

## DIDIER MARLIER



I was a child, when I saw my grandfather dry a tear. Another coal miner had knocked on the door of the family's castle, desperately looking for a job, after "they" had closed the mine. In hindsight, I still don't know whether the shock that this unfortunate man suffered, was due to his own condition or to the end of an illusion: The coal mines wouldn't last forever!

Later on, I found myself twice in his place: at the age of 16, when the bailiffs came to seize our most sacred belongings, due to an abrupt disruption in our father otherwise flourishing business. The second time was an unforgettable period of unemployment, lived as a painful shame, shortly after getting my MBA from IMD, one of the world's best business schools... Why hadn't the world's largest businesses beg me to join them?

Each of these shockwaves left profound "somatic markers" in me: As a child, standing next to my grandfather, I promised myself that I would eradicate unemployment. I failed so far and my modest legacy will be to have acted upon a quote from my friend, Belgian strategist Nick van Heck: "Disruption is what happens to the unprepared!" I now consider my work, around the theme of the Disruption Economy as a part of that "Deep Intent".

Another powerful drive is the conviction that leaders, who are serious about fulfilling their mission, must invest in the development of their people and not pay lip service to it. As an individual, I dedicate considerable amount of time and money to invest not only in the best possible (way above my means!) education for my children but also on people that a sort of synchronicity have placed on my way. As a professional, another part of my passion goes, therefore, into developing strong and visionary leaders.

The only inheritance I got from my grandfather is a piece of bed of a concentration camp, with something engraved on it. It is a sacred object to me. It represents the sacrifice my father and mother families were ready to make to stand up against dictatorship and the unacceptable, even if they could have quietly pretended they hadn't seen. This "family tradition" gave birth to my professional passion for "Engagement via rationale, behaviour and emotions". I do not believe in nor work for dictatorial leaders. I work for those who believe in "teaching them to yearn for the vast and endless sea", as St-Exupery once said.

Apart from this, I like to think of myself as blogger (900 CEO's, top execs and academics follow my weekly publication), writer (Engaging Leadership, co-authored with ex-IMD faculty Chris Parker), professor/speaker (Fundação Dom Cabral/Brazil, IMD/Switzerland, Insead/France, NEOMA/France, Nyenrode/Netherlands, TED-X), consultant (managing partner of the Enablers Network) and agent-provocateur who experiments with the joys and challenges of single parenthood since my unfortunate divorce. I have accomplished my childhood's dream, living between the ski slopes of Villars (Switzerland), my native Belgium (Waterloo) and the country of my heart, Brazil.