

A PUBLICATION FOR LEADERSHIP PROFESSIONALS

*where best practice meets next practice*

# THE MOBIUS STRIP

FALL 2022



Blue Square  
by Jim McManus, Mobius featured artist

ADAPTED FROM THE LIQUID DESERT PROJECT  
BY YEHUDIT SASPORTAS,  
MOBIUS MASTER EXPRESSIVE ARTIST



MOBIUS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP  
U.S. +1 781-237-1362  
[info@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:info@mobiusleadership.com)  
[www.mobiusleadership.com](http://www.mobiusleadership.com)





Dear Friends:

Welcome to the Fall 2022 edition of our transformational leadership magazine *The Mobius Strip*. Alongside the issue released at the start of this year, we are thrilled to showcase such a rich selection of thought leadership from Next Practice Institute Faculty and other offerings from within the Mobius community on a range of timely topics.

This edition includes a selection of Mobius Chief Thought Erica Ariel Fox's recent *Forbes* articles, along with a feature from Senior Practitioner and Principal at Mobius, Thomas Halbeisen on the recent scholarship in our field on the transition journey for new CEOs.

We are also delighted to include contributions from Mobius Senior Expert Jennifer Garvey Berger and co-author Carolyn Coughlin who joins the faculty for NPI 2023, along with NPI 2023 keynote speaker Rasmus Hougaard of Potential Project, and writings from core Next Practice Institute faculty member, renowned mystical teacher, Thomas Huebl who leads an intensive workshop for us each year at our annual gathering.

This issue also showcases a fantastic collection of book excerpts from Mobius Transformational Faculty member Sander Tideman on sustainability and social contribution, Mobius Senior Expert Terry Real on relational healing, and Mobius Friends Fran Cherny, Ashish Kothari, and Nicholas Janni.

We are delighted to promote the work of our featured artists: the exquisite photography of Heather Rhodes and new contributions from painter Michael Robbins. We are also very excited to announce our partnership with Studio Sasportas and to share an in-depth exhibit of Master Artist Yehudit Sasportas' Liquid Desert project.

Finally, we include a collection of professional development opportunities from Mobius, our alliance partners and members of our practitioner community.

We welcome you to share the digital version of the magazine – available on our website under the Next Practice Institute, with friends and colleagues.

We hope you enjoy our magazine and look forward to our continued journey together.

Warmest best,



*The October 2022 annual global practitioner event is sponsored by the professional development arm of our organization, Next Practice Institute. NPI has been established to codify the disciplines of transformational leadership, spread thought leadership in its interrelated fields of study, and professionally develop a generation of facilitators, coaches, mediators, consultants and team interventionists deeply skilled in the arts of transformational change. For more information about Next Practice Institute programs and thought leadership, please visit our website.*



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*This edition highlights recent scholarship from Next Practice Institute Faculty,  
along with other important selected readings in our field.*

## FEATURED ARTIST: YEHUDIT SASPORTAS PAGE 57

*Working in both Berlin and Tel Aviv, Yehudit Sasportas is one of the most prominent and prolific Israeli artists working in the local and international art scene today. Her work is focused on site-specific installations, which include sculptures, drawings, video and sound works, and call for an intense sensory experience. Since 1994, Yehudit Sasportas works as a senior professor at the Department of Fine Arts in the BA and MFA programs of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design.*







## OCTOBER 2022 ANNUAL GATHERING GUESTS

We are deeply honored to welcome these six important keynote speakers. If you are unable to attend this year's week-long program, we welcome you to watch the livestream of these presentations..

To watch, visit [Mobius Executive Leadership Facebook Page](#)



### MONDAY AFTERNOON OCT 24

#### PROFESSOR TOM MALONE

*Founding Director of the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence*

**How Hyperconnectivity is Changing the Way We Solve Problems**



### TUESDAY MORNING OCT 25

#### BILL TORBERT

*Professor Emeritus of Leadership at Boston College*

**The Alchemy of Transformational Learning and Leadership**



### TUESDAY AFTERNOON OCT 25

#### DR. STEVEN HASSAN

*Director, Freedom of Mind Resource Center*

**How to Determine the Integrity and Trustworthiness of Spiritual Teachers and Communities**



### THURSDAY MORNING OCT 27

#### ANDREW SZEGEDY-MASZAK

*Professor of Classical Studies and Historiography at Wesleyan University*

**Lessons from the Ancient Greeks and their Gods**



### THURSDAY AFTERNOON OCT 27

#### DR. DIONNE WRIGHT POULTON

*Diversity & Inclusion Expert and Executive Coach*

**Racial Healing and Harmony\***

*\*Not available for livestream*



### FRIDAY MORNING OCT 28

#### PUJA JASPAL

*Senior Vice President for People & Communities at Cisco Systems and former SVP of Talent at Visa*

**Transforming Organizations: The Future of Leadership Development**

[www.mobiusleadership.com/npi](http://www.mobiusleadership.com/npi)



## 2023 ANNUAL GATHERING OCTOBER 15 – 20, 2023 | BOSTON, MA



### REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 2022

Visit our website to reserve your place and to avail of the Early Bird Discount.

We are once again privileged to be joined by a world-class group of presenters, faculty and guides for an intellectually rich, emotionally stirring and artistically inspirational week-long program.

#### 2023 TRACK LEARNING

Track 1 **Values and Consciousness as a Pathway to Purpose** with Lisa Doig

Track 2 **Creating Conscious Tribes** with Nadjeschda Taranczewski

Track 3 **Systemic Intelligence and Organizational Constellations** with Paul Zonneveld and Mieke Jacobs

Track 4 **Sourcing the Poetic Flame: 10,000 Ways to Enter Your Creative Process** with Anne Gottlieb

Track 5 **Encounter-centered Relational Transformation** with Hedy Schleifer

Track 6 **Social Presencing Theater (SPT)** with Arawana Hayashi

Track 7 **Adaptive Leadership and Alignment to Change** with Zander Grashow

Track 8 **Dancing With Complexity** with Sheila Buechler and Carolyn Coughlin

Track 9 **Scaling Intimacy** with Jenny Sauerklein and Alex Rogers

#### 2023 KEYNOTE TALKS, WORKSHOPS AND EVENING EVENTS

We continue the tradition of devoting Wednesday to an intensive day-long workshop with mystical teacher **Thomas Huebl**.


As in previous years, we are joined by inspiring thought leaders and pioneers in the field for daily keynote presentations. We are thrilled to welcome somatic expert Richard Strozzi-Heckler, Harvard Business Professor Ashish Nanda, Frederic Laloux, author the seminal book *Reinventing Organizations*, Potential Project founder Rasmus Hougaard, psychologist and psycho-drama expert Karl Scheibe, physicist Brian Swimme and Peter Koenig, expert in identity, entrepreneurship and the Sourcing energy of Founders.

In the evenings we have the opportunity to work with Mobius Transformational Faculty member **Dr. Paul Dunion** and look forward to evenings of music with **Jai Uttal** and **Jami Sieber**.

Register will open before year-end 2022 with a special Early Bird Discount. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

For full brochure visit: [www.mobiusleadership.com/npi](http://www.mobiusleadership.com/npi)





“When we experience the world as ‘too complex’ we are not just experiencing the complexity of the world. We are experiencing a mismatch between the world’s complexity and our own at this moment. There are only two logical ways to mend this mismatch — reduce the world’s complexity or increase our own. The first isn’t going to happen.”

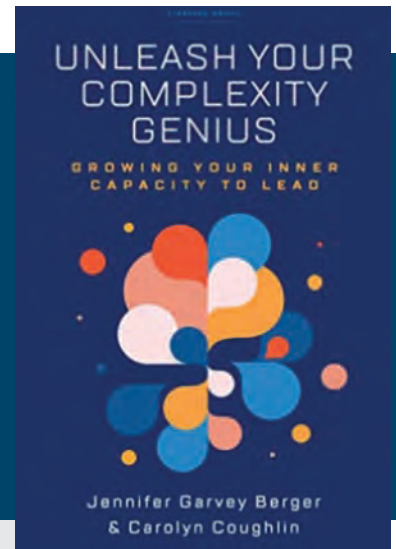
MOBIUS SENIOR EXPERTS  
BOB KEGAN AND LISA LAHEY



# Unleash Your Complexity Genius

## Growing Your Inner Capacity to Lead

By Mobius Senior Expert Jennifer Garvey Berger and Carolyn Coughlin,  
Next Practice Institute Faculty 2023



There is a complexity paradox that we all need to understand. Humans have a natural inclination towards connection, engagement, and creativity—all necessary skills to thrive in complexity. The problem is that the stress caused by uncertainty and ambiguity makes it difficult to tap into this inclination when we need it the most. This book offers a set of practices that help you not only understand complexity but manage your own nervous system to bring your natural capacities back online. By paying close attention to your body, redefining your emotional experiences, and connecting more deeply to others, you can transform the anxiety, exhaustion, and overwhelm that complexity creates. Better still, as you unleash your natural complexity genius, you create the conditions for those around you to flourish in an uncertain world.

### FROM THE INTRODUCTION

You know those days: you have planned your schedule precariously, one thing hanging off of the next, like a child's balancing game. Then something unexpected happens—you get a call from school that your daughter is sick, you get a ping from a colleague that a major customer is about to make an announcement, your boss walks in with a troubled look on her face. And you think: I simply cannot handle one more thing that is changing or uncertain or difficult on this day—or this week or this month.

And yet the world keeps throwing these things at us. Whether we think we can handle them or not, they come, and they come.

We're here to help. We can't do much to shape what the world throws at you, but one of the things we've learned in our twenty-five years of helping leaders manage difficult situations is that we can do very much

to shape how we respond to what the world throws at us. In this book, we're going to let you in on a secret: you have a genius for handling complexity.

We know this as something that humans have excelled at for as long as we have been on this planet—we know how to play and invent and learn our way into new possibilities. If we weren't able to flourish in complexity, we wouldn't have been able to do all the wonderful things humans have done—building thriving societies, writing novels, making vaccines for COVID-19. And this isn't just a modern or just a COVID-era capability. There are complex adaptive ideas woven through our most ancient texts. Humans have been accessing their complexity genius for millennia (which shows that these are both ancient ideas and not as automatic as we might wish).

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We understand that it doesn't always feel like you have a complexity genius. That's because alongside your genius for handling complexity, you—like the rest of us—have a rather unsettling human quirk. It turns out that when we need to handle complexity the most, we often are least able to. Here's why. Complexity tends to trigger us, to make us anxious or afraid or overwhelmed. When this happens, our nervous system creates a whole series of shifts in our body that lead to reactivity and oversimplification. So we have a funny paradox woven right into our humanity: when we are calm, we are able to handle complexity better with play and collaboration and co-creation. But complexity kills the calm, making us less able to handle these things.

We two have been puzzling about this conundrum in one way or another for the last twenty years or so. We first met as partners in a small consulting firm, both with little children of our own. Our lives were complex and overwhelming, and we were struggling to stay on top of things. We studied and taught and used the complexity and adult development ideas that had brought us together, and we learned. Over the years, Jennifer has gotten more and more into the world of outer complexity: *What is it about the way complex systems work that is so counterintuitive for us?* Over the

years, Carolyn has gotten more and more into the world of the body: *What is it about how we manage our own bodily reactions that makes us more fit to handle the complex world?* The ideas and practices that come together in this book have transformed our lives and have transformed the lives of the thousands of leaders with whom we and our colleagues have worked. And now we're hoping they'll help you too.

Here's what we'll explore together: What is already inside us that makes us well adapted to handling complexity, and how can we dial that up when we need it the most? Or, to put it another way: What is our complexity genius and how do we best make use of it for ourselves and others?

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### **It's not just out there, it's in here – Your Nervous System Meets Complexity**

#### *From Chapter One*

We're going to be thinking a lot together about complexity and what we can do to lead ourselves and others in an increasingly complex world. So let's start with a definition we have found invaluable in our lives: the difference between what's complicated and what's complex.



© Heather Rhodes, Mobius featured artist



Complexity theorist Dave Snowden tells us that some of the tricky things we deal with—challenges, problems, processes—are “complicated.” Complicated problems or issues aren’t obvious at all—they have too many moving parts, too much background knowledge required. Your taxes are complicated. Your car is complicated. The yearly budgeting process is complicated. Probably lots of things about your life are complicated—and to handle them, you either have to become an expert or to hire experts to help you. Expertise and experience are your friends here, because you need to know what you’re doing in order to accomplish your goal. When a problem is a complicated one, the goal tends to be pretty clear: balance the budget, remove the tumor, create the fastest, cheapest, most reliable route to get your partner and your four best friends to your holiday destination. Complicated problems are difficult, but they’re solvable. Better still, as you solve one category of them, you get faster and more efficient at solving more and more problems in that category. You can feel like such a hero as you master the complicated!

Complex challenges, on the other hand, are tricky for a different set of reasons. It’s not just that there are moving parts and background knowledge, it’s that there are so many moving and interacting pieces that they are impossible to predict, and they are not within any one’s ability to control. The lines of causality are blurred, and even as you look back on things, you can’t always tell which move led to which outcome. Did your team do so well because you were an extraordinary leader? Or do you lead so well because you have an extraordinary team? You can’t tell which things are the cause and which things are the *effect*.

Even if you get really, really good at dealing with complex challenges, you’ll still be surprised, and you’ll still be wrong sometimes, maybe even often. There’s no certainty here because, by definition, complex spaces are uncertain and unpredictable. You can’t ever perfect your approach because the conditions change and then your approach has to change too. In fact—and here’s perhaps the most important part—

**Your expertise and  
experience can become  
your enemy when things  
are complex.**

if you get lulled into believing that you can use your experience and your expertise to predict and control complex things, you’re likely in trouble. Your expertise and experience, which were your friends when things were complicated, can become your enemy when things are complex. You need all the creativity, agility, pattern-recognition, experimentation, and learning you can muster when you’re dealing with complexity.

We’ve set up our organizations, our schools—often even our families—to create predictable spaces where we mostly believe we know what’s going to happen next. We have created systems and structures that allow us to handle difficult situations with what looks like a kind of predictable ease. We understand how to

create clean drinking water and thus how to prevent plagues and illnesses that could kill millions. We understand how to build houses that will stand up to the unpredictability of a gale or an earthquake. We understand how to keep good records of what comes in and

what goes out and protect ourselves from financial ruin. We have worked hard as “progress” marched on to slowly move some of the complexities of life into the complicated realm.

But of course, we begin to believe too much that we can control the universe. These systems and structures—particularly in our organizations—trick us into believing that there is much more about the world that is complicated and much less about the world that is complex. We humans enjoy the feeling of being in control and of knowing what happens next, so we act as though that’s possible—even when it isn’t.

This is not a new trend. Things were complex and uncertain in 2018 and in 2019. People were tired and overwhelmed at work and at home. And then 2020 hit, and everything notched up in difficulty and complexity.

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We can no longer believe that the pattern of life will unfold in one fairly predictable way. Hybrid work is unraveling organizational cultures and familiar ways



## We are fit for complexity until it gets really complex.

of working. And now we know better than ever that unexpected weather systems, virus variants, social disruption—any of these can upend our experience of our lives at any moment. That was always true, but now we have lived some of the truth of it, and it has changed us.

