



# Plan-A.show Episode 1: What is enkelfähig? Towards a "Plan A" for our businesses, societies & planet.

## Introduction

[00:00:00] **Niels:** A guy from Alabama, a British actor and a German IT consultant walk into a bar.

[00:00:09] While this could be the start of a bad joke, what connects us three is the same that connects climate change, economic upheavals, societal unrest, wealth inequality, unrewarding workplaces, brittle relationships, anxiety about the future, and political resignation.

[00:00:25] Welcome to Plan A – A podcast in which we explore change, present and future, good and bad, through the lens of sustainability and resilience.

[00:00:34] In our opinion, there is too much talk about the problems we are all increasingly facing and not enough talk about solutions. And if there is talk about solutions, they often do not go far enough, they do not address root causes, or they are framed as divisive cutbacks rather than positive transformations.

[00:00:50] In other words, they are backup plans, makeshift band-aids to delay the inevitable just a little bit longer—rather than creating a better world here and now.

[00:00:59] In the alternative, we wish to propose and explore a Plan A instead. Approaches and solutions that are unreservedly positive; that benefit us all.

[00:01:08] Before we draw up this Plan A, get into topics as diverse as workplace productivity, agricultural land use, mental health, sustainable



prosperity, and the need for visionary politics, and before we interview expert guests on all of these subjects, we start off with a more conversational episode.

[00:01:26] In this introductory episode, we recount how the diverse interests of the three of us, seemingly unrelated at first glance, turned out to all be interrelated by the magic of a single word.

[00:01:38] And with that, the guy from Alabama walks into a bar with exactly that word in hand.

## Discovering "enkelfähig"

[00:01:46] **Scott:** The beginning of all this, for me, starts way earlier than my actual running into the word "enkelfähig". I have three kids, I came from a family, a very broken home, you know, I think there's, I forget the number, but there's like 11 or 12 marriages between my two parents.

[00:02:02] And I always thought that there had to be a better way to think about the next generation, you know. And I always thought it was very, it was very inappropriate of my parents and their parents before them to just let me start all over.

[00:02:16] It felt like it wasn't the way you can win a game by starting at the beginning every time you're born new. And I didn't really even think of that in a way of wealth, but more in a way, let's call it street smarts, combined with a solid financial background.

[00:02:30] So these are things that I've been carrying along with me along my journey, you know, going from being born in the Philippines, grow up in Alabama. In Alabama, we had a lot of nature, but we didn't really think about the nature, all that too much. You know, I was digging holes and changing the oil inside of it and stuff like that when I was a kid.

[00:02:52] I've come a long way since then from moving to Germany when I was 18. And so the environmental part of it is something that I've been gaining momentum on as far as my concern in that generational thought processes is concerned, right? So I'm carrying all these kernels of ideas with me the whole



time, and really not sure who am I, as far as that's concerned. It's a lot of simple interests, but nothing that puts all of it together.

[00:03:20] And then, out of nowhere, I found this word "enkelfähig" and it meant all of that to me at one time.

[00:03:27] The company that I worked for was bought by the company Haniel and it was literally 3:30 in the morning when I woke up in the middle of the night, knowing that we had been bought and I was tired the night before, so I didn't get a chance to look. And then I woke up looking okay, who is Haniel? Who just bought us? Is this something that I could think of long-term or is this like a PE company that's gonna want to sell us in three years? What is my future in this whole thing? And then the first thing that I saw when I landed on this page was "enkelfähig".

[00:03:56] I was like, God, I've never seen that word before. That seems really interesting. What is it? And it was very minimalistic what I could find about it, but everything that I did read on their website made me think. Okay. Okay . This is awesome. What is this? What is this?

[00:04:09] So I woke up the next morning and I went to my wife and I said, look, have you ever heard of this word before? Do you know this? And she's German. She said, no, never heard of it before. She wasn't nearly as excited as I was about it, but she just doesn't get excited about things like I do. So I was on this journey to figure out, is this Scott being Scott again, just getting excited about stuff or is this actually a real thing?

[00:04:31] And I went to my friends and to my family and my colleagues at work. And my colleagues all confirmed it. But they're not my colleagues. They actually work for me in my department. And sometimes I have to second guess like, are they saying, yes, Scott, this is great. Just so that I'll be happy with them. I know that's not the relationship that we have, but, and this is the segue into Niels.

[00:04:51] Niels is probably the one person in my life that I would go to and say, Niels, am I allowed to be excited about this? Or not. And he's not going to say yes, you can do it. And just let me feel good about myself. He's going to say no, that's a horrible thing. Why are you even wasting any time on that? That's stupid. And so if I want to have an answer about something like this, something



that I'm ready to dedicate a lot of energy to, I go to Niels and I say, Niels can you tell me what you think about this?

