

Sam Colijn

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A Simple Mind | <https://www.asimplemind.nl>

“Because leadership starts in the nervous system.”

— Sam Colijn

Executive Profile

Therapist, facilitator, speaker, and former innovation strategist with a unique background at the intersection of psychology, nervous system regulation, leadership, and organizational dynamics.

Founder of A Simple Mind and creator of *The Regulated Leader* — an experiential leadership approach rooted in nervous system awareness, psychological safety, emotional regulation, and human behavior.

Over the past 20+ years, I have worked with individuals, leaders, creative teams, public organizations, and international brands around themes such as stress, emotional resilience, behavioral change, communication, innovation, and human connection.

My work combines:

- trauma-informed leadership development
- nervous system regulation
- behavioral psychology
- experiential facilitation
- organizational and relational dynamics
- creative strategy and systems thinking

I bring a rare combination of:

- deep psychological insight
- executive facilitation experience
- entrepreneurial leadership
- public speaking
- creative innovation strategy
- and embodied, human-centered leadership development.

I work fluently in both Dutch and English.

Core Expertise

Leadership & Organizational Development

- Regulated Leadership & nervous system awareness
- Psychological safety within teams
- Leadership under pressure and uncertainty
- Stress regulation & burnout prevention
- Conflict dynamics & emotional regulation
- Team communication & relational dynamics
- High-performance cultures without chronic stress
- Executive self-awareness & behavioral insight

Facilitation & Training

- Experiential workshops and leadership trainings
- Keynote speaking & organizational inspiration sessions
- Group facilitation & embodied learning
- Therapeutic communication & emotional attunement
- Behavioral change facilitation
- Deep listening & conflict de-escalation

Psychology & Human Behavior

- Trauma-informed approaches
- Psychodynamic therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Polyvagal-informed regulation work
- TRE® (Tension & Trauma Releasing Exercises)
- Mindfulness & embodiment
- Nervous system education
- Attachment & relational dynamics

Strategy & Innovation

- Consumer psychology & behavioral insight
 - Creative direction & innovation strategy
 - Qualitative research & trend analysis
 - Brand positioning & storytelling
 - Workshop design & systems thinking
 - Cross-disciplinary collaboration
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Professional Experience

Founder | Therapist | Facilitator

A Simple Mind | Amsterdam

2020 – Present

Founder of a private practice and leadership platform focused on nervous system regulation, emotional resilience, behavioral awareness, and relational leadership.

Key activities include:

- Individual therapy and executive coaching
- Leadership development programs
- Workshops on stress regulation and team dynamics
- Corporate lectures on nervous system awareness and behavior
- Facilitation around burnout prevention and emotional resilience
- Development of The Regulated Leader framework

Core themes:

psychological safety, embodied leadership, emotional regulation, stress responses in leadership, behavioral patterns, resilience, and sustainable performance.

Partner

Het Huis – Integrative Therapeutic Center | Amsterdam Noord

2022 – Present

Co-developing and supporting an integrative therapeutic center focused on emotional health, nervous system regulation, embodiment, and holistic well-being.

Founder & Creative Director

Out Of Office

2008 – 2019

Founded and led an international creative strategy and consumer insight agency working with brands, governments, designers, innovators, and organizations.

Responsibilities included:

- Leadership of multidisciplinary teams
- International workshop facilitation
- Strategic innovation consulting

- Consumer psychology & qualitative research
- Organizational and creative direction
- Trend forecasting & future strategy
- International presentations and keynote speaking

Worked with organizations including:

- Heineken
- Starbucks
- Vrumona
- English Home
- Municipal governments such as Pforzheim & Taiwan
- International design and innovation teams

This role developed a strong understanding of:

- organizational behavior
- team dynamics
- innovation culture
- communication under pressure
- and the psychological side of leadership and change.

Content & Creative Director

Striative Branding

2006 – 2008

Led trend analysis, branding strategies, and concept development for international clients and creative teams.

Consumer Insight Researcher

Studio Commandeur | Amsterdam

2004 – 2006

Conducted qualitative consumer and behavioral research focused on trends, identity, lifestyle, and future-oriented innovation.

Speaking & Facilitation

Leadership, Innovation & Human Behavior Speaker

Selected engagements:

- CTAM Europe, Vienna — Speaker on The Future of Retail
- Peij Gruppen, Scandinavia — Speaker tour on The Next Generation
- Evtoks Istanbul — Speaker on The Future of Retail Experience
- Appletizer Netherlands — Trend and behavioral speaker
- Artez Fashion Master Arnhem — Lecturer in Consumer Psychology & Design Research

Current speaking themes include:

- Leadership starts in the nervous system
- Psychological safety and performance
- Stress responses in organizations
- Burnout and emotional resilience
- Nervous system awareness for leaders
- Human behavior under pressure
- Embodied leadership and communication

Education

Compassionate Inquiry – Two Year Professional Training & Mentorship Program (Gabor Maté)

2025 – 2026

Advanced trauma-informed training rooted in Compassionate Inquiry®, focused on:

- attachment wounds
- nervous system regulation
- trauma dynamics
- emotional inquiry
- somatic awareness
- relational attunement
- behavioral patterning
- therapeutic presence and embodiment

Ongoing advanced professional development within the international Compassionate Inquiry community founded by Dr. Gabor Maté.

Master Psychology

Barbara Brennan Institute / SOL
2015 – 2022

Focused on:

- psychology
- embodiment
- emotional regulation
- trauma awareness
- relational healing
- human development

Accredited through RBCZ & FAGT.

Psychosocial Basic Knowledge (HBO)

Con Amore | CPION/SNRO Accredited
2023 – 2024

Medical Basic Knowledge (HBO)

Con Amore | CPION/SNRO Accredited
2017 – 2018

BA Design + Strategy

Amsterdam Design Institute
2001 – 2004

Liberal Arts

Parsons School of Design, Paris
1997 – 1998

Certifications & Additional Training

- Mindfulness & embodiment approaches
 - NIMA Marketing A + B
 - New York Film Academy – Storytelling & Editing
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Selected Organizational & Strategic Projects

Municipality of Pforzheim, Germany

Led large-scale future vision and identity workshops involving:

- mayor and public officials
- architects and experts
- citizens and stakeholders

Co-developed strategic positioning and future city identity.

Heineken

Facilitated consumer research and innovation workshops around the future of beer, behavior, and experience.

Starbucks

Led qualitative research and strategic workshops around the future of coffee culture and consumer behavior.

Vrumona

Developed strategic insight sessions around healthy beverages, wellness, and future consumer trends.

Languages

- Dutch — Native
 - English — Fluent
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Additional Information

- Driver's License B
 - VOG Declaration
 - AGB Registered Therapist
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Positioning Statement

I believe leadership is not only shaped by strategy, intelligence, or performance — but fundamentally by the internal state of the leader.

The nervous system of a leader shapes:

- communication
- decision-making
- conflict dynamics
- psychological safety
- stress levels within teams
- and ultimately organizational culture itself.

My work focuses on helping leaders and organizations move from chronic survival states toward more clarity, regulation, connection, resilience, and sustainable high performance.

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