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7/31 – Leadership Development – Three Dimensions of Skill, Stage, State

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Hello! My name is Anouk Brack and I'm an expert in leadership development. We know about skills development in leadership, project management skills and conversation skills and all kinds of soft skills that are important. But skill is only one of the three dimensions of leadership development. There are two more dimensions that are very

present, but often people don't know about or are ignored; these are stage and state. So we have skills, stage and state. The skill dimension I'm going to leave for now. We know about that and it's important to work on it or develop it.

The stage dimension is about maturity, about being able to deal with complexity in a meaningful way and still be able to act sensibly. And there are different levels in human development after we have already turned 18 and think we are grown up. Actually, there are several more steps, distinct steps—levels—that we can develop in. And whether we develop or not depends greatly on a combination of the support and the challenges that we get. So if you work in very complex and fast moving surroundings, then you get lots of challenges. If you get enough support, then you can develop in these stages of leadership and you become a more mature, wise leader.

Now this needs to be paired with state development. State development is the third dimension of leadership development. State is about your capacity to self-regulate your state of being in the moment. So on a good day with a nice colleague, and a fascinating project, we're all brilliant, but under pressure, when it's a difficult colleague or when things suddenly change, then we have a tendency to fall back to a limited version of ourselves. We also call it the survival system or the stress response. And we often do not realize this is happening because our self-reflection goes offline in that moment. We still kind of function, but we're less creative. We take in less information. We can make poorer decisions. It's harder to set priorities. It's harder to empathize with other people, have compassion.

So all these skills and capacities are much less available when we're under pressure, and state development helps us to develop the capacity to self-regulate your state, so you can be centered, focused, in the flow, calm and collected, decisive, all of those nice things that we like from leadership and that we like to cultivate. When we don't center ourselves under pressure, what happens is you become a more compact, stressed version of yourself and communication breaks down. You might forget things or move too fast or move too slow on things. So you lose the nice, perfect timing of the next step.

So these are the three dimensions. Skill we know about, it's important. Then there is stage, the levels of development—also called vertical development in adults. And finally state, self-regulating your state of being, for instance, by centering yourself. Those three dimensions are really important in leadership development in 21st century and if you want to know more, you know where to find me.

[Watch: Leadership development - 3 dimensions of skill stage state](#)

Anouk Brack is an international expert in leadership development. She is the author of two Dutch management books on leadership development. She is one of the first certified Leadership Embodiment teachers in Europe. She holds a MSc. in biology and has been working in adult development for 20+ years. With her embodied and integral approach she helps leaders to level up so they can contribute to what matters, also under pressure and in complex circumstances. Her clients include the city of The Hague, Dawn Foods, the Dutch authority for the financial markets, Geneva Centre for Peace and Security. Anouk's clients appreciate her pragmatic groundedness, her ability to explain complex matters clearly, and her sense of humor. [Visit Anouk's homepage to learn more.](#)