

# Developing Leadership Awareness

A qualitative study of four participants in a leadership program.

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the leadership program: Develop Your Leadership – DYL – on four leaders that participated in the program the autumn of 2015. The program consisted of three gatherings in a period of three months. The participants in the program were middle level leaders.

Data for this study was collected through three types of data gathering methods, based on the population from the second gathering of the program; first a survey, then observation, and last interviews. Four participants volunteered for interviewing, which took place four months after the third and last gathering.

On the basis of the results of this research, it can be concluded that the DYL program had an effect on the four leaders that participated, with the immediate effect seeming to involve increased self-awareness. Furthermore, the participants seemed to adopt leadership skills they learned from the program to their day-to-day working life, based on their level of readiness and willingness to learn new skills. The combination of more self-awareness and level of readiness and willingness to learn new things seemed also to be related to the leader's Leadership Development Level.

## **Abstract in Norwegian**

Hensikten med dette studiet var å undersøke effekten lederprogrammet Develop Your Leadership - DYL – hadde på de fire lederne som deltok i programmet høsten 2015. Programmet besto av tre samlinger fordelt over en periode på tre måneder. Deltakerne i programmet var mellomledere i bedriften.

Populasjonen for studiet var deltakere på den andre samlingen av programmet. Tre ulike metoder ble brukt for å samle inn data i dette studiet; først en undersøkelse, siden observasjon, og til sist intervjuer. Fire deltakere meldte seg frivillig for å delta i intervjuene som fant sted fire måneder etter den tredje og den siste samlingen.

Resultatene fra studiet kan sies å gi grunnlag for den konklusjonen at DYL programmet hadde effekt på de fire lederne som deltok, først og fremst i form av økt selvbevissthet. Men i tillegg virket det som at deltakerne hadde lært seg leder-ferdigheter fra programmet som de innførte i sin arbeidshverdag. Hvor mye av de ferdigheter de lærte og brukte, så ut til å vært basert på hvor villige og åpne de var for å lære nye ting. Kombinasjonen av mer selvinnsikt og grad av vilje og åpenhet for å lære nye ting, så ut til å være relatert til lederens utviklingsnivå.

## Foreword

I guess my interest for leadership and leadership development was ignited when I became a leader myself, then I started to notice in detail how other leaders acted and dealt with things. At that time, it probably was about me looking for a role model. I got the opportunity to attend a leadership course for new leaders, I don't really remember what the course was about, but I still remember a conversation I had with a fellow new leader. He told me that what surprised him the most about his new position was the people, it was so much more about people, relations and communication that he had imagined. I had to agree, that part of being a leader was challenging and uncontrollable. It made me want to know more, to excel at being a leader, and this conversation was the start for my leadership journey.

I would like to dedicate this work to leaders engaged in their leadership journey, developing their abilities and striving to become a better version of themselves.

My deepest thanks goes to my supervisor Dr. Jonathan Reams, without him challenging me, sometimes to the edge of my abilities, this master thesis would look quite different. I am very thankful for your guidance, your good advises and support.

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I am thankful for having had the opportunity to do this research, and the Company and its leaders that participated and made this possible. This has been a journey of amazing and a precious experience, that has enriched my life and showed me that leadership is not just an ability, a role or a technique one can learn, it is whom you are and whom you want to be as a person.

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## **Abbreviations**

EQ – Emotional Intelligence

FRL – Full Range Leadership, leadership model consisting of transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership style

DYL – Develop Your Leadership, a leadership program

LDL – Leadership Developmental Level

LCP – The Leadership Circle Profile

ITC – Immunity To Change

NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data



# **1 Introduction**

It was a Wednesday morning, I had applied for a job few weeks earlier and later this morning I had an appointment with a HR-representative related to the job, or more precisely related to a personality assessment test I had taken. While I was waiting for my appointment, I read a book written by Daniel Goleman et al. (2013) where they were talking about the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and how it presents itself in different leadership styles, and my mind was busy reflecting on their theories as I went to my meeting with the HR lady. At the meeting she had a review of the test profile, and told me that the profile showed a person who was very open to other people, very creative in seeking solutions, and result oriented. Still influenced by Goleman et al.'s discussion on EQ in leadership, I was quite pleased with the results, but when I saw her face I realized this was not the profile they were looking for. So I asked what the problem was, and she told me that their working environment was highly regulated, there was no place for creativity, and innovative solutions. It was a leader position I had applied for, and she was looking for someone exercising authority; showing direction, protection and maintaining stability. These abilities was seen as opposites to creativity, which in reviews for this particular personality assessment test was perceived as possibly harmful to an individual's career due to, basically it seems, lack of controllability (Hogan, 2014). Their quest for an authority profile had strong similarities to what Heifetz et al. (2009) call the social contract, where the authority is given to a leader within certain scope, and it defines what the leader is expected to do and not to do.

## **1.1 The effective leader**

This experience made me think of an article I read some months earlier in a respectable Norwegian magazine specializing in leadership, called "Ledernytt." The article presented the leader as a person of authority: the leader is the one making the difference, he should make the perfect work environment, be the right leader for everyone and in every situation, be positive and create results. All this he did by himself – he was the hero. Seeing leaders as heroes is a very common view of leadership, and traditionally it has been related to autocratic (Gill, 2006) and authoritarian leaders (McCrimmon, 2010).

Contemporary leadership researchers indicates that heroic leadership is not compatible with effective leadership behavior (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Anderson & Adams, 2016), because heroic leadership behavior is more often related to having negative effect on the people they work with (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). McCrimmon

(2010) described the heroic leaders' behavior as the search for the goal, involving their people wasn't interesting, as he said (p. 1): "*heroic leaders ... get their kicks from doing what they regard as "real" work, which does not include engaging people*".

In 1978 James McGregor Burns presented his concept of the transformational leadership (Gill, 2006; Bass & Riggio, 2006) where he changed the focus of leadership studies from the acts and traits of a great leader, to the relationship between leaders and their followers and how they can make each other great. Later, Bass followed up Burn's work and presented his theory of Full Range Leadership (FRL) where transformational leadership was presented as the preferable leadership behavior style due to the positive effect it had on the environment, where the focus was on development, motivation and empowering (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Gill (2006) said: "*Managers may be good at managing and nominally regarded as leaders, but the most effective managers exercise effective leadership*" (p. 10), and Bass and Riggio (2006), stated that "*To be effective in today's world, leaders need to be more transformational*" (p. 114). Newer leadership theories also add to the discussion that learning to become an effective leader, however, is a process (Gill, 2006), and as such, difficult to teach as it depends on the leader's preferences and motivation to learn (Parks, 2005).

One of the leadership programs that aim at training leaders to become more effective is the Develop Your Leadership (DYL) program. The goal of this research is to learn about the learning effects for four participants in the program in the autumn 2015.

## **1.2 The research question is:**

***How did the DYL program help or not help the four participants to become more effective as a leader?***

In this context an effective leader is defined as a leader that is capable in handling adaptive challenges, that shows agile leadership behavior, and his or her leadership developmental level (LDL) includes awareness, among others, awareness for their inner and outer life, that they are confident in reflecting on and addressing difficult themes, that they are able to show trust and confidence in subordinates.

The DYL program is based on contemporary leadership research where the leadership principles of the transformational leadership theory were central. The program is strongly influenced by Ron Heifetz's theory of adaptive leadership and his contribution in making leadership teaching inspirational and influential. His theory can shortly be described with Parks (2005) words: "*Acts of adaptive leadership depend on a capacity for self-knowledge as*

*well as an understanding of the systems that need to be mobilized to address tough problems”* (p. 152). Other influential theories are Kegan’s theory of adult development, and how our mental developmental level in many ways directs our perception of our environment (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), and Joiner and Joseph’s theory of agile leadership that combines leadership theories with psychological theories of adult development (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Joiner and Josephs presented their concept of the heroic leader and what effect the heroic leadership behavior have in organizations, and what it would mean to develop leaders beyond the heroic stage. The agenda for the DYL program is shown in Appendix A.

### **1.3 Disposition**

In this thesis I will look into the effect the DYL program had on the participants, if it had effect, and try to understand why and how the program had or did not had effect. The theories that the program is based on will be presented and discussed. I will briefly present developmental models as they have significance for willingness and readiness for learning. The key theories have all in common that they highlight the importance of awareness and highlights the need for development of the mind, but have different approaches to how to achieve it, this will be discussed in chapter 2. In the DYL program different leadership training tools were used and the most important was about raising awareness, this will also be shortly discussed. I will present the research methods in chapter 3, with an explanation of why those methods were chosen. The ethical consideration of my study will also be discussed, and actions that were taken to ensure research quality. After presenting the theories and methods of the research, the focus will be turned over to the research itself, the analysis from the data gathering methods, findings and discussion. In the last chapter, the research question will be answered, its limitations discussed, and possible improvements will be debated. In the end of the chapter, I will reflect on the research implication, and recommendation for further research.

## 2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will discuss the evolvement of the transformational leadership theory, and why it matters for contemporary leadership literature, including the theories that will be the basis for this research. The DYL program will also be presented and the theories that it was based on. In the end of the chapter there will be a short summary of the main theories regarding development of leadership and leadership training.

### 2.1 Complexity in an organization's environment

It is “*My Way or the High Way*” – this is how Owen (2000, p. 107) describes the need for control that characterizes leaders in organizations today. According to him the organizations go through five transformative stages; from their humble startup, they grow - which demands structure, and then the structure takes over and with it the leaders need for control, the stage that characterize contemporary organizations, the later stages he says represents less or no need for control (Owen, 2000). The leader in this structured and controlling environment tends to be the heroic leader, often autocratic, characterized of being charismatic, the one issuing the orders and demanding loyalty as in obeying his demands (Gill, 2006).

According to Gill (2006), studies of the impact of leadership have been shown to be measurable both in the company results and in employee's satisfaction. He refers e.g. to Bennis' discussion from 1998, of the findings of the Accenture Institute of Strategic Change in the US survey, that showed that the stock price of companies that were viewed as *well led*, meaning that they were able to create cultures for adaptation, grew 900% over a 10-year period, compared to 74% for companies that were *not well led* in this respect (Gill, 2006). Those results were supported by Anderson and Adams research (2016) that went over a period of 20 years, and which has shown strong correlation between leadership effectiveness and business performance. Collins (2001) research showed that the most effective leaders, those who had successfully driven their business over longer period of time, did not show the heroic leadership behavior, their behavior was characterized by self-management, purposeful and unpretentious. Kelley (1992) turned the focus from the leader to the employee and said that the impact of the leader in making the organization succeed was 10 to 20%; it was the employees' effort that counts for the rest.

In spite of this, heroic leaders are still being studied and used as models for leadership, but in today's global VUCA business environment this model is somehow insufficient (Parks, 2005). The VUCA world is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (Ohanian, 2012), and

this new business environment came with the age of global interaction, free floating information, and new techniques that allow people to work together from the different corners of the world (Gill, 2006; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; Anderson & Adams, 2016). It is uncontrollable, unstructured, ever changing. Bennett and Lemoine (2014) told of leaders that simply gave up to try navigating in this world, because it's after all an uncontrollable VUCA world. Their suggestion to survive in this business environment was to become more agile as an organization and as a leader. Kegan and Lahey (2009) argued that this more complex world of business environment demanded a more complex mindset, both of the leader and of the subordinates. Leading alone in this world is not possible, and Bennis and Anderson (2007), went so far as saying "*The only person who practice leadership alone in a room is the psychotic*" (p. 3) when they criticized psychologists for still seeing leadership as an "*individual phenomenon*."

Multiple longitudinal studies have shown that the heroic leadership behavior has its limitations, and that organizations are in need for more effective leadership. The organizations business environment has also become more complex, demanding more of the leaders. This was the background for the Company's implementation of the DYL program for their middle management, as a leadership-training program.

## **2.2 The transformational theory**

Church and Waclawski's (1999) research on the impact of leadership style showed that managers scoring high on performing were more self-aware than managers that scored as average performers. The focus on leader's self-awareness, as well as the importance of empowering the subordinates, created the necessary climate for the new dimension in the leadership literature (Parks, 2005; Gill, 2006). In 1985, and revised version in 1990, and 1994 with Avolio, Bass introduced his *Full Range leadership model* (FRL) (Gill, 2006). This model was a result from Bass's extensive empirical research in the 80's and in this model he presented the transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership style and the relationship between them (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Sosik et al. (2002) argued that the FRL model was based on that all leaders show in some degree the behavior of the transformational, transactional and laissez fair style. They called it a degree of activity, where the transformational behavior was related to highest degree of activity. Their research showed that there was a high correlation between higher degree of active behavior (transformational behavior) and more effective leadership (Sosik, Potosky, & Jung, 2002).

Transformational leadership is defined as “*focus on developing and raising the awareness... about importance of satisfying higher order growth needs*” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 122). Leaders that show transformational leadership behavior are more attentive in the relationship with their subordinates, and the focus is on growth, development, and in responding to the subordinates needs (Bass & Riggio, 2006). They use coaching skills like active listening, asking open questions, giving feedback and critiques, challenging the status quo, and encouraging their followers or subordinates to do the same. By doing this they have big influence on their follower’s motivation and development, and achieve performance that is beyond expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Gill, 2006).

Effective leaders transform their subordinates – in the meaning in helping them to reach their ultimate abilities, and in doing so, they strengthen themselves, their environment and their organization. The ideas from the transformational leadership stand central in the design of the DYL program.

### **2.3 The Develop Your Leadership program (DYL) - theories**

The program of “Develop Your Leadership” (DYL) was designed to help the participants to achieve more awareness about their leadership behavior, and making them more adaptable in leadership situations (Reams & Hilmarsen, 2014). The program was based on the Company’s desire to develop an adaptive leadership culture, in order to enhance the organizations ability to evolve, and to be able to meet complex challenges in an ever changing business environment (Reams & Svantesvoll, 2011).

