

# LEARNING JOURNEY

## LAO4: LEADING TRANSFORMATION (ESTIMATED TIME 90 MINUTES)

### Context

*“If you are feeling confused and as though everything is impacting you all at the same time, this is not a personal, private experience. This is actually a collective experience”* (Adam Tooze). And this experience has a name – the “Polycrisis”.

*“The confluence of crises facing leaders and managers is nothing short of remarkable. The concern for leaders and managers should be whether they are prepared.”* (PwC)

*“It’s not the strongest or most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change.”* **C. Darwin**

The “My New Good Life” Learning Journey series has been developed to support leaders / managers better handle the “Polycrisis” to create successful and resilient teams and organisations.

This Learning Journey comprises four *Learning adventures* designed to support you to:

- examine potential opportunities and threats to your organisation (LAo1).
- consider how the future may evolve by developing scenarios (LAo2).
- explore strategies to achieve your vision in a way that is resilient to change (LAo3).
- reflect on how to go about transforming your organisation (LAo4)

### Objectives

This *Learning adventure* explores on Step 5 of the [AIHR](#) Scenario Planning process introduced in LAo1 i.e. how to build external flags and internal triggers.

Then, we go on to explore how to lead the transformation of your team and / or organisation in line with your strategy.

Specifically, we will be exploring how to:

- clarify the Purpose and DNA of your team or organisation
- develop a Transformation Canvas of the future
- create a NGL Orientation Board
- tell the Future Story of our Organisation



## Building External Flags and Internal Triggers

The last step in the scenario planning process is identifying external flags and internal triggers that help us monitor when our designed scenarios are becoming more or less probable.

External flags are developed as specific events to “watch out” for. They will tell us that the probability of a scenario occurring is increasing / decreasing. Internal triggers dictate a response to a flag that will help the organization systematically shift to prepare and move closer to the designed response.



When we talk about scenarios and risks, people can say: “We cannot plan what we do not know. We decide when the moment comes.”

This is a good approach for many events. We assume that we can come up with a good decision quickly enough when the moment comes. Either:

- your organization is centralised, and top leaders are good and quick decision makers, having enough detailed knowledge, and they are available 24/7; or
- you have a decentralized organisation, and you fully trust that the employees involved are themselves good and quick decision makers, and that they understand the big picture.

However, having developed scenarios and a common understanding about Purpose, DNA, changing worlds and Elements available, you now can come up with “plans” for situations that are bound to occur sooner or later. Many organisations are doing this already for a “Black Out”, a prolonged time without electricity. Many organisations have similar plans for serious accidents.

Many leaders / managers realize that it can be relieving to pre-plan other events as well e.g.:

- What if we don't have enough staff to maintain all services?
- What if we have problems with liquidity?
- What if we run out of a particular resource?
- What if we have electricity, but no internet?
- What if we don't have electricity, and internet access only via mobile phones?
- What if we neither have electricity nor internet?

Are there specific situations for your organisation for which you need to plan?

Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

It may be that you define precise rules, but perhaps defining general principles would be more appropriate. The main objectives are that:

- your organisation stays capable of acting.
- staff are empowered to make decisions because they know that they have the mandate to do so.
- decisions take account of the Purpose, DNA and values of the organisation.

Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

At first, many organisations have a hard time developing these procedures. Often, people are tempted to say: “The more we talk about this, the more likely it will happen! Let's focus on something positive!” But once these procedures are available the whole organisation experiences a kind of relief: “Now we know what to do, in case.”

### The NGL Orientation Board

The following table puts together a set of principles that enables different members of an organization coherent decision making. This board is best put together in an interactive process of devising and dialogue. You will find the aspects from this workbook in the different fields.

