelry of drowned people
- Skating naked in dormitory in front of women
- Death threats to the commander and his daughter
- Initiation rites for new firemen
- A second or third job as taxi driver or plasterer
- A conspiracy of silence to colleagues who accept change

- Do you recognize the lived reality?
- Examples from your lived reality?

Method for arrested OD cycle 9 – 12 months



Preconditions for normalizing organisational life



- The supervisory board must stick to their role and give unconditionally support to the board of directors.
- Norms of performance and social behavior are made explicit: non-compliance has consequences.
- The position and role of direct supervisors must be restored.

Duration and phasing of the recovery

(Kampen & Henken, 2018)

1. The first, year-long phase places the greatest demands on senior management and the board.
2. In the second phase, operations and support are starting to find the right balance.
3. In the third phase, operational staff is learning to take a stand and assume responsibility for their duties. Social interaction is becoming more functional.

Facing the inevitable backlash



Working on recovery requires to be resilient in the face of an avalanche of negative emotions ('negative capability') (French, 2001)

- Dealing with fake compliance and negativity
- Dealing with undermining and intimidation
- Supervisors learn how to handle the strong resistance, hostility and personal attacks they will face
- Consultants play a reflective and reinforcing role in this learning process.

Conclusion: OD practice



Neglect in the workplace must be dealt with before organisational development can take place. The (social) foundations must be solid if they are to support the development of the organisation:

- encouraging direct supervisors to take a stand, just like primary caretakers
- initiating structure in the organisation's social interactions, just like in children's daily lives, where good parents focus on 'orderliness, consistency and routine'
- applying functional relationships and roles in the organisation, just like in the setting of institutional treatment of neglected children
- setting limits, making people accountable for their behavior and letting them feel the consequences of transgressions, just like parents/caretakers need to do when dealing with neglected children.

Conclusion: OD method



- The method of OD proved to be an effective alternative to the classic change strategies that aim to realize a desired future state
- This method is situated in the lived reality and is performed by the line management from the start
- In this method the gap between the 'soll' situation and the 'ist' situation is bridged
- By structuring the interventions into 6 phases a process of learning by doing is enacted. The method helped leaders to guide the development of their subordinates, the teams and the organisation as a whole
- The method proved successful in different types of organisations.

Interventions at the fire brigade



- Introduction and implementation of 8 hour shifts
- Positioning (direct) supervisors
- Intervening and normalising destructive behaviors:
 - Racism, sexism, discrimination, bullying
 - Culture of a motor gang
- Modernizing working practice:
 - From 95% pull out, to 40% prevention, inspection and supervision

Effects

- Workers council frustrates and undermines
- Death threats to commander and his daughter
- Spreading fake news and horror stories in social media and public media
- Playing the victim role: pensioners as communicators
- Internal group pressure
- (Direct) supervisors taking command
- Normal social life is possible

Limitations

- How can the risk of rigidity of a structured method be overcome?
- Does the method also apply to healthy organisations?
- How can the durability of the recovery be assured?
- How can the disturbance of turnover in the board be intercepted?
- Smaller organizations (under 250 head count) were underrepresented.
- The role of the OD consultant needs further research.

Reflection: the emotional rollercoaster ●

- Bewilderment, stupefied (how is it possible?) (2010)
- Anger (They seduced me into it/It is my fault to have accepted this)
- Curiousness (how evolves something like this?)
- Challenge (this can be done better!)
- Loneliness (who sees this also and with whom can I talk?)

- Role switch (the organisation is not ready for the Dean role: I must quit or I must face the challenge and do what I think is right) (2010-2011)

Last but not least...

What is the influence of the curricula of business schools on the attitude and leadership style of their graduates

- What is the responsibility of business schools?
- Must future leadership be better prepared to the dark side of organisations?

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- **Scholar-Practitioner at Van de Bunt, VU University, University of Twente, Business School Netherlands**
- **OD Practitioner: problems related to destructive leadership, arrested OD and failed organizational change**
 - Public transport, health care, higher education, governmental institutions, airline companies, financial institutions, energy network companies, police, fire brigades
- **OD Research: Theory of Emotional Abuse and Neglect in the Workplace**
 - 15 years of research
 - >150 cases
 - Palgrave 2015: Emotional Abuse and Neglect in the Workplace: how to restore normal organizational life
- **30 years of experience in (part-time) education: business schools and universities**



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- Assistant and Associate Professor at WUR (1982-1996)
- Senior Fulbright Scholar (1992-1993, UC Davis, USA)
- Head Microbiological Health Protection, Director EU Salmonella Reference Center (1996-2003), Dutch Institute Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
- Director Nutrition, Health and Consumer Safety, Director Public health and Deputy Director General (2003-2009) at RIVM
- Dean Applied Science and Technology, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (2009 - 2016). Role of transformational leader and commissioner of OD & change
- Advisor to the Board of UAS and Professor Smart Urban Innovation (2016 - 2017)
- Associate Partner Van de Bunt Consultancy (2017-)