The program was built on leadership research from the last 30-years which shows that to become a more effective leader, one has to develop mental abilities such as self-awareness, self-motivation, self-reflection and self-leadership. Heifetz’s theory of adaptive leadership, Kegan and Lahey’s research on adult development, and Joiner and Josephs’ research on agile leadership were central. Two types of personal developmental techniques were used in the program: The Leadership Circle (LCP) based on Anderson and Adams’ (2016) work and Immunity To Change (ITC) based on Kegan and Lahey’s (2009) work, with the purpose of igniting the interest for one’s own leadership practice, and to reflect on it (Reams & Hilmarsen, 2014).

The theories of adaptive leadership, adult development and agile leadership will be presented, and used as grounding theories for the thesis. In addition, Heifetz’s approach to teaching leadership skills will be presented, and in chapter 3 the execution of the program will be presented.

## 2.4 The theory of adaptive leadership

In 1994, Ronald Heifetz introduced the theory of adaptive leadership, which was an effort to understand the relationship between leadership, organizations, problems that arise and adaptation to the need for change (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Heifetz and Linsky (2011), defined adaptive leadership as, “...*the activity of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive*” (p. 26), referring to the successful adaptation of the system to new environments, new needs and dreams, and to have the leadership with an ability to mobilize this need for adaptation (Heifetz R., 1994; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Heifetz’s theoretical framework for understanding and practicing leadership is based on four elements, the first being: Leadership as opposed to authority – in which effective leadership is about addressing problems that challenge people to go out of their comfort zone in order to find a new solution and in doing so, change and develop through the hard time of disequilibrium (Heifetz R. A., 1994; Parks, 2005). Another element is the definition of the problem the organization is facing; is it an adaptive challenge, as opposed to technical problems – in which technical problems were problems with a known solution, while adaptive challenge demands change, new learning and innovation (Heifetz R., 1994; Parks, 2005). The third element of Heifetz’s leadership theory is based on understanding leadership as an activity, as opposed to power; the activity of the leader to address an adaptive challenge and be the source of change (Heifetz R., 1994; Parks, 2005). The fourth element is the presence of a leader, as opposed to a leader’s personality, meaning that the focus is on the leadership in handling an adaptive challenge, rather than on the personality, where especially a leader’s charisma becomes less important (Heifetz R. A., 1994; Parks, 2005).

The importance of the adaptive leadership theory is the way an adaptive challenge is recognized, addressed and the process involving the stakeholders in finding the solution. According to the theory of adaptive leadership, the practice of leadership depends on three main processes; diagnosis – what is happening, interpretation – why is it happening, and intervention – what next (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Heifetz (1994) said: “*Leadership is both active and reflective*” (p. 252). The art of adaptive leadership is this practice of diagnosis-interpretation-intervention while in the situation and asking: “What is really going on here” and while being in in the middle of the action, go inward into one’s own mind and do the same thing; “What is really going on here” (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). This change of focus from the situation to the inner mind, is often referred to as moving from the dance floor where the action is, and, getting on the balcony;

i.e. take a distanced perspective of what is happening both in the situation and within oneself (Heifetz R., 1994; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). This leadership behavior is essential for a leader to get a better understanding of what is going on, and so being more capable of taking the right actions. The effect of an adaptive leadership makes its marks on the organization, it empowers its people so they go beyond their job description, it nurtures innovative thinking as it rewards smart risk taking, it makes the organization strong (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

It is in the presence of an adaptive challenge the heroic leader comes up short; the heroic leader is bound to deliver to his or her stakeholders what is expected – bring solutions, deal with problems and solve them with known repertoire of solutions, preserving the balance. Using the theory of adaptive leadership, the DYL leadership program moves the focus from the all-knowing heroic leader, towards a leader who has the courage to identify and address adaptive challenges. The goal is to teach the Company leaders the possibilities that a need for changes can imply, and to be familiar with the “productive zone of disequilibrium” – the place just outside the comfort zone that is just within the limits of tolerance, and thus gives the opportunity for learning (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

## **2.5 The theory of adult development**

Kegan presented his findings of the development of human mind after adolescence first in 1982 in his book *The Evolving Self* and a more evolved version in 1994 in his book *In over our heads*. He had found out that adults can, and some do, continue to develop their mental abilities, and in doing so, the developmental process follows always the same pattern where new mental abilities is based on the old grounding (Kegan, 1982; 1994). Further research in the field of adult development showed that not only did adults develop more complex mental abilities like awareness and openness to differences, it had an influence on their behavior as well, making them more effective in any given situation (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

### **2.5.1 The adult meaning systems**

This mental ability or mental complexity as Kegan and Lahey (2009) called it could be divided into three adult meaning systems; the socialized mind, the self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind. These adult meanings systems help people to make sense of the world and how to operate within it.

The Socialized mind is mostly busy with fitting into the group they want to be a part of, awareness of own needs and openness to differences is not very developed (Kegan & Lahey,



2009). People with this mindset are generally good subordinates, but are more of a “yes” people, and do usually not contribute with reflection or constructive feedback. People with this mindset are usually not fit to hold a leader position.

As the mental ability grows the person enters a more mature adult meaning system based on the self-authoring mind; the social system is still important but the person is able to step back and make judgment, evaluate and make their own choices (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). This is a common mindset for leaders to hold, and it makes them excellent supervisors and managers, but their awareness and openness are still somehow inadequate to deal with more complex challenges, like those adaptive challenges present.

The third and highest level of the adult meaning system is based on the self-transforming mind; social systems and one’s own agenda are still important but he or she is not driven by it, this person is able to step back and reflect on the limits of their own ideology, tolerates contradictions and opposites, can keep hold on multiple systems (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). A person with this mindset would be able to show highly effective leadership behavior.

Kegan and Lahey (2009) argued that in order to become an adaptive leader, people needed to understand their inner life, especially the elements that created their blind spots and thus became a hindrance for changes of behavior and development of mindset. They developed a process to help people to get insight into their inner life and awareness, and they called the process *the immunity to change* (Kegan & Lahey, 2009).

This process was used in the DYL program, referred to as the ITC mapping, where the point was to raise self-awareness, self-knowledge as in understanding one’s own behavior and responses and one’s own trigger points that release defensive and unproductive behavior. As well, self-regulation as in seeing the need for development, self-reflection as in reflection of own leadership behavior and an understanding of how one’s behavior affects others.

### **2.5.2 The Leader’s development level – LDL**

Eigel and Kuhnert (2005) built on Kegan’s work on adult development, and presented their research findings of the correlation between leadership developmental level and leadership effectiveness; when a leader’s leadership development level (LDL) increased, their leadership effectiveness increased. They defined LDL as: “*measurable capacity to understand ourselves, others and our situations*” (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005, p. 359).

They told of 5 LDL levels, and discussed that a leader probably was not able to show effective leadership behavior until they were on level 4 or higher. This conclusion was also supported by Lauren and Kuhnert’s (2008) study. Eigel and Kuhnert (2005) referred to Cook-

Greuter's (2005) work on ego development in explaining an adult's developmental level, and how it influenced on what a person is aware of and as follows; their perception, interaction, and their knowledge about their surroundings and how they make sense of their experience. The variations in the adult developmental level, they argued, explained why it was not enough to learn new skills or gain more experience to increase one's LDL (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Lauren & Kuhnert, 2008). They stated that the leader's LDL probably played an important role in the readiness and willingness to change and develop, and their conclusion was that leadership effectiveness was not developed by learning new skills on a same level, or increasing the capacity to "*recite company leadership competencies*" (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005, p. 383). On the contrary they said, leadership development demands a new way of challenge the leader's LDL – his or her understanding of oneself, of others and of one's situations, as they said: "*it is not just what you know, but where you know it from that matters*" (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005, p. 383).

This perception of leadership development was deeply embedded in the design of the DYL program, and the LDL might be an important indicator for understanding how the experience from the program might affect how the Company leaders demonstrated effective leadership behavior.

## 2.6 The theory of agile leadership

Joiner and Josephs' (2007) studies resulted in a model of leaders' mental development, and how it affected their leadership behavior. They divide this mental development into two main levels: Heroic and Post-Heroic, with three stages on each level. Each level and stage is characterized by a certain mindset, awareness and intents (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). These stages correlate with Kegan's description of adult development, but are more detailed, thus giving more descriptive picture of the mindset based on stage. These stages are also based on the concept, like other prominent theories of personal development, that a person develops his or her mindset in series of steps, each building on the previous one. Research have also shown that this happens independent of a person's personality, and the development sequence is universal (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

These Heroic and Post-heroic stages of personal development are shown to have an effect on the leadership agility, where agile leadership is defined as "*the ability to take wise and effective action amid complex, rapidly changing condition*" (Joiner & Josephs, 2007, p. 6).

### **2.6.1 *The Heroic mindset***

The heroic mindset or LDL, describes a leader whom alone takes full responsibility for their organization's objective settings, activities of their subordinates and overall performance of the organization or the unit they lead (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). The Heroic leader on the Pre-Expert stage has the mental development mindset of what Kegan and Lahey called the Socialized mind. The most usual stages for leaders to hold are the Expert stage and the Achiever stage.

The Heroic leader at the Expert stage (ca 45% of leaders) has the mental ability of the Kegan and Lahey's Socialized mind, but is developing into the direction of the Self-Authoring mind. Leaders on this stage have shown to be good at dealing with technical problems that have known solutions (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

The Heroic leader at the Achiever stage (ca 35% of leaders) has the mental ability of what Kegan and Lahey called the Self-Authoring mind. Leader on this stage is an excellent manager and gets results, since his or her mental ability to deal with others point of view that differs from their own has increased, there is some capability to deal with adaptive challenges (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

### **2.6.2 *The Post-heroic mindset***

The Post-Heroic mindset or LDL, is where the leadership become more prominent, as leading is no longer necessarily tied to any formal leadership role. Leaders with this mindset hold accountability and authority based on shared commitment and responsibility (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Leaders on this level have the mindset Kegan and Lahey called the Self-Transforming mind. They are capable of dealing with adaptive challenges, as their mindset is capable of dealing with disequilibrium and successfully adapt to changes (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

The DYL program uses the theory of the agile leader to help the participants to get insight into their own mindset, strengths and weaknesses, thus raising awareness and evoke their need and willingness to evolve as a leader. When they become more aware of their own inner state of mind and reactions, and are capable of using that knowledge to react to their environment in a more appropriate way, that would result in higher LDL and increased effective leadership (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Anderson & Adams, 2016).

## 2.7 Developing effective leadership

Heifetz et al. (2009) pointed out the importance of evolving one's awareness to be better able to deal with adaptive challenges, Goleman et al. (2013) take it further and said that self-awareness has been undervalued in business settings, which is unfortunate as it is the basis for understanding our own feelings. Not understanding our feelings, they continued, makes us bad in managing our feelings and incompetent in understanding them in others (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013).

Anderson and Adams (2016) developed a model, based on the most relevant theories and research from the field of leadership development, organizational development, psychology, and personal development. Afterwards and based on this model, they created a leadership assessment: *Leadership Circle Profile* (LCP), which is a 360-degree assessment test that measures behavior and underlying subconscious assumptions. Their test shows the current stage of behavior and how it affects their leadership effectiveness and points out what action can be taken to develop more effective leadership behavior (Anderson & Adams, 2016).

Leadership development has until now been focusing on leaders' competence as in expanding their skillset, giving them tools to deal with their environment, but the focus has been on strengthening the leader's technical skills to deal with problems (Parks, 2005; Anderson & Adams, 2016). Parks (2005) argues in her book *Leadership can be taught* that skills related to solving adaptive challenges are possible to learn. She refers to Schön (1987) who argued that people cannot simply be told what they need to know, they must learn to see for themselves, and she points to the importance of experience learning by doing, and to be helped by good coaching. Goleman et al. (2013) support this and said that technical skills are easy for us to learn, but skills related to feelings are harder to incorporate and need time, exercise and positive experience with the change. Lauren and Kuhnert (2008) claim that exercise is not enough, to develop one's mindset and consequently increase one's LDL, there has to be an intervention, something that assists the mental development. This could be a 360-degree leadership assessment, or type of new experience that contradicts earlier experience thus expanding one's view or way of thinking (Lauren & Kuhnert, 2008).

This is what characterized the DYL program; firstly, the participants' awareness of own behavior and underlying subconscious assumptions is evoked by using results from their LCP, then they are given the opportunity to explore this new awareness, to reflect on it and evolve their self-knowledge in the work with a coach and ITC mapping. The rest of the program is

used to learn various leadership skills, and training in using them, an approach to learning developed by R. Heifetz's "case-in-point".

Heifetz's approach builds on reflecting on actual cases (Parks, 2005). The students are encouraged to "*be on the dance floor*" and also to "*get on the balcony*" and they were being offered concepts, metaphors, and frameworks that assist them in interpreting and naming what they are learning to see and to do (Parks, 2005). The facilitation aims at meeting every student at his or her level of readiness, with issues that are relevant for them, use reflection in action to be able to do so, as well as offering the students a different arena of learning; discussing in plenum, dividing into smaller working groups, gathering again for reflection using silence as an important element of being present. This is learning the theory of adaptive leadership in practice (Parks, 2005).

The goal of the case-in-point method is to develop mental ability. It starts with enhanced mindfulness that is a part of the deep transformation of consciousness from an authority-bound mode of knowing, to a systemic critical awareness, thus gaining a more inner-driven mode which enlarges the capacity for developing quality of presence (Parks, 2005). The developmental shift that follows, enhances the capacity for critical thought which is important to be able to distinguish role from self, as well as the capacity to use oneself as a barometer of what is happening in the group – this capacity for presence cannot be taught by telling as in conventional teaching practice (Parks, 2005).

## 2.8 Summary

The DYL program's primary focus is on raising the leaders' awareness of their own leadership behavior. This focus on awareness can be explained with Anderson and Adams (2016), words: "*Leadership requires wisdom, self-knowledge, and character development at psychological and spiritual levels. Mastery of leadership requires that we work on these depths and develop mature, conscious awareness*" (p. 29). The goal of the program is to train the Company's leaders to show leadership in demanding and constantly changing business environment.

