

## Talk Outline

Gold symbolized perfection to ancient civilizations; the highest height of existence. Firstly because of the beauty of the yellow metal and secondly, because gold was considered to be the perfect substance due to its immunity to decay. As gold is a scarce material, the alchemists set out to make their own gold. They devised complicated production processes consisting of successions of heating, melting and cooling of multiple mixtures of materials. Of course, they were never able to manufacture gold and modern science views alchemy as hocus pocus. However, a system psychodynamics inquest into and beyond the crucibles of the gold-makers elucidates that there are many golden leadership lessons that we can learn from the science and history of alchemy.

## Speaker Profile

Prof Mias de Klerk is Associate Professor in Human Capital Management and Leadership at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB), where he also holds the position as Head of Research. His research interests include system psychodynamics and unconscious processes, behavioral aspects of business ethics, emotions in organisations, change, transformation and change emotions, existentialism, meaning and spirituality in organisations. Before joining the USB at the beginning of 2015, he was employed at Sasol for many years. At Sasol, Mias was the Chief Ethics Officer of the Sasol Group and also worked as an internal Organizational Development consultant and coach in Sasol. Internationally, he facilitated workshops in many organizations and on all continents.

Mias received extensive training in the field of psychodynamics and unconscious processes, group consultation and Group Relations from the Tavistock Institute (UK), the Centre for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (Unisa), and TDCI. He has consulted several times at Group Relations events, including the Robben Island Diversity Experience, where he has taken up the role of Advanced Group Director for two years. Mias has been involved for many years in the academic world as Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour and Business Ethics at the University of Pretoria and Visiting Professor in Organisational Behavior and Leadership at the University of the Free State. His qualifications include a PhD (University of Pretoria) in Organisational Behaviour, a Masters Degree in Business Leadership (MBL) from the University of South Africa and a degree in Engineering (University of Pretoria). Mias has published widely in international scholarly journals and internationally presented more than 30 papers at academic conferences on a range of topics relating to organisational psychology. He is a member of the American Academy of Management, American Psychological Association, Business Ethics Network of Africa (BEN-Africa), Viktor Frankl Institute of Logotherapy, the Society of Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa and the Ethics Institute of South Africa.



## Prof Mias de Klerk

GOLDEN LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM  
THE ALCHEMISTS' CRUCIBLES –  
ELUCIDATION FROM A SYSTEM  
PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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