[00:05:24] I just basically called Niels and said, look, I've got all this podcast equipment, I'm going to come by your office. We're going to podcast. And he's like, God, I don't know about that, man. That doesn't sound like my thing, I don't like to be out there, you know?

[00:05:35] So I force-fed him this podcast thing. I think you were actually, while I was putting the stuff together, you were like, Scott, I don't want to do this. It felt almost like I was forcing you to do something you didn't want to do. And you put the headphones on, you had the microphone in front of you and it was no looking back from that point.

[00:05:54] I mean, I think I hit the record button and it was done. You were hooked.

[00:05:58] And the thing that I remember distinctly was, and one of the things you actually said, and I can find that soundbite is me, Niels, as someone who has no children, that you can identify with "enkelfähig" on a whole nother level. And that's almost the point, like you were the confirmation, you were the cherry on the top for me, that this is a powerful thing because you don't get moved by anything, really, unless it's a legitimate thing.

[00:06:25] And to see that you don't have to have generations coming out of you to care, right. So that was, that was really important for me.

[00:06:32] And that's my quick intro to how we got here. You know, I basically left your office, Niels, and then, apparently, you started talking to people. Maybe you can explain from that point on how it went from there and your perspective.

[00:06:47] **Niels:** I think I didn't want to hide as much as I thought, who would want to listen to me on anything, but what won me over is the headphones you gave me were pink and had cat ears. So I was sold from then on.

[00:07:00] And when you came to me with the term, I think your first question was, have you ever heard of "enkelfähig". And much like Barbara, your wife, I had never heard that word, but it immediately made sense. And it combined, at



least the way I interpreted it right from the get-go, and I guess we will flesh out what it means later on, it combined several interests that I've had for a long time anyway. But the attractiveness of that word in particular, is that it encompasses them all.

[00:07:28] And it's so easily understood. Maybe not for our English speaking listeners, so to explain "enkel" simply means grandchildren and "fähig" means something along the lines of capable. So making something, behaving in a manner that is compatible with future generations, I guess would be a good summary of it.

[00:07:47] And so to me, it's one term that encompasses many ideas that, at first glance, maybe they are disparate. So it's financial, it's environmental, it's social. But all these ideas actually form a cohesive concept for better business, for better lives, for a better society, for a better environment. And it's this combination that makes it so, so interesting to me, as a word.

[00:08:08] And it turns out, I think, that when you start to comprehensively think about the many challenges facing individuals, businesses, and societies today, there are these universally applicable ideas and solutions. And even if individual measures are particular to a specific audience or a specific set of problems, they nevertheless interrelate.

[00:08:28] And if you take all of these ideas together, they form a positive feedback loop. The hope is that you then get a sort of a runaway solution, that you can't even stop anymore. And I come at all of this from two different angles.

[00:08:41] First, I come at it from a classic sustainability angle, meaning environmental sustainability.

[00:08:47] So what can we do, as individuals, to live sustainably in an era of oversupply of unsustainable goods, services, and even habits, frankly. But also how can we structure society so that society is able to resist those offers and how can we structure our economic system so that those offers don't even make it to the market in the first place or that they are priced fairly, in a manner that factors in all of these externalities.

[00:09:13] And then secondly, I'm interested in the subject of resilience.



[00:09:15] Not only in the context of environmental sustainability, meaning climate change, but also in the context of mental resilience to personal fate and to the duality of human existence on the part of individuals, psychological health, broadly speaking, but also in the context of societal resilience to change in general, environmental, economic or political upheaval. And in the context of business who have to constantly adapt to all these changing conditions.

[00:09:48] And with all of these ideas already, kind of, marinating in my mind anyway, I had, before, Scott, you came to me with "enkelfähig", I had approached Eirik to talk to him about all these issues, because I know he shared the same interests and he also comes from a consulting background. And I was wondering if we could figure out a way to offer consulting services to make private businesses more sustainable and resilient. And I think it's this combination that's interesting from a business perspective, how can we, as a business, be resilient to all of these things.

[00:10:20] And that led to us founding the joint consulting practice "Mellontiko". And, Scott, I think either on the first or second time when you came to me with this word "enkelfähig", I immediately afterwards just sent you a link to our website.

[00:10:34] **Scott:** You actually read the content of the homepage to me. And I was like, what, that sounds like an "enkelfähig", you know, so it was a really weird coincidence.

[00:10:44] **Niels:** It's "enkelfähig" by a different name, I suppose, a bit more geared towards the business consulting practice.