Multiple research from the last three decades have confirmed that effective leadership behavior could be learned. The mental ability of awareness, the very basis for effective leadership, can be evolved. With self-awareness and self-knowledge, the effective leader sees leadership development as a process of his or her ongoing *leadership journey*, where the goal is not to become a perfect person, but to become more capable, authentic and resilient as a person and a leader.

### 3 Methodology

In this chapter I will first present the practical aspect of the DYL program, and then explain the choice of methods used in the research. Philosophical grounding for the research will be discussed, procedures of document analysis, assurance of quality and in the end ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 The Develop your leadership program (DYL) - practice

The DYL program is divided into three modules; 1, 2 and 3. At the first gathering (module 1), the participants got their LCP profile and an opportunity to work on their ITC mapping; the purpose is to evoke awareness of their own behavior and how it affects others, uncover the participants' blind spot and the underlying assumptions that maintains the blind spot (Reams & Svantesvoll, 2011). The two following sessions (modules 2 and 3) build on this awareness, and consist of training leadership skills like setting expectations, leading teams, coaching techniques, and how to implement and communicate strategy (Reams & Svantesvoll, 2011).

The training sessions had some resemblance to Ron Heifetz's case in point method of learning; plenary sessions where new themes or leadership techniques are presented, training on this new theme or technique in smaller groups, then a time to reflect on the experience in a new plenary session (Parks, 2005). The participants were encouraged to use the Reflection Action method presented by Joiner and Josephs (2007), a method of personal development also presented by Anderson and Adams (2016) as a part of the LCP process.

#### 3.2 Research methods

In this study I used three different types of research methods: survey, observation and interview. One of the critiques for using only a quantitative method like a survey, is that it could be *"too restrictive and may not tell the story as it should be told"* (Iversen, 2004, p. 897). By using three different methods, both methods of quantitative and qualitative research, I hope to avoid the narrowness of using only one perspective, it is an effort of going deeper into the subject and to get more detailed understanding; starting with a survey, observing and then interviewing four participants from the program. By using three different methods, the results from each research method can possibly support the validity of the research.

##### 3.2.1 The Survey as a research method

A survey is an example of a quantitative research (Iversen, 2004), which is defined as *"research about curriculum that collects and analyzes information and data that are*

*represented by numbers*” (Haertel, 2010, p. 708). It’s characterized by using statistical methods to gather data and to analyze them, and usually is the purpose to be able to generalize from the data to the whole population (Iversen, 2004). The survey used in this research holds all the characteristics of quantitative research, but it’s weakness could be the small sample.

### *The survey design*

The preparations for the survey consisted of creating questions that cover and measure the theme the questions were meant to measure. The advantage of questionnaires and the reason for their wide use, is that each person answering the survey are asked in the same order and same way, making it simpler and more effective to gather and construct a structured data set (de Vaus, 2011). The main pitfalls in creating questions lies within the high face value; i.e. the questions “looks” valid but does not measure what they are meant to measure (Anastasi, 1990). There are some steps that need to be taken to ensure the validation of the questions; the most important according to Johannessen et al. (2011) is the awareness of, and to reflect on, how the questions are interpreted by the respondents and to make questions that ask about one item in one setting. Sometimes the questions are pre-tested by a selected sample to improve their reliability and validity (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016), but in this case that was not possible because I did not have access to a test group with same background as the participants (people that had participated only in module 1), but as recommended by Johannessen et al. (2016), I discussed the questionnaire form with my advisor.

The survey had five questions with a predefined choice of answer. A Likert scale, which is a widely used device for measuring people’s attitudes, beliefs, etc., (Spector, 2004), was used with 6 possible answers, from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”. The survey is shown in Appendix B.

I chose to use 6 response alternatives, because I did not want to give the respondent the choice of a middle response. They had to choose one side or the other to some degree; this was an experience they had had, and I wanted to see how the experience had affected the respondents. The survey was based on two themes, awareness and setting expectations. Setting expectations is an exercise of awareness, because a leader cannot talk about expectations without being aware of what he or she wants from their subordinates.

### *The sample*

The sample for the survey was all 23 registered participants to the DYL program at the time.

### *Collecting data with a survey*

Using questionnaire for data collection is a widely used method (de Vaus, 2011), and this method has its own logic (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). It is a standardized form of collecting data as it has fixed questions and predefined answers, the standardization creates possibilities for generalization from the sample to the population, it doesn't take long to collect the data, and using statistical analysis methods it is possible to look at relationships between phenomena (de Vaus, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). This method of collecting data was chosen because of its logic, and its possibilities to achieve understanding about the group participating in the DYL program. The challenge was to create questions that captured the spirit of the first module of the program, and structure them in such a way that they could provide answers. The survey was presented at the module 2 startup; the purpose was to get the participants' experience before it became influenced by new experience. I presented my research to the participants, explained the purpose of the survey, and asked for their participations in the survey. All the participants present answered the survey, and gave the questionnaire form back to me. The survey was simple, with only 5 questions and a possibility to elaborate on the last question, the whole session took about 10 – 15 minutes.

### **3.2.2 Observation as a research method**

What characterizes qualitative methods like observation is that they are less structured than the quantitative methods; they are more flexible, open and it is possible to adjust the research practice to the situation (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). Observation as a method can be used when other methods do not give answers that are needed to gain new knowledge of the phenomenon studied (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). I used the method of observation to get a deeper understanding of the learning environment, and how it affected the participants. It also gave me an opportunity to observe their training, and to witness events or episodes that I could refer to, and ask about in depth later in the interviews.

### *The sample*

The sample for the observation was the participants at the second session of the DYL program, also referred to as module 2.



### *Collecting data as an observer*

When working as an observer the technique used for data collection can vary from writing observations on a notepad to audio or video recording (Angrosino, 2004; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). The field, the setting and analysis units for the observation can also vary widely depending on if the observer is participating in the field studied, is placed there but not participating, or not visible (Angrosino, 2004; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). In this research observation situation, I was sitting in the room with the participants – although a bit on the periphery, visible but not participating. After getting the questionnaires in return, I took my role as an observer and my data collection was based on writing in a notepad, both during the session and afterwards.

### **3.2.3 *The Interview as a research method***

In the third part of the research the qualitative method of structured interviews was used. A qualitative method is mostly about studying phenomena from the perspective of an insider (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011). An interview as a method is most relevant when the researcher wants more in depth information than is available by using other methods, like in situations where the researcher wants to attain the complex and nuanced version of peoples' experiences and perceptions, or their reflections on things that have happened (Schensul, 2011; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). I chose this method for those reasons, because I wanted to know what the participants learned, what inspired them and how they experienced the program.

#### *The Interview design*

The characteristics for qualitative research are that the data acquired is colored by the theories used to interpret the data (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). In other words, the interviewer is working with certain theories in mind and this affects what he or she notices and collects as data. In this research, I wanted to know how people experienced the DYL program. The program is based on a theoretical foundation, and although I tried to keep an open mind and not let that affect the conversation during the interviews, the interview guide was inevitably based on those theories as well.

When using interviews as a research method, there will always be this problem of how to gain comparable data from different interviewees. This problem can be modified by the structure of the interview; from unstructured interviews with open questions to structured

interviews with both questions and answers pre-defined (Schensul, 2011; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). I have used a semi-structured interview and an interview guide as an aid and guideline for themes and questions, the interview guide will be presented later. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and form the basis of the research data.

### *The sample*

From the sample of twenty-three participants at the DYL program, four participants volunteered to be interviewed, and they were contacted four months after the program ended. The four participants were Anne, Fred, Frank and Phillip. They were all contacted in February along with a simple presentation of the research and “a consent to participate” form that they signed and delivered before the interviews started. The letter and the consent form are presented in Appendix C.

The names of the participants have been changed, and the position they hold has been slightly changed to avoid recognition:

Anne is an Engineer, and has led several projects within her area of expertise. Every time she is assigned to a new project, she works on a different site and with a different crew.

Fred is an Engineer, he has had several leader positions within the Company, and is now in a leading senior position at the Company’s overseas offices.

Frank is an economist and holds a position as a senior leader for several of the Company’s projects, and is a supervisor for the managers and leads on these projects.

Philip is an economist and holds a senior leader position in finance, and works at the headquarters with his group of finance analysts.

The plan was to interview the participants over Skype, but due to technical problems, only one of the interviews were completed using Skype, the other three were over the telephone.

### *Interview guide*

An interview guide is a tool used to structure the conversation on a specific topic, it is not a survey but a list of themes and questions related to the problem the researcher wants to know more about and is used to ask questions that encourage the person being interviewed to tell more or bring a story to the conversation (Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). The interview guide used was semi-structured and based on questions; this means that the structure made the frame for the conversation, but the questions gave a lead for the topic to discuss, yet keeping the freedom to follow-up interesting leads that

appeared in the interview (Morgan & Guevara, 2008; Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011).

The interview guide I used was based on the research question and elements that might have had an influence on the learning. Eigel and Kuhnert (2005), Heifetz et al. (2009), and Goleman et al. (2013) are among several leading leadership theoreticians that have discussed how people learn new leadership skills, and that discussion was the background for my process when making the interview guide. I started on writing a list of many questions related to the research question, got feedback from my advisor regarding the relevance and the structure of the questions to avoid leading or unclear questions. Then I shortened the list and categorized it and had new rounds with feedback from my advisor and sessions where we discussed the interview guide. When making the interview guide, I focused on elements that could have had effect on the learning process like expectations, motivation, inspiration, support from their private or their professional environment, themes from the DYL program, their own view of what an effective leader looked like, and in the end a brief evaluation of the program. As a result of this process, four themes for the interview guide appeared: organizational background, expectations & motivation, new knowledge, and an evaluation of the program. The interview guide is presented in Appendix D.

All of the questions had a follow-up questions or comments like why/why not/please provide details.

#### *Collecting data with an interview*

A good research interview has a certain structure: Introduction, “breaking the ice” type of questions before going to a general reflection around the theme to personal experience or perception, and then to the key questions and in the end a predictable and comfortable ending (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). It is recommended to perform a test interview before entering the interview situation (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). I chose not to perform a test interview because I have conducted many hiring interviews that share a similar structure, and felt prepared.

### **3.3 Methods used for data analysis**

The purpose of the DYL program was to help leaders to evolve their leadership skills, to show more effective leadership behavior at the end of the program, and that the behavior change would persist over time. Since there were three different research methods used to gather data, I also used different analysis methods for each data gathering method.

### 3.3.1 *Document analysis methodology*

In using quantitative research method, like a survey, the analyzing method is of statistical characteristics (Iversen, 2004). The analytical method used for the survey was the Univariate Analysis, using a frequency tables for presenting the findings. This is a simple form of statistical representation of the findings with a frequency distribution, which shows how the participants agree/disagree on each question (Kimball & Weisberg, 2004; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016). The survey's last question was open for free writing, this text was then coded and categorized.

In using a qualitative research method, like observation and interviews, the analyzing method must take into account that the data consist of text. In interpreting the data, a qualitative analyses process often referred to as the "*hermeneutical circle*" was used (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011, p. 418). The hermeneutical circle refers to the process of moving between the part of the text that is to be interpreted, and the context it should be interpreted in. Each interpretation needs to be justified either from the details in the research or from the context, interpretation is justified with other interpretations (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). This is to say that the text is coded, categorized and then interpreted in context of the themes and theories used. This is the process of coding and categorization. The hermeneutical circle is used to uncover a meaning or intentions that lies between the words or behavior, interpret and to gain understanding (Blaikie, 2004).

As mention earlier, the hermeneutic circle was used in the analyzing process of the text, in addition a discourse analysis method was used as well. Discourse analysis is an analyzing method that stresses the role of language in constructing a person experience, and its goal is to examine how this experience produces knowledge and meaning in a certain context (Talja, 1999; Edwards, 2004; Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005). In other words, I used the hermeneutical circle to analyze the text, which is an interpretation within the context of theories used and the context of the program, but to get a deeper understanding I used the discourse analysis to understand what the participants experienced by focusing on how they used the language to describe their experience.

### 3.3.2 *Coding and categorization*

Coding is an analysis process based on looking for patterns in the text, categorizing the main elements of the pattern, interpreting the findings based on the context and then drawing a conclusion based on those interpretations and arguing for the findings by referring to the text and the context (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). The goal for using the coding

process is to find repetitive patterns and consistencies in the text, when grouped together these patterns form categories and from there, the results can contribute to a new understanding (Saldana, 2008). This method gives information about the rational motives that make people do what they do, but it does not necessarily give any causal explanation (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). In this study the theme is tightly tied to the result; the DYL program is designed to have influence on the leaders in such a way that they see and experience the need to change their own behavior in order to become a more effective leader. Therefore I assume that there is a strong causal explanation possible in this research.

The process of coding starts with noticing concepts, collecting examples of those concepts, and analyzing them in order to find a pattern (Saldana, 2008; Talja, 1999). There are many ways to structure the coding process; I have used Schultz's (2012) "Deductive Research Approach" for structuring my work, but Saldana's (2008) Talja's (1999) and Burnard's (1991) for theoretical background for the coding process.

Schultz's (2012) approach is a six step process starting with creating a set of themes or categories from the literature based on a theoretical concept, this is the same process as Burnard (1991) presents, but Burnard breaks this process down in more details and uses 14 steps. Then, the text is coded, after that the codes are analyzed into main codes and in step 4 the codes are analyzed and categorized. In step 5 the process is reviewed and quality assured. The final step is to write a narrative from the themes and the codes to support the research question, and a basis for discussion (Schulz, 2012). Saldana (2008) presents this process as the first cycle and the second cycle of coding. The first cycle of coding is the process of coding from single words, sentences or a full page, while second cycle of coding can span the same units but are more reflective, developed versions, even a reconfiguration of the coding from the first cycle. When the codes are grouped together, compared and united, categories emerge, and as Saldana (2008) said; *"you begin to transcend the reality of your data and progress to the thematic, conceptual and theoretical"* (p. 11). He called coding an act of interpretation, not an exact science, due to the fact that the coding is based on how the person doing the coding perceives and interprets the text (Saldana, 2008). This supported by Talja (1999) and Burnard (1991), emphasizing the need for quality routines for the coding performed.