All of this uncertainty wreaks havoc on our systems—financial systems, political systems, social systems. But the first stressed system that leaders must deal with is their own nervous system. We cannot handle the complexity outside us unless we are able to notice—and ultimately change—what complexity does inside us.

### COMPLEXITY AND THE BODY

You see, humans—like most animals—evolved to face times of threat and times of safety. To handle that difference, our bodies evolved with two different phases for our nervous system: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic.

The sympathetic is often talked about as the fight or flight nervous system. It's the one that's always ready for action. It is perfect for short bursts of physical challenge or threat as we prepare to move our bodies to save our lives. Adrenaline kicks in for energy and focus. Our breath gets shallow, pumping oxygen quickly into our largest muscles so that we can run. We get hyperfocused, with our peripheral vision actually disappearing. And we get incredibly sensitive to danger, ready to lash out at— or run from—anything that might be threatening us.

Even when the threat isn't physical, the reaction is physical. Think back to the last scary movie you watched. This is the sympathetic nervous system at work: your heart beating faster, your stomach churning, your palms sweating, and your muscles tight.

Sometimes what we get with the sympathetic nervous system is the sweet spot of all of the good things that come from stress—which we might think about as thrill or high-intensity flow. When we feel at the top of our game as we step out in front of a

crowd to make a speech, or are about to leap off the bungee platform over a deep river gorge, or watch the roulette wheel turn after we have put all of our chips on, we have this delicious—and addictive—sense of excitement. This is what the sympathetic nervous system was made to do! We are hooked!

If the perceived threat continues, though, our body finds things somewhat less thrilling. Our nervous system releases the steroid cortisol which shifts basically every system in our body toward saving our life. And remember, this is an ancient threat we're moving away from, so our body readies itself for running and fighting. Who needs the immune system, the reproductive system, the digestive system to be working if your life is under threat? Cortisol takes command of the entire bodily system as a kind of emergency military leader. If we're not attentive, we won't even notice it, but there is an internal coup afoot.

Over time, this coup—like most coups—gets to an unsavory place. The long-term effects of too much cortisol will literally kill us. For a whole variety of reasons, cortisol becomes corrosive in basically every human system. Robert Sapolsky, the brilliant primatologist, writes, “The human species, despite its talent for solving problems, has managed over the millennia to turn one of its most basic survival mechanisms—the stress response—against itself.” When people suggest that stress is hurting our health, what they tend to mean is that cortisol building up and overwhelming our system, doing what it was never meant to do—becoming our destroyer rather than our savior.

What's missing in that picture is the other part of our nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system, which people sometimes call the “connect and create” nervous system. When our parasympathetic system is in charge, our heart rate becomes slower and oddly more irregular which keeps it healthy and agile. Our breath deepens and slows. Our life-giving systems—our digestive systems, endocrine systems, reproductive systems— just go ahead and



do their thing, digesting, crafting the perfect blend of hormones, and, you know, reproducing. Instead of adrenaline and cortisol, the body releases a different cocktail of dopamine, human growth hormone, and, at night, melatonin. Our immune system pumps up, our peripheral vision expands, and the conditions are created for neurogenesis, the creation of new connections in our brain. Now we are wired for play, connection, and creativity with a wide focus and the more complex view that is required for humor and for innovation.

The parasympathetic system has its own shadow side, though. If we've been stressed out of our minds or under increasing threat, the parasympathetic takes over again—but not in that connecting and creative way. This is when we find ourselves stuck in the part of the nervous system that is meant to basically make us freeze: to conserve our energy, disconnect, and prevent what might be life-threatening movement. Ultimately, this stressed parasympathetic nervous system is a shut-down switch and leaves us feeling hopeless or lost in the face of the profound uncertainty around us.

Instead of this emergency shutdown switch that toggles us between the overactivation of the sympathetic and the overwhelmed circuit breaker of the parasympathetic, in normal times, our bodies are supposed to find their way to a dance between the everyday versions of the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. The sunshine of the parasympathetic nervous system (and the way we'll talk about it from here forward) is supposed to take

over when we are free from danger and we can not only rest but also restore, connect, and create.

Here's why this matters as we're dealing with complexity. It turns out you want that restorative parasympathetic nervous system switched on when you are facing a complex situation where it's not movement and thrill but creativity and connection that will meet the challenge. Unfortunately, though, one of the biggest stressors in our lives is that brew of ambiguity, complexity, and uncertainty that the modern world serves up at every meal. The sense that you don't know what's going to happen next is itself experienced as a threat by your body. Neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett has found that "uncertainty is more unpleasant and arousing than assured harm, because if the future is a mystery, you can't prepare for it." She goes on to write, "When people are seriously ill but have an excellent chance of recovery, they are less satisfied with life than people who know their disease is permanent."

Take that in for a minute. If you're *sure* that something is going to end badly—this is it for you—it is less troubling than thinking that something *might* end badly. We humans tend to really, really hate uncertainty.

The uncertainties and complexities of the modern world are the equivalent of your heart racing as you watch the hero go down the basement stairs after all the lights have gone out unexpectedly. What these last couple of years have shown us is that we are all always going down into the basement in the dark. The world has become a set of stairs leading into an uncertain

#### Recommended further reading from the authors:

Stephen W. Porges, *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017)

Guy Claxton, *Intelligence in the Flesh: Why Your Mind Needs Your Body Much More Than It Thinks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Deb Dana, *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2018).





### Grow your inner capacity – five practices the book delves into

1. Start with the Present – the Genius of Noticing
2. Adjust Yourself First – The Genius of Breathing, Moving, and Sleeping
3. Create the Conditions for Things to Change – The Genius of Experimenting
4. Emotions are the New Facts – The Genius of Laughing and Wondering
5. Connections Matter More Than Competence: The Genius of Loving

© Heather Rhodes, *Mobius* featured artist

future, and we have to find a different way to deal with the anxiety that automatically arises in us. We have to figure out how to avoid activating the shadowy sides of our nervous system and activate intentional parasympathetic goodness.

### **AUTOMATIC MESSAGE SYSTEM: I'M OUT OF CONTROL TODAY SO I'LL BE MOVING TO SAFETY**

Of course, we don't think much about our nervous system at work. We experience it as a set of thoughts or emotions that set us off to *do* something. This makes sense. We have evolved to stay one step ahead of the dangers of our outside world—literally. There is more and more evidence that many of our internal systems are, in fact, attempting to predict our way into making the appropriate physical movement to escape trouble. Barrett tells us, "Prediction is such a fundamental activity of the human brain that some scientists consider it the brain's primary mode of operation." Neuroscientist John Coates takes it one step farther when he writes that evolutionary science suggests "the brain is fundamentally very practical, that its main role is not to engage in pure thought but to plan and execute physical movement. What is the point...of our sensations, our memories, our cognitive abilities, if these do not lead at some point to action?" Our emotions, our thoughts, our impulses all arise from this body whose primary job is removing us from danger so as to keep us alive.

Our nervous system doesn't know whether it's our lives or our identities that are threatened, though. Whether we are dealing with the essential question of a threatening noise downstairs or the existential question of whether this terrible feedback means we should just quit our jobs and join the circus, our nervous system understands these different types of threat the same way and wants to act—to move—to make the threat go away. This means that often our impulse when we're feeling triggered by our anxiety is do something—grab the wheel, answer the question, come to a conclusion. Or we numb out—have a beer, check our Instagram, binge watch the latest Netflix series.

Leaders discover this impulse in themselves when they see a problem: a missed launch date, falling quarter three numbers, two teams that seem to be



blaming each other more than working together—and they want to get in there and take action. We can hardly count the number of times we have heard leaders say something like, “I know this might look like micromanagement, but really it’s necessary given the circumstances.” And maybe those leaders are right. But what they might not notice is that this “action urge” is their nervous system telling them that they are at risk and they need to move. The logic about why we should move is generally a back-filled rationalization—we are justifying the action urge that stress delivers to us rather than rationally deciding to take action. In most cases these days, the risk is to our reputation, our bonus, our need for harmony rather than our lives, but it’s all the same to the nervous system.

### GO SLOW TO GO FAST

One of the core paradoxes of complex systems is that a lot of effort can have no impact and a tiny bit of effort can have a lot of impact. And of course, in complex systems the bummer is that you can’t know which is which until afterward. But this means that continuing to act at speed can be counterproductive for a couple of different reasons.

First of all, it can take a while for a new pattern to emerge in complexity, and you can’t always tell whether what you’re seeing is a new pattern or a momentary aberration. This means that rushing in too fast to make a change can be a total waste of effort or worse. You probably recognize this in your own history. You know, like when you come home from a holiday to a full in-box, and you notice as you slog through the piles of emails awaiting you that many of your challenges resolved themselves without your doing anything. After these moments we tend to breathe a sigh of relief—to have acted right away would probably have made everything worse. But we forget this.

The second reason is that it can take a while to see what is emerging. This is the classic delay in the system, like a shower tap in an old London flat. You turn both taps on equally, expecting warm water, and

you get freezing water. So you turn the cold down and the hot up—still freezing. So you turn the cold off and the hot on full and suddenly the water heats up to scalding. So you turn the hot down and the cold up—still scalding. You get the point.

This also happens in organizations, of course, or anywhere there are “taps” with delays. You find your team is frustratingly slow with delivering projects because they are trying to get them perfect before they send them out, so you push them to send work in progress and to move faster and not count on perfection. Still, it seems slow to you, so you institute more changes that are designed to move work through

faster. But this changes hardly anything. Then you try another initiative and then suddenly there is a flood of very fast, very mediocre work, and you have to begin to scramble to increase your quality again.

The third reason that going slow can help you go fast is an unexpected quirk of human systems: just putting your attention on something—without doing anything—can change what happens. You’ve seen this one too. You get feedback that you’ve been interrupting others in meetings, and you set out to prove that it’s wrong. As you watch yourself, you notice that you don’t interrupt at all! And then your feedback-giver comes back to congratulate you on your changed behavior when you hadn’t intended to change anything. This also happens at scale, when we begin to notice something collectively. Drawing attention to the idea that people have been a little profligate with their use of office supplies can have an effect on how people use office supplies (although, like so many complex systemic effects, you can’t know whether people will begin to use fewer supplies—because they’re being mindful about it—or more supplies—because they’re being passive aggressive about it).

So while action is useful in complexity, not all actions are useful. And the kind of reflexive action that is created by our sympathetic nervous system is

**“If you want to  
improve the world,  
start by making  
people feel safer.”**

**STEPHEN PORGES**



rarely useful. We need to slow down and learn as well as speed up to fix. We know that our bodies will pull us to motion. But to truly learn enough to change our perspective and then change the system, we need to resist that action urge.

### INTENTIONAL EVOLUTION: FIND YOUR COMPLEXITY GENIUS AND AMPLIFY IT

So far what we've been talking about is the system that evolution has created for us. We get it automatically, just for being born: hundreds of thousands of years of experimentation into how we protect ourselves and keep ourselves alive long enough to reproduce and raise our young. This is what evolution offers to all living things on the planet.

But evolution has also given humans an unusual extra genius, one that might be our birthright alone: a

relationship to our own minds and bodies that grows and changes over time. This relationship creates a developmental path—a small evolutionary impulse in each of us. And unlike the evolving nervous system, which might take hundreds or thousands of years to catch up with the demands of our current lives, this evolutionary impulse of our minds unfolds anew in each human lifetime. All of us have the capacity for our own intentional evolution.

This means that over time we can shape what our nervous system offers. When we are very young, there is no separation from the signals our nervous system sends us and the actions that we take. When we are frightened, we wail. When we want to touch the shiny sharp object, our hands dart out. Growing up is in part a journey of learning to recognize and manage our impulses – a capacity that can evolve quickly, even over the course of reading this book. ■



**JENNIFER GARVEY BERGER** is a Mobius Senior Expert and a globally renowned expert in complexity, leadership and adult development. She is the founder of Cultivating Leadership, the author of *Changing on the Job: Developing Leaders for a Complex World* and co-author of *Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders*. Jennifer has worked with executives in a wildly diverse set of organizations like Microsoft, Fidelity Investments, the New Zealand Department of Conservation, and Lion, helping leaders increase their own capacity to think well about problems and people.



**CAROLYN COUGHLIN** is a Founding Partner of Cultivating Leadership, a firm that works with organizations and individuals to help them increase their capacity to lead across complexity, ambiguity, and change. She is also the co-founder of Growth Edge Coaching, where she trains coaches, and writes and talks about developmental coaching as an integrated mind/body/linguistic practice. She is the author of a chapter called “Developmental Coaching to Support the Transition to Self-Authorship” in the Jossy Bass Sourcebook, *Transforming Adults through Coaching*. At the 2023 Annual Gathering of the Next Practice Institute, she will, along with Cultivating Leadership colleague Sheila Buechler, co-lead the track, *Dancing*

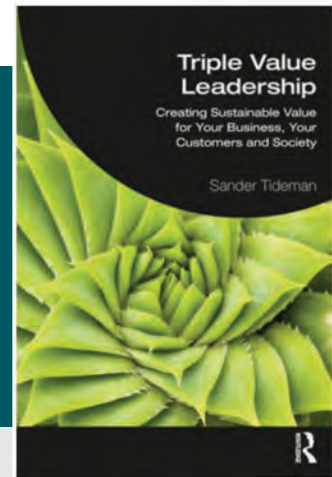
*With Complexity* in which we will dive deeply into how we equip ourselves to be more resilient, complexity friendly and keep growing our capacity to navigate and lead effectively in our ever changing world.



# Triple Value Leadership

## Creating Sustainable Value for Your Business, Your Customers and Society

A book excerpt from Mobius Transformational Faculty Member  
Sander Tideman



With the sustainability emergency, businesses can no longer give priority to commercial interests (and financial gains) and close their eyes to societal and environmental interests. We need a new, higher perspective to close the gap. We need to formulate a new business logic and a robust value creation method for sustainable business, their customers and society – that is, all business stakeholders, as well as the planet. This book will do just that.

This book presents the insights gained from action research with leading companies across the world to discover a comprehensive method that works: a practical framework for CEO and business leaders who want to lead their organization along the sustainability transition. Building on the latest insights from science, summarized as the *systems view of life*, the book identifies six principles that provide a new leadership lens on how to understand the changes taking place in business and create sustainable value from a systems perspective. Based on these insights, the book offers the Triple Value mindset model, consisting of six distinct leadership qualities, to enable business leaders to scale their intended impact from the organization to all stakeholders in the value chain, thus transcending the conflict between business and society.

Not only that, the book will also offer you a leadership journey – an adventure that will transform the way to think, feel and execute the new perspective in your company, while perfecting your leadership potential and inspiring the people you work with. On the journey you will be supported by models, tools and best practices, which will help you to reimagine your business strategy and your role as leader in driving sustainable transformation and success.

