

*If you only have a minute, Rooted and Unwavering is all about connecting deeply with ourselves, others, and our service in the world. What happens to seemingly intractable conflicts when we purposefully step into another person's shoes to see the world from their perspective? How much power comes online when we align ourselves with a higher purpose?*

## United by a Higher Purpose

By Esther Groves and Hylke Faber

Imagine you have been in conflict with someone for a while and are at an impasse. Each of you thinks the other is just plain wrong or, worse yet, malicious. Each becomes more and more entrenched in their point of view. How do you break the stalemate?

Bert vonder Hoek, former CEO of the health insurance company De Friesland and current CEO of the Trimbos Institute for Mental Health in the Netherlands, suggests asking yourself one question: "What if there were no risk in taking the other person's perspective and letting yourself see that you are working toward the same goal?"

This is not a theoretical question for Bert. He is on a mission to address the conflict between health insurance companies and health care providers. Could any two industries be more at odds? When the health insurer optimizes its small part, the result is that the healthcare provider cannot provide adequate care to patients. On the other hand, when healthcare optimizes, the insurer cannot stay profitable. Taking a bird's-eye view, Bert realized that it wasn't the people who were at odds but the system. He set about to work with the systems and evolve them together.

How could a higher purpose unite them to improve healthcare quality and ease of access? How could they work together to evolve both systems and bring more justice into the world? "In my life," he says, "the value of justice has grown and grown, and, at this moment, I think it's the most important one for me. We are busy every day to give equal chances for everybody to grow up and live the way they want regardless of where they were born."

Bert started pushing the system at a young age. As the son of blue-collar parents in the Netherlands, he dreamed of attending medical school, but in the lottery system, there were more applicants than available spaces. He had loved playing in a band in high school and decided instead to study classical guitar with an option to study psychology at a later date. He eventually switched to psychology for the intellectual challenge he needed.

"I realize that having worked in health insurance companies as well as for health care providers, I know both worlds. And I feel very responsible for being a bridge between all those different worlds, and to get things in a good direction, a sustainable direction for the future. And we are doing that. With all the notice we have, it is a very difficult challenge because of all the interests of the parties in the system."

Just as Bert did not stay in the system he grew up in, he encourages people not to remain in their current system but to play in another system until they can see the world from a rival's point of view – until they can agree on a higher purpose, one that unites rather than divides and brings real justice into the world.