I started with reading the interviews, reading them again and marking the words, expressions and themes presented in the text I thought were important, and then once again and this time add a word that I thought was a good description for the text. Then I looked for the descriptive words in the leadership theory literature and the purpose of the DYL program, and could then identify three main themes within the literature; use of techniques learned in

the DYL program, behavior referring to action and mindset of an effective leader as defined by the presentation of the agile leadership (Joiner & Josephs, 2007), adaptive leadership (Parks, 2005; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), and behavior referring to action and mindset of an post-heroic leader as presented by developmental psychology (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). I used these pre-findings to help me to find words describing the same thing in the literature text, and based on this I made a coding list with 25 coding words distributed on four categories; the three themes that appeared and listed earlier and a fourth category that was about the context of the program. Then I used this coding list to code all four interviews, after that I gathered all quotes from each interview sorted after the coding words and categories. I then went back to the original text in order to assure the quality of the coding, and compared the quotes with the original text. After that I constructed the findings from the interviews with quotes from the interviews.

### **3.4 Ensuring Quality**

#### **3.4.1 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the accuracy of the data collection, (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011), the quality of the consistency of the result when the process is repeated (Anastasi, 1990; Dick, 2014). Since there was not a pre-testing of the survey, its reliability has not been confirmed. As goes for the observation and the interviews, the reliability for quantitative research has been an object for discussion for a long time; some researchers suggest that using terms as dependability and consistency are more accurate. In this research I use the concept of reliability, because the effect of the DYL program has been a subject of studies before, similar results from those studies can give this research an inter-reliability.

#### **3.4.2 Validity**

Validity refers to the relation between the data research and the phenomenon or situation researched; are the findings representative and can they be generalized (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Dick, 2014), this can be simplified to “*what*” does the survey or the interview measure and “*how well*” does it do so (Anastasi, 1990). For the observation and the interviews, the concept of validity is up to discussion within the field of researching, because of the nature of the quantitative research; it is about people and therefore is a subject for more uncertainty and unpredictability (Dick, 2014). The survey has not been through a pre-testing, therefore has the validity of the survey not been confirmed, but as Johannessen et

al. (2011) said, the most important effort when making survey questions is the reflection of what is the phenomenon studied, and how can that phenomenon been made tangible and measurable. The validity in a qualitative research can also be enhanced by the care and mindfulness a researcher puts into his or her works; the communication between researcher and participants; and when it “*yields favorable outcomes for the research participants*” (Dick, 2014, p. 805). In working on this research I have had those guidelines in mind.

### 3.4.3 Generalizability

A research study is usually evaluated by its generalizability, where generalizability is a synonym for external validity (Donmoyer, 2008), defined as “*the application of finding from one study or in one situation to other studies and situations*” (Dick, 2014, p. 378). The generalizability is important because it is through generalizability, a research can claim to contribute to a theory or contribute with knowledge in the professional field (Dick, 2014).

The survey had very small sampling for a quantitative research; therefor it faces the same limitations as normally attributed to qualitative research. Qualitative research has in general fewer samples than quantitative researches, and has been heavily criticized for the lack of generalizability (Donmoyer, 2008; Dick, 2014). The solution to the problem of generalizability of qualitative researches has been of various sorts; the most known approach is the *Analytic generalization* where the findings from one study used to refine existing theory, which in their refined form can be used in other situations (Dick, 2014; Moriceau, 2016); and the *Naturalistic generalization* where the responsibility for generalizability is put on the user, suggesting that if someone can make use of earlier findings, the generalization comes naturally (Donmoyer, 2008; Dick, 2014; Moriceau, 2016).

An alternative solution to the problem of generalizability has been to use the term *transferability* with generalizability, or replace it (Dick, 2014; Moriceau, 2016). Transferability “*implies that the results of the research can be transferred to other contexts and situations beyond the scope of the study context*” (Jensen, 2008, p. 886). To increase the transferability, the researcher can provide *thick description* (Jensen, 2008, p. 887) i.e. a descriptive spec of the research design, the participants and the context in order for the reader to determine the transferability, or through *purposeful sampling* (Jensen, 2008, p. 887) i.e. how well the participants fit into the context and thus giving the reader the possibility to transfer the results to similar context. In chapter 5 the generalizability and/or transferability for this research will be discussed.

#### **3.4.4 Triangulation effect**

Creswell (2008), defined mixed methods as a “*research in which the inquirer or investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of study*” (p. 527). By using mixed methods as a research method, it is possible to gain more complete understanding of the research problem than is possible with using only one of the research approaches (Creswell, 2008). One of the mixed methods designs is called the triangulation method and is based on using both the quantitative data of frequency and the qualitative data of the individual perspective, in order to check the results gained from the same subjects with a different methods (Creswell, 2008). This can be used to promote the generalizability and transferability of the research (Dick, 2014; Burnard, 1991). In this research the triangulation method has been used and in chapter 5 the effect will be discussed.

#### **3.4.5 Interviewer effects**

The interview bias is when the presence of the observers can have influence on the participants (Angrosino, 2004). Research has shown that interviewer effects or interview bias are particularly strong when the interview is a face-to-face type, but do not influence the respondents in the same way when visual contact is not existing (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). One of the challenges in making and performing a survey or an interview is how the respondent react to the questions, how he or she interpret the questions, the mental work of finding the answer, customizing the answer to the question and then editing the answer in a socially desirable direction, meaning the respondent wants to give a positive socially acceptable picture of him- or herself (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011; Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2016).

Interview bias was an element I was observant of during the hand out of the survey, and during the period of observation, trying to reduce my presence and thus the effect of me being there to the minimum. Since the interviews were performed over telephone, the interview bias was possible reduced as opposed to the effect of face-to-face interview would have.

#### **3.4.6 Literature**

The literature used was based on recommended reading from my supervisor on theories that the leadership development program is based on; adaptive theories of effective leadership, developmental theories that affect the leader’s possibility to act as an effective leader, and the instruments used in the program; LCP and ITC. These theories and instruments became a



guideline when seeking additional literature, and literature of critique from sources such as [oria.no](#) and [scholar.google.no](#).

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

The Ethical considerations are about the relationship between people, what we can do or not do that can affect others in a negative way (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). This is especially important in social science because it directly influences people and society. The guidelines for research ethics are designed to include the participants' rights for autonomy and privacy, and the researcher's duty to avoid strain (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2011). In this research the ethical consideration was mainly about protecting the people that participated, shared their experience, and made this research possible. In order to protect their identity, I have changed the participants' names, and kept out of the text any form of personal identifying elements like name, age or other personal information. I do not use any references to the company they work for, and the description of the company is on a general basis. The research has been approved by NSD, as shown in Appendix E.

## 4 Findings

The DYL – Develop Your Leadership – program was designed to raise self-awareness, self-reflection and self-knowledge. In order to do so, the program offered tools capable of raising awareness as in presenting the LCP profile, and the opportunity to work on the results from the profile in form of the ITC mapping and working with a coach. All four participants from the interview told of how difficult this process was, how hard it was to work on this, and how important the coaching sessions were. In addition, they learned different leadership skills and trained on them, all this helping them to make them more effective as a leader. In this chapter, I will go through the findings from the survey, the observation and the interviews, to see if the goal of the program did manifest in more leadership effectiveness.

### 4.1 Findings from the Survey

The survey had 5 questions with a fixed choice of answers; from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results are as shown in table 1 (score 6 = strongly agree, score 1 = strongly disagree):

**Table 1 Survey results**

	Q1: I am more aware of my behavior and how it effects others after module 1	Q2: My new awareness has helped me to see what I can improve in my relationship with other	Q3: I have recently talked to my team about the team goals and directions	Q4: My new awareness has helped me in communicating to my team members what I expect of them	Q5: I have learned something helpful from going through the process of reflecting on and working to clarify expectations
Strongly agree	2	3	2	1	4
agree	8	9	3	7	11
rather agree	8	6	2	6	2
rather disagree	0	0	6	3	1
disagree	0	0	2	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	2	0	0
SUM	18	18	17*	17*	18
Average score	4,7	4,8	3,5	4,4	5,0

\* One respondent did not answer q.3 & 4

The purpose of the first question is to see if people experience more awareness of their own behavior and how it affected other people after receiving their LCP. Everyone agreed, from rather agree to strongly agree, on the question, with the average score of 4,7. The awareness seems to have effect in helping people to improve their relationship as the results from the second question are on the average score of 4.8, where everybody agreed, in some degree, on

the question. Using this awareness and improvements in relationship with their subordinates did not seem to have as much effect on the leaders' ability or willingness to practice the leadership skill of leading a team, as the result from question three had a score of 3,5 in average and only 7 out of 17 agreed on some level. But communications on an individual basis seem to have grown stronger as the results from the fourth question show average score of 4,4 and 14 out of 17 reports of being helped by their new awareness to talk about expectations. The purpose of the fifth question was to gain some understanding of how the participants had taken in and obtained the process so far in their journey toward more effective leadership where awareness, reflection, communication, stand central. It seems like the participants have reacted positively to this experience as the majority of the group agreed in some degree on this question, with an average score of 5,0.

#### *Results of elaboration on question 5*

In order to get a little deeper insight into what the participants had learned from module 1, they were asked to elaborate on the question. The main results were that their awareness had enhanced, this explained by two of the participants:

*“I learned a lot about myself and how I am perceived by others”*

*“Being aware of the transformative nature of developing creative traits vs. reactive traits was humbling and allowed me to take time to listen to my team and others rather than thinking that I know best automatically”*

#### **4.1.1 Summary of the Survey**

The survey showed somewhat paradoxical outcome; questions 1 and 2 indicated that the leaders gained enhanced levels of awareness which they found helpful in relation with others, but putting that awareness into action like having a conversation with their subordinates about goal and direction did not come as relevant, yet with follow up questions about expectations, they claimed to set expectations. When describing their experience with their own words, it illustrates a picture of change; everyone had learned something, some on deeper level than others, and they were capable of using that new gained knowledge in their leadership role.

#### **4.2 Findings from the observation**

After the survey, I spent two days observing the participants during the gathering for module 2. When I joined the setting, I got the feeling that the group seemed not very close; the participants appeared to me as insecure and cautious at first, like in avoiding eye contact, small talk was absent, it was a quiet group. But when the session started, and the participants

shared their status in plenum, it seemed to loosen up. The first status report told of more awareness, more reflection and many told that they had shared their profile with colleagues and/or leader. People seemed active both in plenum when learning of new concepts and skills, and later in their peer groups practicing what they had learned. After each session there was a time for reflection and sharing, and most of the participants seemed open and willing to share. The setting had strong similarity to the adaptive leadership; the facilitators functioned in a way as a role model for adaptive leadership, providing authority by setting the goal and the directions, creating environment for development and learning. They turned on the heat to push the participants out of their comfort zone as in using the circle, the silence, the small training sessions, and then reduced the heat as in giving the participants a moments of rest while going through a new theme and reflecting on the experience. In the last status report of the session there was an indication for increased self-reflection within the group, as the theme the participants brought up was related to their capability to handle difficult and/or uncomfortable situations.

#### ***4.2.1 Summary of the observation***

My impression observing the process, was that the instructors were not busy trying to tell people how to think and how to act, the element of control was absent, instead there was this element of trust; we are giving you tools to find out how you think, how you want to be as a person, how you want to react in a given situation, and a technique to change the things you want to change in order to become a more effective leader.

### **4.3 Findings from the interviews**

The third and the last module was held about four weeks after module 2, and four months later I contacted four of the participants for an interview. They shared their experiences of the program with me, and the findings will be presented as follows. The findings will be divided into five parts: the context for the interviews, the three themes that emerged from the coding: Development of Leadership Skills, Development of Effective Leadership Behavior, Post-Heroic leadership behavior, and the last will be summary of the findings.

#### ***4.3.1 The context***

The organization was described as very hierarchical, and its processes for decision-making were long and bureaucratic. This characterized all divisions within the Company with an exception of the project division; where the decision processes were shorter and more

dynamic. The organization had undergone extensive changes during the period of the DYL program; three of the participants described a process of downsizing and organizational changes that aimed at making the Company leaner and more flexible.

The participants were nominated by their leader to participate in the DYL program. This is usually a part of leadership training for middle management, but this program is also required to advance in a leader carrier within the Company. Some of the participants were motivated to join the leadership program, others went because it was required of them.

#### ***4.3.2 Development of Leadership Skills***

Development of leadership skills was one of three themes that emerged from the coding process, and is strongly related to what people expect to achieve from participating in a leadership programs. Like in Philip's case, when he talked about his expectations for the program he expected to gain some leadership tools, and that after the program he would go home with a *leadership toolbox* that contained a "*great leader*". His expectations weren't directly met, however, the DYL program provided training on some important leadership skills, and I will briefly present each of the leadership skillset the participants talked about.