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## Sustainability as Value Creation

### *Excerpt from Chapter 2*

Unilever illustrates how a company progresses through a number of stages, gradually expanding the perspective on society and increasing its sustainability ambitions. It entails a shift from the *inside-out* approach of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the *outside-in approach* of sustainability from the viewpoint of strategic growth. Paul Polman described this stage as “turning CSR into SRC: becoming a Social Responsible Company.”

Another example of the “beyond CSR approach” is Microsoft, when CEO Satya Nadella announced in 2019 an ambitious commitment: to become carbon negative by 2030 and remove more carbon than they directly emitted since their founding from the environment by 2050. “No one company can solve this macro challenge alone, but as a global technology company we have a particular responsibility to do our part,” Satya Nadella said. Since the announcement, Microsoft has added commitments to become water positive, zero waste and to protect more land than we use by 2030. Especially the commitment to remove from the environment all the carbon the company has emitted (either directly or by electrical consumption) since it was founded in 1975 is a remarkable step in complex sustainability leadership. No other firm of the size of Microsoft has voluntarily made such a retrospective footprint commitment.

In particular, the Unilever and Microsoft examples illustrate that sustainability can be merged with strategy. Sustainability is no longer on the periphery of the firm, but at the center. It enables the company to *create sustainable value* by serving the needs of consumers and society in an integrated manner. A significant feature of this stage is that the company is discovering its *shared purpose* with society. In fact, at this stage the company leadership realizes that its shareholder value creation process is *dependent* on its ability to create societal value. There is no longer any conflict between the two.

There is another dimension that these front-running companies demonstrate: sustainability is a major source of inspiration for one’s employees, investors and consumers. It is an attractor for new talent, while it drives the latest stage of evolution

in business sustainability. Somehow this next stage beyond CSR represents a “win-win” for all stakeholders.

We define this next stage as *Triple Value creation* (TVC): the company starts to create value for society, its clients and its own organization simultaneously, without unnecessary trade-offs. In this definition, society includes the environment, which is the highest order of systems that we depend on. Alan Jope, current CEO of Unilever, recognizes this integrated approach: “The future of business should be based on values of humanity and empathy. Simply because our employees demand it, our clients expect it and the planet needs it.”

## The Living Systems View

### *Excerpt from Chapter 3*

Biologists have observed that all types of organisms are capable of reproduction, renewal, growth and development, connection, maintenance and response to stimuli. The endless complexity of life is organized into patterns of behavior that tend to repeat themselves. All nature is a continuum.

The chemist and Nobel Prize Laureates Illya Prigogine proposed that living systems are run on the principle of “self-organization.” In a self-organizing system – unlike a machine – there is no central factor or predesign driving the system, but an emerging pattern of self-organization involving all parts of the system.

We can identify roughly six dominant patterns that signify a healthy organism. On the basis of these insights, we have identified the **six key principles** that operate in all living systems, which can be utilized by leadership to create healthy and sustainable business systems. While they are derived from biology and systems science, they correspond to the latest insights from cognitive science – hence we will use terms from these disciplines to describe them. We will call these the six principles of life.

### **I. Context-relatedness: Systems View**

Living systems are open systems with input and output flows, consisting of matter, energy or information in exchange with their context. This makes them



different from nonliving matter. These flows are usually facilitated by a membrane, which separates the organism from the external environment. The membrane has a selectively permeable function, through which it sets and maintains boundaries and keeps the system integrated within a changing context. In psychological terms, the ability to relate to the context can be described as the “systems view.” It corresponds to the ability to deal with complexity and a state of psychological integration.

## **2. Consciousness: Learning and adaptation**

Living systems are cognitive systems. Modern biology affirms that this statement is valid for all organisms, with or without nervous systems. Cognition co-emerges with the interaction between the system and its environment. When the organism faces challenges or problems from the environment, it uses cognition or consciousness (which includes memory) to come up with a solution. Consciousness drives a process of continuous learning, with successful adaptation as the outcome.

## **3. Centeredness: Homeostasis**

While the organism is constantly changing, renewing and adapting, there is a process of maintenance occurring as well – it wants to preserve its core or center. Homeostasis refers to the maintenance within a living system to bounce back from disruptive changes and restore the system to a state of equilibrium. In terms of psychology, we speak of mission, values and culture to describe the same pattern of preserving the core.

## **4. Connectedness: Symbiosis**

Living systems are constantly engaged in symbiotic relationships. Symbiosis is a close and sustaining biological interaction between two different biological organisms. A symbiosis occurs when there is mutual benefit to each partner. As human beings evolved into a unique species, cooperation and collaboration are their defining characteristics. This pattern constitutes the connectivity that living systems need. In psychology, we speak of relatedness as well as the qualities of care and compassion.



**Individuals who practice  
mindfulness and awareness  
experience a stronger linkage  
between intentions and behavior  
than those who don't engage  
in these practices.**

© Heather Rhodes, Mobius featured artist



### 5. Competence: Efficiency

Competence is the ability to do something efficiently by streamlining its activities. For organisms to survive, they will need to be competent in obtaining resources such as food, water or territory in limited supply, or for access to mates for reproduction. This may involve a sense of competition with other species. Yet while a degree of competition is natural for species, this is often a temporary state within a larger ecosystem with mutually beneficial symbiosis between species, enhancing the overall resilience of the ecosystem.

### 6. Creativity: Regeneration

Living systems are never static; they constantly change and renew themselves, which facilitates a process of evolution in organisms over time across generations. This process of regeneration allows organisms to evolve into the diversity that is needed for the health of the ecosystem. Regeneration implies that the species is truly adaptable and sustainable in a changing context. In psychology terms, all this corresponds to qualities of adaptation, creativity and innovation.

### STRIVING FOR OPTIMAL BALANCE

Let's consider why these insights from the systems view of life are so different from the material paradigm that we know so well in business today.

System scientists determined that when these six principles are fully activated and well balanced, there are **two outcomes** that determine the living system's vitality and sustainability: *efficiency* on the one hand and *resilience* on the other. Efficiency is the ability of the system to absorb quantities of energy and information. Resilience allows the system to rebalance and renew itself after an external force has disturbed it.

*Resilience* of a system is enhanced by redundancy, diversity and connectivity. Redundancy refers to excess capacity provided by homeostasis, diversity refers to the various parts of the system that serve as coordinating nodes in the network, while connectivity refers to the pathways connecting the

nodes. Importantly, connectivity extends both inside and outside the organization, forming an integrated ecosystem with its surroundings.

Efficiency is achieved by the *streamlining* of the system. Streamlining requires that diversity, connectivity and the redundancy inherent within homeostasis – all be reduced. This can only be done for a short time, until the system starts to react.

This is *the crux of living systems science*: living systems don't have a natural drive to achieve optimal efficiency. If they would extend this drive toward efficiency, they would compromise their resilience – they

would die. What they do strive for is the *optimal balance* between efficiency and resilience. Both of these forces are indispensable for the health and vitality of any living system and its regenerative capacity over time.

Any pressure on account of either efficiency or resilience will lead to the malfunctioning of the system. Too much emphasis on efficiency can lead to structural

imbalance or explosion, while too much emphasis on resilience will lead to inertia and stagnation.

In short, the sustainability of a complex system can be defined as the optimal balance between efficiency and resilience as depicted in the image of a New Paradigm on page 20.

### THE EFFICIENCY TRADE-OFF

These insights from system science can help explain why our current economic model has become so unstable and “out of flow”: the Triangle of Growth is designed to create optimal efficiency of invested capital and production, while ignoring the health of the systems of which it is a part. If business as one subset of a system drives efficiency, it will gradually undermine the vitality and health of the entire system.

Echoing the words of the complexity scientists is Harvard economist Roger L. Martin, who wrote in a book advising CEOs about performance, “Resilient systems are typically characterized by the very features – diversity and redundancy, or slack – that efficiency seeks to destroy.” He continues: “We

“The greatest threat  
to our planet is the  
belief that someone  
else will save it.”

ROBERT SWAN



pushed the pursuit of efficiency to such an obsessive level, creating massive wealth for those at the top while ignoring the needs at the bottom, yet it is this very inequality that undermines the functioning of the economy.”

We have seen these principles at play with monoculture farming techniques. For example, the reliance on Cavendish bananas might have been very cost efficient, yet the lack of variation has made the crops highly susceptible to disease. Likewise, today’s large-scale, specialized and centralized supply chains are highly efficient and cost-effective, but their corresponding lack of redundancy, diversity and

interconnectivity makes it rigid and highly susceptible to failure when confronted with an unexpected challenge. The system may be highly optimized with minimum redundancy, yet the lack of buffers will diminish its chances for recovery.

The same applies to the way we organize our companies. When the sole purpose of corporations is to maximize shareholder returns by optimized efficiency, a dangerous feedback loop is created where short-term financial successes come at the expense of long-term resilience. Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce, expresses this insight in words: “Excessive focus on creating shareholder value goes at the expense of



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creating stakeholder value. A healthy company needs to balance these objectives, like two hands working together.”

### THE NEW INTEGRATED PERSPECTIVE

More than two centuries after Isaac Newton, we can conclude that the material and mechanical beliefs embedded in our current business paradigm fail to provide the *systems view* that is needed for dealing effectively with multifaceted challenge of sustainability. The old beliefs resting on reductionism, efficiency and specialization, which have been useful for achieving economic efficiency, are literally *too narrow* for the complex reality today. The new and undeniable reality is that people, business and society function as a *complex adaptive system*, for which economic efficiency alone is not enough to survive.

The question now is how can we discard our materialistic blindfold and recognize the more accurate perspective of living systems? Can we articulate a more holistic, relational and comprehensive view in agreement with the principles of life, in which efficiency and resilience are in balance, with a view on achieving genuine sustainability? Can we move from the Growth Triangle to the Circle of Sustainability?

### A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

*Excerpts from Chapter 7 and 8*

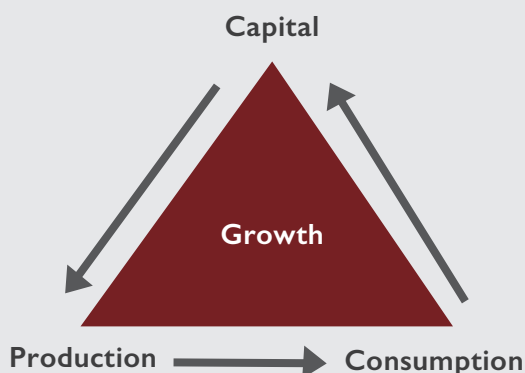
For centuries, the mind – our awareness or consciousness – has been a “black box” of science. Psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist makes the point that the mind is the one thing that can be experienced from the inside, but not from the outside; while the brain (and the body) can only be seen from the outside, and not from the inside. This allowed the myth of particular assumptions about the mind – such as the *homo economicus* – to be taken for real and find its center in economic theory.

A recent major breakthrough in neuroscience comes from the discovery that our brains are “plastic,” a phenomenon technically known as *neuroplasticity*. Our identity, character and state of mind are not static and fixed – they are a constantly changing and evolving process of moment-to-moment awareness. And we are in charge of the direction in which we evolve; we are not hapless victims of whatever occurs in our mind. Naturally, we suffer from dysfunctional patterns of thinking and varying degrees of pathologies, but this does not mean that the vast majority of us cannot train and develop our mental and emotional capacity.

How does that work? Research has demonstrated that contemplative practices enable people to change

## A NEW PARADIGM

### From the Triangle of Growth



### To the Circle of Sustainability





their intentions and their behavior. Individuals who practice mindfulness and awareness experience a stronger linkage between intentions and behavior than those who don't engage in these practices. People who take the effort to cultivate the potential of their minds will be able to deal with a complex reality more effectively, recover faster from setbacks, engage with people better and, therefore, generate better results.

The reasons for this is obvious, say researchers Brown and Ryan: "It helps individuals disengage from automatic thoughts and become more open to behavioral change and the freedom to make different choices." Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter (see page 38 of this magazine) describe this field of mind-training well in their book *The Mind of the Leader*, the importance of which is illustrated with the ancient saying: "Observe your thoughts as they become actions. Observe your actions, as they become habits. And observe your habits as they shape your life."

The Triple Value creation mindset has six facets that can be framed in leadership "archetypes", representing qualities of mind that we already possess, but that need to be cultivated in the service of creating sustainable organizations.

The first two qualities – the Wise and the Learner – are especially relevant today for adjusting to a more complex interconnected world. We can define them as the *awareness-based systems mindset*, which constitutes a new conceptual approach to leadership. The other four qualities have been more commonly recognized in the leadership literature, but by presenting them as aspects and attributes of the first two qualities, they will take on new significance.

Importantly, the systems dimension will make them suitable to serve as qualities for cultivating the leadership that is needed for the transitioning from the Growth Triangle to the Circle of Sustainability. They are building blocks of a comprehensive TVC leadership model, which – in technical terms – can be characterized as *awareness-based system leadership*. This type of leadership is dedicated to perceiving the systems dimension of reality yet is rooted in

### TRIPLE VALUE LEADERSHIP ARCHETYPES

PRINCIPLES OF LIFE	QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP
Context-relatedness	The Wise
Consciousness	The Learner
Centeredness	The Grounder
Connectedness	The Connector
Competence	The Warrior
Creativity	The Visionary

the recognition that this springs from our innate awareness.

Eileen Fisher, founded by her namesake in 1984, has been recognized as one of the top 500 women-owned businesses and one of the 25 best companies to work for. As of today, the fashion industry remains one of the most wasteful industries in the world as a result of many brands' tendencies to dispose of old garments and fabrics in landfills. Textiles are purchased from countries with poor labor standards and its production process consumes lots of water, energy and chemicals. Nonetheless, Eileen Fisher decided to adopt environmentally conscious manufacturing practices years before it became a trendy cause. In 2009 the brand decided to reduce the brand's reusable textiles waste, which has been a major issue many fashion brands have just now begun to address.

"Our environmental vision is holistic," says Shona Quinn, Director of Social Consciousness. "We believe in paying attention to what happens in the field, the dye house and our customers' washing machines. Our goal is to design out negative impacts – and design in positive change." These statements are obvious reflections of both *the Wise* (holistic vision) and *the Learner* (design in positive ways).

This Learner is also evident in the practice of starting all meetings with a minute of silence. Eileen Fisher explains:

"Mindfulness means slowing down enough to be thoughtful about what you're doing. It helps you see



the need to get other viewpoints in order to see the whole. It brings more self-awareness – of how you feel, how you speak, how you treat others. Over time, it starts to weave itself into everything you do."

In 2015 the company launched a bold plan toward the goal of 100% sustainability, which is an expression of the *Visionary*. "We don't want sustainability to be our edge, we want it to be universal", said Eileen Fisher. The firm reframed its mission from selling clothes toward serving and empowering women, who are the company's main customers and employees: "Use business as a force for change by making clothes that empower women and are responsibly designed from field to factory to closet." This mission represents *the Grounder*.

The brand obviously also has a strong *Connector* quality, evident from the various Eileen Fisher initiatives to empower women, including through the communities in the supply chain. "I believe that a powerful collective energy emerges when women connect with other women," said Eileen Fisher. Finally, the *Warrior* is evident by Eileen's relentless focus on the essentials. Instead of going public, Eileen Fisher transferred shares to her employees and registered as a public benefit corporation (B-Corp).

