

# The importance of international careers

Geert Roelens

KATHO, 13 november 2012

# Everywhere



# My journey

1975

Second year RUG

Who am I?

Where do I go?

What do I want?



Today

> 55 years

CEO

World

Teach / Learn



Tomorrow

80+ years

Balanced

Into peace

Active youngster



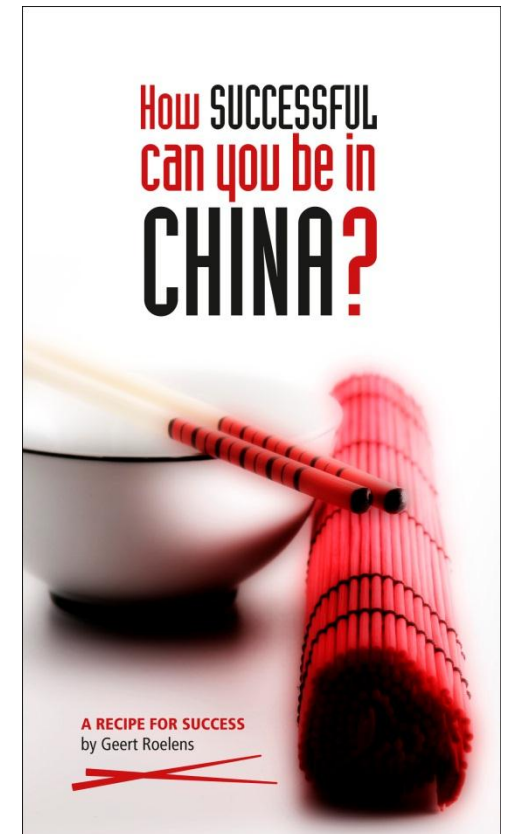
# Back in time ... 1975

1. If there is an elephant in the room, introduce him
2. “A better life than ours” *dixit my parents*
3. From one exam to the other, yet ... Firenze

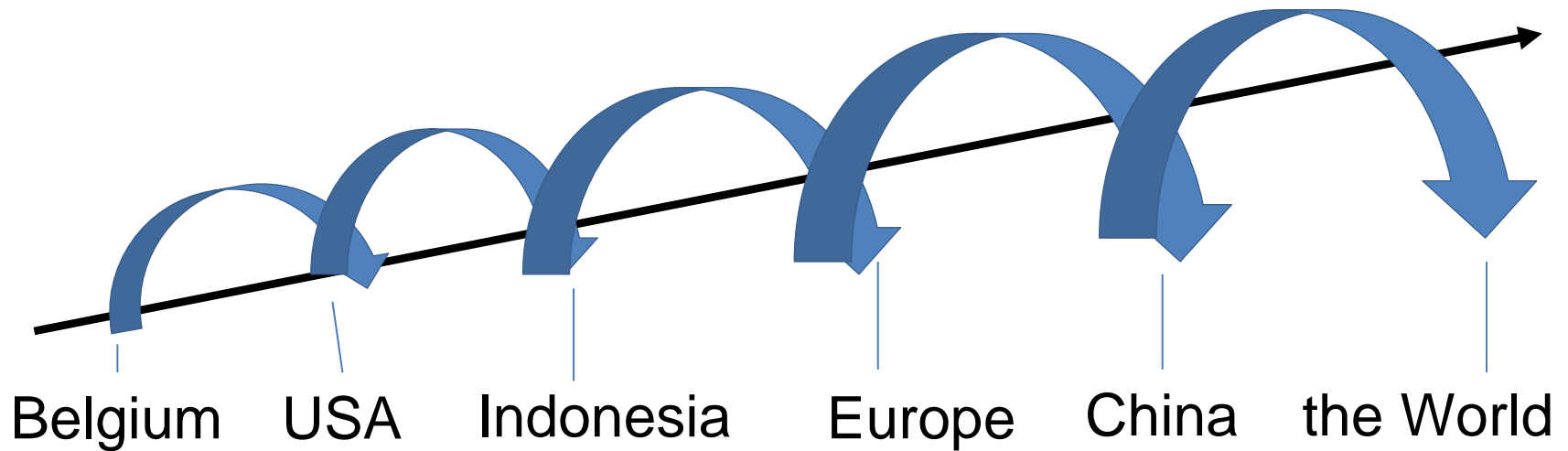


# This week

1. A new business in China
2. Someone new to coach
3. Here with you ... the future CEO's?



# How did I get here?



## My basic beliefs



HALF  
FULL

+

“FIRST WHO  
THEN WHAT”

+

“NEVER  
LOOSE FAITH”

# Do you know him?

## Zhang Heng (AD 78 – 139) Inventor of the seismometer



- Lived during the Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220)
- One of China's greatest scientists
- Still remembered as a great astronomer, mathematician, geographer, inventor and poet
- Created a "Houfeng Didongyi", an instrument for measuring seasonal winds and earth movement
- Improved ancient Chinese calculation of pi ( $\omega$ ) to the estimated value of the square root of 10 or 3.1622
- Produced a device that could measure the exact length of "li", the Chinese distance equal to half a kilometer → the first odometer in the world.

