



The existential approach to leadership – a challenge for personal commitment

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Agenda

1. Existential psychology
2. Existential motivation
3. Existential goal
4. The specific attitude
5. The specific structure
6. Success – existentially seen
7. 7 existential leadership task



1. Existential approach to Psychotherapy – a short profile





Philosophical background:

Nietzsche – Kierkegaard –
Heidegger – Scheler – Jaspers -
Camus – Sartre – Merleau-Ponty
– etc.

Founders:

■ L. Binswanger – W. Blankenburg
■ – J. Bugenthal – M. Boss – G.
■ Condrau – V. Frankl – K. Jaspers
■ – H. Tellenbach – R.D. Laing –
■ R. May – I. Yalom etc.

Existential Psychotherapists today:

Karel Balczar – Ludovico Berra – Betty Cannon – Emmy van Deurzen – Stephen Diamond – Bo Jakobson – Alice Holzhey-Kunz – Christoph Kolbe – Svetlana Krivtsova – Alfried Längle – Dmitry Leontiev – Ernesto Spinelli – Simon du Plock – Kirk J. Schneider – Vladimir Shumsky – Alison Strasser – Lilo Tutsch – Paul Wong – etc.



Existential Psychology =

a special section of the

Humanistic Psychology

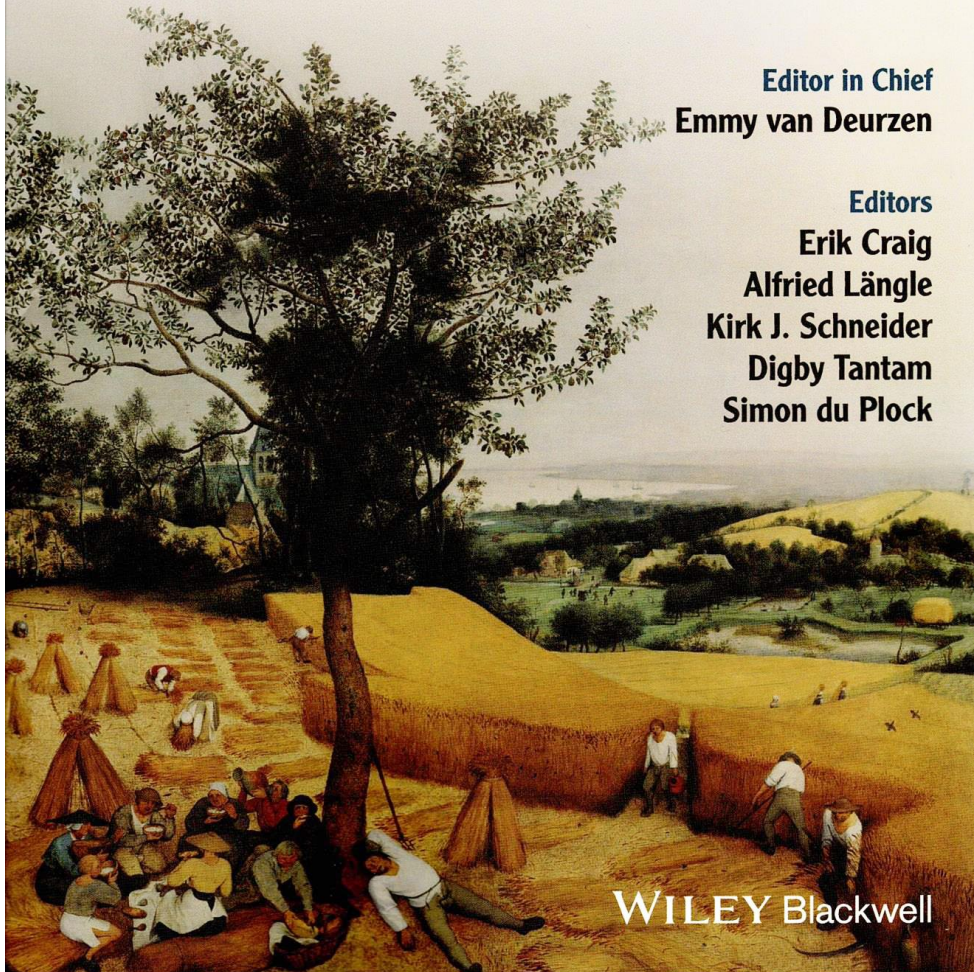




The Wiley World Handbook of **EXISTENTIAL THERAPY**

Editor in Chief
Emmy van Deurzen

Editors
Erik Craig
Alfried Längle
Kirk J. Schneider
Digby Tantam
Simon du Plock



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Alfried Längle
Dorothee Bürgi

Existentielles Coaching

Theoretische Orientierung, Grundlagen und Praxis
für Coaching, Organisationsberatung und Supervision

Dasein
können

Leben
mögen

Sein
dürfen

Sinnvolles
Wollen

Faktizität

Wert

Identität

Sinn



Johner / Bürgi / Längle



Existential Leadership
zum Erfolg

Philipp Johner / Dorothee Bürgi / Alfried Längle

Existential Leadership zum Erfolg

Philosophie und Praxis der Transformation

HAUFE.



MANRES
Leading Transformation

HAUFE.



Alfried Längle, Ingeborg Künz

Leben in der Arbeit?

Existenzielle Zugänge
zu Burnout-Prävention und
Gesundheitsförderung



facultas





2. Existential motivation



V. Frankl:

„People do not strive for happiness – they strive for a **reason** to be happy!“

In analogy we can say:

„Leaders and coaches do not strive for **success** – they strive for a *reason* to be successful!“



Reasons?

■ ... not just luck or favorable
outer circumstances

■ ... not cheating

■ ... not forcing



■ but

Existential Reasons

1. Clear **facts**: knowledge, capacities, experience, realism
2. Clear **values**: assessed activities, important
3. Clear **decisions**: chosen by oneself, personally engaged
4. Clear **context**: fits to the circumstance, has meaning



*When success and effectiveness
are well rooted
→ existential criterion:*

Inner fulfillment



3. Existential goal



Existential understanding of human being:

Autonomous, free person





The existential goal:

to **respect the person** in
coaching and leadership

→ to connect with the human
essence



→ To help people to live
with **inner consent**
to what one does



The inner consent am I!

It is a personal inner felt **yes** –
a **resonance** (position) to what
one does.



The effect of inner consent:

- Intrinsic motivation
- Feels free
- Gives power
- Makes us present
- Feel the value
- Authentic action
- No stress!





... and leads to

Commitment

Giving oneself with one's heart =
to be totally there.





The coach/leader should be felt
by the coachee/collaborators
as **persons** –
with their personal presence,
interest and participation.



Without commitment –
no existential life.

Without commitment –
no inner fulfillment.





4. The specific attitude - coaches can work on with leaders





4.1 Openness towards the other

Phenomenological attitude:

(Heidegger 1967, 1975; Husserl 1950; Scheler 1980; Vetter 2007; Lleras 2000, Längle 2007)



Phenomenological attitude:

Bracketing all external information (theory, knowledge, thoughts, experiences) – knowing nothing else than what the coachee says and how this impresses me (referring to the sensing).

Phenomenological attitude:

■ = Understanding – not explaining

■ = Respecting the freedom of the person
– not referring to the deterministic

■ = no interpretation

■ = intuitive



4.2 Openness towards life

Phenomenological attitude:

= let oneself be asked by the actual situation [V. Frankl]

= „**Existential turn**“



4. The specific attitudes



“It is life itself that asks questions of man. (...) it is not up to man to question; rather he should recognize that he is questioned, questioned by life;

he has to **respond by being responsible;**
and he can answer *to* life only by answering *for*
his life.”