[00:10:48] But yeah, Eirik what, what did you think when you were approached with all of this and when then Scott later came around and called it "enkelfähig"?

[00:10:56] **Scott:** Yeah, but wait a minute, wait a minute. Like, so you guys had your thing going on. That was going on before I approached you with "enkelfähig". Did you call Eirik that night and be like something's happening here? Or was it, was it just a coincidence that, I mean, you guys talk later about in a conversation you were having coming anyway and you said, Hey, I had this guy in the office and you were talking about this.



[00:11:16] **Niels:** I don't know exactly when it was, but at that time I was thinking about whom could we talk to for the podcast. So Eirik is in the UK and I thought, well, that's good to talk to people there. And yeah, he got immediately on board as well.

[00:11:29] **Scott:** The accent sounds legitimate by the way. So we're, we're about to listen to it.

[00:11:33] **Niels:** But he is a trained actor, so.

[00:11:35] **Eirik:** It must have been relatively quickly after you had the conversation initially you got in touch and as you mentioned, we'd been sort of talking about this and interested in it from a sort of professional capacity in terms of how we can strategically support businesses and becoming more resilient.

[00:11:52] And resilience was really the key kind of concept that we thought about. How to attract that. Simply because, and this, I think comes with our background of how we have dealt with companies. And specifically for myself, I've done quite a bit of work in due diligence.

[00:12:06] But also strategically for pension companies and especially sort of the front facing workplace pension companies. So they deal with private individuals who directly invest. And one of the major issues they are struggling with or have been struggling with, are still continuously struggling with, is how to bring the concept of investment closer to these private individuals, who give their money to them and then expect something back in retirement. Because the vast majority of people don't have a detailed relationship to financial concepts like that. So they don't necessarily understand.

[00:12:38] And then once they do understand, it becomes very cryptic in terms of where your money actually is. And of course, because then there is a number of bad news stories, people are hesitant about it, of where their money is actually going. Especially when you consider topics like weapons manufacturing, animal testing, all sorts of things.

[00:12:58] And so the industry started thinking about how can we label specific funds or fund choices that then include or exclude specific segments like that.



And they came up with all this terminology such as ethical investment, responsible investments.

[00:13:16] And none of this is new, of course, none of this is in any way, shape or form impactful to the person who is reading about it because it's very vague, it doesn't really make a lot of sense on its own. You would have to interrogate it in detail and understand what it really means. And in terms of investing, you would probably have to look at the fund choices. No one is of course going to do that. So it's a labeling and branding issue.

[00:13:41] And the reason why I talk about that or bring that up is because that's what sucked me into "enkelfähig".

[00:13:48] Because exactly as you both said, and exactly as Niels said, you say that term, you mention it and you immediately know what it means. Even if you mention it to an English speaker who doesn't understand the term and explain, as Niels did, the two components and you immediately grasp what it entails or what it should entail.

[00:14:10] There's an underlying concept there that is immediately graspable, I guess that's what I'm trying to say. So from what it sounds like we all had a very similar kind of experience in that it's a topic well worthwhile exploring and talking about.

[00:14:23] **Scott:** It's the emotional part of it, right? All of the other initiatives that I've come across that either have to do with sustainability or maybe even social standards and not necessarily just environmental sustainability, it's not the only thing. I mean, ESG encompass all of it. But there's no emotional component to it.

[00:14:38] And "enkelfähig" puts almost a fifty percent emotional thing on top of this already a hundred percent ESG part and turns it into this beautiful thing.

[00:14:48] I have a colleague here that I talk to a lot about it. Her name is Anke and Anke compares it to a multilayered cake. You've got all these beautiful layers, whether that's the social part or the environmental part or whatever it is, all of these beautiful things that should be taken care of, and that will be worked on. And then you've got this icing that comes over this cake, called "enkelfähig", which puts it all together in this perfect kind of cake thing.





[00:15:10] For me, it's the emotional part of "enkelfähig" that I think can make it be the motor for everybody to join into this. I think it's something that can grab onto people. I want to just add that in that's the emotional part of it that I think is a really a good thing. I mean, I think all the initiatives are good and every time I see them, I'm really happy about it. But the thing that gets me excited about it and not just me personally, but the reason that I believe that this can become something big is because it brings a big emotional package with it.

[00:15:37] **Niels:** For me, it was all about the communication aspects of it. How easy this term, this word makes it to communicate.

[00:15:44] I guess the purpose of all these measures is, if you talk about let's save this tree over here, let's do this, let's do that, a lot of people won't get the bigger picture or the ultimate goal of it. And I found it to be a very good tool to talk to people. Ultimately, I mean, that's why we do the podcast, right? It's all about communication.

[00:16:03] **Scott:** Yeah.

