

If you only have a minute: Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others and our service in the world. Prioritizing giving yourself and others space to think, solve problems, and be creative, strengthens connectedness and brings higher wisdom online.

The Power of Space

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

“Every moment is an opportunity to drift away from who you are,” says Tuula Ryttila, a former senior leader at Nokia, former Corporate Vice President at Microsoft, and board member of multiple corporations, including Bang and Olufsen. “If I’m connected with myself,” she continues, “I can have a connection with others, so staying centered is very important. I use various practices for that.”

“Fear of connection is present in a lot of human interaction. At the same time, we long for connection, so it's a big paradox. If I overcome that fear and reach out in a conflict, that's challenging,” she reflects.

Tuula cannot recall a single occasion when reaching out was not rewarded with a deeper connection.

“Often, you have to be the one to take the first step,” she says. “If you realize there’s a need for connection, and you're the one who realizes it first, it's your duty to reach out and connect - don't wait.”

“I've noticed that if I show generosity and give in, other people mostly respond the same way,” Tuula says. For example, if she is in a budget discussion where disagreement arises and she can give in a bit, that generous spirit will inspire others, so everybody genuinely wins.

Winning can happen in conflict. Creativity can happen in conflict. She reminds us that we should not fear conflict, but rather open to different perspectives – to put them on the table where they can be examined and integrated collaboratively.

At Nokia, Tuula worked on connecting people through technology. They came up with the idea that, instead of calling a room, you could call a person, which felt like a real stretch at the time. Nokia forecast that 20% of the world’s population could have a mobile phone. They were laughed at.

“I had great leaders,” she recalls. “One of them took me through coaching training. I learned that it's not powerful to always know the answer but to give the other person space to come up with it. And that learning was huge.”

At Nokia, she also learned about a leadership model that is still relevant today: “Lead your business, lead your team, and lead yourself.” “This idea of leading yourself spoke to me,” she says.

When Microsoft acquired Nokia in 2013, it was an emotional time, and Tuula felt she needed to be an example to her team. “Leading myself in that situation meant getting curious and courageous...and taking care of the team. There was this feeling of responsibility, and that gives you pressure, and not necessarily that relaxed mindset where you connect. You feel like you don't have space or oxygen. Self-

If you realize there's a need for connection and you're the one who realizes it first, it's your duty to reach out and connect – don't wait. - Tuula Ryttila

awareness was something that I was trying to catch myself when I wasn't at my best, or I was led by fear.”

Tuula learned through neuroscience about the power of creating space when working on a difficult problem. She discovered that after defining the problem, stepping back can allow intuition to emerge. She realized that intuition is a weak signal that needs space and attention to be recognized.

“Today,” Tuula says, “I have enough time to do my yoga or meditation, think or go on a walk, or just have creative thoughts so that my priorities now include things like space.”