##### *Setting expectations*

The leadership skill of setting expectations is vital, and a basis for the employees to know what is expected of them. For Philip, setting expectations was not something he usually did much of, and it became a theme he often discussed with his coach. For him, this was the act of taking the time to listening to what other people had to say, and then to communicate his opinion and expectations: "*...use some time to give feedback to the people I work with, and tell them what I expect, what I see as a correct decission in the situation, so we work towards the same goal.*"

##### *Active listening*

The coaching techniques were referred to as a useful skills by all of the participants, especially the technique of active listening, and that knowledge made a difference for some of them. As Fred said: "*I never listened before. I certainly listen (now) what they are saying and do find myself actually saying that in the head and listen to what they are saying, you know, as opposed to "here is my answer"... sit back listen to what they are saying, think about it and respond.*"

*Give feedback and constructive critiques*

The participants told that they tried to use the coaching techniques they learned in the program, where the use of active listening was central. This resulted in better quality in communicating with others, especially in a situation where they gave feedback and constructive critiques. Philip told of his experience: *"I try to communicate what is unclear in their proposal, I (have) tried to be a more open and more clear in my feedback on initiatives and stuff."*

*Setting direction*

This is an important skill in leading a team, and includes the communication of holding a vision and setting goals. For Anne, setting direction was not an important theme to communicate in her current team, but for the others this was an important skill they tried to get better at. Like Frank whom usually did most of the job himself; during the program he realized that his behavior was neither an effective use of his time or use of the talented people working for him. With help from his coach, he worked on the leadership ability in leading a team, and by doing so he realized that it gave him more time to practice leadership, as he said: *"... I have probably more effective utilization of my deputies when they do things that they can do, instead of me, so I can concentrate on the right things; like the organizational plan and to look ahead, both in terms of commercial and organizational things."*

*Framing conversations*

Leaders will at some point, need to frame and perform demanding and often difficult conversations. An important part of framing a conversation is to ask questions like Fred did when he had the role of a discussion partner. His friend was going through a leadership development process, and that night they were talking about strengths and weaknesses. Fred told: *"I was asking him about humility, he is a very strong character, this guy, and... "do you ever use humility?" and, you know, he thought about it a bit and said "yeah, yeah I do"... and then... the kind of conversation that went a little bit flat ... and I said, what was wrong? and he said "you pissed me off"... I said "why say this?"... and he said "because you are questioning whether or not I have humility" and I said "I am not questioning that, I am asking if you use it?" I do not work with you, I am asking you something I clearly cannot know the answer to, and he said "right, I don't use it" (laughter). So, that was actually quite remarkable for me, I certainly was not trying to make him feel bad or upsetting him, or anything, I was just being very open with him, saying to him "how do you operate". Later on as the conversation*

*progressed, he said "I am really starting to appreciate you, bringing that up, because than I have something to think about there".*"

### **4.3.3 Development of Effective Leadership behavior**

The theme of development of effective leadership behavior emerged from the interviews as an important part of the DYL program. First and foremost it seemed to be about enhanced awareness on multiple levels: their own behavior and how it affects others, their own strengths and weaknesses, in situations and in relationship with others. This gave them self-awareness and had an impact on some of the leaders' level of confidence, as well as in trusting others, and in all cases resulted in behavioral changes.

#### *Awareness of own behavior*

All of the participants told of heightened awareness of their own behavior and how that understanding made them to want to do something about it. Two of them made an effort to change their behavior, like Anne whom had to face a tough feedback, as she told: *"I felt terrible... deep down inside I knew it, but on the other hand it was actually a bit shocking to see, it affected everything after that."* This experience led her to work on improving her communication skill and to let go of her need for control, not only at work but also at home.

#### *Confidence*

Two of the participants had gotten feedback from the LCP profile that gave them insight into how their behavior affected people around them positively, and how it was appreciated. The LCP profile showed Frank his strengths in relating with others, and that helped him to deal with demanding organizational change process, as he said: *"Finding the strengths you have in your LCP. To use them in situations like we've had right now, mass layoffs, a lot of organizational changes, etc. A great deal uncertainty."*

#### *Awareness of strengths and weaknesses*

The LCP profile helped all of the participants to gain more knowledge of their strong and weaker sides. Frank realized that although he has strong relationship abilities, he had the urge to be *"hands on"* and he had the drive to get things done. But this affected his people in a negative way because of his tendency to take over the job. His challenge was to give the job back to the job owner, and rather take the role of a guide and an advisor. Knowing this, he was able to reflect on it, and then find a way to do things in a better way, as he explains: *"Not just work on details and so on, without maybe raise my eyes a bit more... I have to work a bit on with this being a bit more present, I may seem a little absent sometimes."*

### *Self-knowledge and self-reflection*

Knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses gives self-awareness, this leading to self-reflection and self-knowledge. This was described by Frank: *"It is like to be conscious of what really... what kind of person you are."* Philip's reaction to the program was to realize that he needed to have a more productive relationship with the people he worked with if he wanted to become a good leader. Knowing this, he got an understanding of how his behavior could effect on achieving his own goals, as he said: *"thinking over and (to see) why your action (does) not (lead to) achieving those goals, by looking inwards at yourself."*

### *Trust*

Both Frank and Phillip had to work on their tendencies to take over the job and do it themselves, they had to recognize that they had some trust issues and that they had to become more conscious of giving the job back to the owner. As Frank told: *"...you simply must trust that people do what they are supposed to do, and then you need to manage them towards the overall goal."*

### *Situational awareness and how it affects behavior*

Fred was the only participant whom told of situations where he experienced being aware in a situation. When asked if he had gained a new knowledge by participating in the DYL program, he said: *"I think I learned new ways of thinking about things...."* This insight made him listen more actively to what people was saying, trying to understand what lay behind their expression. This awareness also gave him more understanding of his own role in the situation he entered: *"Also I think...understanding how influential I can be... I have to be very careful how I tell people what I tell them. I clearly have a lot more influence than I thought I had."*

### *Behavior change - Transformation*

The LCP profile gave the four participants insight into how their behavior affected others, what abilities other people experienced as their strong sides and their weak sides. This knowledge helped Anne to realize that yelling when frustrated, did not have a good effect on her team, thus helping her to adapt to a new and better way of dealing with her frustration and to communicate her expectations with her team. It also helped her see that she needed to let go of her control, to trust others to do the job, and to see that her behavior was hurting what was important to her, i.e. her relationships with others. This was a challenge for the others as well; Frank's willingness to take over the job because it saved him some time, and Phillip, whom preferred his own ideas and was struggling in his relationship with peers and subordinates. Fred used the knowledge from the DYL program to stop and listen, and became more aware



of his own tendencies to take the command and just do things, as he described: *“...like ten words into the discussion and I know what we are going with this, and here is what we should do. That is not a good way to deal with that; sit back listen and to what they are saying, think about it and respond.”*

#### **4.3.4 Post-Heroic leadership behavior**

Some of the four participants showed leadership behavior that not only is related to effective leadership, but also to Post-Heroic leadership. This is an evolved leadership behavior and consists of leadership behavior as relating to others, adjusting one's own behavior, showing strategic ability, being able to seek feedback and openness to options and views that differ from one's own. Leaders with those abilities have the capacity of empowering others.

##### *Relating to others*

The participants told about how their heightened awareness affected and in all cases, improved their relationship with others. Three of the participants told how their ability to relate to others was based on improving their own listening skills; listening to others point of view, adding that to their own opinion and then reacting on it. Philip described himself as being negative to others suggestions before, simply because he liked his own suggestions best, and how his heightened awareness helped him to open up to others suggestions, evaluate them and give feedback and clear up things he felt were unclear. Frank felt that learning about LCP and how people reacted in the different categories, helped him to relate to people he otherwise had felt difficult to relate to, or to understand. As he explained: *“I have become more aware of the different types of people, how they react and what is important and what drives them.”*

##### *Adjust own behavior*

Awareness and the ability to relate to others is the foundation for being able to adjust one's own behavior. Two of the four participants told of how they learned to adjust their behavior in a situation in order to create a more profitable outcome. Fred realized that his impatience made him too often jump to a conclusion. In the DYL program he learned of Chris Argyris' tool; the Ladder of Inference, and as he said: *“...so now ... any time I feel am about to get frustrated, I actually imagine a ladder in my head, and this is just on the border right now.”* Being aware of his own mindset in a middle of a situation helped him to adjust his behavior, and instead of rushing in and make a decision for what to do, he now stops and says: *“Look guys, let's establish the facts before we do anything. And that is just very effective and people like that approach.”*

### *Strategist*

One of the participants told of the strategic process he went through when he made his plans in order to get certain results, how to present that to others, and at the same time be aware of the resistance he might get, and how to deal with that. Fred attempted to challenge people, to find the best solution, to really understand, and do the things that served the Company the best. He described it: *“...lets really understand what we are doing, why we are doing, and how we should, and do the right thing for the business. Not the right thing for a certain individuals, or a certain function, lets do the right thing for the business.”*

### *Seek feedback and openness for different views*

To seek feedback and be open to different views is an ability that demands certain level of awareness and self-knowledge to effectively take others opinions into account. Like in Phillip's case, he began to listen more to what other people had to say, and to communicate his own opinion sooner and better than he had done before. Fred acknowledged that there were two sides to each story, but as he said: *“...there are two sides to every story... to look at it pragmatically, I should always know every side of every story, I think we all do, it is just easy to ignore that.”*

### *Empowering others*

Two of the participants described their interest in working on making others better at what they do. Frank told of giving the job back to the owners instead of doing everything himself, and the responses he got. He took the role of a mentor and an advisor for his people, he challenged them to find a solution to a problem instead of giving them the solution. He helped them to analyze the problem when they were stuck, and showed them alternative solutions, but he was very clear that they had to solve the problem themselves. It caused confusion at first, some people liked the challenge, other did not at first, but getting his guidance helped them to relax and after a while they also appreciated the opportunity. Frank said: *“It is about mastering... making people better at what they do.”*

## **4.3.5 Summary of the Interviews**

The four participants in the DYL program joined the program because their leader appointed them, yet the motivation to participate differed. The motivation, or in some cases the lack of it, didn't affect the impact of the developing devices like the LCP and ITC for raising awareness. All of the participants told of learning new leadership skills, which they appreciated and had incorporated into their working day. All of them told of incidents that can

be related to more effective leadership, some of them told of more such incidents than others. Some of the participants told of situations that could be related to Post-Heroic leadership behavior, and that their reaction in these situations was different than it would have been, before attending the program.

Frank's evaluation can be used to summarize the experience of the DYL program for the four participants: *"I'm more aware of how I behave as a leader. The program raised awareness, like; what are you doing, how are you acting as a manager, and how do people perceive you when you behave in certain way."*

## 5 Discussion

In this chapter the findings from the survey, observation and interviews will be summarized based on the analysis from previous chapter. This will be followed up by detailed comments on the findings that seemed most important, and finally a discussion of possible implications.

### 5.1 Summing up the Findings

The findings from the triangulation method of survey, observation and the interviews showed that the participants in the DYL program experienced increased self-awareness. I will start the discussion of the findings with a brief summarization of the result from each method.

#### 5.1.1 *The analysis from the survey*

All of the participants reported of being more aware of their behavior and how it affected others after attending module 1, and that this awareness helped them to identify what they could improve in their relationship with others. The majority of the group (94% or 17 of 18 participants) reported that this was helpful when reflecting and working on clarifying expectations, and 78% (14 of 18 participants) reported that this awareness helped them in communicating with their team members of expectations. When elaborated on this experience, the participants told of more awareness and better communication skills. In spite of this, only 41%, or 7 of 17 participants agreed on that they had recently talked about goal and direction with their team members.

#### 5.1.2 *The analysis from the observation*

Module 2 started with a status report, a time for reflection of the experience from module 1. The majority of the group reported of having experienced enhanced awareness, and better communication. During the two days of module 2 the participants were presented to multiple leadership skills in plenum, those skills were then trained on in smaller groups, so called peer groups or buddy groups. Before and after each session there was a time allocate to reflection in plenum, and the participants seemed relaxed and willing to share. What caught my attention was that the facilitators seemed to trust people, trusting them to adopt new learning as opposite to telling them what to learn. This became visible in the way new skills were presented like the technique of asking open questions and then trained on that skill so they could experience the effect, and then reflect on it – not just telling them what to do and what not to do. The participants' status report at the end of module 2 indicated enhanced level of

self-reflection, this assumption is due to the themes they brought up, like reflection on how to handle difficult and uncomfortable situations.

### ***5.1.3 The analysis from the interviews***

All the four participants I interviewed, acknowledged that the Company was facing a difficult time resulting in comprehensive re-organizational process, and this had affected three of the four participants at the time of the interviews.

#### ***Development of leadership skills***

Development of leadership skills was one of the three themes that emerged from the coding process; it was also one of two themes focused on in the DYL program, i.e. developing leadership capabilities. The sub-themes or skills the participants had learned and talked about, was setting expectations, giving feedback and constructive critique, framing conversations and coaching skills like active listening.

All of the participants talked about setting expectations, for some this was new and something they practiced on. All of them also told of how important the skill of active listening was, and how much they gained from using that skill, and about their experience of giving feedback and constructive critique with very positive results. All of the participants, except for Anne, talked about the skill of setting direction as important and something they worked on. Of the four, only Fred and Frank told of episodes where the skill of framing a conversation was used, and with positive results.

#### ***Development of effective leadership behavior***

Development of effective leadership behavior was one of the three themes emerging from the coding, and also the second theme focused on in the DYL program; i.e. raise awareness of own leadership behavior and by doing so become better able to adapt to changing leadership situation and challenges.

All of the participants told that they had achieved more awareness of their own behavior because of the program, and how their behavior affected other people. They also said that the knowledge and raised awareness of their strengths and weaknesses had been an eye opener. They all also told of more self-reflection, self-knowledge, and willingness to do something about their own behavior that did work against the goal they wanted to achieve. They told as well of being better at trusting others to do their jobs, and for three of them this also included to work on letting off control behavior and/or tendencies to do the job themselves. Two of the four participants, Fred and Frank, told of how this awareness and others recognition of their

strengths had strengthen them, made them more confident as a leader, and more willing to attend difficult interpersonal situations. Only Fred told of how his awareness in certain situations, situational awareness, affected him, and how knowing this made him adjust his behavior when in a situation. To summarize; all of the participants told of awareness that lead to behavior change; of their own transformation into adopting more effective leadership behavior.

### *Post-Heroic leadership behavior*

Post-Heroic leadership behavior was the third theme that emerged from the coding. This is the advanced form of effective leadership behavior, where the mindset of the leader has developed from the mindset of a Heroic leader into more adaptive and presented Post-Heroic leader. This change in mindset has also been referred to as the LDL or leadership developmental level.