These qualities steered the company into the direction of Triple Value: higher workforce motivation, higher brand profile and customer loyalty, and higher financial returns. By focusing on the needs of society (empowerment and well-being of women, clean production and worker conditions), the needs of clients (offering great design products to clients) and its own needs of staff well-being and better reputation, Eileen's Fisher is an example of the TVC approach. They evidently found strategic alignment among the needs of their stakeholders.

As a complex adaptive system, these six qualities are interdependent. Only when all six are developed to a large degree, can the leadership successfully transition from the Growth Triangle to the Cycle of Sustainability.

When all qualities of the leaders' awareness are dynamically balanced, they generate a strong sense of empowerment that strengthens the ability to deal with the ever increasing levels of complexity – at the level of the Self, the Organization, and System (Society and Ecosystem).

This is an exciting prospect: with this model, we can create a generation of business leaders who manifest as "Sustainability Warriors." These system warriors can restore the distrust between business and society, while reversing environmental degradation and social inequality. They can help transform the current "competitive race" to the bottom of a lifeless planet into a "compassionate race" to the future of a flourishing society on a living vibrant earth. ■



#### **SANDER TIDEMAN**

*is a member of the Transformational Faculty at Mobius. He specializes in leadership development with a focus on shared value strategy and societal leadership. He is a Senior*

*Researcher at Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) and an Executive Director of Garrison Institute International. In addition to Triple Value Leadership (2022), he is the author of the book, Business as an Instrument for Societal Change: In Conversation with the Dalai Lama (2016) – featured in the 2017 edition of this magazine.*



# Crossing The Threshold

## How New CEOs Prepare Themselves For The Journey Ahead

By Thomas Halbeisen, Senior Practitioner and Principal at Mobius Executive Leadership



Leadership transitions present tremendous opportunity but also risks, for both the executive and their organizations – and never more so when the leader in question is the new CEO.

Stepping into the role often entails a more radical shift than can be fully anticipated. There are, however, a few *known-unknowns* about the transition period. These are the probable and foreseeable dynamics that can catch new CEOs off guard even if they seem obvious in hindsight.

Each of these dynamics – whether it's the prominence of new stakeholders or the initial tension between making a bold move versus a period of judicious fact-finding, reflect the inherent complexity of the role itself – that is the thread tying these transitional challenges together. And ever-increasing rates of CEO turnover underscore how hard it is to succeed.

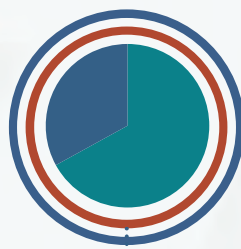
In this article we discuss how new CEOs equip themselves for what lies ahead.

### AROUND HALF OF LARGE PUBLIC COMPANIES SUFFERED HIGH CEO TURNOVER



42%

have had 3 or more CEOs during 2011-2020\*



33%

of very large public companies have experienced a major succession disruption

#### Reason for major disruptions include:

- CEO resignation
- CEO fired
- CEO death/illness
- Loss of heir or CEO not willing to renew/extend contract

Source: EZ proprietary analysis of 228 companies \$30B+ in revenue and market capitalization  
\*January 2012 to December 2021; considered as decade for analysis; \*\* Overall data

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A pragmatic first step to clarify the assignment is to map out the many domains of your new responsibilities. But the real work lies deeper still – in the ongoing developmental challenge of accepting that “what got you here won’t get you there.” The extraordinary level of achievement that all candidates for this role possess, masks the reality that their continued development is not only possible, but vital and necessary. The sheer complexity of the role demands that, but how do you go about it? By seeing anew the patterns of behavior, and the assemblage of beliefs that underpin your leadership journey thus far, so that these continue to serve rather than constrain you.

### THE KNOWN-UNKNOWN

While no two CEO transitions will be alike, here are some of the common dynamics we see at play and some advice on how to approach them.

#### 1. Prepare to commit and commit to prepare

Often, there is a big tension between getting to know the company and making a few decisive moves early on to mark your arrival. Recently, I sat down with a CEO about three months into the role. As we examined the different facets of the role (see page 27), it struck him he had made an ingoing mistake. He failed to negotiate with the Chair who had been asking him to come up with a strategy fast. While the CEO had been doing his best to respond to that pressure, first he needed to get to know the business and the industry better. Fortune may favor the brave, but rarely the blind. In this instance, he devised a two-phased approach where in the immediate term, he focused on three high-level efforts. He gave himself

a further six months to gather the data and diversity of perspectives he was missing before committing to detailed aspirations and strategies. Even so, he felt that he had lost some of his credibility by needing to reset the Chair’s expectation where he might have challenged that from the beginning.

Which elements can or should a new CEO negotiate with the Chair upfront?

Negotiating your success tends to be a multiple-step journey. Ideally, it includes a conversation before accepting the role and once you have more clarity a couple of months in. A new CEO needs to get to the heart of not only how he or she will define success but what it looks like for the Chair. It falls to the CEO to insist on clarifying their assignment, to align with the Board on what you aim to accomplish and by when. Mismatched expectations make for a rocky road. Agreeing these in advance helps to establish what working together really entails, including each party challenging the other in the higher interest of the organization.

#### 2. Temper courage with wisdom

In myths, the child archetype can be depicted as either the weakling or superhuman, where wide-eyed innocence sometimes accomplishes what adults, burdened by knowledge, cannot. New CEOs often live through this paradox. Their job is huge. So many things can go wrong that a CEO cannot mitigate. In this respect, the CEO is “small” – he or she cannot control the world. At the same time, an incoming CEO will often face huge expectations – explicitly or implicitly – to be the Heroic Child and make the impossible possible. Some CEOs act buoyed and enthusiastic about what they want to

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do with the organization and the business. But as they get their feet under the table, complex realities start to clutter their path.

A first-time CEO who started the job during the pandemic in a sector severely impacted by lockdowns, needed to tackle the immediate threats to the business. At the same time, he needed a post-pandemic plan to deal with three senior team members who were underperforming and displayed unhealthy behaviors. Formally, he had all the decision rights to do so. The chairperson gave him carte blanche. Yet, he could foresee the symbolic punch a blunt reshuffle would deliver – not just to the individuals or even the team, but to large swaths of the organization. He had to undergo his own process of individuation, of finding his way – without becoming a helpless child or stepping into a false heroic mode where he distracted too much organizational attention or damaged team trust at a critical time of post-pandemic recovery.

A new CEO needs to calibrate what's possible with what's desirable. This dilemma proved the learning ground for the new CEO to stretch into previously underdeveloped aspects of his leadership approach. Ultimately, he chose to champion a much more welcome and positive initiative and choreographed the team changes he had been impatient to make over a healthier time frame – at a rate the organization could withstand. In the interim, he found less punitive ways to signal the behaviors he expected leaders to role model.

### **3. Accept the prominence and potential dominance of stakeholders**

One of the first tasks is to map out the overall leadership landscape, especially the extended terrain

#### **How to Navigate Your Transition:**

1. Prepare to commit and commit to prepare
2. Temper courage with wisdom
3. Accept the prominence and potential dominance of stakeholders
4. Protect your inner circle
5. Navigate loss

of stakeholders and their expectations. This will often lead to surprise realizations about the job ahead. Nothing sets apart the CEO's everyday life more than the constellation of relationships that come to the fore. These demand a relentlessly relational orientation. For some new CEOs this change introduces a tangle of often conflicting demands, where previously these leaders enjoyed far less ambiguous to-dos. All CEOs must attend to the Board and investors. Some have the added complexity that comes with a Family-Owned Business.

*The need to tackle Board Dynamics* – New CEOs who insist they are there to run the company, not the Board – have not thought this through yet. Technically they are right, but if the Board is not working well, and if your relationship with the Board isn't in good shape, you have a very serious problem that undermines all else that you do. It is your job to manage up. Often no one tells you this in advance.

Like any relationship, this is never a one-off investment. A mid-tenure CEO realized that his

**“In these times of massive change, we need leaders who embrace the complexity and emerging possibility of the world, and meet it with the full power of the complexity and emerging possibility within themselves. ”**

– ERICA ARIEL FOX



support from the Board had expired. Where once they approved nearly all he suggested, now he struggled to work out the cause for considerable pushback. Emboldened by their early support, he had stretched his remit too far (for example, straying into top team compensation). He showered the Board with too many ideas rather than limiting himself to the few that really mattered. He needed to realize his honeymoon phase was over and to put himself in their shoes in order to figure out not just what they needed to know about major moves he wanted to make, but what they needed to believe.

For Board members who did not vote for your appointment and preferred another candidate, the challenge can become even harder as you focus on building trust where you need it without neglecting support you already have.

It is not all about the Board, of course – another set of relationships peculiar to the office involves the *investment community*. A SME client realized that he would now spend much of his time focused on investors and the next wave of funding. “Previously I would have said, that’s not my forte or the best use of what I am good at, but then I saw I am the only person who can do this. Investors need my voice, my perspective, my belief in the business. It’s an energetic thing – that I show up and attract their confidence with my deep trust and insight into the technology. Before, I would hardly say I radiated the joy of what we do – I wasn’t even aware I had it in me. But when the job called for it, I realized that I do.”

*Family-owned businesses* bring a host of idiosyncratic challenges. Recently one of my clients struggled with how much time he now had to spend with what he regarded as arrogant family members. He had what we might call “a balcony moment” – borrowing from the work of Ron Heifetz on adaptive leadership, where you step back from the dance to view a situation with greater perspective. He wondered how he was going to cope. “Managing the family makes up at least thirty percent of my time. I find these interactions incredibly draining,” he reflected. Many of these multi-generational family members were born into money and as far as the CEO knew added little value or useful perspective. Given his own massive track record, it was hard for him to see or acknowledge

their contribution. “They don’t even understand what my job is,” he said.

Our work together involved carving out that judgment, digging deeper into the part of him that resented them. We examined his values, how his life journey informed his beliefs, how disappointments might have influenced the way he judged others – some too harshly. He needed to find a new route into deepening his connections with some of these individuals. Failure to do so wasn’t just going to make him miserable, it would hamstring his leadership. The resentment he experienced with every family interaction seemed overblown, worse, it ensnared his creative vision and energy, pulling it away from where he needed to place it.

How well do you know your investors, customers, regulators, and advocacy groups? If all of your key stakeholders deserve at least some immediate attention, how might you prioritize going deeper where you need to most? One new CEO confessed that for years she had wondered what exactly her predecessor spent his time doing, only to realize that most of her new schedule would focus on the host of relationships it was her job to cultivate. These relationships determine whether the business would or would not thrive. They enabled her to steer the enterprise where she needed to take it.

#### 4. Protect your inner circle

Where is your refuge, the safe place which enables you to be bold and develop the depth of leadership needed to succeed in the role? Stepping into the CEO position tends to have a dramatic effect on your inner circle both at work and at home. In what ways can you protect your most meaningful relationships? With whom will you pressure-test important decisions? Who are the people who can and will be candid with you?

People inside and outside the company can help you stay centered and grow. CEO peer networks, for example, can become a great source of trustworthy exchange and counsel. In the right setting, not only can a CEO talk openly about concerns with peers, he or she is not being evaluated. They can drop their guard without having to worry about comments backfiring on them.



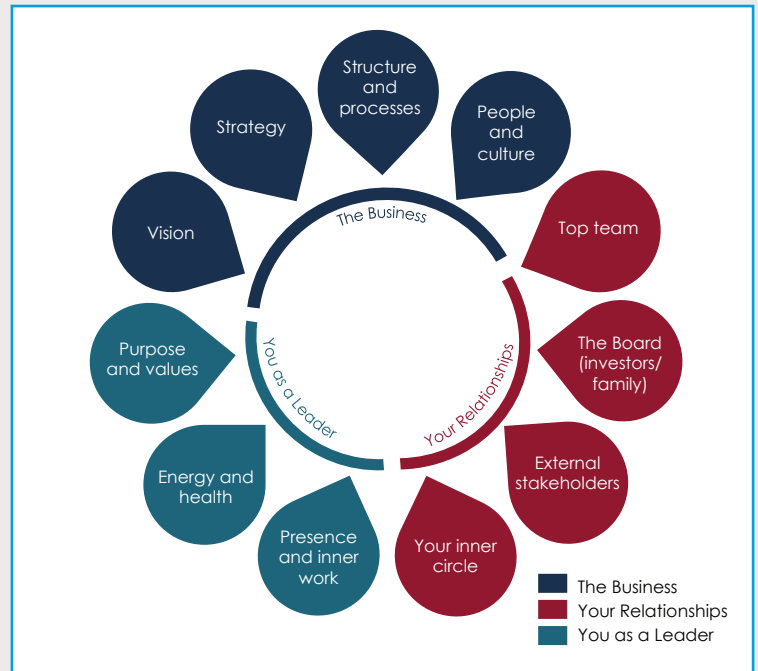
## MAPPING THE DOMAINS OF CEO LEADERSHIP

Even for internal successors, stepping into the CEO role pushes them over the threshold into foreign territory. In a CEO survey conducted by our partners at Egon Zehnder, only 28% of internally selected CEOs said they felt prepared for the role. External hires fared better at 38%, perhaps because they expected the new surroundings.

The context of every CEO transition differs and thus the first task for the incoming leader is to clarify the assignment. To do this we begin by holistically mapping the relevant domains of leadership that make the role unique.

Whether you have a year or three months to Day One or already have your feet under the desk, unpacking the entirety of the map – drilling down to tasks and tactics, typically proves eye-opening.

The exercise helps to:



### 1. Scope the job and put your arms around the sheer breadth of it.

### 2. Assess where you are with what you know.

- In which areas do you already have a strong view versus emerging hypotheses or indeed a complete blind spot?
- How might you go about developing the perspective you need? What do you need to learn? And how will you learn it?
- Which of these many areas will likely prove critical to your success and over what time frame?

### 3. Chart your course

With the huge demands on you, creating a timeline – sequencing tasks and plotting milestones, frees your attention and it can quieten some of the noise – whether that be inside your head or with key stakeholders that need visibility into your plan.

### Practical outcomes from mapping out the terrain include:

- A plan for engaging the Board with an emphasis on the decisions, timings, and communications to make the transition as transparent, aligned and welcomed as possible
- A list of the specific obstacles that invariably get thrown up during your transition along with trouble-shooting tactics. Common transition challenges include:
  - The outgoing CEO steps into the role of Chair
  - The handover timing of responsibilities remains imprecise
  - Internal candidates who did not get the job may swiftly depart
- An initial, high-level developmental plan – with an emphasis on the priority learning areas.



One CEO realized he needed to find a “jester” – a person capable of giving uncensored feedback and speaking the truth from a place of support. In his personal life, he had something like this with his circle of university friends. Now, he needed people inside the company who could speak freely without suffering negative consequences. For that to happen he had to find and contract with allies, to make it safe for them to confide in him.