[00:16:04] **Eirik:** I agree. I think the PR kind of, or marketing, kind of power of the term is what's great. It omits or avoids the sort of negative connotations around sustainability, environmentalism that sort of ends up in, I don't know, dirty hippyism for some. And more conservative people will therefore, perhaps also immediately block that off because it has a negative connotation to them that they may not necessarily want to engage with.

[00:16:28] And then it has this great ability to actually focus, as Niels put it, on what is important, that kind of humanity element, because it is us who are we'll run into problems going forward, if we don't change things socially, environmentally, and generally becoming more "enkelfähig". And I think that's what it does really, really well.

## Why start a podcast

[00:16:48] **Eirik:** I think that there was a point though, where, and I think this is an interesting one that you brought up, Niels, where perhaps you weren't necessarily immediately on board for this podcast or to generally talk about it.



[00:17:01] **Scott:** Is that, because I was involved?

[00:17:03] **Niels:** No, it's just there's two types of podcasts, right? There is this, sort of, just information, be it like a news podcast or something very specific about a specific subject, then there is the sort of narrative stuff, which you listen to almost like an audio book, just to be entertained. And, I guess there's three, then there is people talking into a microphone. And kind of that's what I was scared of. I didn't want to add to that body of work, as it were. And so Scott came around and said, look, let's just record us talking. I think he said something along the lines of it's fun to talk into a microphone. We did that two or three times, and then Eirik came on board and we just started having conversations that we happened to record. In these conversations each of us told anecdotes, recounted conversations we have had, and we kind of developed these ideas. It got me really excited about where else we could go with this.

[00:17:56] Because it's such a big area to explore. Even just among the three of us, we're interested in environmental issues, we're interested in business. And that's another great thing about the term "enkelfähig", as Eirik mentioned, it's different than this hippie environmentalism. So it's more kind of palatable.

[00:18:14] There's another aspect to it, which is the business related aspect. Where If you talk about a business becoming more sustainable or more resilient, this can easily be interpreted as, oh, they just want to make more money. It's just all about the profits for them, but you can also structure a business in a manner that is "enkelfähig". Meaning you can, and that's what Haniel is doing, you can actually have a stable, profitable business over generations. And if that's a responsible business, that's good for all of society. It's not just good for the people who own the businesses. It's good for the employees, it's good for the community, it's good for the state, because they pay taxes and they provide jobs. A lot of businesses who are "enkelfähig" do a lot of sponsoring in the communities.

[00:18:58] And so this term is just a purely positive term. Because by its definition, even if you had a multi-generational business, if it wrecks the environment, it wouldn't be "enkelfähig". So if you say this is an "enkelfähig" business, it kind of encompasses all of these things. And that is precisely why I like it so much. It brings together all these things.



[00:19:20] **Eirik:** I was going to pick up on the sort of communication aspect again. Because no one knows exactly what things need to be done in order to be more *enkelfähig*. You can't basically have a blanket solution is what I'm saying. Rather, you need individual tailored and specific solutions for specific problems. And they can't all be the same. And I think that's one of the inherent challenges around this.

[00:19:43] From my perspective, then therefore more, most important in order to create a society that is more *"enkelfähig"* is to run an effective PR campaign, essentially, to make this palatable to everyone and to get everyone thinking about it. And as we've just demonstrated, *"enkelfähig"* is a perfect hook for that. This podcast does, all these conversations do, two things.

[00:20:07] One, help me engage with the topic in more detail in terms of what it actually may mean and what kind of practical solutions or what kind of roadmaps can you provide to people as well as specifically businesses to address those kinds of things and become more resilient.

[00:20:25] And also, what can you do? How can you positively make an impact through influencing other people to think about this in a constructive manner?

[00:20:34] **Niels:** And it makes for a great mantra as well. "Is this *'enkelfähig'*?", you can ask yourself when you're doing something, is this actually *'enkelfähig'*?" It's a great check on things.

[00:20:40] **Scott:** It's an easy question. It really is an easy question. It's just a few words and it actually goes back to kind of a lot of self-help type of things. Before you eat that, ask yourself, do you really need it? Or before you do that, ask yourself, is that really positive for you? And this gives us a collective one of those things. "Is this *'enkelfähig'*?" "Is this decision I'm about to make *'enkelfähig'*?"

[00:21:01] **Eirik:** In terms of the combination of podcasting and this subject. How did you come about marrying the two?