1. Purpose: The reason for our organisation to exist.
2. DNA Elements: What are the elements of our identity that define us?
3. Our Ecosystems and their developments: What is happening in our networks?
4. Glocal Shadows: Global Shadows in the form they have in our local environment.
5. Local Shadows: Further relevant problematic developments we can observe.
6. Scenarios: Potential future scenarios.
7. Opportunities: What are the opportunities that arise from the developments in our ecosystems, glocal and local shadows?
8. How can we further foster antifragility?: What can we do to become more “fluid”: mindset, habits, structures, processes, etc.?
9. What are the key Elements for a NGL?: Which of the 9 Elements are most relevant for us in the next timeframe? What impulse arises from them for us?
10. If in doubt what do we preserve?: Elements of purpose and DNA, target groups, etc.
11. If in doubt where do we let go?: What can members of the system let go of if needed?
12. What do we need to learn?: Looking at all the items above: Which capabilities and capacities are supportive, maybe even necessary?
13. Strategic Directions: more / less: If members of the organisation need to decide: Which qualities are more and less desirable?

## My New Good Life Orientation Board

Purpose: Vision:		What to learn:	Strategic directions (more / less):
DNA Elements:	Our Ecosystems / Dev		
Glocal Shadows:	Local Shadows:	In doubt we preserve:	In doubt we let go of:
Scenario 1:	Scenario 2:	Elements for a NGL and their relevance:	
Scenario 4:	Scenario 3:	Opportunities:	H2 further foster Anti-fragility:

## The DNA of our Team or Organisation

Successful resilient and antifragile organizations let go of everything if need be - but they hold firmly to their DNA.

If you look at the history of your organization: What are the specific elements that were baked into the DNA of your organization? Is it a special style, a special motto, a special promise, a certain value? What was there at the beginning that is still alive, that is still pulsating, that enlivens the soul of the organization?

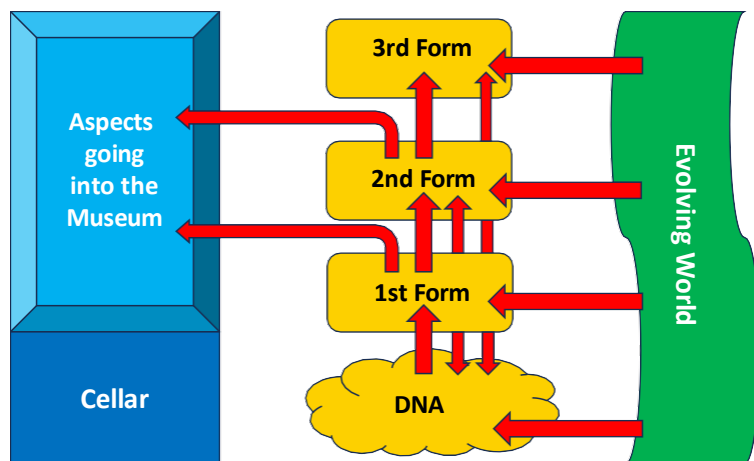
When you think of the global and local shadows: Do you get an idea what your “antifragile” looks like, letting go of some things, integrating new things, maybe totally changing the surface, bringing forth a new gestalt of the DNA interacting with a moving world ...?

## Our Transformational Canvas

The DNA is central in creating the first form. It picks up elements from the past world.

When the world changes and the fit with the world is no longer optimal, the system shifts, integrating new material from the world.

Hopefully it is possible to put elements gracefully into the museum and to reconnect with the original DNA.

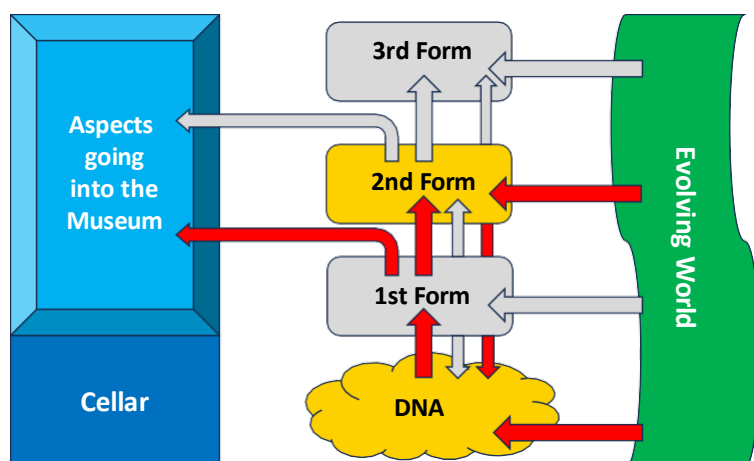


When elements cannot be put gracefully into the museum they sometimes end up in the basement and it is necessary to clean that up later to bring peace to the system.