Another CEO got the feedback she comes across as impatient. Colleagues noted her tendency to lean forward when she wanted the conversation to hurry along, which she herself barely noticed. We agreed she would pay particular attention to that movement and ask a team member to give her a sign, especially during tough meetings, whenever she did this. “It was as if my body was controlling my mind and now, I have the chance to correct it as it happens. Such a small adjustment and yet it’s proved very helpful. People have become more confident around me. They can see I want to hear what they have to say.”

Finally, it’s not all about work. What do you want your partner, your children, your friends to remember of the person you will be for these years? How might they support you and how, in exchange, will you protect your time with them? High performing CEOs safeguard their private life, they recharge their batteries, they draw on all their resources to bring their best to the job. And now more than ever they must role model that more balanced behavior to ensure those around them are not running on empty.

## 5. Navigate Loss

Becoming a CEO marks the end of an era and the start of the next. More than the crowning achievement of your career, it’s the beginning of the greatest test of your leadership prowess. But all change involves loss – natural cycles of death and renewal.

For example, where once you may have got a lot of energy from working with your team to create real impact in the business – whether that was doing something new and cool or achieving the numbers you set your sights on, that dynamic falls away. You do not own that business anymore. You hold the enterprise. And the Board, while they will recognize

good business results once, that only raises the bar. In any case, as the CEO you must pass that achievement back to the team. Wins are no longer your wins. If they are, there is a problem. It’s only natural to notice a loss in terms of what used to boost and motivate you. You must relinquish what may have been an essential source of energy that propelled your ambition for decades.

In exchange, you gain extraordinary decision-making rights and the privilege of power, but you will live every moment of your CEO-ship under intense scrutiny. No matter how at ease you may feel with those around you, the relationship becomes inherently imbalanced. Even small gestures or a momentary display of indifference has an amplified effect. Who you listen to, how attentively, who you overlook, which business unit you forget to mention, the tone of your voice, the micro flickers of your gaze – all can send unintentional signs. More broadly, stakeholders of every type review your comments differently.

Not only does the spotlight mean less freedom, but you also lose former peers – at least any within the organization. Your new position creates a gulf between yourself and others which can be especially exaggerated in the early days and months when people will be wondering where they stand in your estimation. As an executive you could talk informally to your colleagues. It was more easily accepted that you were closer to some more than others. As CEO, people will track how much time you spend with different people. It’s important, symbolically, to give the same “blessing” to everyone on your top team.

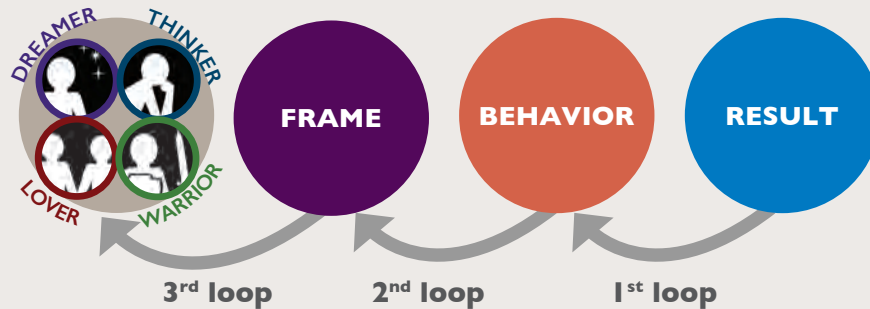
To conclude, it is worth pausing to notice what you have lost. How will you mitigate that? The more vitality you bring to the role, the more others will feel it. Many CEOs find new sources of energy spending time with key stakeholders or engaging in global issues like climate change and tackling poverty.

## PRACTISING NEW MOVES IN THE HEAT OF THE SPOTLIGHT

In a 2021 survey conducted by our partners at Egon Zehnder, an extraordinary 97% of CEOs agreed that “As CEO, I need the capacity to transform myself as well my organization.” But what does it even mean



## How to change the frame with Winning From Within® Triple-loop learning



to self-transform? In short, it is an adaptive, *ongoing* practice. It involves questioning how you know what you know and testing fresh approaches which yield new sets of outcomes.

There are a range of methods that support self-transformation, that delve into the type of inner inner developmental work required of any leader at the forefront of complex systems. In our work at Mobius Executive Leadership we will often tap into aspects of powerful, primary archetypes.

### Triple Loop Learning

Why is working with archetypes as a development method so effective and catalytic? Asking this is a little like asking why do stories move us? Archetypes offer a shorthand for universal interior properties. They evoke concepts which are quick-to-grasp and alive in the collective psyche. And yet as stories or images that appear again and again, they possess tremendous depth – where we explore the shadow side and more evolved expressions of each archetype. It is this ease-of-access yet depth that make archetypes so instructive for this level of development with the most seasoned and accomplished of leaders among us. This is how we help insanely successful people become something more.

In the *Mobius Strip* article "Working with CEOs to Close the Performance Gap" (Summer 2018), Mobius Chief Thought Leader Erica Ariel Fox explains that her Winning from Within methodology, core to many

of our flagship programs, draws on depth psychology, mythology and Action Science. Depth psychology seeks connections between what's going on in your outer world with what's happening deep in your inner world. Mythology lends additional meaning to those connections using universal themes and archetypes. Action Science is the practical application of these insights.

In their pioneering work on organizational learning, Harvard Business School Professor Emeritus Dr. Chris Argyris, and MIT Professor Emeritus Donald Schon and colleagues, developed the Action Science model where they distinguished the different ways people try to achieve better outcomes.

- **Single-loop learning** suggests that if you do not like the result you are getting, change your behavior.
- As the image at the top of the page suggests, with **Double-loop learning**, to change the result, you loop back twice to look at your underlying frame. If you can adjust that, this gives you more behaviors to choose from and thus, different results. With Double-loop learning the question is what is the belief about yourself or about the world that would invite better outcomes?
- **Triple-loop learning** – the model Erica developed asks *how do you change that underlying frame?* Through many years research and supporting senior executives around the world



she developed the Winning From Within® framework which boils down the many frames available to us, to say there are universal lenses to which we all have access. Erica refers to these as the Big Four (Dreamer, Lover, Warrior, and Thinker) and has developed a methodology for maturing your skills across these core archetypes.

Take for example a CEO I will refer to as Henry. Before he became the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, he took over one of the company's major divisions with tens of thousands of employees. He redefined the purpose of the business, established a radically new way to look at the ecosystem, successfully introduced new products and services, and managed the internal changes that were necessary to make all of this happen. As a result, the business numbers soared. The success story became a case study in the management literature. Henry became a super star in his industry.

On the basis of this accomplishment, Henry joined the pool of candidates to replace the company's current CEO. His extraordinary achievement made him the number one candidate. He stood for results and impact, and he had demonstrated outstanding leadership.

During the selection process Henry received a battery of feedback – most of it positive. But did he really care about people, the Board wanted to know. They didn't believe he would be the right CEO for the company unless they could find more evidence of that emotional intelligence.

In archetypal language we might say Henry displayed his Warrior-Magician – someone with a possibly unconditional orientation to results who could envision entirely new realities. As he dove into the details of the feedback, I suggested that it was time he stepped into the energy of a King. This was not just a way to summarize the feedback we were reviewing, but also a way to make sense of the developmental path forward. He would have to do more than “show he cared” for a greater number of people – he would need to really step into a new commitment to the wellbeing of a collective

enterprise and somehow balance this with his incredible drive and vision.

His response was enthusiastic: “Yes, spot on. That is exactly what I need to do. It feels totally right. How can I accomplish that?” Henry's immediate reaction demonstrates the power of archetypes as uniquely intuitive resources for learning.

When an archetype is activated in your life it provides an energy that makes immediate growth possible. You are not just gaining new knowledge or insight, you are expanding your capacity for *being* and unlocking dormant or under-developed leadership capacities. This is the main reason why archetypes – along with other methods that tap less conscious intelligence – work so fast. We step out of the realm of the rational mind and potentially overthinking and into the realm of embodying new ways of being.

CEOs need to change and to transform on the job – under the hottest professional spotlight of their lives. The developmental experiences that will serve you best often involve those you can access swiftly, intuitively, naturally – and this is what archetypes achieve. What if you were to step away from your Warrior, step into your King or your Queen, or become more the Lover and the Dreamer and operate less exclusively from the analytical capacity of the Thinker? Simple questions can prompt the profound work of expanding your leadership repertoire to meet the enormity of what may prove the greatest invitational moment of your life so far. ■

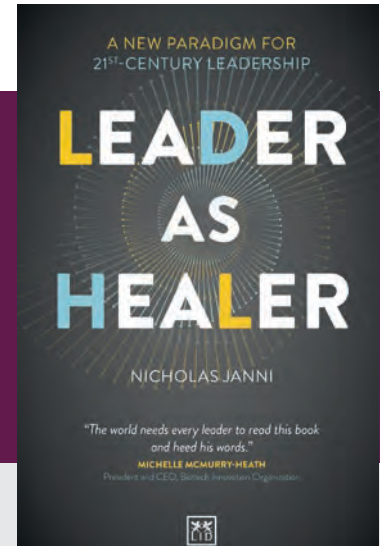
**THOMAS HALBEISEN** is a leadership advisor, management consultant, and a Principal at Mobius Executive Leadership. He coaches CEOs in their transition and over the course of their tenure. He has over 20 years of consulting experience in leadership development and transformational culture change – including accompanying companies and top teams in change processes; leadership development programs; re-organization and organizational development. Prior to joining Mobius, Thomas was an Expert Associate Partner at McKinsey & Company, Zürich and co-leader of the global initiative, McKinsey Leadership Development.



# Leader as Healer

## A New Paradigm for 21st Century Leadership

By Nicholas Janni



*"Nicholas Janni is a pioneer in transformational leadership and in his new book beautifully captures the current zeitgeist in business. Presented as a modern-day path for a leader or a roadmap for maturing organizational culture, he focuses on the importance of emotions, embodiment, relational attunement, higher purpose, mindfulness and service to life. Written from the heart of a seeker, the sensibility of a theatre director, the expertise of a top team coach and the vision of an activist, Leader as Healer is a primer for leading in the Century ahead."*

– AMY ELIZABETH FOX, CEO, MOBIUS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

### From the Introduction

This is a book about the highest levels of presence and peak performance leadership, and the cultures that ensue from them, in which wellbeing, results and contribution to the world are naturally interwoven.

It is, above all, a call to break from the chronically imbalanced ways of thinking and functioning that have become the norm in so many corporate cultures, where 'doing' eclipses 'being,' and hyper-rational, analytical thinking relegates feeling, sensing, intuiting and the transpersonal to the outer fringes of life.

I believe that the failure to correct this imbalance is severely detrimental not only to individual and organizational performance, but to our capacity for creating healthy, thriving futures.

In the book, I outline a theoretical and practical path to a new paradigm of leadership. It is a path of *restoration* through which we reintegrate previously exiled aspects of our nature: physical, emotional and transpersonal.

On this pathway, the brilliance and sophistication of the thinking self takes its rightful place alongside the sensing and feeling selves, together creating a much larger, more holistic intelligence.

To face the scope and threats of 21st-century challenges, today's leaders must possess potent powers for logic, reason, discernment and strategic forecasting. Yet, they must also be empathic and, therefore, embodied; grounded and, therefore, intuitive. They must be skilled in mindfulness and deep listening; present and receptive to higher levels of insight and innovation; able to inspire authentic engagement and collaboration; and possess a clear and wholehearted sense of service, mission and purpose.

I call this leader the *Leader as Healer*.

In recent decades, as the world has driven for growth and efficiency above all else, the Leader as Executor became the dominant global business

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**“The test of leadership is not to put  
greatness into humanity, but to elicit it,  
for the greatness is already there.”**

**– JAMES BUCHANAN**





© Michael Robbins, Mobius featured artist

model, the prevailing standard that sees ‘great’ leaders as drivers of action and agents of discipline. Their relationships are transactional, and their goals are primarily instrumental: maximize profit and shareholder returns. The power of Executors rests in a metaphorical sword to be wielded on the perpetual battlefield of business competition. And it is a war of attrition.

Executors operate from a narrow bandwidth, characterized by the primacy of the rational, strategic mind. They are generally disconnected from their emotional and physical selves, which creates an absence of deep listening and receptivity. Executors function almost constantly in a ‘doing’ modality with little or no access to ‘being.’

But all models must evolve to meet changing circumstances.

The global COVID-19 crisis has exposed executor-oriented leadership for what it now is: inadequate to meet the huge systemic challenges facing us in ‘the new abnormal.’ It is inadequate because the rational, linear mind always seeks to reduce everything into knowable, predictable, replicable terms. Yet, the increasing complexity of our times cannot and will not yield to such an approach. To thrive, not merely survive amidst heightened disruption requires new strategic competencies, heightened levels of

innovative thinking and advanced capacities for receptivity and openness.

That execution-oriented leadership is still regarded as the gold standard, the model by which all others must operate, is testament to how entrenched we have become in a paradigm that no longer serves us. Blind adherence to this outmoded style creates leaders who are no longer fit for purpose and a modality of function that poses a threat to the long-term health of our societies.

I find in my work that most executives instinctively know when they are leading in an unbalanced and unsustainable way. They know it because of the stress and frustration it induces. They know it because of the lack of meaning and connection and, sometimes, even despair they experience. Yet, in the field of business education, there is remarkably little emphasis or instruction on the inner development of the leader, or the emotional, ethical and spiritual maturity that is required of them. People are thrust into senior positions of responsibility with a lack of preparation that, in many other fields, would be unthinkable.

Even before the pandemic, many chief executives and senior leaders were speaking about the new capacities they realized they needed to develop in increasingly unpredictable environments. Chief amongst these: being comfortable with uncertainty,



Principles of the *Leader as Healer* examined in the book, along with detailed self-reflection and practices for each

- Foundation – Being and Doing
- Embracing our Emotions
- The Power of Embodiment
- A Life of Purpose
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- The Call

and able to embrace paradox, doubt and ambiguity without rushing to an ineffective fix. They revealed a growing need to meet and adapt to complexity with much more than the linear, formulaic strategies of the past. Since the pandemic, instability has grown exponentially. One of my CEO clients recently said to me: “I am understanding more and more that I simply cannot lead, cannot formulate strategy, in any of the ways I did before. I am in a completely new land.”

Individually and collectively, we find ourselves more than ever engulfed in a volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) environment. Recently, a new acronym entered the corporate lexicon: Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear and Incomprehensible (BANI). The growing scale of the systemic challenges before us is far beyond anything we have faced before. To meet the moment, we need new frameworks of understanding and higher capacities with which to lead. Today’s leaders must be able to embrace complexity, grapple with ambiguity, and express authentic empathy. They must learn to access the wisdom and emotional skill required to steer the ship in a rapidly changing world. They must be people who seek opportunities for genuine inner development, for themselves and those they lead. They must be able and willing to create cultures of real engagement in which people give the best of themselves, and experience the deep satisfaction that comes with seeking to contribute more than to take.