[00:21:09] **Scott:** I've been listening to podcasts basically since podcasts came out. And I've, just recently over the last couple of years, stopped listening to podcasts. And for me it was always an intention to do something with podcasting. The original idea, for me, and it's weird because it's kind of an



"enkelfähig" thing, but I never really put it or thought about it like that, is I wanted to document for my children who I am. So I wanted to have conversations with friends of mine so that later when they're adults, they can listen to how I was when I was however old I was when I was recording. And it was something that I was always planning on doing just as a private thing to just hand over to them at some point.

[00:21:46] I wish I had something from my parents to listen to. What were they thinking when they were my age? Are we having the same problems, the same thought processes, things like that. Also if they ever wanted guidance on anything. Just one of those things. It would be nice, if I hit a tree, that my kids would have something from me.

[00:22:01] So that was the beginning of what am I going to do as far as podcasts, but it never really turned into much. And the equipment was always kind of expensive when I was looking into it and I did some recording into my phone, but it's different.

[00:22:12] And then at work we had, really with Corona, an issue that our sales team was no longer allowed to just go to construction sites and walk onto it. And we had to teach a very analogue sales team to become more digital hunters . And LinkedIn was something that we put into focus. And I just said to my colleague here, look, let's do a podcast for our sales team.

[00:22:34] And we bought the equipment. That was the first time I had a legitimate reason to spend a thousand Euros on equipment. And we sat down and we did, I think, 25 episodes for our sales team about how to use LinkedIn . And that went over really well and it felt natural to me to be on the microphone and to have those conversations. And I had a really good time and that's when I realized, okay, this is fun. I like doing this. This is something that I really want to get into.

[00:23:01] And that's when "enkelfähig" kind of fell over me. I'm not going to say fell into my lap, but just like washed over me. And so the two things basically came to me almost at the same time. It was almost simultaneously. And really the confirmation that I had was when I saw Niels' eyes light up with the pink headphones on. And I thought, okay, if he's in, I'm in. So that's where this whole thing came from.



[00:23:24] **Eirik:** In terms of the topics or, I guess, the interests of "enkelfähig". Why is it that you think, and this is trying to bridge the gap between format and content, what is it that makes the format suitable for the interests that you have, the underlying interests in "enkelfähig" do you think?

[00:23:43] **Scott:** Podcasting is a good way to get a message out. So there's the combination of the ease of production together with, usually when someone's listening to a podcast they're less distracted than if they're watching a video or something else. To watch a video, you actually have to sit down and you have to pay attention. If you're not paying attention, you're not getting all the information the video is giving you.

[00:24:03] But if you're in your car or you're on a train or you're on a jog and you're listening to a podcast, it's in your ear and it's in your mind, and you're thinking about it. You usually can engage with it a lot deeper than you can with most other formats.

[00:24:15] **Niels:** Podcasts make it easy to talk to people. Firstly just logistically it's a lot easier to stick a microphone into someone's mouth rather than setting up a camera, taking care of lighting, makeup, whatever, worrying about the background in a shot. It's a lot easier to just do audio. And I think a lot more people are comfortable with being on audio rather than also being on video.

[00:24:35] Especially in era of COVID, where we would have to ship a lot of equipment if we wanted to do high quality video, audio is just, it's the sensible solution. More "enkelfähig", maybe, you could say.

[00:24:48] **Eirik:** Podcasting is more "enkelfähig". I like it.

## The themes we plan to explore

[00:24:52] **Eirik:** I think it's worthwhile just touching on the kind of themes and ideas that we want to personally explore and perhaps will try to explore through this podcast going forward.

[00:25:04] From my perspective, I'd like to delve into these ideas of resilience more. To wrap business strategy up in a way that becomes easy to action for smaller businesses that may not have resources and time and money and effort



to put into these kinds of things, because they have to forward-focus on their core business. But to give them something that they can easily understand, that they can agree with and go, that makes absolute sense for us.

[00:25:32] I think that is ultimately where I'd like to sort of come out or have the hope to come out.

[00:25:38] **Niels:** That actually reminded me why, I started thinking about formulating all of these ideas I've had into a business consulting practice. Because I got frustrated with some of my past consulting clients, about a lack of strategy. So they would be in whatever business they're in and they'd perform very well sort of in their business, but there was a lack of bigger picture vision. And, of course, that's the luxury if you come into a company as an outside consultant. You're not, we call it "betriebsblind" in Germany, which just means you don't have this tunnel vision of, "oh, we have to do what we do every day". You can take a step back.

[00:26:19] And I wanted to formulate that into something, not *all* encompassing, but into a *principle* of advising businesses that takes into account more than just, oh, did the blah blah blah delivery arrive this morning. And when I then started talking to you, Eirik, you had all of these ideas in your head already about UN sustainability goals. And it kind of took off from there.

[00:26:41] So I'm interested in the strategic angle. I'm also interested in the resilience angle, that you already brought up.

