

# A WELCOMING WORLD

The world is in desperate need of a new story. A story about finding joy and meaning in our lives and living in true community, sitting around a common fireplace in dialogue and searching ways to live together. A world where all humans feel expected and welcome. We call this vision "A Welcoming World" where children, friends, strangers, guests, customers, and co-workers dare to meet each other without thinking of religion, position, colour, gender, or age. We believe that this is something fundamental for lasting and true success for us as persons, for our companies, our places, and finally for our common home, the Earth. Imagine a world where everybody is equally welcome. Where we meet each other without thoughts of where we come from. This sounds like a dream, we know this. But many of us share this dream today. Many, who believe that there should be no difference in how people are received. But there is a big difference. It matters who you are in this world, where you come from, how old you are, and if you are a woman or a man. A world where we bring forth the best in ourselves, where our talents and personalities are cherished, where we are free to meet each other as the human beings we are, and to see that which unites us instead of seeing that which divides us. This also includes all life on Earth, in one sense to welcome life itself.

The faces of the unwelcoming world are many. Alienation, loneliness, hunger, racism, discrimination, intolerance, pollution, inhuman working environments, violence and corruption, are some of its ugly expressions.

Our challenge is so vast that it would be easy to give up. But this cannot be an option. Because giving up is to leave people living today and future generations behind. Moreover, isolation and alienation are the fruits for us as individuals in the well off part of the world living in comfort while feeling inside ourselves the growing pain of others suffering. This situation is unbearable.

To succeed as humans we cannot look upon ourselves only as guests here on earth but rather as its hosts and stewards with a responsibility for all living beings and the environment that we and the people of the future shall inhabit. To see ourselves as vehicles for life itself to evolve. One could say that it has taken life close to 14 billion years to evolve to a point where it is, through us, able to reflect on creation itself. This leaves us with an important choice, to see the world as a candy store to exploit or as something in our trust. We need to define our role on Earth. Why we are here as a species.

A host who practices, Hostmanship, the art of welcoming, and who bases this important skill on six fundamentals: serving others, taking responsibility, perceiving wholeness, being caring, searching knowledge and practicing dialogue.

## **Serving others**

We use our talents and experiences to the benefit of something larger or someone else. We meet each human being with thoughts of how we can make life easier for her. We recognize that all our actions are meant to serve those around us, and that our places serve the people who live and work there, plus all those who have chosen to visit them today and tomorrow. Serving someone else is an often misunderstood art in the times we live in. Being misled, we have begun to believe that service is the same thing as voluntarily act as a doormat, to let someone “place himself above” and let us “sit below” the other person. Let us now reclaim the word and return to it its proper meaning. To serve is to be there for someone else. To listen, to understand, and to ask oneself: “What can I do to make you feel better right now?” To help someone reach their goals and thus become successful in life. A characteristic of the serving organization is that it has a serving leadership. Leaders who serve their employees. Where they primarily care about the world and daily life of their employees, so that the employees themselves shall feel free enough to serve when meeting others. And we need fellow citizens who are prepared to encourage and trust their leaders and take responsibility themselves.

This is in practice quite a different perspective than the narcissistic and selfcentric one we live in today.

## **Taking responsibility**

We take responsibility for our actions, which means that we stand by our ways to react and relate to all that happens to us. We take responsibility for the world that is ours, and we dare meeting people with our entire essence, without blaming circumstances, our history or other people. Taking responsibility means using our courage. It is unrealistic to feel responsible for all that happens in the world; on the other hand, we always take responsibility for how we choose to react to what happens. We may choose between taking the matter seriously or blaming someone else, we may choose to learn something, or to walk away unaffected. To carry responsibility is not the same as being loyal. Loyalty is based on sticking to rules of behaviour and doing as we are told. Really taking responsibility is instead a question of solidarity, putting ourselves on the side of the other party and helping to improve the world we live in. A choice perhaps not always very appreciated by our organization, but which in the end creates stronger relationships and more responsible individuals.

### **Perceiving wholeness**

We see and we understand the larger context. We need to understand and feel in our heart that “a pain in one is pain in all, progress for you is progress for me”. We need a perspective that does not only include us as a person, the organization we work for, our community, nation or region but one that sees us first and foremost as global citizens.

