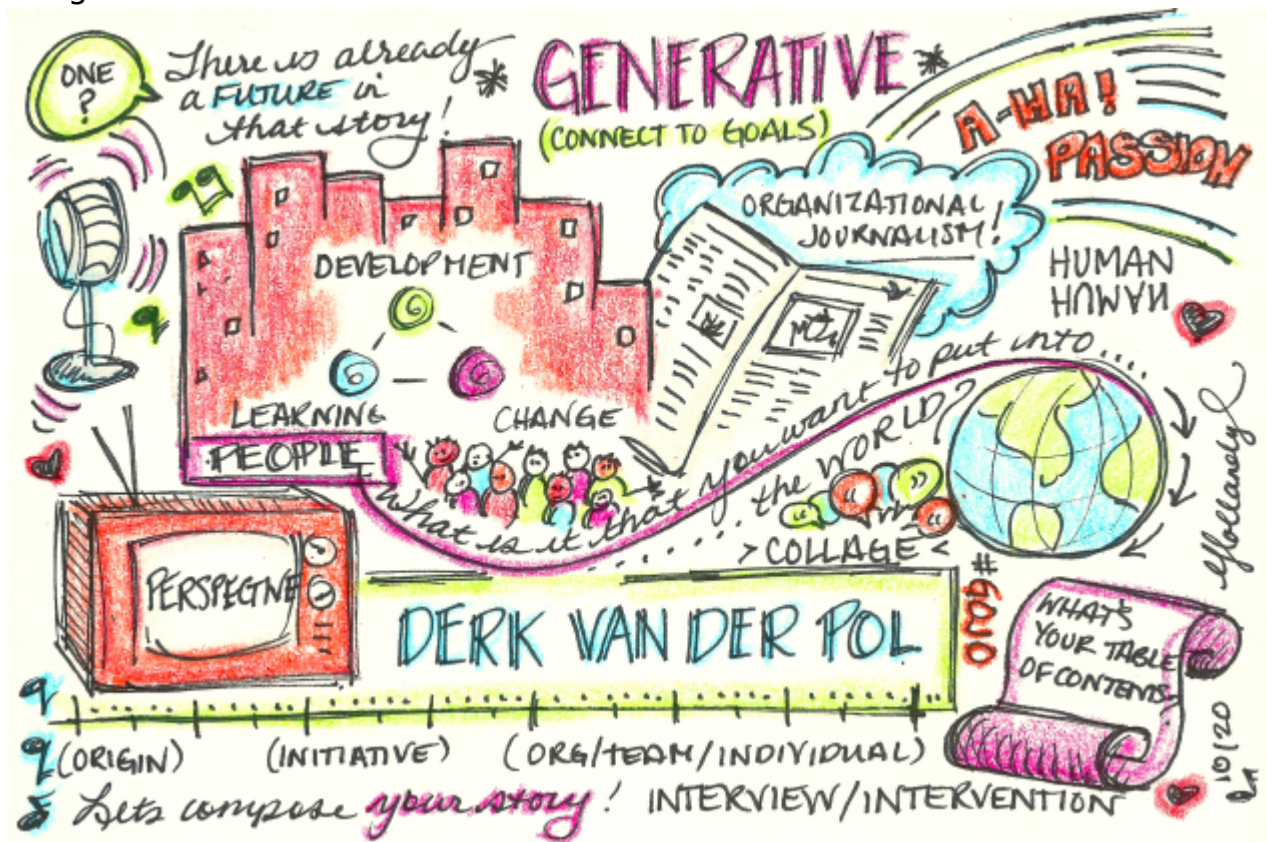


Discovering Generative Organizational Journalism with Derk van der Pol

Image



Organizational development consultant party to coining a new term: GOJO

It is people who make an organization. It is people who start initiatives inside their organizations. They should have a podium to give their stories back into the whole organization so other people can connect to those stories and grow together, says Derk van der Pol, and organizational journalist with [Kessels and Smit](#).

This is what Generative Organizational Journalism (GOJO) can do, really reconnect

people to the people of an organization.

An organization is a group of people who like to work together to get a certain main goal done. Somehow, we put that goal into all kinds of structures, hierarchies, the wishes people have, ambitions, and culture. And sometimes, that doesn't help the main goal of an organization.

Organizational journalism really helps. It connects with Generative Journalism in that sense. GOJO can help people to reconnect with what their main goal once was. Can you reconnect someone with that? And can you then put into the light where their dream future for the company is already present?

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You can look, from a journalistic approach, inside an organization with an Appreciative Inquiry perspective and uncover stories that create direction. Not ones focused on what is going badly, but just to give words to what people would really want. And well, one of the famous things in Appreciative Inquiry is, of course, words create worlds.

If you're inside an organization, you have to deal with all kinds of tensions. Realizing that, ask someone to forget about the whole system, to really sit and talk. You'll always bring that whole system with you. But, if you can really make it small and just talk to the person in front of you, then it's just a human being talking to a human being. Then you are having a good interview.

An interview is sort of intervention. People come to take things for granted and sometimes forget how special something they created together with other people is. A generative interview will help people remember they never do it alone, and how great that is. And in that story, we help someone to reconnect with that story and to make some sort of a whole.

Just by starting with the question, where did this initiative of yours start, we help a person to compose their story. What were the most important steps and who was involved? What was something that didn't work out and what did you do to make it work? Can you describe the feeling after reaching your dream? What happened with you and what's next?

Organizational journalism can focus on an organization as a whole. It can also take the perspective of a team inside the organization. Or, from an individual's perspective.

Just start from the intimacy of one conversation and see what happens.

Soon, there will be a collage of all kinds of micro stories that form a whole and that's the story of that particular team and what they do.

We share stories in order to organize, not to be an organization, Derk says.

“So, I was really fascinated by the perspective of Generative Journalism I read about in the Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner on the steps into Generative Journalism. It made so much sense because it was the way we worked (as organizational journalists) without knowing that was the way we worked,” says Derk.

It was such a defining moment in doing organizational journalism by giving some structure to how we worked, he says.

“I can ask myself what kind of journalist do I want to be? I have learned that I can call myself a journalist, a generative journalist, organizational journalist, a generative organizational journalist.”

And so, we’ve discovered GOJO.

*In this podcast Derk tells the story of his journey to generative, organizational journalism. **This article is a weaving of some the insights shared during our conversation.***

Listen to this and other [Axiom News Podcasts on Spotify](#).

To learn more about Generative Journalism visit the [Journalism for Change podcast](#). Also check out the September 2020 edition of the [Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner](#).

Upcoming Event