Of the four participants, three told of episodes where they used their awareness, self-knowledge and skills to better being able to relate to others. All of them, based on the themes they raised, saw the value of seeking feedback and getting other's opinion, but two of them; Fred and Philip seemed to show willingness to open up for different views as in getting opposite opinions. Two of them: Fred and Frank told of episodes where they used their self-awareness and self-knowledge to adjust own behavior to the situation, and thus laying the ground for better communication and results. They also told of episodes where they used their own self-awareness, and leadership skills to empower their subordinates, and to take on a role of a mentor. Fred was the only one that told of active use of strategy in presenting and discussing a theme, in order to get the result he was aiming at.

## **5.2 Comments on the survey and observation findings**

The findings show in general, elevated self-awareness and understanding for how the leaders own behavior affected others. The interviews gave more in depth perception and an indication that the four participants from the program had developed elevated self-reflection, self-regulation, and self-knowledge. What I experience as striking, was that there seemed to be a difference in level of self-awareness, and this difference seemed to affect in diverse ways:

1. The difference the participants seemed to show in the readiness and willingness to learn new skills.
2. The correlation that seems to be between adopting new leadership skills and showing effective leadership behavior.

3. There seemed to be different underlying source for seeing or experiencing the need for behavioral change.
4. Emerging of the post-heroic leadership behavior and how it seems to correlate with developing effective leadership behavior.

### ***5.2.1 Comments on findings from the survey***

The answers from the survey showed that the participants agreed on being more aware after module 1, and more aware of their behavior and how their behavior affected other. This self-awareness, which is defined by Joiner and Josephs (2007) as: “*Your level of self-awareness refers to the quality of attention and reflection you bring to your own thoughts, feelings and behaviors*” (p. 37), helped the participants to improve their relationship, and was helpful in communicating with their team members in more productive ways. These findings were supported by the findings from the observation and the interviews. Yet, this new awareness did not seem to be helpful in all leadership situations: 10 of 17 disagreed on question three, which was about setting goal and directions for the team. This could be seen as surprising results, knowing that the Company was going through extensive re-organizational process at the time when the survey was performed, thus indicating the extraordinarily need for strong skills for leading a team. The reason for this could be, that at the time, they were in the middle of a difficult process of reducing their staff, for some up to 50% and that could be enough to keep the focus on the current situation. In addition, one can assume they did not know enough about possible changes to practice goal setting and direction, as the future could have been quite unclear at the time. Or they could be like Anne and simply didn’t see the need for this skillset. The survey showed a change. The participants had learned something about themselves, enhanced self-awareness, and that knowledge became useful in many situations.

### ***5.2.2 Comments on findings from the observation***

The observation supported the results from the survey and the interviews, where people expressed that their awareness of own behavior and how it affected others had increased, for many lead this knowledge to behavior changes. Being in the role of an observer in module 2, also showed me how the facilitators were modeling the behavior of an effective leader; they presented a theme, made time and space for reflection, training and reflection. The goal seemed to be to let people find out for themselves what they needed to learn, and to trust them to adopt the skills they needed and were ready for, this is strongly related to Heifetz’s approach to leadership teaching (Parks, 2005).

### 5.3 Discussion of findings from the interviews

The findings evolving from the interviews showed development within three themes: Development of Leadership Skills, Development of Effective Leadership Behavior, and Post-Heroic leadership behavior. Everyone attending the program and answering the survey told of enhanced awareness, and that they used that awareness in various degrees in their day-to-day work. The observation supported this, showing that they were willing to reflect on and share with their fellow participants their experience from their working life. But the nuances of this newly gained awareness didn't show in the survey or the observation. It was when I talked to the four participants, four months after the end of the program, that I could get a deeper understanding for what they meant with enhanced awareness, how differently they adopted the new knowledge and what elements from the program were still in use.

#### 5.3.1 *The context*

The motivation in participating in the program differed considerably, the participants that had requested for training and had high expectations, also reported higher motivation. In spite of different levels of commitment in the beginning, all of them told of elements from the program that had affected and inspired them. When asked about what inspired the participants during the program, all of them pulled out the reaction to the LCP profile, and how that affected them; two of them felt more confident after getting the results, the other two got feedback that made them seriously reflect on their behavior and they felt the need to improve. All of the participants reported that their expectations were met and more so. Fred also mentioned, and this was emphasized by all of the participants: the coaching sessions were an important part of the program. All of them reported that their behavioral changes had made them stronger, and it helped them in their day-to-day life, making it easier and more pleasurable. The effect of the program or as Parks (2005) called it the “*staying power*” (p. 14) seemed not to have faded as the participants still used techniques and reflection they learned in the program, four months after then program ended, but the use varied; some of the participants used a selected range of the leadership tools presented, while other used all of them, practiced their use and implemented them in their leadership skillsets. These findings of the staying power of the program can be related to how people learn. Goleman et al. (2013) discussed the necessity of deliberate stimulation of the part of the brain related to emotions, to alter old learning and habits; this was a slow process but resulted in permanent change. The LCP was deeply tied to emotions and as Anne said; “*it changed everything.*”



### 5.3.2 *Development of leadership skills*

Leadership tasks that are central in any leader role, consist of giving feedback, constructive critique and setting expectations, this is e.g. presented in the theory of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Without communicating this, both on individual and on a team level, the team will not be capable to work together in creating results. Important elements in communicating is the skill of active listening and is outlined as a basic leadership skill for the transformational leader (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This is a coaching technique that was considered a very useful skill by all of the participants, and they practiced the use of active listening which resulted in a more transformative communication style, like Fred told of when he started to listen. All those leadership skills were embraced and practiced by all of the participants.

The skill of setting direction is an important skill in leading a team, and includes the communicative skill of holding the company vision and interpreting that into a team vision and goal, to be able to communicate that inwardly in the team, and to use the team effort to incorporate that into their work. This leadership skill is emphasized by Joiner and Josephs (2007) as a skill that emerges and strengthens with higher LDL, and was a skill that was embraced and put into practice by three of the participants, all except for Anne, whom regarded setting direction as not an important theme to communicate in her current team.

The skill of framing a conversation is actually about a set of skills: asking questions without people going into defence, being aware of one's own communications channels like body language, use of words, and stand in the situation – take the heat as Heifetz et al. (2009) described it, especially important dealing with an difficult conversation. This is a strong adaptive leadership skill that requires the leader to be self-aware, present, reflective and with a high level of self-knowledge (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). In the interviews, only one participant described an situation that consisted of framing a coversation, but the story he told showed a typical reaction when someone is challenged: *“When you exercise adaptive leadership your authorizer will push back”* because *“you are scaring people”* (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 26). In Fred's story, the elements of the adaptive approach in a difficult conversation were present, and it showed how Fred, in spite of his friend's aggressive outburst, manage to keep calm and to distinguish between his own feelings in the conversation and his friend's feelings when he said: *“I am not questioning that (having humility), I am asking if you use it?” I do not work with you, I am asking you something I clearly cannot know the answer to.”*

The interviews showed that the participants experienced varied levels of need for new leadership skills, and as followed, the use of the learning opportunities they got, and the incorporation of new skillset into their day-to-day work after the program ended, were according to the evaluation of the need. This is what Heifetz talked about when he described the goal for teaching, when using his approach: *“Different people have different things to learn, and by the end of the term, my aim would be for people to have learned a lot that was relevant to them in regard of their own capacity”* (Parks, 2005, p. 30).

### **5.3.3 *Devopement of effective leadership behavior***

As presented in chapter 2, an effective leader is defined as adaptive, agile and aware, i.e. in awareness for their inner and outer life, that are confident in reflecting on and addressing difficult themes that are able to show trust and confidence in their subordinates.

Effective leadership behavior is known to increase team commitment and satisfaction, thus having direct impact on increasing the team productivity and profitability (Church & Waclawski, 1999; Gill, 2006; Collins, 2001; Cook-Greuter, 2005; Crewell, 2008; Day & Dragoni, 2015). Effective leaders hold awareness on multiple levels (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Anderson & Adams, 2016), their own strengths and weaknesses, their own behavior and how it affects others, awareness in situations and in relationships with others.

This awareness is a foundation for self-awareness essential for developing self-knowledge which is the understanding of one's own behavior and trigger points, especially important in stressful situations, i.e. situations when leaders show or tend to show defensive and unproductive behavior (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Enhanced self-awareness and self-knowledge gives them the possibility of self-reflection, as in seeing the need for development, and of self-regulation i.e. to work on their developmental process (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Becoming more aware of their own inner state of mind and their own behavioral reactions, the participants built up knowledge to react to their environment in more effective ways. Effective leaders show adaptive leadership (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) and they are confident addressing adaptive challenges and do not hesitate in challenging the status quo. They have highly developed situational awareness and show the capability to move between their own inner world and their outer world, and trusting as in giving the job back to the owner, basically as Heifetz et al. (2009) said: *“Your job in exercising adaptive leadership is to make yourself dispensable”* (p. 168). A leader that trusts his or her team shows confidence in the team members and thus builds up the

team identity and vision, making it strong and successful, and each team member most likely will experience more job satisfaction.

The participants said that the LCP profile helped them to gain more knowledge of their own inner mindset, and how it manifested in their behavior; this knowledge helped them, they told, to reflect on and to acknowledge what they could do to become a more effective leader. As a result, all of the four participants seemed to have developed, although in various degrees, effective leadership behavior. As mentioned earlier, there was a difference in the participants' readiness and willingness to learn new skills. This difference seemed also to appear as a relationship between adopting leadership skills, and the narratives of situations showing elements of effective leadership behavior; the more leadership skills learned and used, the more effective leadership behavior situations described. In addition, it looked like that the four participants had different underlying reasons, or sources, for experiencing the need for behavior changes, this manifested in how the participants adopted new behaviors.

I will go deeper into these findings, starting with the relationship that seemingly is between adopting new leadership skills and showing more effective leadership behavior. As described earlier, Anne seemed to incorporate into her work some of the leadership skills she learned in the program, but not all of them – like the skill of giving direction – as she said: *“some of the subject matters, some were not as exciting.”* This was in contrast to Fred's reaction, who seemed to practice most of the leadership skills he learned, and his comment was *“the lot of it inspired me”* and *“I think it (DYL program) certainly gave me the tools to be a more effective leader.”*

These findings can be related to, and explained by research on LDL – leadership development level. According to Eigel and Kuhnert (2005) the readiness for learning of new leadership skills is related to willingness to develop, and the willingness is related to the LDL, which, as mentioned earlier, is defined as the capacity to understand ourselves, other and our situations (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Harris & Kuhnert, 2008; Heifetz R., 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). Both Eigel and Kuhnert's (2005) and Harris and Kuhnert's (2008) research showed a link between the LDL and effective leadership competence. The participant's readiness to learn could therefore be linked to the participant's LDL, and supported by Heifetz's approach to learning; people learn what they need to learn and are ready to learn at that time (Parks, 2005; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Another interesting finding was that there seemed to be differences in how the participants adopted new behavior. All of the four participants experienced more awareness of their own strengths, weaknesses and how their behavior affected others. Everyone became aware of

their own behavior that was not productive, and that basically was a hindrance for them reaching the goals they wanted to reach. But, two of them, Philip and Anne seemed to change their behavior as a reaction based on external stimulus. Anne learned that showing her frustration by yelling was a hindrance for her to have a productive relationship with others, and she valued having good relationship. She changed her reaction, stopped yelling and changed the way she gave feedback and in return she felt better, and reflecting on that, she expressed that people might have seen her as more approachable. Philip, on the other hand, valued getting good results, but not listening to others opinions and not communicating his own standpoints early enough didn't get him the results he was striving for. He learned to listen and communicate better, and by doing that he got positive feedback, giving him the feeling of being less intransigent as he said. Yet, for Philip, the timing of the program was unfortunate due to organizational changes, and he didn't get the benefit from the program as intended, as he explained: *"...one tries to relate more to the people... it has been very difficult to incorporate it in the situation here."*

The behavior changes both Anne and Philip showed seemed to be based on others people's reaction, and therefore they experienced it as a need for change. Anne, because she valued being liked, and Philip valued to get the results he wanted.

This reaction, or source of need for changing behavior seemed to be opposed to Fred and Frank's reaction that seemed be more related to inner need for change. Frank, knowing his strengths in relationship with others after getting his LCP, seemed to use those strengths to be more present and available for the people he had to let go, he had conversations with them that were difficult and emotional, but he did that because he felt the need to be there for them. This attending, he said, would not have happened before the DYL. On the other hand, he told that he worked hard on giving the job back to their respective owners, acknowledging that being *"hands on"* was probably not the best way of practicing leadership. In doing that he learned, as he said, that not only could he trust his people, but he also gave them the possibility to master their tasks, and he got more time to attend to his leadership tasks. Fred told of how he learned to listen, and the technique he used to restrict himself from jumping to conclusions, and how he now used the time to look for the best solutions for the Company; in doing so he made space for other opinions, and for himself in listening to what was really going on in the situation. This gave him the ability to ask challenging questions, like in the story he told, and taking a role of a mentor for other leaders. He talked about empowering others, and he also explained that it gave him pleasure to be able to contribute in the learning process. In Fred's and Frank's case, the need for change seemed to come from within, making

the change because it meant something to them personally. Frank was in similar situation as Philip, but he did not seem to see the situation as a hindrance for using the skills and awareness he learned from the DYL program, on the contrary he seemed to use more of his strengths and more purposefully.

