

## **Points of contact: A photographic exploration**

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### **Abstract**

Leadership is a complex task that sometimes is described as art rather than science. Taylor and Karanian (2008) point out that if we are to take seriously the idea that leadership is an art, we might also ask, what is the medium of the art of leadership? The authors suggest that, like the glass is the medium of the glassblower, connection is the medium that is worked in the craft of leadership.

However, we seldom reflect on the nature of connection in itself. What does it mean to be in connection? How does it feel from inside? What does it look like? Inspired by Buber's (1923/1937) notion of "I and Thou", this photographic research uses contact improvisation to explore the nature of connection as one's ability to embrace another "I", while at the same time being in genuine contact with one's own "I".

Contact improvisation is a contemporary dance form in which two or more people are improvising around a point of contact. As the next move is never known in advance, the dancer can only mindfully experience the dance as it emerges, listening inwards and acting outwards at the same time. In this way, the dancers are participating in a shared co-creation while simultaneously dancing their own dances. The purpose of this still image film is to share that experience with people who would not dance themselves. In this sense, the photographs form crystalized points of contact with the dance itself.

**Keywords:** leadership, connection, contact improvisation, photography

**Video:** <https://vimeo.com/467314160>

### References

Buber, Martin. 1923/1937. *I and Thou*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Taylor, Steven S., & Karanian, Barbara 2008. Working connection: The relational art of leadership. *Aesthesis*, 2(2), 15-22.

### About the Author:

Lasse Lychnell (PhD) is a photographer, a contact improvisation dancer, and an affiliated researcher and teacher at the Stockholm School of Economics focusing on leadership, organization, and inner development. Moving seamlessly between different worlds, he allows different modes of knowing and being to be integrated. In this project, he has allowed these roles to come together as one. His paper *When work becomes meditation* won the 2017 best paper award in the Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion.