



Reinventing Natural Leadership with LSP

One of the major benefits of **LEGO SERIOUS PLAY (LSP)**, mentioned over and over, is the ability to break the 20-80 meeting curse and create a process that is fair where everyone is EQUAL.

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Does this sound like meetings you attend?

In a 20-80 meeting, one or two individuals, often either the most senior or the meeting host, control and enjoy the meeting. This dominating minority (20%) takes 80% of the time, hence the title of 20-80. This leaves the remaining 80% of attendees with little opportunity to contribute. In addition to leaving valuable insights unexpressed, the frustration of not being heard or understood may even carry into employee attitude about work after the meeting.

Timeless leadership attributes



One reason for 20-80 meetings is that a couple of dominant people immediately begin talking, prompting them to take over the agenda and limit how the content is framed. Few processes (other than LSP) ensure that everyone engages in the discussion and that EVERYONE uses his or her voice.

So why is LEGO SERIOUS PLAY able to break this curse by bringing equality to the table? Dutch evolutionary biologist, Mark van Vugt's research about the Evolutionary Science of Leadership may provide insight.

In his book [Naturally Selected, the Evolutionary Science of Leadership](#), von Vugt makes a convincing case that current management theories and practices have evolved more rapidly than our brains. Deep in our brains lives a primal, "natural" sense for right and wrong, what makes sense and what seems irrational.

Stone-age men and women bonded together in tribes. Many aspects of how and why members of a tribe worked together and thrived still make sense in today's fast-paced, complex and chaotic world. Leadership for stone-age people was trust based. Tribes rarely exceeded between 150 and 200 members so people knew each other really well, their relationships were close and informal. Relationships among and between early humans were more equal because in primitive societies it was difficult to accumulate resources and power.

Leadership can kill motivation



According to van Vugt, the principle of equality is still an important part of our instincts. Large organizations can kill motivation. In some large hierarchical organizations, top leaders can earn as much as 380 times the salary of entry-level employees. This wide range in compensation feels unnatural and alienating, deepening the frustration among average employees. In our ancestors' time, leaders were usually democratically selected. Today's average employee has little or no influence over leader selection. And instead of leadership being situational, or project specific, many leaders hold universal power.

Bringing equality to the table



When employees are accustomed to working in a hierarchical system, it is challenging to relax into a more natural leadership model where people know and trust each other, and share leadership responsibilities according to the tasks at hand. A key insight from our work with large organizations is that the equal and democratic nature of the LEGO SERIOUS PLAY process can reconnect all employees with their own deep knowledge, and create a better foundation for natural leadership to emerge and flourish.

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Sincerely,

Robert Rasmussen

Rasmussen Consulting I/S is a global company specializing in using LEGO SERIOUS PLAY to effectively harvest an organization's collective intelligence to enhance strategic behavior for better and faster decision-making. We are based in Denmark with offices in US, Japan and Singapore.
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