Bennett and Lemoine (2014) talked about the importance of leaders' level of mindset or LDL for organizations, especially the mindset of experimentation to be able to survive in the VUCA world. Both Fred, in his conversation with his friend about humility, and Frank, in his conversations with people he had to lay off, seemed to show the mindset of experimentation, both tried to go into difficult situations where they were facing the risk of emotions and feelings and they came out stronger. This, both of them said, would not have happen, or it would happen to a much lesser extent before they attended the DYL program. This also suggests that their LDL has increased by participating in the program. These results could be supported by Goleman et al.'s (2013) explanation of the importance of developing the emotional intelligence to become more effective leader, and of Eigel and Kuhnert's (2005) research, as they said: "*We also know that formal leadership interventions (e.g. 360-degree feedback, job assignments) fuel development*" (p. 381).

Assuming that for Frank and Fred there were different underlying needs for change, their LDL could possibly explain that. People's level of mindset, leaders' development level (LDL), or as Kegan (1982) called it; people's meaning making systems, are central in helping them to make a sense of the world. Kegan and Lahey (2009) stressed that people think and respond according to their level of mindset; a person on the level of a socialized mind would embrace change to be more accepted in his or her community, while person on the level of self-authoring mind will be open for a change that fits with their plan and agenda. A person on the level of self-transforming mind takes other people into account, realizing he or she is just as dependent on others, as others are dependent on them, and that mindset would be their catalyzer for change (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Based on this, it would be possible to argue that Fred and Frank have more developed mindset or LDL than Anne and Philip, thus taking more elements into account and able to reflect more about their own impact and reactions.

That the four participants' LDL differs becomes even more visible from the third theme that emerges from the coding: Post-heroic leadership behavior.

### 5.3.4 *Post-heroic leadership behavior*

Joiner and Josephs (2007) stated when talking about post-heroic leadership level that “*the capacities and competencies developed by these men and women represent the cutting edge of leadership development for the twenty-first century*” (p. 11).

Leaders on this level have the mindset Kegan and Lahey (2009) called the self-transforming mind, Joiner and Josephs (2007) called it the post-heroic mindset. This is when the leadership ability becomes more prominent, as leaders on this level are able to step back and reflect on the limits of their own ideology, tolerate contradictions and opposites and they are capable of keeping track of multiple systems (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), and to handle adaptive challenges, as their mindset is capable of dealing with disequilibrium and successfully adapt to changes (Joiner & Josephs, 2007).

Not all of the participants told of episodes that could be linked to post-heroic leadership behavior, but those who did, seemed to be more self-reflective, have more self-knowledge and seemed to be humbler, acknowledging that leadership was a lifelong learning process; a leadership journey. This acknowledgement relates to Kegan and Lahey’s (2009) description of the self-transforming mind and the reflection of the limits of own ideology.

Post-heroic leadership behavior is defined as the ability to relate to others, to adjust own behavior to the person or situation at hand, make strategic approach to tasks at hand, seek feedback and being open to others point of view, and able and willing to empower others (Joiner & Josephs, 2007; McCrimmon, 2010).

All of the participants in the interview said that their heightened awareness affected, and in all cases, improved their relationship with others. The behavior of seeking feedback and openness for different views, are abilities that need to be developed, and for many, especially new leaders, this ability is not very mature. It demands certain a level of awareness and self-knowledge to effectively take others’ opinions into account. The ITC mapping and coaching helped all the participants to open up for feedback, and three of them made an effort to stay open to others’ opinions. Relating to others is the ability to see others point of view as well as one’s own, and act on that, an ability that all of the participants’ except for Anne seemed to have developed, this assumption because three of the participants’ discussed their effort to relate to others, she did not. The ability to adjust one’s own behavior is based on self-awareness, situational awareness, and the ability to relate to others. Two of the participants, Fred and Frank talked about episodes where they actively adjusted own behavior in order to get better contact with the person or persons involved. Only Fred told of how he prepared

himself for meetings by making a strategic plan, including possible response and standpoints of critiques. Empowering others is a central element in transformational leadership behavior and includes; delegation, shared values and guidance, a leadership behavior that contributes in building high-performance teams, and team members that go beyond their job description and make the organization strong (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Frank told of how he changed his focus, giving the job back to his subordinates not only gave him more time to work on leadership tasks, but also manifested in giving his people the experience of mastery. Fred told of doing this, but also taking this a step further as he took over the role of mentor in helping less experienced leaders to develop their own leadership abilities, and he e.g. reflected on how his employee becoming empowered and taking charge that could lead to improving his own daily tasks and duties.

#### **5.4 Discussing implications from the findings**

In the previous section I presented the findings I found interesting: from the survey the missing emphasis on direction in leading teams, from the observation how the teaching was framed in such a way that people could learn the skills they were ready and willing to learn. From the interviews the difference that emerged in the readiness and willingness to learn new skills and its relationship in showing effective leadership, the difference that seemed to be in the underlying source for need to change behavior and finally, the emerge of post-heroic behavior. I will discuss the implication from my findings in terms of generalizability and transferability, and it will be discussed and criticized on the ground of findings from qualitative case studies.

As mentioned earlier, generalizability is related to what degree a researcher can claim to contribute with knowledge. In this research, as in all qualitative research, the generalizability might have its limits and I will discuss this for each research method.

The survey showed that all of the participants experienced more awareness of their own behavior and how it affected others after attending module 1, which basically was about raising awareness through the LCP, ITC and coaching. All of them told of how this helped them in identifying and improving their behavior that could benefit them in better relationships with others. In spite of small and homogeneous sample, the survey's generalizability is substantiated as this same finding has been found in several other studies which have shown that using leadership intervention techniques like 360-degree leadership assessments, help to develop self-awareness (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005; Day & Dragoni, 2015;

Anderson & Adams, 2016) and is identified as an important element in personal leadership development and behavioral changes.

This experience of evolved awareness was supported by observation when people gave their status reports in plenum, the observation also indicated that the learning environment had similarities with Heifetz's teaching approach that focused on letting people learn what they needed to learn at that time, at their mental developmental level. It could be difficult to generalize the results from the teaching methods due to the facilitation of the program, that because of the homogeneous group: leaders in middle management level from the same company and industry. But it is possible to argue that other studies, like the one of Parks (2005), shows that the framing of the program following Heifetz's teaching approach has shown to be effective in setting in motion processes for personal and leadership development.

To generalize from the interviews, the small sample of four participants will always be an issue. Referring to the concept of the naturalistic generalization that states that if someone can make use of the findings the generalization comes naturally, increases the generalizability of the findings. The alternative solution to the problem of generalizability is to use the term transferability, which implies that the findings can be transferred to other contexts or situations, and the transferability can be increased by provide thick description of the research and purposeful sampling.

The interviews supported the research with both *thicker descriptions* or deeper understanding, and *purposeful sampling*, as the participants were leaders attending leadership development program, so by those terms the results should, in the same context, be transferable. The interviews with the four participants supported both the survey and the observation when it came to the evolvement of awareness. In addition, it gave a deeper understanding of how the awareness evolved and how the evolved awareness manifested itself on multiple levels; awareness of own thoughts and feelings, awareness of the effect of own behavior, and situational awareness.

The interview also showed deeper understanding of the readiness and willingness to learn, and how this could be related to the individual LDL. The readiness and willingness to learn seemed also to affect, to an extent, if and how the four participants showed effective leadership behavior. As all of the four participants showed willingness to change their own behavior to gain more productive relationships with other people, there seemed to be different underlying sources or reasons for changing their behavior: Anne seemed to care for her relationship with others, Philip seemed to care for the results he wanted to achieve, Frank seemed to realize that giving the job back to his subordinates gave them the experience of



mastering and him more time to do leadership things, and Fred seemed to enjoy the process of reflecting and looking for best solution for the Company, as well as enjoying the role of a mentor and empowering others as in helping in other people to learn and develop.

An additional finding was that while the program focused on developing and training the Company leaders to become effective leaders, some of the leaders went further than that and started their own developmental journey; developing Post-Heroic leadership behavior. The common denominator for level of awareness seemed to be related to the individual LDL or leadership development level. In this research the LDL was not measured specifically, and therefore this assumption can only be extracted from the participants expressed experience, reflection and their evaluation and comparison of their own behavior.

The interviews gave more and deeper understanding for leadership development, and as such followed the developmental trail or levels presented by i.e. Joiner and Josephs (2007), Kegan and Lahey (2009), and Andersen and Adams (2016). Similar findings as the interviews showed, have been found earlier in two studies that has been performed to evaluate the DYL program, those of Reams and Svantesvoll (2011) and Reams (2013), and by Grotli's research (2011) who's research thesis was about similar leadership development program using the same instruments like the LCP, ITC and coaching.

In this research a survey, observation and interviews were used; all of them supported the results of enhanced awareness and understanding for how the leaders' behavior affected others. This triangulation effect supports the validity of the research and its generalizability and transferability, yet the critical point for this research would be the small and homogeneous sample.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter I will elaborate on the answer to the research question, discuss the limitations of this research, and provide suggestions for further research, and in the end I will discuss possible implications and recommendations.

### 6.1 Answering the Research Question

The DYL program is a leadership program designed and aiming at training leaders to become more aware of their leadership behavior, helping them to adapt in different situations and facing different challenges (Reams & Hilmarsen, 2014). The underlying goal in this program, as is for all leadership development programs, is to make an intervention into the leader's developmental process to help him or her to become more effective as a leader. In programs like the DYL, which is based on contemporary theories of leadership, this intervention is not only about teaching leadership skills, but it is an intervention into each participant's leadership development level – LDL.

Research of the last three decades tells a story of the importance of raising the leaders LDL, for themselves as well as for the organizations they represent, to be able to deal with the expectations that contemporary leaders have to face. Those expectations can be accumulated to one word: efficiency. The spirit of transformational leadership, as presented earlier, is to facilitate for development and growth, a leader's role is to bring vision, motivate, challenge and inspire. This leadership style is strongly tied to empowering their subordinates, also related to stronger and more resilient teams, and work that often exceeds expectations. The transformational leadership style can be approached in different ways. Some enhance the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) or visionary leadership, but in the DYL program the approach is the focus on adaptive leadership, adult developmental level, and theories of agile leadership. This combination binds together the practical approach of leadership and the LDL. I consider this combination as a good measure of effective leadership skills, because the LDL is an indicator of how a person perceive the world, interpret and react to his or her environment, while the adaptive leadership theory and the theory of agile leadership gives an overview of effective leadership skills that one can achieve with interest, time and dedication.

This research aimed at getting an understanding of how the DYL program did help, or eventually, did not help the four participants to become more effective leader. In addition, the learning effect of the program was in focus.

The simple answer to the research question would be that the research showed that the DYL program helped the participants to become more effective as leaders, by intervening into their leadership development level (LDL), making them aware of how their behavior affected the people they were working with. All of the three methods used in this research indicated that the self-awareness increased, including the awareness of one's own behavior and how it affected others, and knowing this put people into state of self-exploring and self-reflection. The results also indicate that it was the coaching that helped people to face the results from the LCP, and combined with the ITC mapping made them want to change their behavior, as one of the interviewed participants said: *"the coaching thing really gets you thinking"* and another said *"the program would not have had the same effect without the coaching."*

In addition, the participants were presented with different leadership skills, and they got the opportunity to practice and train on these skills in controlled and supported learning environment with fellow participants. The teaching approach was in the spirit of Heifetz (Parks, 2005; Crewell, 2008) where the classroom itself, as a social arena, was an opportunity for learning, where the facilitators had the concepts, metaphors and framework for putting names on what the participants were learning and experiencing. The four participants told of how much they learned, as in setting words to their feelings like Fred who thought of the *ladder of inference* every time he was on the verge of jumping to conclusion, and Frank who used the *TGROW* as a model for empowering his people.

The more complex answer would still be yes; the DYL program helped the four participants to become more effective leaders, but I also learned that there was more to it. The results indicate that it is not only about the participants' experience of becoming more self-aware and learning to use new leadership skills. It was also about them growing and evolving as a person. The interviews indicated that the four participants were acting from different leadership development level, LDL, this influencing their perspective as in choice of themes they talked about. Like Anne, who talked mostly about the program and how she had to let go of her control behavior and frustration outbreak, while Fred talked about empowering others and how much he had learned from his fellow participants at the program. It also seemed to have had an influence on what they learned: Anne didn't seem to see the need in using all the leadership skills presented, while Fred made a point of integrating them into his day-to-day work. This perspective also seemed to affect their behavior four months after the program ended, described by themselves: Anne seemed to be still focusing on her controlling behavior, Philip seemed to understand the importance of the leadership skills he learned, but sounded a bit reluctant to continue, Frank seemed to embrace what he had learned and found a way to

effectively use that knowledge he had gained, while Fred actually hired his own leadership coach because as he said: *“I think it (DYL program) certainly gave me the tools to be a more effective leader, and I think I am on the way to become a more effective leader. That is a journey I will be on for the rest of my life.”*

## **6.2 The project’s limitations**

The project limitations are related to the sample for the research. The DYL program was a leadership program, designed for the Company and for the Company’s leaders, within the business environment they worked in. The participants from the program population autumn 2015 were invited to participate in the study, and from that population a small sample was invited to participate in the interview part of the study. This small and homogeneous sample could reduce the research transferability and result in difficulties in transferring the findings to other leaders, in other companies, working in same or different business environment. Consequently, the study contribution with new knowledge in the field of leadership development and training would also be questionable.

Another limitation could also be related to the sample, as the four participants all volunteered to participate in the research, which might have given a slightly askew picture of the group as a whole. The sample was four participants that volunteered, therefore it could be argued that the participants participated in this study because they had learned something already, and were more open to the experience of learning.

## **6.3 Taking the research a step further**

The field of leadership is wide and I would like to refer to Lt-Gen. Edward Flanagan’s saying as presented by Gill (2006): *“Leadership is a timeless subject; it has been described, discussed, dissected and analyzed by management expert for centuries”* (p. 2). Adding to the already comprehensive knowledge of leadership development and learning, was an ambitious undertaking, but I believe that this research has, if not added new knowledge, at least contributed to confirming earlier studies of leadership development and learning.