### An Emerging Model – Leader As Healer

In the context of leadership, *healing* does not refer to the physical. Rather, it is:

- The *restoration of unity*, bringing those parts of us and the systems within which we work that are fragmented and/or exiled back into a coherent whole
- The *rebalancing* of our thinking, emotional and physical selves
- The *transformation* of stagnant energy, leading to greater vitality, enhanced connection, and higher intelligence and wisdom
- The *awakening* of transpersonal levels of consciousness
- And a precise *excision* of that which is toxic, unhealthy and dangerous to the whole

Healers are leaders who have highly developed rational minds and have likewise invested in their emotional and psychological development. They are leaders who transmit embodied presence. They have explored and sufficiently reintegrated wounded parts of themselves and developed higher levels of consciousness and innovative capacity, abilities described by all cultures for thousands of years. As a result, these leaders bring to the table their cognitive, emotional and embodied physical selves; no part of the whole is excluded.

The Leader as Healer sees the world, its problems and potential solutions in very different ways than the Leader as Executor. The Healer can analyze and strategize every bit as well as the Executor, but knows what it means to connect with themselves and others, to integrate being and doing, proactivity and receptivity, rationality and intuition.

The Healer both understands and embodies the essence of coherent presence: *I’m here, and I’m available*. They recognize the power of fostering connection and know, for instance, that just one minute of quality attention paid to a colleague or employee is priceless. Where the Executor builds cultures of absence on a foundation of disconnection, the Healer creates cultures of presence on a foundation of interconnection.



Critically, the Healer utilizes power very differently than the Executor. In place of the sword, a Healer chooses the scalpel. He or she understands that feeling and empathy are essential, but not always sufficient. True leadership sometimes requires that one decisively excise moral and spiritual tumors from the bodies of organizations or nations. And, like all good surgeons, Healers seek to preserve any and all healthy tissue, to the greatest extent possible.

This emergent model of leadership unlocks parts of ourselves that have long been pushed aside, and even derided, in order to expand our operating bandwidth. By bringing higher levels of consciousness to our work, we find we can access much more nuanced information, much subtler signals. We can unlock new reserves of energy and inspiration, elevating our efforts and those of our teams to higher levels of efficiency, innovation and impact.

This style of leadership is a journey that demands transformational inner work and uncovers new reserves of wisdom and empathy. It is a path that marries the sophistication of rationality and the brilliance of science to the profound understandings of timeless wisdom and cutting-edge body-mind psychology, better preparing us to meet the times in which we live.

This fresh and necessarily radical vision offers an entirely new perspective on leadership. As we face ‘the new abnormal,’ the prior model is no longer enough. Simply put, execution-style leadership doesn’t cut it. As Albert Einstein advised, we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used to create them.

It is time for a new toolbox.

## A LIFE OF PURPOSE

*Excerpt from Chapter Four*

Generally speaking, there are three ways in which we wake up to and ‘recover’ from a loss of purpose:

**THROUGH A CRISIS**, such as severe illness, bereavement, divorce, employment redundancy, etc. A wake-up is not guaranteed by crisis, but there are hundreds of stories of people whose lives were turned upside down by such events, yet emerged with a renewed sense of purpose and direction.



**In our self-obsessed culture,  
it is easy to forget the deeper  
purpose of mindfulness  
and meditation: to dissolve  
the experience of separation;  
to broaden and transform one’s  
sense of I/me; and to open  
oneself to the mystery of a  
deeply unified field.**

© Heather Rhodes, Mobius featured artist



The great artist, like the great scientist and the great leader, has matured enough to realize that the higher levels of creativity, insight and innovation we crave are not something we do. Rather, they *do us*.

**SPONTANEOUS REALIZATION** occurs through a moment of recognition, when we realize that our guiding purpose has been lost and must be found. This happened to one of my clients after he treated himself to a walking holiday in the Himalayas in celebration of his 40th birthday. One day, as he sat alone, facing a magnificent mountain panorama, he experienced a sudden recognition of how out of balance his incredibly ‘successful’ life actually was. This kind of moment usually inspires new life choices and transformational change.

**VIA DIALOGUE WITH A MENTOR/COACH.** When we find ourselves at a crucial crossroads, we may seek out a companion or coach – a guide with depth and experience. A mentor or coach can encourage us to lean into the unknown and surrender to the darkness, rather than try to get out of it as quickly as possible. Such times often prove to be the most transformational of all.

Indeed, facing questions about the core purpose of our lives needs to be done in a careful, well-supported context. The first requirement is to create a strong enough space – with the help of a mentor or coach, or in the company of a group of trusted and dedicated friends or colleagues – in which the full spectrum of what is happening can be acknowledged and felt. This is important; we need to keep at bay the impulsive leap to rationalize or fix the experience, even if sitting with it is uncomfortable.

Once we engage wholeheartedly, we often discover two types of tension emerging, both of which need to be welcomed and precisely discerned. The first is the *pull of the past*. As noted previously, the experiences from our early lives that we tried to pack away begin to call for attention and take us to the places within where our fundamental needs – to be received, nurtured, and

to belong – were not adequately met. If we allow these places in us to be felt, we begin to see how aspects of the individuals we have become (the ‘somebody’ we have each attempted to build) were in fact subtly but essentially based in the exclusion of these painful parts of our past. This work requires from us a deep level of vulnerability, but it allows our hearts to melt so that qualities of compassion, connectedness and humility may flourish.

The second tension is the *pull of higher levels of consciousness*, which are simply the successive stages of our human psychological and personal development. If mindfulness brings us to a first level of enhanced spaciousness, here we are called to an entirely different level of consciousness. Art, nature and silence become more essential, and a need for rational certainties recedes further into the background. In traditional cultures, people readily recognized this calling and retired into the forests, deserts or caves, literally or metaphorically, for a period of contemplation. No time limit was set for this task because the need to be in control no longer took precedence.

The Leader as Healer is committed to creating a culture in which time for deep contemplation can be honoured without having to leave the world. They also embody the kind of leadership and organization that emerges when our tidy, individualistic identities become less rigid, and we are able to embrace a larger field of connectedness, a deeper sense of purpose and a natural instinct for stewardship and service.

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## THE CALL

*Excerpt from Chapter Six*

As a theatre director, I frequently observed two distinct types of actor: the technically competent actor and the ‘surrendered’ actor.



The former might approach me with a dilemma: “I don’t know what to do with this speech.” My reply was always the same: “Whatever you do with this speech is of small interest compared to what *it* will do with *you*.” Throughout 20 years of work with actors, I researched how to help them lean consistently into what it meant to be a ‘channel,’ a container through which intense frequencies from the full spectrum of humanity could flow, just as they do in any great live musical performance.

When an actor understood this, they were able to speak one line of Shakespeare, for instance, with a completely new impulse of emotion, an unforeseen eruption of energy and aliveness. And, if they had learned how to *surrender* to such flow, to give themselves ‘as if in love,’ then we, in the theatre or the rehearsal room, could be moved to our very core. I remember instances in which the simple words ‘thank you,’ spoken at a climactic moment of a Shakespeare play, could reduce almost an entire audience to tears.

Through the surrendered performer, we find ourselves in the presence of magnificent life force. It is no wonder that people were willing to camp on a sidewalk overnight in sub-zero, midwinter New York to get tickets to see an opera artist like Maria Callas, who gave herself so fully to that force.

The great artist, like the great scientist and the great leader, has matured enough to realize that the higher levels of creativity, insight and innovation we crave are not something we do. Rather, they *do us*. They recognize when it is time to step aside, relinquish control and demonstrate a balance between being and doing. The Leader as Healer has matured enough to know how to bow and surrender to the emergence of new ideas and higher insights. They understand first that many of the innovations we currently need will arrive in this way, and secondly that we cannot know what these emergent qualities will be until they appear. Our task is to cultivate the receptivity in us.

Yesterday’s leaders were masters of incremental change and gradual shift, and were selected and rewarded for their powers of profit-maximization. Today’s leaders must possess potent powers for logic, reason, discernment and strategic forecasting, yet must *also* be empathic and therefore embodied; grounded and therefore intuitive; present and

therefore awake. They must be skilled in mindfulness and deep listening; present and receptive to higher levels of insight and innovation; able to inspire authentic engagement and collaboration; and possess a clear and wholehearted sense of service, mission, and purpose. They are called upon to restore coherence where there is fragmentation and unity where there is division.

They must be both intentional and surrendered, able to embrace the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of our time, so as to become agents through which radical disruption transmutes into radical opportunity, and planetary crisis into global transformation.

They are the heralds of a new future.

This is *Leader as Healer*.

Your time is now. ■



*Originally a director of theatre, NICHOLAS JANNI taught acting at The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and directed his own theatre company. He dedicated 30 years to exploring the theory and practice of peak performance flow states. Over the last 20 years, Nicholas has gained an international reputation for his transformational coaching and leadership development programmes, designed for chief executives and top teams from diverse sectors, public and private. He teaches regularly at The IMD Business School and the University of Oxford Said Business School. His transformative work bridges the worlds of creative, personal, spiritual and professional development in a uniquely powerful, relevant and accessible way.*



# Why the Ego is an Obstacle to Mindful Leadership

From Rasmus Hougaard, Founder of Potential Project, Mobius Alliance Partner



We are delighted to be able to continue to share the significant thought leadership of Rasmus Hougaard and his colleagues at Potential Project. For more, the Winter edition earlier this year features excerpts from his books *The Mind of the Leader* (2020) and *Compassionate Leadership* (2022), in addition to a special report co-produced by Harvard Business Review on the organizational outcomes of wise and compassionate leadership.

Rasmus joins us at the 2023 NPI to offer a keynote address. He is the Founder and Managing Director of Potential Project, a global leadership training, organizational development and research firm. They help leaders and organizations enhance performance, innovation and resilience through mindfulness and other practices grounded in neuroscience and research.

*Offering our full attention with those we lead is key to effective listening and communication in the workplace. Here's how the inner "me voice" of ego can get in the way, and a simple way to practice leading with presence.*

In-the-moment presence can be an awfully tricky thing for leaders to find in an age of multitasking and mixed priorities. But it's also a skill we can't afford to neglect. Steve Mizell, CHRO of Merck, told me that he believes one of the most critical skills for leaders today is to slow down and be more fully present with people, to really check in, and to listen more deeply. And this is even more important when some of what we're called to do includes tasks that aren't necessarily easy: enforcing a rule, giving constructive feedback, canceling a project, laying someone off. "As leaders we have great impact on the people we lead," Steve said. "And sometimes

*Originally published in Mindful magazine, April 2022, reprinted with kind permissions*

we have to do difficult things. In those situations, it is imperative that we are truly present and take the time to get vested in our people's current state of mind."

Amid challenges, however, it is difficult to be fully present. [For more on how being triggered impacts our nervous system, see the first article in this issue.] We are easily distracted. It can be hard to slow down when we have so much to do. And even when we are able to be "in the moment," we can get caught up in our own stories and projections about what is happening. We can be influenced by our biases or driven by our ego. This is why cultivating a mindful leadership style



includes becoming more aware of how our ego's self-serving tendencies can undermine our best intentions.

### **Understanding Your Ego**

Our ego—that is, our individualistic sense of self—is designed to protect us and help keep us safe. The ego is the little voice inside our head, generated by the default mode network in the brain, that looks out for Number One, for the purpose of protecting us from harm.

Most people, leaders included, don't like to think that we are egoistic. We like to think of ourselves as being kind, generous, and thoughtful toward others. And although we can be all those positive things, we have all experienced moments when we are unkind, selfish, and self-centered.

The ego often poses an obstacle to mindful leadership. It can easily manipulate you into thinking that what it wants is for the greater good, but its focus is self-centered. As a result, sometimes it can get in the way of our natural ability to care about others. This can be especially true in the workplace, where there is so much focus on individual performance and success.

In contrast to these egoistic impulses, human beings are most often compelled to exhibit compassion and care for others—what many teachings refer to as

our intrinsic goodness. The worst comes out, however, when we fail to manage our ego's natural drive for self-preservation. When the ego takes over, we are driven by our fears of losing prestige, money, or influence. This can drive us to make decisions that are (for example) narrowly focused on the bottom line. When this happens, our actions toward others can be detrimental and even cold-hearted.

Being aware of the dangers of rampant ego provides an opportunity for us to enhance awareness of how our brain works and to act in ways that are more in line with our values. Through mindfulness training, we can gradually rewire our brains to be less self-oriented and more selflessly attuned to others.

### **A Six-Step Mindful Awareness Exercise**

Mindful awareness helps us manage our attention by enabling us to be aware of what is happening within the landscape of our mind. It helps us to be more attentive to our external environment, as well as our internal processes, including what we are thinking and feeling. With greater mindful awareness, we can be more intentional about where we choose to place our attention and what we choose to let go of. We can change the ratio of our conscious to unconscious behaviors, which can be the difference between making wise or unwise decisions.

© Michael Robbins, Mobius featured artist





**“Being present mostly means letting go of anchoring our attention in the past or the future. Both provide attractive escape routes from the unpredictability of the present moment.”**

**DR. PAUL DUNION, MOBIUS TRANSFORMATIONAL FACULTY MEMBER**

Do you know what mindful awareness feels like? Follow these steps to take a moment to experience it:

1. **Take your eyes off the screen.** For one minute, sit still with your eyes closed or downcast.
2. **Whatever comes into your mind, be aware of it.** Simply notice it.
3. **Let go of any inner commentary** on why you are doing this exercise.
4. **No analyzing, no judging, no thinking.**
5. **Simply be aware:** of your feet, your seat, your belly, the temperature on your skin, sound entering your ears, light entering your eyes.
6. **Just be.**

This is Awareness: a direct experience of what is happening to you in this very moment. Mindful awareness is the starting point for becoming a wise leader. It helps you to take a step back from the ego's domineering voice, understand more of the inner workings of your internal landscape, and be more objective in how you manage your mind—and your teams. In this sense, mindful awareness is the foundation for any leadership journey.

### **The Benefits of Staying Present with Others**

When we commit to being mindfully aware, along with better understanding of our egos and our thoughts, we should be set, right? Well, not quite. Being present with others means that we need to tune in to what they

are experiencing and what they're communicating. Despite our best intentions—and even with increased self-awareness—this is not easy. But mindfulness practice helps.

Our data shows that when leaders practice mindfulness, they experience less stress and more connection with others. Mindfulness practice allows leaders to be more in tune with their direct reports. Mindful leaders more frequently experienced a sense of shared and mutual understanding of the world with their direct reports.

Furthermore, when leaders practiced mindfulness frequently, this had a tangible impact on their direct reports, who experienced lower burnout, higher job satisfaction, job engagement, organizational commitment, and improved job performance. Our results also suggest that the impact of leaders' mindfulness on their employees' outcomes is channeled through wise compassion. In other words, leaders who practice mindfulness become wiser and more compassionate, and that in turn means that their direct reports are doing better.

In many ways, mindfulness practice is a means for unlocking other positive leadership behaviors. But before you can look too far ahead, pausing to cultivate and sustain a mindfulness practice is an important step in becoming a more aware, wiser, and more compassionate leader. You can practice the next time you catch your mind wandering during a one-to-one interaction: Notice if your ego is getting in the way, bring yourself back to the present, and focus on the one you're with ■.