[00:26:47] And, this might be a German thing, because World War II, effectively, started with a social upheaval that society wasn't resilient to, that society couldn't cope with in a healthy manner. We see it in COVID a little bit. We saw maybe with the election of Trump, where society and the political system just wasn't resilient to a certain type of change. And that's not healthy, that's not good, that's not productive. So I'm highly interested in that topic.

[00:27:18] And then, as I mentioned earlier in the introduction, just the classic environmentalism as well. And my sort of angle on all of this is: let's think about it in a manner that makes us realize that all of this change is positive, regardless. If we plant a tree, it doesn't matter whether the tree was climatologically necessary to be in that particular spot. It's nice to look at, right. If we get rid of a few cars, it doesn't matter if that gets air quality below a



certain threshold. It's just, it's nicer to sit outside at a café if there isn't a huge truck rolling past. So I think there's a way of framing all of these measures in a much more positive manner than is done classically.

[00:28:04] **Scott:** Yeah. I mean maybe even the framing of it is less necessary, but just the realization "how do I see it?", right? So I think that's actually a really good thing. We can frame it for the people who don't see the proper frame or the same frame that we see in a way that they can accept it and accept it as good. The change itself isn't bad. It's just change bothers people sometimes. So yeah. And, and I agree with you totally.

[00:28:31] So I guess it is a framing, but I wouldn't want to reframe it totally. You've got this huge group of people that like the frame that's hanging there. But you just have this other group of people who don't like that frame. So let's build a new frame for them. I don't know what the word—duplo-frame it, I don't know.

[00:28:46] **Niels:** Sort of self-framing, like what's happening internally in people's heads, not handing them a reframing that they have to accept. It's more, just look at it, you, as the listener, look at it from a slightly different angle and you'll see all these positive aspects to it.

[00:29:00] **Scott:** Yep. And I'd like to take one second to explain where I'm coming from on this whole thing. Because this is where the three of us differ to some extent. I think me differing from the two of you more extensively. And that's what our talks in the past have given. One of the things that I'd like to get out there, like what my purpose and the reason that I'm in this is because it's not the same. Let's say my drive isn't the same.

[00:29:23] I accept all of the "enkelfähig" initiatives, every single one. It doesn't matter what it is. If we can get this thing going, if you have the "enkelfähig" badge, you're my people, right? You don't have my focus necessarily, but you're my people, right? We can, we can eat at the same table. We can play the same games. We can do the same stuff. We are all on the same team. But there's different focuses in the whole thing.

[00:29:49] And I don't know what it is and I don't know why it's my drive, but my drive in this whole thing is really to better the workplace. The work life, I don't even call it work-life balance, but the place you are for eight to twelve



hours of your day, more sustainable for the individual. And I believe that making them more sustainable for the individual itself collectively will make it possible. And it will give us this resilience that you guys are looking for.

[00:30:13] I think there's some really simple things that can be done to alleviate some of the pains that we have. And those are the things that I would like to concentrate on.

[00:30:20] I've been talking to Haniel about their interpretation of "enkelfähig". And I had a couple of really interesting conversations in the direction of diversity, also in the direction of customer experience and using "lean" to optimize processes and what kind of stresses that can take out of the day-to-day in the work life.

[00:30:39] Those are the things that I get up in the morning thinking, okay, I can work on that. And that's the one thing that I really, really want to explore. I'd like to talk to people on this podcast who are working on making the lives of the normal workers more productive, more enjoyable for them. And not enjoyable in a way that, ha ha we're playing soccer at work, that's not what I'm talking about. That's the first place everybody goes with this.

[00:31:02] I want people to be comfortable at work. I want diverse teams to be more productive with each other, and I would like to better the workplace. So that's where I'm coming from with this. And from my perspective, it's not a small thing that I'm focused on. It can go in a lot of directions, just like the environmental issues can. So it's a daunting task for me to look at. And I've really been trying to get my brain wrapped around how to get focused within that. That's where I'm coming from, from this whole perspective.

[00:31:28] **Niels:** And that's the beauty of the term "enkelfähig", isn't it? That it all, kind of, pays into the same account, as it were.

[00:31:36] **Scott:** Yeah. Pays into the same account, I like that.

[00:31:38] **Niels:** Yeah. And I'm hoping this will also turn into the positive feedback loop we touched upon earlier, where if you figure out that aspect of "Enkelfähigkeit", it changes mindsets, it changes approaches, and it'll improve the entire company. And if the company is improved, it will improve society and so on and so forth.