(Frankl 1973, 62)



questionning, asking...dialogue towards me

(= demand, requirement(s) of the situation)



ME

Free Person



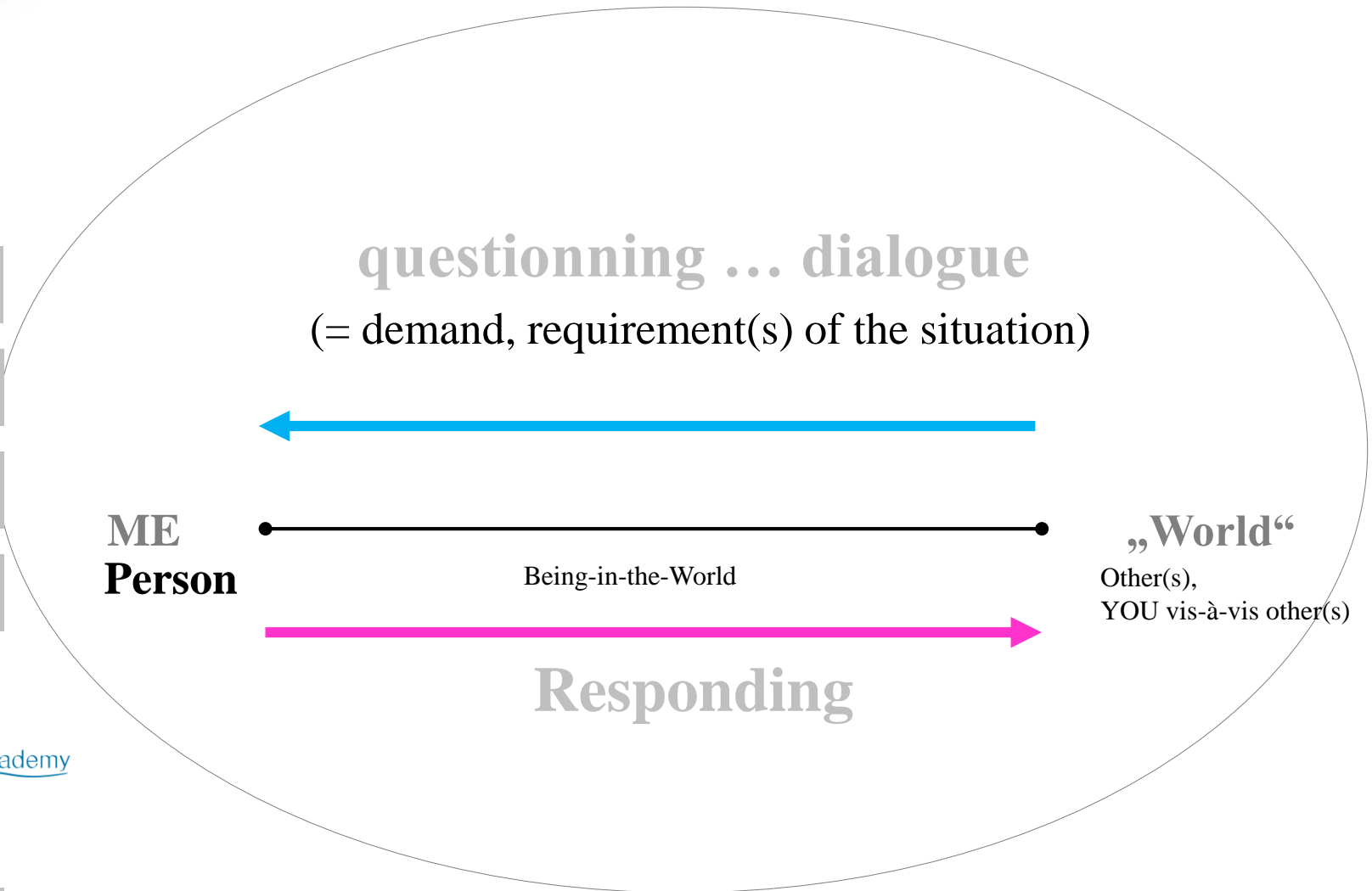
Being-in-the-World

„World“

Other(s),
YOU vis-à-vis other(s)



4. The specific attitudes



Dialogical reality of existence

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In other words...

Being human means:

⇒ **being questionned**

to live means:

⇒ **giving answers**





Practically speaking:

The coach is asked:

what needs the coachee and what requires his/her situation now, and what from me?

And teaches the coachee to also look similarly at their situation.





4.3 Openness towards oneself

Enhance the
inner dialog!