**A rich history**

# SLAGERIJ

„HET IS TOCH WEL HALAL...!“

„KOOSJER...!“

„GOEDKOOP...!!“



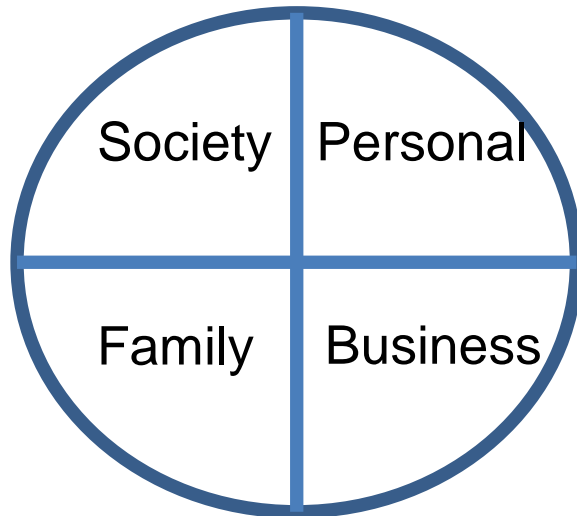
TBM



# Where did I learn the most?

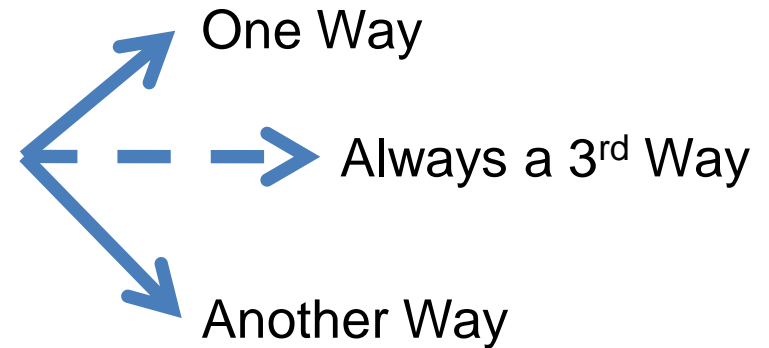
Eckerd College  
(USA)

Balance



MBA at National  
University (Singapore)

Professor Wang



# But also ... Matthias Berg, 1 month ago

5 lessons:

1. Ich packe es an
2. Ich übernehme Verantwortung
3. Ich konzentriere mich auf meine Stärken
4. Für einander engagieren
5. Diszipliniert sein



# Nie plooien ... Niemals aufgeben ... Never loose faith

## Check it out and use it

- Myers-Briggs profile – ENTJ (Extraversion / Intuition / Thinking / Judgment)
- Dare / Want / Can
- Smile please
- Step by step
- ‘My time’ concept

# My leadership model

**F**

Focus

**I**

Inspiration

**S**

Speed of decision making

**S**

Speed of execution

**T**

Togetherness



# Why do I look at Myanmar now?

## MIND

1. Untapped potential
2. First mover advantage
3. \$

## HEART

1. Aspiration
2. New people /  
cultural exploration
3. Legacy

# When you have international aspirations

- Needed:
- Language skills
  - Empathy
  - Genuine interest in people
  - Open minded
  - Balance (but work hard also)

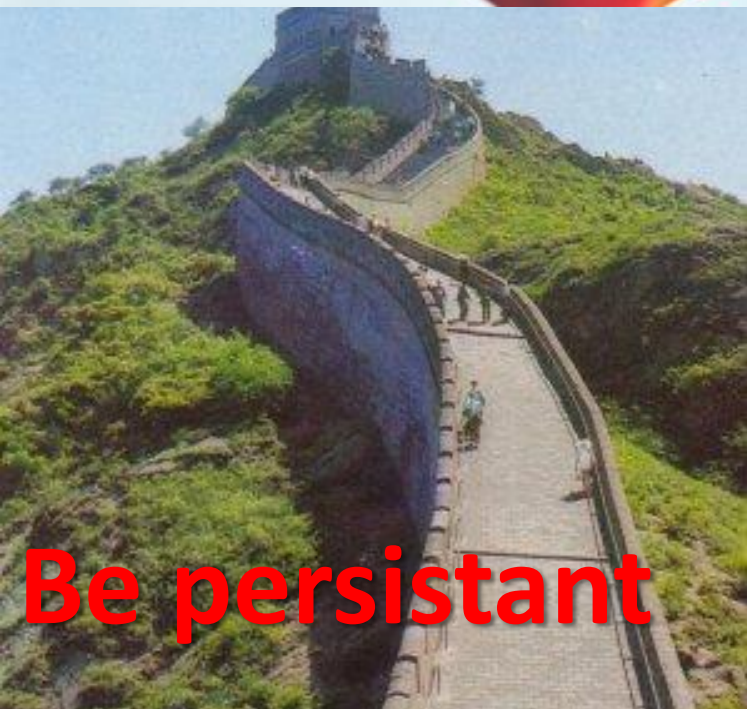
- But also:
- Select with your mind
  - Choose with your heart



**Be aware**



**Be close**



**Be persistent**



**Be adaptable**

A signpost with two green directional signs. The top sign is a green arrow pointing to the right with the word 'SUCCESS' written in white capital letters. The bottom sign is a green arrow pointing to the left with the word 'FAILURE' written in white capital letters. The signpost is a grey pole against a clear blue sky.

SUCCESS

FAILURE



# The importance of an international career

- Broaden your horizon
- Belgium ... in the world
- Learn every day, broaden your skills
- Cultural diversity
- New people, new ideas, new challenges

I did it ... my way, no regret at all.

You will do it your way, success will come.