*Adapted from: Compassionate Leadership: How to do Hard Things in A Human Way by Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter. Published by Harvard Business Review Press, January 18, 2022.*





# Leaders Are Alarmingly Out of Sync with Their Teams

New hybrid workplaces demand leaders who are connected and caring

## 55%

Lack compassion  
for their people

or

Are out of touch  
with their employee's  
perceptions



Source: Potential Project

## THIS IS A PROBLEM.

Millions are resigning from their jobs, in part due to **employer indifference** and lack of support.

Many people are returning to the office feeling **burned out** and disconnected.

Leaders are the top factor influencing a person's **job satisfaction**.



What's needed now are compassionate leaders who are truly in touch with how they are doing.

## WHY COMPASSION IS IMPORTANT



Source: Potential Project

Compassion in leadership creates stronger connections between people. It improves collaboration, raises levels of trust, and enhances loyalty. But it's not enough. When leaders marry compassion with the courage to be transparent and do hard things – what we call wisdom – amazing outcomes happen.

Job satisfaction improves by

**86%**

Job engagement grows by

**53%**

Burnout improves by

**64%**

## WHY BEING IN SYNC IS IMPORTANT

Leadership is a relationship in which both sides need to feel understood and connected. When leaders and employees share a common understanding of how things are going, there is a greater meaning in the workplace, team commitment, and higher performance.

**“The way we work in the modern world is a mode psychologists call hyper-arousal. We describe it as feeling stressed-out, overwhelmed, burned out, lost or exhausted.**

**Put aside what this does to us emotionally.**

**On a purely physical level, the very systems that evolved to keep us alive, are now slowly but surely killing us.”**

**ERICA ARIEL FOX, MOBIUS CHIEF THOUGHT LEADER**



To quantify the importance of being in sync,  
we asked leaders to rate their level of compassion.  
We asked their employees too. Three profiles emerged.  
Only one delivers the best outcomes for all.

## 1 WE LEADER



In this profile, leaders view themselves as compassionate and their employees agree.  
There is a shared and accurate understanding of the relationship.  
As a result, both sides experience positive outcomes.

### For Employees

11% higher job satisfaction

10% higher organizational  
commitment

10% lower burnout

(relative to the Me Leader group)

### For Leaders

lower burnout 15%

lower intent to quit 6%

higher leadership efficacy 12%

(relative to the You Leader group)



## 2 ME LEADER

In this profile, leaders overestimate how  
compassionate they are and are disconnected  
from how their employees really see and  
experience their leadership. Employee burnout  
is high and job satisfaction is low when they  
work with leaders who have a distorted picture  
of their leadership.

Source: Potential Project



## 3 YOU LEADER

In this profile, leaders underestimate how  
compassionate they are, rating themselves  
less favorably than their employees perceive  
them to be. Employees do well with this type  
of humble leader, but the leaders can struggle  
with burnout and productivity.



Find your balance as a leader by following these tips and strategies.

## FOR A ME LEADER

### TAME THE EGO

Find your balance as a leader by following these tips and strategies. The power that comes with leadership can be fuel for our ego. If ego is mismanaged, our leadership becomes about ourselves rather than about our people. This doesn't make us bad people, just normal human beings seeking recognition, praise, success, or influence.

- When ego rears its head, try remembering that you are not the sole architect of your success.
- Remember all who have supported and guided you along your leadership journey.



Source: Potential Project

## FOR A YOU LEADER

### CALM YOUR INNER CRITIC

Effective leadership isn't just about serving your teams well; it includes being of service to yourself. However, leaders are often their own worst critic, full of self-judgment and negative self-talk.

- You can counter this with self-compassion and reminders that you are good enough.
- When you can acknowledge that you are doing your best, you can let go on your inner critic and move on



## FOR ALL LEADERS

### LESS DOING – MORE BEING

It can be hard to stop doing the things that earned you a senior position. But now your greatest contribution is often your presence. Practicing mindfulness is foundational to mastering presence as a leader. We Leaders are 1.6 times more likely to practice mindfulness on a regular basis.

- Spend less time acting and more time being fully present with your teams.
- When you are mindfully present in a situation, your best traits shine through, and the connectedness with your team multiplies.

### GET A (SHARED) REALITY CHECK

With remote, distributed work, it can be hard to get on the same page as your team. Without meeting regularly in person, it's easy to miss body language and subtle nonverbal cues, and it's tempting to deprioritize check-ins.

- Create a "shared reality" with the members of your team by meeting with them for non-work conversation.
- And when you have those moments, make them matter.



# Modern Mystic

## Principles for Living Consciously

Master Transformational Faculty Member Thomas Huebl  
in conversation with Stephan Breidenbach



Originally published in 2016, this book containing eight dialogues between spiritual teacher and modern mystic Thomas Huebl and legal scholar and entrepreneur Stephen Breidenbach. Recently translated from the German by Ben Mason-Sucher, the collection is now available to a wider audience.

Together, Thomas and Stephen discuss how mystical principles can guide our everyday lives – enriching our experience to become fuller, more conscious, and in greater flow. For many people a spiritual lens grounds us and helps us to accept and from that place of surrender, commit ourselves to the wellbeing of all people, places, and living things that interconnect us.

### Mysticism is Inner Science – from Stephen

Thomas Huebl is a mystic of our time. My discussions with him are about the deeper principles that underpin our lives, and how these play out in the most everyday situations. They are about what makes our lives more fluid, more conscious, and more successful. About which parts of ourselves we are not really living, and which as a result, are not truly alive.

What does mysticism in daily life mean? It means studying and applying mystical principles – not in some mountain cave, but in the bustle and flow of the world, we inhabit today. If we can free ourselves from rigid identification with our normality, we allow greater creativity and joy to emerge. We can download an update for ourselves.

### Go where you feel the strongest attraction – and also where you feel the strongest aversion

**STEPHAN BREIDENBACH:** Let's talk about a suggestion that you sometimes make: "Go both where you feel the strongest attraction and also to where you feel the strongest aversion." That's a surprising and counterintuitive idea – at least the second part.

**THOMAS HUEBL:** There is an energetic principle there, because people respond to energy. When we feel an attraction to something or someone, then a part inside us is resonating – one that has a higher development in this other thing or person. If somebody exhibits a high intellectual or bodily presence, if they radiate a strong sexual energy or great wisdom, and if these things are contained *within me* as possibilities, then this potential within me is spoken to. If I find somebody where these qualities are pronounced, then that part of me starts to resonate. If you like the same kind of music, you are going to run into each other at the same concert.

**Stephan:** That means that this only happens if it is really contained as a potential in me?

### Potentials vibrate together

**Thomas:** Exactly. You need to have a resonance. If you don't, then it leaves you cold. For example, there are lots of people toward whom you don't feel any strong sexual attraction. You would say: yes they are good-looking,

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## Modern Mystic captures eight dialogues between Thomas and Stephen:

1. Take complete responsibility for your life and your feelings
2. Put the other person center stage
3. Go where you feel the strongest attraction – and also where you feel the strongest aversion
4. Always keep sight of your body
5. Use intellectual concepts where they belong – and do so authentically
6. Fully take your place in life
7. Communicate transparently
8. Witness the world as fully as possible

but still I'm not tempted. And then there are people where suddenly there is a spark. Something resonates, and this resonance is interesting. This kind of energetic resonance is a co-vibration, like two instruments playing in tune. There's a part within us that can profit from that. When we meet a person and they're advanced in a line of development which is also a significant potential within me, it's often very good and supportive to go more deeply into contact with that person. The energetic transfer that happens, the resonance that it creates, stimulates nerve-endings in my brain and body. When we meet creative people, it spurs us to creativity ourselves.

**Stephan:** That means it always has to do with a potential in me, a space of possibility which is strengthened through this stimulation? Hence it's not something that already fully exists and then "merely" resonates. It's something that has room for more, and this "more" comes into existence through this stimulation, this attraction?

**Thomas:** Yes. And this stimulated state is the best way to learn. When we're in this stimulated, attracted, creative

state, then the transmission of higher knowledge from this level, from this higher skill, is only natural. It falls on very fertile soil.

**Stephan:** This principle, that this particular kind of stimulation, with this kind of resonant frequency so to speak, as the incubator for good learning, is what neuroscientist Gerald Hüther calls *Begeisterung* (which translates to enthusiasm), except you describe it on an energetic level?

**Thomas:** Right. It doesn't matter whether you're a musician listening to music, or an artist looking at art, or a scientist talking to other scientists – the moment you notice that a creative space is opening, in that moment, your Being is at its most open to receiving new information from within, meaning through yourself, as well as from outside. Together – the outside world and your own intuition and inspiration – create a chemistry that acts upon this creative, inspired, stimulated state. Then you have a thousand ideas or a thousand insights. You're completely overloaded with insights. And that's precisely the *Begeisterung* that Gerald talks about. It's in such moments that we learn fastest, whatever our age, because we are vibrating in this energetically open state.

**Stephan:** What I find especially interesting is the idea that when we're in this state, we not only get something from outside that we learn – learning is also generated from within us. That means in this state, we contribute part of whatever we're learning.

**Thomas:** Absolutely. And I actually think that's a fundamental principle: What we receive from outside stimulates our own evolutionary potential, which we can grow into. And then you download a new version of yourself.

**Stephan:** So you are saying, in every moment, whenever you encounter an attraction, you should perceive it and go towards it. It's an enormous opportunity, so don't pass it up. It doesn't matter what the context is, or what it is that's attracting you – do it. Of course, that's a bit tricky if you board a plane and you're walking down the rows and suddenly you



encounter a strong sexual attraction in seat 17A, on the 6 am Lufthansa flight to Dusseldorf. But maybe even that is possible...

### **Our body-mind-system is a radar for energy**

**Thomas:** Well, particularly with the sexual level you have to bear in mind that life keeps presenting you with lots of attractions, and if you started thinking you needed to act on all of them, then of course that's difficult. But the principle remains, and it's simply this: We learn that our body-mind-system is a radar for energy. We only see things that have energy for us. And each person has a different spectrum of interests, of abilities, of attractors...

**Stephan:** ...of potential!

**Thomas:** Right. Meaning that different people will have their sensors activated by different things. For one person it will be Nietzsche, for another rock music. If something is good and it attracts you, because it's relevant to you, then your radar lights up. Waking up means paying attention to the things which set off your sensor. They are often opportunities for development.

**Stephan:** So, we have an energetic sensor, an energetic alarm system within us, which draws our attention to opportunities when they arise.

**Thomas:** Absolutely. And the more freely you go through your life – that is, the more you can free yourself from being consumed by yourself and your thoughts and daydreams – the more often such potential experiences will come along. Sometimes through people, or else events, or things that you read, and so on. If you are walking down the street and see out of the corner of your eye a newspaper headline that grabs your attention, then that's the same thing, just in another form. And then you go and look – and you gain information that's significant to you. Reality

is speaking to us the whole time. And if we have eyes and ears to perceive it, then we receive a great deal of information that sets off our energetic sensor.

**Stephan:** So it's also a question of working on my perception, so that I'm not absorbed by all the stuff going through my head. The freedom that I grant myself when I move beyond my daydreams and distractions is the freedom to perceive more clearly my energetic radar, which picks up on the things I come across which really have a resonance for me.

**Thomas:** Exactly and then your path will keep getting quicker and easier, and you'll say: I always meet the right people at the right moment. Whenever I need something, it seeks me out. And then your whole life starts to flow much more. All the information is there either way. But often we're so closed that we don't see and don't hear. If, on the

other hand, we are attentive, suddenly it all becomes so easy. Then I'm on the bus and suddenly somebody sits down next to me who tells me exactly what I wanted to know.

### **Go right where you feel a strong aversion**

**Stephan:** Now, we said at the start that this holds not just for things that attract us, but equally for things that deter or repel us. Where I have a defensive reaction. When we say: No way, I really don't want that *at all*. And you say: Go precisely there.

**Thomas:** Yes. Because this part of you that says "no way, I don't want that" also belongs to your radar. The radar also picks up on shadow energy. That means our sensor also sees into the shadow area where we ourselves cannot see so clearly. If somebody casts a shadow on my screen without my even knowing who they are, then that's a person I should get to know. Because they've got something in their energetic field which produces a

**If you say to a person  
“I don't want you,” then you are  
saying in the same breath that  
you don't want the shadow  
that you carry within you. And  
that ties up part of your energy.**



rejection within me. Or, to put it more precisely, they hit a part within us that we reject. And it's important to find out what it is we're rejecting, which is constraining our energy. So it has less to do with the person who we've just encountered, and more with the energy in us which is trapped and which creates such a strong rejection. And in that, you're not in a state of love, but rather living in a form of disconnection. If you say to a person "I don't want you," then you are saying in the same breath that you don't want a representation, a shadow that you carry within you. And that ties up part of your energy.

**Stephan:** So imagine I meet somebody who is loudly extolling their extreme right-wing views. One possible reaction would be that I say: There goes another far-right crank, but beyond that, it doesn't activate anything in me. In other words, I reject what he's saying, but it doesn't have any resonance within me, no negative resonance. But it's also possible that this person triggers an extreme rejection impulse within me. In that case, I know that my sensor is sounding, meaning that there's energy there. And that means that something is trapped in my shadow, which I haven't yet

released. And I could use the contact with this person to take a closer look at what that is.

**Thomas:** It is important to note that forcing yourself into contact and then waiting until you can get out again is obviously not the right way. It is about reflecting on what it is exactly about this far-right extremist which I reject in myself so forcefully that I can't bear to look at the person. If I have a sense of aversion towards a person, then it's highly likely that when I'm in situations where life sends me such people, I won't be able to adequately act from my potential, and instead, I'll be acting out of a contraction. That means I only see what I project onto them, and that's totally negative. But to truly transform something, I need to be fully there. I need to be free to really meet that person. That doesn't mean that I agree with his views. Rather, it means exponentially increasing the possibility that a fruitful interaction can take place. Because I'm open and flexible enough.

**Stephan:** Fruitful doesn't mean that we need to believe what he says. Fruitful simply means that this encounter contains development.

© Michael Robbins, *Mobius* featured artist





**Thomas:** Yes, it transmits a developmental impulse, and maybe even leads to a change in a very positive way. But that can only happen if I truly see the person. Otherwise, I just see my own “I can’t stand that” written on the face in front of me – that is, my own split-off energy.

**Stephan:** The projection becomes independent, and so I just see my own projection through my own filter.

**Thomas:** Right. That means I also overlook the possible openings to change and movement within this person because all I see is a far-right radical. I no longer see the person, who, among other things, belongs to the far-right. I just see a far-right radical and nothing else. And that means I’m already walled in, I no longer have any room to maneuver. For example, I’m blind to the part of him which might be totally terrified and is afraid of me, and which covers up this fear by puffing himself up. I don’t see that because I’m so over-shadowed by my own aversion. If I were to see that, then maybe something new could emerge from precisely that place.

**Stephan:** Perhaps I could speak to his fear in an adequate way so that something in him releases which allows a change.