### **Being caring**

We dare using our hearts and we search for the human being inside ourselves and see the human being in others. We trust our friendly instincts regardless of whom we meet or where the meeting takes place. Caring is the heart of welcoming. An empathetic, considerate person easily becomes a good host. For her, it seems natural to take care of others and to look out for someone’s best interests. Therefore, it’s easy to release the human in ourselves and to meet all others first of all as fellow human beings. This may seem a little strange: certain environments, certain systems may sometimes appear as if they are prepared for everything but for a human being. As if meetings only is meant to take place in theory, not in practice. A caring system, on the others hand, never forgets whom the system serves, and that this recipient most likely will act just as human beings usually act. To let consideration rule in an activity is seeing the human side in those who seek us out. Being caring also involves our use of resources, the environment and how we cherish our own and other peoples time.

### **Searching knowledge**

We meet a human being where she is and understand that, what she understands. We gratefully and humbly carry our knowledge and serve when we use it. We open up to all cultures and people, regardless of background. Good knowledge is a given when it comes to Hostmanship. We know what we do and why we do it. But having knowledge is something far greater than this. Utilizing Hostmanship is also building a culture where we constantly learn things that enrich our experiences. This applies as much to a personal Hostmanship as to an activity. A culture where each question is taken seriously and where the important thing is not always the answer, but who asks it. For a global citizen who will take responsibility for the whole, science and the understanding of man and nature is paramount.

### **Practicing dialogue**

We seek understanding and agreement. We listen not only to the words, but also to the entire person, and we dare opening ourselves up to diversity. We receive critique as the gift it is and are thankful for the confidence by ignoring pre-conceived notions, and we use our courage to understand all aspects of a problem. In order to be able to carry on a dialogue, we must first learn to listen, which often is the biggest obstacle to solving a problem. We human beings cling tightly to our

deep-rooted patterns and pre-conceived notions. We always believe that one plus one is two, and often answer before we hear the end of the question. There are three ways to meet a person, when a problem occurs. One, we can enter into a debate and explain that the other party is wrong. Two, we can choose a discussion and convince her that we are right, or three; we can listen and try to understand the context while beginning a dialogue. Opening up to a dialogue at each meeting means taking everybody seriously. By being able to think together we will find solutions not reachable by an individual person or culture.

The art of Hostmanship is performed on different stages. The core is the personal Hostmanship. What I, as a person, offer everyone I meet. The next stage is the Hostmanship of the function, the Hostmanship with which we, as a department or group, greet everyone. A Hostmanship that also other co-workers and units within our organization can be a part of. The third stage is the entire organization. How do we act as the whole we say we are? How do we assume responsibility for each other and serve everyone? This stage is in many ways as easy to identify as the Personal Hostmanship, but requires a spirit of openness and responsibility that reaches far beyond us as individuals. The fourth stage, then, involves more than the organization itself. It is partly a geographic place, like a city or another limited area. But it is not just the map that determines, but more so in what context we act. All companies that are part of a larger organization depend on the Hostmanship of the organization. Many also belong to a certain branch, and then the entire industry is of interest. Then, at last, the largest stage of all, where we act as citizens.

The creation of a welcoming world demands a different view of our relationship to life. We need to be a "homo hospes", a welcoming human, whose consciousness has evolved to a level where our story is possible. "Homo hospes" is a human being that defines richness not by how much one accumulates but by how much one gives to others. Living in the wealthy part of the world imposes upon us an extra responsibility. We must not try to implement our way of life in every corner of the world, but rather help others from where they are to reach a point where they can create their unique way.

Being part of this story demands no religion, no party politics and no passport. We only need homo hospes who have regained their compassion and sense of humanity. We need storytellers who want to tell the story to as many as possible. Success is counted by the number of people who have been inspired by it, and are enabled to play their part in creating a more welcoming world. We need to tell it in schools, institutions and everywhere people gather. We need to tell it to children, adults, leaders, politicians and others. And we need people who share the story, are willing to take part in



the storytelling, and enrich it by adding words and chapters to it. Our story is not something completed that should be implemented, rather a conversation, a journey where the road is created by many different footsteps.

The enemies of a welcoming world are not the evil and greedy forces in the world. The enemies are all the good people that do not take part in sharing our common responsibility while knowing that they should, losing their way in the tempting labyrinth of complexity, fragmentation and academics.

Mankind and all life on planet Earth are at this moment in time facing unprecedented challenges. By understanding that we all are part of the same tribe on a common journey, we will thrive and be able to stand with dignity before life itself and the generations to come.

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