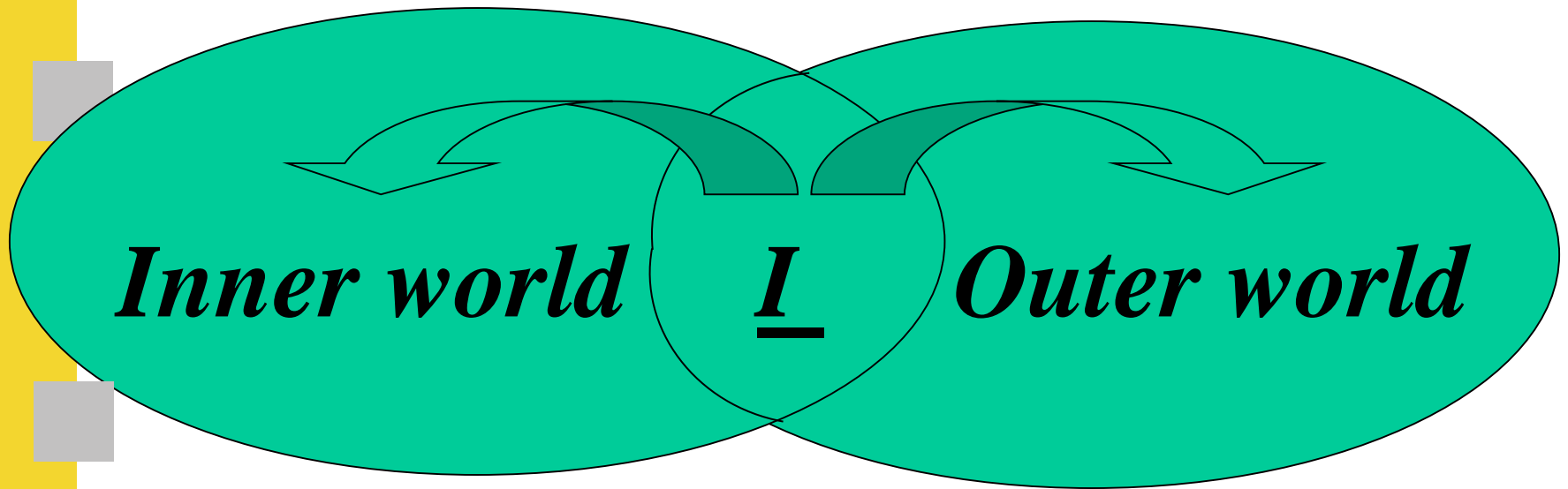


Basic principle of Existential Psychology:

Dialogical exchange
with the world, and
with oneself



4. The specific attitudes





Without dialog with the world and
with oneself

→ one cannot find *oneself*

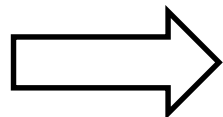
→ one cannot find one's *meaning*

But: emptiness + feelings of being
lost ► alienation



Inner dialog

- referring to the inner self, to the personal
- what starts speaking within me
- how it resonates in me



authenticity

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5. The specific structure for coaching and leadership





There is a solid and supporting
motivation


→ when s/he **can** do it

→ when s/he **likes** to do it

→ when s/he **may** do it

→ when s/he **should** do it (meaning)

→ then s/he really **wants** to do it
(consent)



If these basic structures of existence are *not given* (no inner consent)

→ it would be *too little* to really invest *time and life energy*.

Existential coaches and leaders *support* people in this existential demand.