Antifragility means being synchronised with the world, with no attachment to forms of the past.

## Our Transformational Canvas – What to preserve?

Let's call your phenotype of your organization the “2nd form”.



What is it that you want to preserve from your “1<sup>st</sup> form” when you need to make a transition to the next form?

Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

What is it that you want to preserve from your system’s DNA? Remember, it can take a new form!

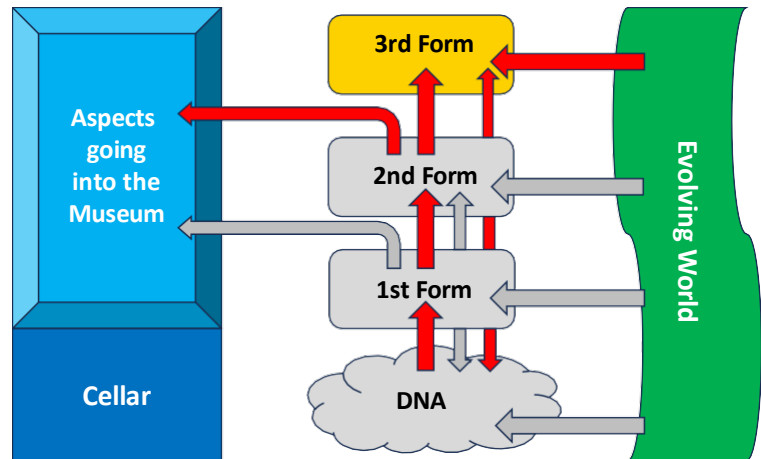
Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

Revisit your list. Ask for each item: What for? If you can replace an item with the purpose it stands for - do so also in the list, may be giving the potential form in brackets (e.g. via ...)

## Our Transformational Canvas of the Past and Future

Integrating what you have developed so far, you have explored:

- What you observe as relevant about what is happening in the world.
- How you re-interpret your organisation's DNA and Purpose in the emerging new world.
- Aspects you want to take with you from your organisation's present form – at least their purpose.



Next, identify what aspects of your team or organisation you would like to put into the museum.

Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

What you already know about the next form (the 3<sup>rd</sup> form in the above diagram).

Capture your thoughts and ideas here:

## Telling a Future Story of our Organisation

Once you have dived into Shadows and potential risks for our organisation, it can be tempting to evangelise others about it. With some distance we know: This can be overwhelming and counterproductive.

So, should we rather conceal this perspective?

We are convinced that it is possible to tell a (non-dystopian) story of ongoing transformation, e.g. following this structure:



1. Once the world was like this: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Our founders, \_\_\_\_\_, saw this and felt: The world needs \_\_\_\_\_, let's do something about it.
3. They founded the organization, with this purpose in mind: \_\_\_\_\_
4. They baked into this organization these pieces of DNA: \_\_\_\_\_
5. They experienced challenges, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_
6. and experienced success, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_
7. The world changed, and they integrated new aspects, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_
8. while putting some practices into the museum, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Now again, we can see how the world is changing, not only in scenarios, but already, e.g. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Again we ask: How can we best actualize our purpose and DNA in our time?
11. Again we ask: What is it we want to put into the museum with grace, while integrating new aspects?
12. We will need to develop this together.
13. What we are pretty sure about already: It will be more \_\_\_\_\_ and less \_\_\_\_\_
14. We invite you, employees and stakeholders, to co-create this new form together.
15. You can participate by \_\_\_\_\_.



## Summary

In this *Learning adventure*, you have started to explore Step 5 of the Scenario Planning process introduced in LAo1 i.e. how to build external flags and internal triggers and how to lead the transformation of your team and / or organisation in line with your strategy.

## Support

If you would like to speak with someone to clarify any aspects of this *Learning adventure*, or to join our community for leaders and managers, please reach out to us at [support](#).

## References

Websites: [New Good Life](#)

**Contributors:** Bernhard Possert, Anna Zanghi and Rob Bigge