



**Novosibirsk Philharmonia, Siberia
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Mr. Jack Ma, the renowned Chinese entrepreneur and founder of Alibaba—a global giant in e-commerce, online banking, and digital media—shared some insightful reflections in an interview some time ago.

He mentioned that he planned to retire at the age of 54 because he didn't want to die in an office. That statement made him, of course, quite likable. But as a leadership expert, what struck me most was this statement:

"The world needs new leadership, but the new leadership is about working together. As a business person, I want the world to share prosperity together. The best thing about Alibaba is that we come together under a common mission and vision. Globalization is a good thing, but it too should be inclusive."

In these few sentences, Mr. Ma touched on some crucial concepts—collective creativity, inclusion, and shared prosperity. And the word “together” appears three times in his brief statement.

Why do I bring this up? Because today, these very principles—collective creativity, sharing, inclusion, and collaboration—are more critical than ever. They are not just essential for effective leadership but also serve as key drivers of innovation within companies, organizations, cities, and entire regions.

Imagine if a city like Novosibirsk—already one of Russia's most important industrial and scientific hubs—were to strengthen its focus on diversity, inclusion, collaboration across institutions and social sectors, the exchange of ideas and perspectives, openness, and curiosity.

This city would be perfectly positioned to become a center of innovation and excellence—not only in culture, science, and business for Siberia and Russia but also on a global scale. It could become the "Silicon Valley of the East."

Honored guests, let me ask you a few questions:

- What is driving your desire to become more international?
- Your aspiration to position Novosibirsk as a hub of innovation?
- Your wish to open yourselves to Europe and the world?
- Your curiosity to hear new voices and perspectives?
- Your interest in communicating and collaborating with people from different countries?

All of these desires stem from the same fundamental impulse: *curiosity*—a deeply human trait. It is the urge to discover the new, but also the feeling of being more open than ever before!

I invite you to reflect on your "Why."

Why do you feel the need to become more international?

Please, do not simply answer, "*to expand our business.*" That may be the outcome, but it is not the true driver!

The desire to go international is the first step toward innovation.

And the journey ahead will be paved with core values such as:

- **Diversity:** Engaging with people who think and live differently will be deeply enriching.
- **Trust:** You must be willing to give before you receive.
- **Courage:** You will need bravery to take the first step—and even more to continue on this path.
- **Networking:** You will need to build and continuously nurture relationships both internally and externally.
- **Authentic Communication:** Your communication—both internal and external—must be respectful, transparent, and authentic to be truly effective.

Now, let's return to *curiosity*—the ultimate trigger for creativity and innovation.

If you think about it, the greatest discoveries in human history all have one thing in common: they were all driven by curiosity.

Did you know that *curiosity* is currently one of the most researched and written-about topics in management? Studies show that it directly impacts return on investment and enhances team efficiency.

As leaders, you should make space for *curiosity*—it is one of your greatest assets.

I won't go further into this topic in today's celebratory setting. Fortunately, I will be holding a **Masterclass on Smart Leadership** right here in Novosibirsk at the Marriott Hotel on **November 28**. This intensive training is designed specifically for **female leaders**, and I will not only inspire them but also prepare them for international contexts.

This **Smart Leadership Seminar**, which I am introducing for the first time in Russia, is my personal contribution to *collective creativity*!

The world needs more **smart leaders**!

Notice that I didn't say Siberia, Russia, Germany, or Italy—I said *the world*!

Thank you for your attention.