Briefly said:

1. **can** do → see the **chances!**
2. **like** to do → take your **time!**
3. **may** do → do your **own/what matters!**
4. **should** do → feel what is **needed!**

5. **want** to do → **realize yourself!**



6. Success – existentially understood (V. Frankl 1985)





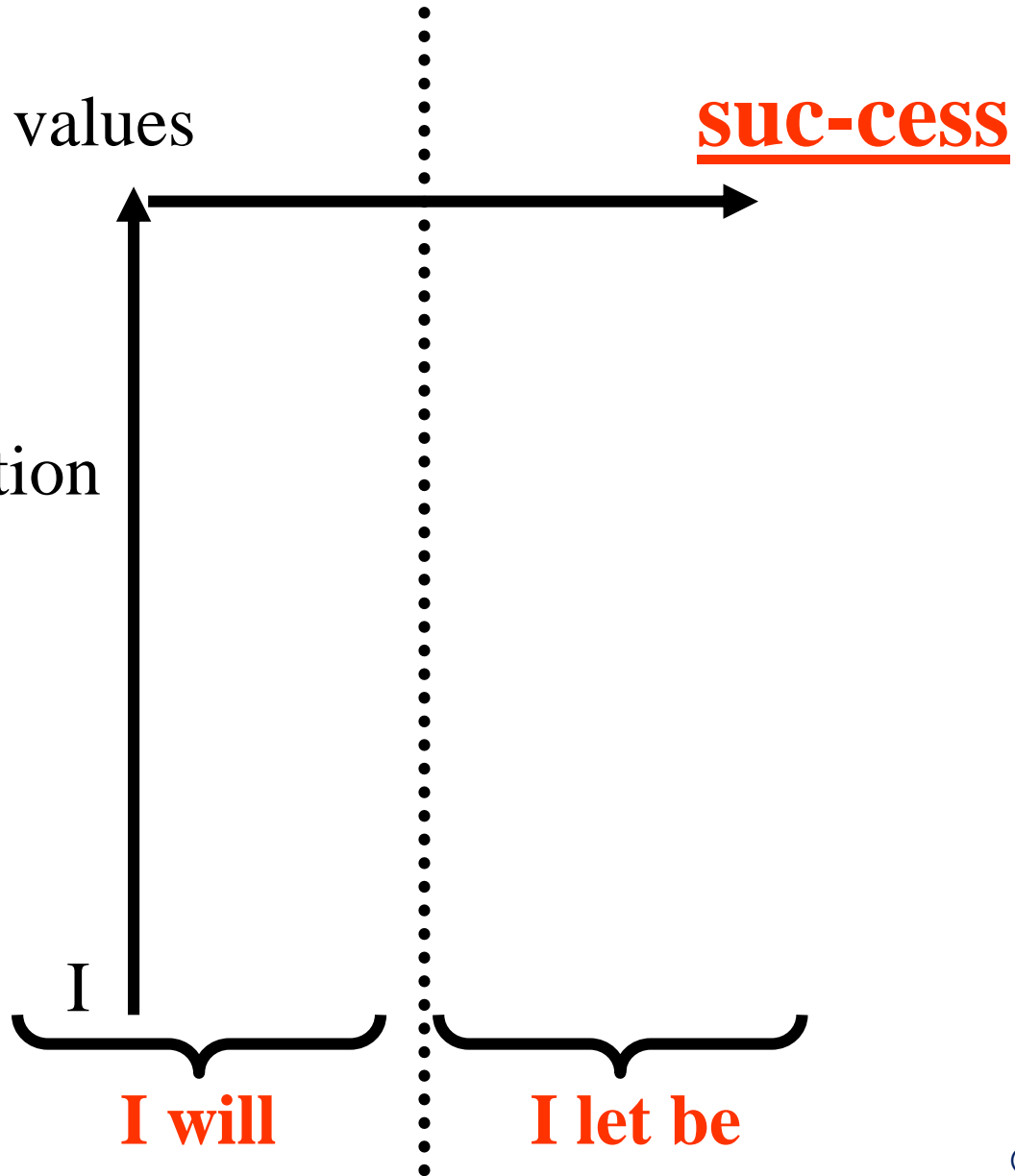
values



intention

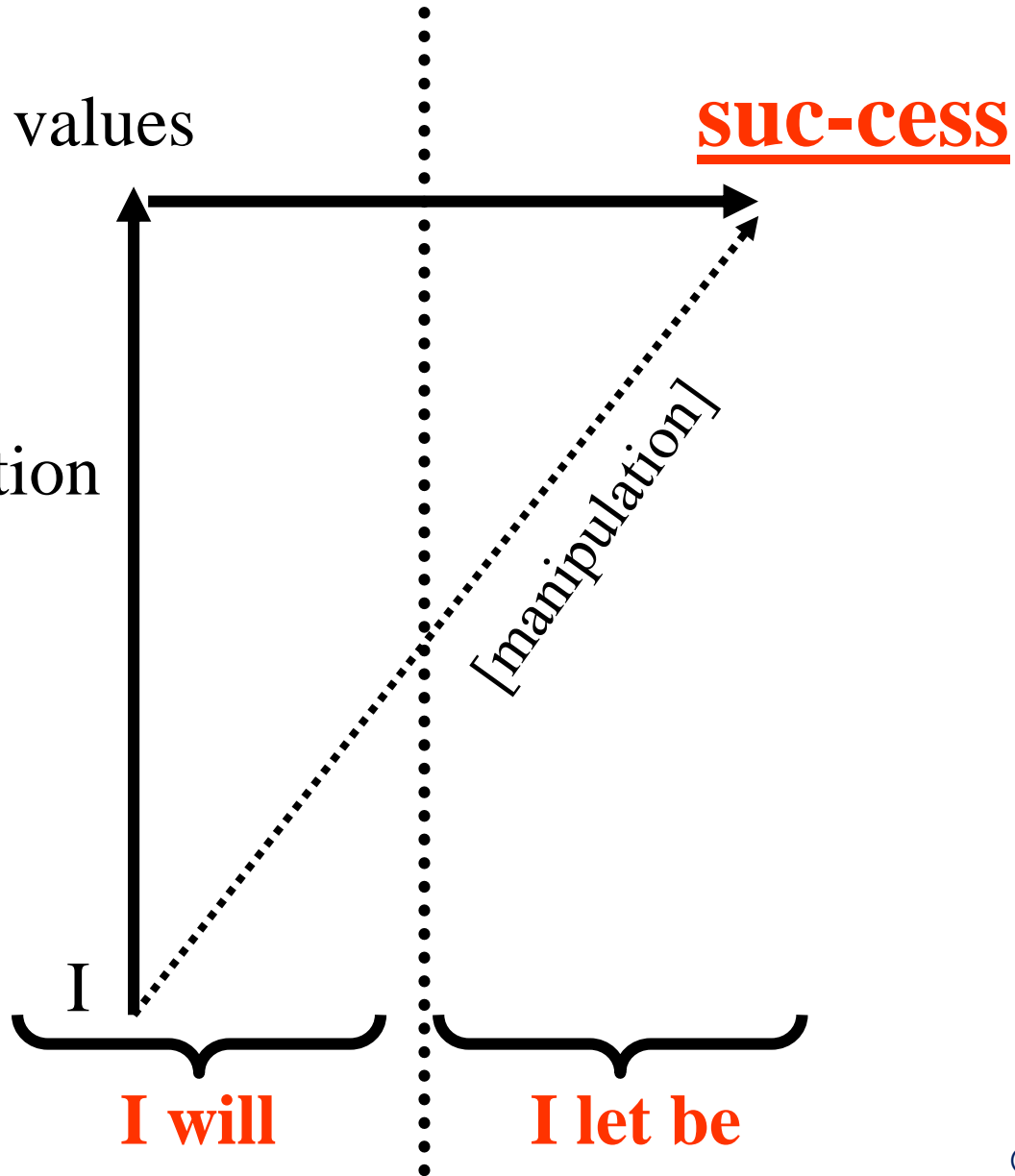
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Will and success (V. Frankl):



intention





7. The 7 existential leadership tasks - a summary



7. The 7 existential leadership task

1. **Dialogical** attitude to others (\neq discussion)
2. **Openness** to the situation, existential turn
3. **Phenomenological** attitude & intuition; inner, authentic dialog
4. **Structural** basis: 4 dimensions (trust+info; values; taking a stand + responsibility; meaning/becoming)

5. **Inner consent** – oneself & asking others

6. Asking for **taking positions**

7. **Relativizing success** – but esteeming commitment



Life is not “something” –

■ it is
■ the *chance*
■ for
■ something.

■ (V. Frankl)





Thank you for your attention!

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