[00:31:57] And I think it's an important point that you bring up, that it is actually allowed for people to focus on one thing. We don't have to worry about all the issues in the world simultaneously and figure everything out all at once, and if we can't reach perfection instantly, we won't even bother. If everyone in their world does what they are interested in, but every action that they take is "enkelfähig" in and of itself. Then it's the way society works. Not everyone is a baker, not everyone is a firefighter and we kind of divide it all up and it works out beautifully in the end.

[00:32:28] And it's excellent to be on the podcast with the two of you, that there's three of us with slightly different interests, because I think it'll make for more holistic picture. And it's perfectly fine if one episode focuses on this and one focuses on that. And it kind of pollinates each other, all the topics.

## What to expect from future episodes

[00:32:47] **Eirik:** Exactly. That is also a perfect segue into what possibly could be expected by listeners going forward, from us. And that touches on exactly that, it is a broad variety of different topics. Like I said earlier, both macro and micro things that we will be discussing, hopefully in a way that is easy to listen to, somewhat entertaining, but also thought provoking.

[00:33:12] The final little subject that may be worthwhile to touch on is what we personally hope to achieve through this.

[00:33:19] We've kind of got to this point where I feel this could have a great impact on several fronts. I do think it's a personal journey and exploration that I really want to go on, that I'm really keen on, that I'm very interested in. Simply because I do think it will help me understand the subject better. I think if there are people who are willing to go on that journey maybe it will help them to do something.

[00:33:41] And then, finally, I think there is this element of thinking about this as a sort of research process from which you can synthesize or distill specific ideas and action initiatives and strategies that can then be employed. There are systemic issues that can be addressed across all kinds of spheres, whether that is making the workplace better in terms of employees, whether it's making it better in terms of the environmental impact, et cetera, and so on. But I think translating it into easy and actionable and sensible kind of points and bringing



out positive and constructive examples to the forefront will be necessary to do that. So that's kind of what I'm hoping to get out of this.

[00:34:23] **Scott:** I would like to provide as much context as possible so that the question can be answered "is this 'enkelfähig', or not". That's basically the point of this podcast. So if you listen to an episode, at the end of the episode, you should understand, concerning that particular episode's content, you understand what the answer to that question is. Is this "enkelfähig" or is it not?

[00:34:50] **Eirik:** Essentially, yeah, we should always be angling to, at the end of the podcast, to leave ourselves and all our listeners a little bit wiser and more knowledgeable about these sorts of subjects.

[00:35:00] **Niels:** Or even just asking more questions. It's just as valid, if we're in an episode, saying "look, is this 'enkelfähig'? We don't know." Let's just think about it some more.

[00:35:08] **Scott:** Yeah. There's a possibility that we might be on a knife's edge, as we've seen before. As long as you're intellectually engaged, your answer is almost always going to be okay for what you're doing there.

[00:35:19] I'm very much interested in the business aspect of it. Anybody in a business, working in a business and/or making decisions within a business, or even running businesses, those are the people that I would like to be gathering information for. That's who I am.

[00:35:32] And that's, Eirik, what you're saying, I need more context in these things, I need more information. I'm looking forward so much to learning. And there's gonna to be so much we can learn during this process. So that's actually what I'm most excited about, is actually finally sitting down and talking to people who know what they're talking about, about the questions that I'd like to get answered. And if we can get some other people informed through that process, great!

[00:35:55] **Niels:** I fully agree with you, Scott. And this is what actually got me excited, or I'm still excited about this, is exactly conversations like this, and then interpolating out, well, once we start getting guests on, it'll plant even more ideas into our heads.



[00:36:09] I think we touched upon this earlier, but just explain to the listeners. We have been doing these calls for a few weeks now, conversations just like this. And even just among the three of us, there have been many different ideas and, in some aspects, even different goals. For sure, we come at it from different angles and that is exactly what has been so stimulating, at least to me.

[00:36:31] And if nothing else, it has validated that, yes, there is a problem, but there is also a solution. And that solution isn't terribly exotic or idiosyncratic. Quite the opposite, the solution we are thinking about, or why we are thinking about it, represents a fundamentally human trait of simply trying to leave a better word for our descendants.

[00:36:54] And there is also a very logical and non divisive way of getting there. And that is, I think, a very important aspect: that this isn't a divisive issue. If you think about it with the "enkelfähig" framing, very much human, it's kind of coded into us already. The behavior that I think we need to show is our most natural behavior, in many aspects.

[00:37:17] And the realization that the three of us can be so like-minded on this and that the term "enkelfähig" can encompass all these different things under one term, under one coherent vision, makes me, to your point from last week, Scott, excited to continue this.

[00:37:32] **Scott:** That's good to hear.