In this research I focused on the DYL program and tried to capture the development of the four participants both during and after the program. In doing so I used survey, observation and interviews, both to get a broader understanding of the learning process, but also to get the triangulation effect to support the validity of the research. Time and resources has been a restrictive factor, therefore I chose to focus on the learning effect on the four participants. A

small sample as that, might have an impact on the knowledge extracted from the research, and I see it as an interesting possibility to expand the research.

More extensive research could focus on bigger sample, using standardized surveys that measured the participants' LDL with regular intervals. The interval could be before the program started, after each program module, and 6 or 12 months later to see the developmental effect, and to see if the developmental effect had stabilized and would still be visible sometime after the end of the program. That would give more nuance in the developmental process, both during and afterwards. Alternately expanding this kind of research even more with interviews and survey, with the goal of taking into account the learning process of learning new leadership skills.

Another interesting research could be to use the same program design and setting, in different context, like in different companies within same branch and/or in different branch. If that research would get similar findings to the finding from this research, one could possibly conclude and generalize the effectiveness of the DYL program as in developing leaders.

#### **6.4 Implications and recommendations**

In 2008, Harris and Kuhnert claimed that their study was the one of the first studies to – as they said – “*empirically demonstrate the link between leadership development level (LDL) and leadership effectiveness.*” What they found was that the LDL level using the 360-degree feedback, could predict leadership effectiveness, and that higher levels are more effective in number of leadership competencies. Knowing this, the challenge must then be: how can leader's level of development be increased? Two of the four participants expressed some worries about the effect of the DYL program, that the knowledge they had gained would not have permanent effect. The decreasing effect of leadership programs is known, and is related to leadership programs that are designed to increase skillset. Goleman et al. (2013) called this the “honeymoon effect,” referring to the fact that most training fades away within three to six months, and people are back into old habits. One of the participants in the interviews said that one of the reasons he participated and volunteered as an interviewee was that he wanted a *recapture*, he wanted to be reminded of the program so he wouldn't forget. The DYL program is a leadership program that is designed to affect the leader's level of development, LDL, and the setting is to let the participants learn by experience. Both of these approaches enhance learning that sticks, because the learning gets a personal meaning, this supported by the participants' experience like Anne's, whom said after the LCP and IMC mapping that everything was changed, there was no way back to prior behavior. The DYL program seemed

to have permanent learning effect on the four participants, as all of them told of episodes that showed that they had changed their behavior, resulting in better communications and relationships with people around them. All four confirmed at the end of the interview that things had changed, they did things differently because of the program. All of them also talked about continuing this process, even though just one of them actually did take action to do so.

The conclusion is therefore that the DYL program helped all the four participants to become a more effective leader, by intervening into their LDL by inspiring and motivating them to develop their self-awareness. The program also had an influence on their learning by training on new leadership skills, and by providing trusting and challenging learning environment adjusted to each individual leader's LDL. The participants seemed to learn what they needed to learn, and were ready and willing to learn, on the LDL they were at that time.

This research confirmed that the most vital element for leadership development was enhanced self-awareness. Self-awareness seemed to make the participants want to change their behavior, although for different reasons. Like in Anne's and Philips case, they would probably not see the need for change if they had not gotten the LCP results showing them how their behavior affect people around them. When they got the opportunity to reflect on the consequences of their behavior, they seemed to realize that the consequence of their behavior directly worked against results that were important to them; Anne liked to have good relationship with others, and Philip ascertained that without good relationship with others, he wouldn't get the results that were important to him. The findings also seemed to show that in Franks and Fred's case, their self-awareness was not based on how they affected others, but it stuck somehow deeper, knowing this seemed to make them want to gain more awareness and knowledge of how they could become better leaders, not because of others but because of inner passion. They told, as a result of their inner self-scrutiny, of episodes where they seemingly not only used the leadership skillset presented in the program more widely - as in more often and in different situations – but as in Fred's case; he started to use the technique of inner conversation: what is happening here in this situation, and what is happening inside of me. Whatever the reason for change, the change, all of the four participants told, made their lives better, it made their relationships more productive and in general their lives happier.

Fred told how he continued his further *leadership journey* accompanied by a coach he hired, because as he said: “*I realized that I have various things I'd liked to develop, and I can't necessary always do that myself.*” The others also told of how they valued the sessions they had with the coach, and how important he was in the process for processing the results

from the LCP, and helping them in use the knowledge to evolve their leadership behavior. My recommendation would therefore be based on this feedback from the participants, and would be to give leaders the opportunity to engage in conversation with a coach or mentor. Leaders need feedback, they need a discussion partner that can challenge them and make them see things differently, and they need to get the opportunity or challenge of reflection. Joiner and Josephs (2007, p. 209) called this the “*process reflective action*,” the process of going to the balcony (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) and reflecting on what is happening, what could be done next and then react. This is the best way to develop self-leadership, and to develop deep self-awareness, and self-knowledge.

After having the privilege of following the DYL program, and having the chance to talk to the four participants, I have high hopes for leadership programs like the DYL and the possibilities they present for leaders. All of the four leaders I interviewed told how much the program had changed their lives for the better, helping them to abandon unproductive behavior, to get deeper understanding for the importance of relationships and how that can affect their role as a leader. All of them told that changing their behavior had made their lives a bit easier and I dare say happier within the context of the change.

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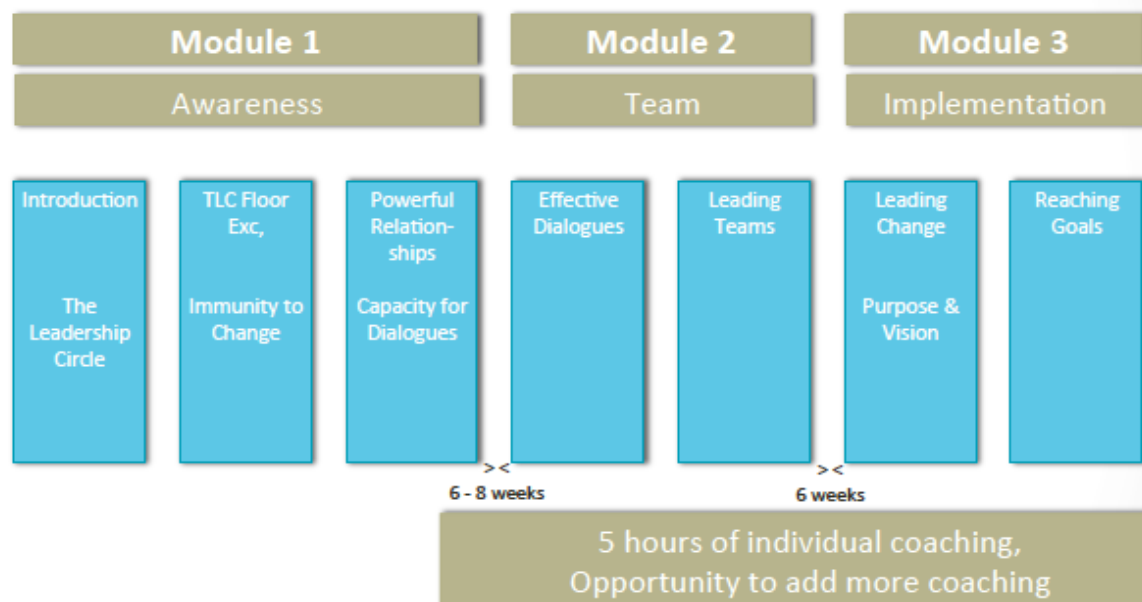
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## 8 Appendix A Presentation of the DYL program

### DYL at a glance



(Reams & Hilmarsen, 2014, p. 3)

# DYL Module 2 Survey

Strongly agree    □ ----- □ ----- □ -----|----- □ ----- □ ----- □    Strongly disagree

Strongly agree    □ ----- □ ----- □ -----|----- □ ----- □ ----- □    Strongly disagree

Strongly agree    □ ----- □ ----- □ -----|----- □ ----- □ ----- □    Strongly disagree

Strongly agree    □ ----- □ ----- □ -----|----- □ ----- □ ----- □    Strongly disagree

Strongly agree    □ ----- □ ----- □ -----|----- □ ----- □ ----- □    Strongly disagree

[illegible]

## 10 Appendix C Letter to participants & Consent form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this research.

The purpose of the DYL program is to help the xxxx leaders to become more effective as leaders; to become more aware of their leadership behavior and thereby be better suited to adapt to an ever changing set of leadership situations and challenges; and to develop capabilities and skills that are especially needed in the xxxx complex operations and organizations structure.

This research is an evaluation of the impact of the DYL program. It is of interest to the training facilitators and to the xxxx management to know if and how this program has helped you in your role as a leader.

By returning attached consent letter signed, you also give your consent to take part in the research project, you understand the purpose of this research, and you understand that your involvement will not be of any benefit to you.

Information gained during the study might be published in accompanied research report, you will not be identified and your personal contribution will not be divulged.

By agreeing to participate in this research, you also give your permission to record your interview, the interview recording will be transcribed (typed up in a document) and the recording will be destroyed once the transcription has taken place.

You are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Please confirm your participation in this research and let me know when it will suit you to have the interview. The time used on the interview is estimated to be an hour till hour and a half.

With kind regards  
Heida Kristinsdottir  
MA student NTNU  
[heidaenator@gmail.com](mailto:heidaenator@gmail.com)

*Supervisor Dr. Jonathan Reams*

### Consent to participate in research project

I, ....., consent to take part in the research project entitled:

***How did the DYL program help or not help the four participants to become a more effective leader?***

I understand the purpose of this research, and that my involvement will not be of any benefit to me.

I understand that information gained during the study might be published in accompanied research report, I will not be identified and my personal contribution will not be divulged.

I understand that if I am asked and agree to an interview, this interview will be recorded. The interview will be transcribed (typed up into a document) and the recording will be destroyed once the transcription has taken place.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 11 Appendix D The interview guide

### 1.

How did it happen that you attended the DYL program?

How would you describe your organization?

Have you notice any changes in the organization in the period during the DYL program of afterwards?

### 2.

What did you expect from the DYL program before you started?

Were you motivated to attend this course before you started?

Did you notice any change in your motivation during or after each program session?

Did something happen in your life (private/professional) that might have had influence on your experience of the program?

### 3.

Did you experience that you learned new things?

How have you used your new knowledge in your private or professional life?

When you used your new knowledge, what kind of reactions did you get?

### 4.

Did you notice any changes in yourself and the way you react during and after the program?

Did something happen in the program that inspired you to change your behavior?

Have you noticed any changes in yourself that you believe is because of your participation in the program?

Did something in the internal or external environment have an influence on your willingness to use the new set skill, and which skillsets were affected?

What do you think of the DYL program?



## 12 Appendix E The NSD confirmation

<b>Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS</b> NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES			
Jonathan Reams Institutt for voksnes læring og rådgivningsvitenskap NTNU  7491 TRONDHEIM		Harald Hårfagres gate 29 N-5007 Bergen Norway Tel: +47-55 58 21 17 Fax: +47-55 58 96 50 nsd@nsd.uib.no www.nsd.uib.no Org.nr: 985 321 884	
Vår dato: 07.04.2016	Vår ref: 47681 / 3 / BGH	Deres dato:	Deres ref:
<b>TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER</b>			
Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 29.02.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:			
47681	<i>How did the DYL program help or not help the four participants to become a more effective leader?</i>		
Behandlingsansvarlig	NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder		
Daglig ansvarlig	Jonathan Reams		
Student	Adalheidur Björg Kristinsdóttir		
Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.			
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.			
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <a href="http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html">http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html</a> . Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.			
Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <a href="http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt">http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt</a> .			
Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.09.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.			
Vennlig hilsen			
Kjersti Haugstvedt		Belinda Gloppen Helle	
Kontaktperson: Belinda Gloppen Helle tlf: 55 58 28 74			
Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.			
Avdelingskontorer / District Offices: OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. <a href="mailto:nsd@uio.no">nsd@uio.no</a> TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. <a href="mailto:kymre.svarsa@svt.ntnu.no">kymre.svarsa@svt.ntnu.no</a> TROMSØ: NSD, SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. <a href="mailto:nsdmas@svt.uit.no">nsdmas@svt.uit.no</a>			

## 13 Appendix F The coding list

Name	Description	Category
Context	Background for attending the program	
Set expectations	Leadership skills trained at DYL	Leadership tools
Set direction (lead team)	Leadership skills trained at DYL	Leadership tools
Frame conversation (ask questions)	Leadership skills trained at DYL	Leadership tools
Active listening (coaching teach)	Leadership skills trained at DYL	Leadership tools
Give feedback & critics	Leadership skills trained at DYL	Leadership tools
Strategist	Ability to make plans for the future, and adjust the plan to any changes (Post heroic stage)	Leadership development
Relating to others	Able to see others point of view and one owns, and act on that (Post heroic behavior)	Leadership development
Adjust own behavior	Balanced power style adjusted to the situation at hand (Post heroic stage behavior)	Leadership development
Open for different views	Able to tolerate other point of view that differs from oneself (Post heroic stage)	Leadership development
Seek feedback	Able to seek feedback and actively do so (Post heroic behavior)	Leadership development
Empowering others	Highly capable in empowering others (Post heroic stage behavior)	Leadership development
Awareness	Awareness own strengths and weaknesses	Effective leadership behavior
Awareness of own behavior	Awareness of own behavior and how it affects others	Effective leadership behavior
Self-knowledge	as in understanding own behavior and responses, as well as own trigger points that releases defensive and unproductive behavior	Effective leadership behavior
Confident	Confidence as in willingness to challenge status quo (adaptive leadership)	Effective leadership behavior
Situational awareness	Situational awareness as in awareness of what is happening in the situation and what is happening in one self and move between "the dance floor and the balcony" (adaptive leadership)	Effective leadership behavior
Transformation	Behavior change -from unproductive to more productive behavior	Effective leadership behavior
Trust	Give the job back to the owner (adaptive leadership)	Effective leadership behavior
Self-reflection	Self-regulation and self-reflection of own leadership behavior and need for development (agile leadership)	Effective leadership behavior