[00:37:35] **Niels:** And to kind of wrap up my feelings about this, maybe a little bit, to my mind, what is so negative, non-productive and probably psychologically harmful about so many conversations around sustainability and resilience is this focus on austerity and restriction. That efforts in sustainability and resilience, they're often framed as reductions of some sort, of retreat and decline, as being only the better of two evils. Almost presented in a manner that it's akin to a possibly lifesaving, but otherwise undesired amputation of a limb. We just have to do it. That's the only way out. But it can also be looked at as positive salvation.

[00:38:20] And in the current environment, societally, we're just firefighting. We're merely administering our lives, our societies, our businesses. And as a result, we see it all around us, we are getting more panicked, or more cynical.



And a lot of people just mentally completely disengage. They don't even go vote anymore.

[00:38:42] What I'm interested in instead is shaping a positive and holistic vision. And then really get into the weeds of implementing it, both on a small and large scale. And I think we can make changes that are unequivocally positive for everyone. There's no losers in this, if we can all just slightly change our perspective.

[00:39:05] **Eirik:** You've touched on something really, really important. In terms of this podcast, and this sort of micro environment of discussing it, one of the things we, in previous conversations, definitely decided was important to maintain and carefully manage and curate this focus on positivity. Because otherwise there is this danger of circling and spiraling into subjects and constantly hitting these challenges that just depress you. Scott rightly pointed out, throughout this, that that wasn't really what he was wanting to focus on and that, that wasn't really what should guide these conversations.

[00:39:40] So I think it's important to iterate that. Should you decide to listen to this going forward, we will do our best to enlighten your day with very dark subjects.

[00:39:51] **Scott:** That's a good way of putting it. You know what? I just wrote down something. I will make this t-shirt: "'enkelfähig' has no losers". I think that's awesome. You just said that, Niels. I mean, it wasn't in that exact same wording, but "enkelfähig" has no losers. I think that's awesome.

[00:40:07] **Niels:** Yeah. Society, the world, it's not a zero sum game. We can all, and that goes back to the positive feedback loops, we can all win in this and probably benefit from it much more than we can even conceive right now.

[00:40:21] If you're happier at the workplace, if your company is more productive, if your society is better, if the environment is better, it's just this positivity in all of this. And everyone though, in society, even if you are not in any position of power whatsoever, you're still impacting others around you, even if it's just in your family. What's the mood you're in when you come home.

[00:40:43] I think, collectively, we do need to change our perspectives on this a little bit, and we need to break out of these preconceived notions and these

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artificial urges, when we think about things like fast fashion, and embrace a more positive view of "Enkelfähigkeit", of all these measures, of ourselves, and of the world around us.

## Towards a Plan A!

[00:41:07] **Niels:** And what had always bothered me about this focus on the climate catastrophe, as it's now being called, is even if there was no environmental urgency, we should all strive for a better world, a happier existence and more "Enkelfähigkeit" *anyway*.

[00:41:28] And if I can be so bold as to wrap up a little bit. What bothers me is that everyone is just talking about a plan B, or a plan C, or a plan D. And what we want to do with this podcast is to draw up a positive Plan A. Sometimes as a high resolution, very concrete blueprint for you to follow directly. And sometimes more abstractly merely guiding you towards new ideas and concepts.

[00:41:56] And in doing so, the three of us, we want to constantly reevaluate our own ideas and preconceptions of the world as well. And much like you, Scott, that's what I personally look forward to the most is to engage with the guests and listeners on these subjects and just learn more about everything.

[00:42:13] So whether you're in business or a political leader, whether you work in an NGO or governmental agency, whether you're a concerned citizen or an interested consumer, join us in formulating this Plan A for our individual lives and our shared societies and planet.

[00:42:33] Join us in 16 weeks for the next episode of Plan-A.show.

[00:42:38] **Eirik:** Excellent. And on that beautiful summary by Niels, thank you very, very much for listening. Thank you for your time. And we hope to be able to welcome you back at our next episode of Plan-A.show.

## Credits

[00:42:51] **Niels:** This was [Plan-A.show/1](https://plan-a.show/1). Go there to download or share this episode or to read its transcript.

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[00:43:02] We would like to apologize for the audio quality of this first episode. We are still learning. And this was a mid-pandemic remote recording with all the challenges that brings with it.

[00:43:12] If you have any comments or questions, please email us at [feedback@plan-a.show](mailto:feedback@plan-a.show).

[00:43:18] If you work in any of the areas discussed on this podcast, we would love to record an episode with you. Please get in touch.

[00:43:24] Plan-A.show was created by Eirik Bar, Niels Ganser and Scott Denton. This episode was edited by Eirik and Niels. This episode's music was performed by Nikolay Skvortsov.

[00:43:36] Thank you for listening.