**Thomas:** Precisely. He might feel seen, for maybe the first time in years, in the place where he’s really small and shy and insecure. And suddenly he notices that he’s being perceived not because he has a certain view or position, but rather he’s being perceived as a person. Such an interaction can cause an entire house of cards to collapse. But that can only happen if I’m free. Being walled up inside our own aversion means we can’t move anything. On the contrary, we even *create* situations that in all likelihood produce something negative.

### **Observe your reaction and look beyond it**

**Stephan:** In fact, that applies to any situation where I leap to a judgment very quickly. I produce a rejection and it’s like I’m holding it in front of me which distorts what I see.

**Thomas:** That can also happen if the judgment I have is very positive. It could be that I have a very high opinion of somebody. Then I don’t see that person either. In both cases, the judging part of my psyche springs into action. But I can try to meet that part consciously enough so that I’m not imprisoned within my judgment, so that I can clearly see who’s there. I connect to precisely that which now is, and not with whatever I would like to see in the person. I see straight through the positive and negative judgment of my mind.

**Stephan:** As a rule for everyday life that would amount to: I can’t prevent my judgment. But I can perceive the process of judgment and say: here’s a judgment arising again; let me try to see through it.

**Thomas:** Right. To prevent the process of judgment means you would have to contract. But if you just let it happen, then you’re no longer exclusively attending to that attraction or aversion. That gives you the freedom to enter the situation and keep it in motion, to see things and let them go again. Then you are truly coming from a larger space of consciousness. This dynamic is just a small part of you that is neither good nor bad, merely an evolutionary habit.

**Stephan:** To come back to our starting point: I start by accepting the aversion, the rejection. It resonates with a deep shadow-aspect of mine. This is typically not visible to me because it’s a shadow-aspect. So now I have an outer indication that I have an inner shadow there. But that doesn’t yet mean that I have uncovered it.

I do that either in the interaction itself – although for that I’d have to be very good at “going beyond” my own shadow – or else I look at it with somebody else. If I wanted to do it on my own, what would be the way to really access the shadow-aspect?

### **I am repelled by the things that I cannot live out**

**Thomas:** Sometimes it works to reflect on what quality in the person repels me. I identify precisely that part in me that I’m dealing with. Is it, for instance, the far-right aggression? That would tell me that I can’t tolerate my own aggression.



**Stephan:** And that aggression is there!

**Thomas:** Either that's present, or I don't feel it because I suppressed it so early on that I no longer perceive it. On the surface, it might look like I'm the peaceful one and the other guy is the angry one. But that's just a nice story my mind tells itself. The moment I reject him, I notice that a part of me has an energy that I very likely cannot live out. That doesn't mean that I'm also a far-right radical. But maybe it means that I'm forcefully suppressing within myself the aggression and the aggressive potential which I perceive in him because that's how I've been socialized. Then when I see people who are loud and aggressive, then I have no choice but to reject them, because they remind me of my own aggression, which I shut off when I was very young.

**Stephan:** This aggression is then trapped energy.

**Thomas:** Energy that's trapped in a way that I can't express it. And therefore I don't want anyone else to have it either. Because that would remind me of myself. That means that in my darkness there is a box and its contents rattle whenever I encounter far-right extremists. But I only hear the rattling, I don't see the box itself, or what's inside it. Now I need to react to the rattling – I need to open the box. Only then can the suppressed energy get out. Then I can also meet the extremist in open, direct aggression. If, on the other hand, my aggression remains suppressed, I need to find something that shields me from him. If I am grounded in my base, then I can meet him on the same level and hold my ground. People sense when they encounter somebody who's really there. People who have such a – let's say – strong, rough energy, react to those people who also have a strong energy. But when they encounter somebody who's weaker on that level, then of course they feel superior.

## **Our batteries recharge through living consciously**

**Stephan:** Now, that was just the first step. I perceive that the aggression obviously triggers something in me, and that I have an issue with trapped, suppressed aggression. So far, that's a cognitive process. But I'm not yet in a position to release this energy. There needs to be an inner process in which I try to connect with the question and look more closely at what is trapped.

**Thomas:** Yes. Either you immediately identify what it is that arises in you as fear, or you begin a cognitive process. Then you feel into your body. What is my emotional state right now? In most cases, you'll feel one of two things:

anger or fear. Whatever is arising in me, where does that land?

If it's fear, then it's about accepting that and saying: Yes, I'm afraid; and it's this fear which I'm rejecting, which means also rejecting this person in the process. If I allow the fear, I can look at what's behind it. Fear occupies a vacuum of energy. That means that if I suppress my aggression, then it's like the country is ruled by a vacuum called fear. If the aggression is allowed to resurface, then the aggression reclaims power, then the fear, the vacuum, is gone. Then energy is there again.

So I need to look at where the aggression is trapped within me. Where is the energy which should be there instead of fear? Where do I feel grounded and strong, rooted like a tree? How can I meet this person with equal strength? That doesn't mean getting into a brawl. I could stand there and really look at him. That makes a completely different impression than shying away. Whether I stand up or shy away will determine the course this situation takes, which means it has a reality-creating component.

**“Suppressed energy doesn't go away, and even dark or disowned energy cannot be destroyed. It needs to move, to become, to transmute; it must find an expression.”**

from Thomas Huebl's book *Healing Collective Trauma* featured in the *Winter 2022 Mobius Strip*



**Stephan:** Following the mystical rule “confront that which you reject” or “go where you feel the strongest aversion and take a look at it” sets a whole series of processes and emotions in motion. I look at them and then I see: Something’s really trapped there – and then I really need to go further.

**Thomas:** Right. Then you go further. That’s your responsibility.

**Stephan:** And if I can’t track down the shadow on my own, then I need to get help from others. Because I’ve uncovered something which needs to be worked on if I want to be more whole and more free than I was before. In other words, this confrontation has opened up something but now I need to work on it.

**Thomas:** Exactly. People who are truly interested in holistic growth and development, immediately make a

note to themselves: work on this! If we neglect to do this, we are failing in our responsibility as humans. If we are interested in awakening a conscious, sustainable life, then we need to take note of all these often-minor situations in everyday life. They are lessons, they show us something. Over time I become more whole as a person and then maybe such a situation won’t happen to me anymore.

**Stephan:** Your experience arises, you work on it and integrate it – and then next time the same situation won’t affect you because you’ve integrated that issue.

**Thomas:** If you have integrated it, you no longer reject people. You know with perfect clarity that there are certain things that they do or say that you do not support. But you no longer have this reactive part inside you that pounces on them and makes you unable to act freely. ■



**THOMAS HUEBL** *Thomas Huebl is a mystic, healer and teacher who is blazing a path of 21st century spiritual practice, helping thousands of students around the world to live their awakening amid today’s busy world. His annual summit on Collective Trauma and his non-profit, Pocket Project, are leading beacons in the field. Mobius is privileged that for the past several years Thomas has been guiding many of our practitioners in the professional development of state-of-the-art healing practices and trauma-informed approaches to executive development. Through the Next Practice Institute, Thomas offers workshops, supervision groups/hyperlearning circles, and study groups exploring mystical principles. In 2020, he published his ground-breaking book Healing Collective Trauma:*


*A Process for Integrating our Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds. This opus explores how significant collective trauma symptoms are in shaping our modern society and contains cutting-edge remedies that serve as a beacon of hope for generations to come. Mobius is honored to have this master practitioner with us every year at our annual gathering and as a supervisor for our community of practitioners.*



**PROFESSOR DR. STEPHAN BREIDENBACH** *works as a university lecturer, mediator and entrepreneur. He holds the Chair of Civil Law, Civil Procedure Law and International Business Law at the University of Viadrina, and is a professor of mediation at the University of Vienna. An economic mediator in the mid-1990s, particularly in the case of clashes between large companies and public spaces, Stephan is also an arbitrator in domestic and international economic disputes. He is a referee at the CAS (Court of Arbitration of Sports). In 2002 Stephan Breidenbach was awarded the Socrates Prize for Mediation. As an EU consultant to the governments in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, he was responsible among other*

*things for the harmonization of the Czech banking, insurance and capital markets. In 2011/12, Stephan Breidenbach was the coordinator of the topic “How do we want to learn?” in the “Zukunftsdialog” of Chancellor Angela Merkel. Stephan co-founded [www.betterplace.org](http://www.betterplace.org), knowledgeTools International GmbH and Blue Economy Solutions.*





“We believe it our job as healers not to get seduced completely by what appear to be signs of systems falling apart and to commit to looking at the world, whenever possible, through the lens of the peace of acceptance of what *is*; the courage to address with passionate advocacy what is out of alignment; and the willingness to notice pro-actively the beauty and the blessing disproportionately – so as not to fall into malaise or despair.”

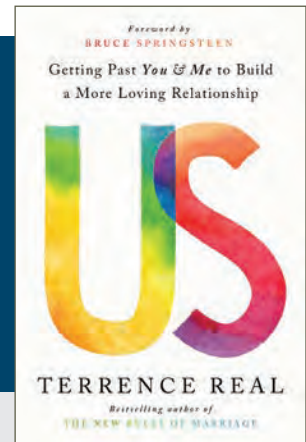
AMY ELIZABETH FOX

– as informed by the teachings of Erica Ariel Fox,  
Thomas Huebl, Ester Martinez, Lynda Caesara  
and Patrick Connor.



# US - Getting Past You and Me to Build a More Loving Relationship

A book excerpt by Mobius Senior Expert Terry Real



Relational Life Therapy, a form of counseling developed by renowned psychotherapist Terry Real, is known for producing deep, permanent change quickly in individuals and in their relationships. It teaches men, women, and nonbinary people how to live skilled relational lives—lives of radically honest, fearlessly assertive, passionate connection to themselves and to those they love. Relational Life therapists break many of the rules we learned in school. We are not neutral, for example. When it comes to responsibility, not all problems are an even fifty-fifty split. We take sides. And we don't hide behind a mask of professionalism. We make a point of being real people, sharing when appropriate from our own journey toward wholeness and intimacy.

This is an invitation that I and other Relational Life therapists offer our clients every day. It's an invitation to truly master a sophisticated skill set, a technology. It's demanding, I won't lie, but once you learn it, it has the power to catapult you and your partner into a level of closeness, trust, solidity, and joy that leaves the norms of our culture in the dust. Would you like to feel heard? And can you satisfy your partner's need to feel listened to as well? Would you like to remember, even in heated or distant moments, that you and your partner stand on the same side?

## Remembering Love

Before you pick up that verbal knife, before you brick yourself in even further, let me remind you that you love this person. And therein lies the rub, my friend. Do you remember, really, in that heated moment when fear or righteous anger courses through your veins, that you love this person? Do you remember it when your body shuts down and, for the life of you, you can barely squeak out a word or two? The sobering answer, if you're dead honest with yourself, is that you do not. In that heated moment, the sweetness between you, the sense of the two of you as a team facing the world together, the sense of *us*, is nearly impossible to locate.

The good news is that the love is still there. The bad news is that it's stored in parts of your brain, body,

and nervous system that, in those flash moments, you no longer inhabit. Your endocrine system is on high alert, pumping stimulants into your bloodstream. Your autonomic nervous system—far below your consciousness—is in fight-or-flight, spurring you on or shutting you down. The higher functions of your brain (the prefrontal cortex, the reins) have gone completely offline, while the more primitive parts of your brain (the limbic system, particularly the amygdalae) have decisively taken over.

At those times, the brain is in a state in which the prefrontal cortex is neither connected to nor soothing the subcortical system. Without that soothing and connection, we lose a pause between what we feel and what we do. These more primitive parts of our bodies

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and brains care only about our personal survival; they have no interest in maintaining the vulnerability of intimacy.

*Us* evaporates and becomes you and me, adversaries in a cold world of I win, you lose. *Us* is the seat of closeness. *You and me* is the seat of adversarial contest. *You and me* is great when you are confronting a tiger, but less so when you are confronting your spouse, your boss, or your child. In those fraught moments, what makes it so hard to keep a cool head is a million or so years of evolution, plus one other powerful force: trauma. Trauma pulls you into survival mode, in which you are clenching your fists for the fight or clamping your jaws shut like a fortress. And the more trauma you sustained as a child, the more compelling *you and me* becomes.

If you are thinking, *Well, gosh, I didn't have much trauma growing up*, my answer is maybe. But before you make up your mind, why not settle into my discussion of childhood trauma? Because sometimes it doesn't take much. Depending on your constitution and a host of other variables, it may take only a slight tap on the egg to produce fissures that can last a lifetime.

### What's Your Trauma?

When I'm working with a couple, I have one important question in my mind. It's not *What are the*

*stressors*? Stressors—like the pandemic, money woes, mismatched sex drives, kids, and in-laws—are all important, but a well-functioning couple can handle a reasonable amount of stress. The critical question I think about is not even *What is the dynamic, the choreography, between you?* That's also an important question, but it's not the most essential. The central question I ask myself during a therapy session is simply this one: *Which part of you am I talking to?*

Am I talking to the mature part of you, the one who's present in the here and now? This is the part I call the *Wise Adult*. That's the part that cares about *us*. Or am I speaking to a triggered part of you, to your adversarial *you and me* consciousness? The triggered part of you sees things through the prism of the past. I believe there's no such thing as overreacting; it's just that what someone is reacting to may no longer be what's in front of them. One of the blessings that partners in intimate relationships bestow upon each other is the simple and healing gift of their presence. But in order to be present with your partner, you must yourself be in the present, not saturated by your past.

The phrase *trauma memory* is really a misnomer. You don't remember trauma; you relive it. The combat vet who hears a car backfire and suddenly spins around like he's gripping a rifle is not thinking, *Now I'm walking down Main Street remembering combat*. In that flash moment, the vet is viscerally back at war. The past

**“Looking more broadly, the price we pay as a society for our toxic individualism and patriarchy is our permanent estrangement from one another. If I can't connect to you, I can't connect to us. Whether it's racism, class differences, or any of myriad other social plagues, its cost is always the same: a broken and dysfunctional system that prevents us from recognizing and caring for our neighbor with a flawed but full heart. Terry's writing is loving and kind, clever and strong, and he's written a beautiful and important book, particularly for the moment we are in.”**

— FROM THE FOREWORD BY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN



superimposes itself onto the present, fundamentally confusing the mind. When our trauma is triggered, we might physically spring into fight-or-flight mode. Faced with an overwhelming shock—infidelity, for example— I’ve seen patients gasp and head for the door before they came to in my hallway.

But most of us do not reenact the experience of the trauma itself. Instead, we act out the coping strategy that we evolved to deal with it. You were emotionally abandoned throughout your childhood, and so you’ve grown into a charming seducer, expert at securing others’ attention. Or you were intruded upon as a child, and now you operate behind walls; you are adept at keeping people out. I speak of this compensating part of us as the Adaptive Child.

One of my great mentors, Pia Mellody, spoke of the Adaptive Child as a “kid in grown-up’s clothing.” The Adaptive Child is a child’s version of an adult, the you that you cobbled together in the absence of healthy parenting. Here are the traits of Adaptive Child and Wise Adult, which are distinct from each other.

Adaptive Child	Wise Adult
Black & white	Nuanced
Perfectionist	Realistic
Relentless	Forgiving
Rigid	Flexible
Harsh	Warm
Hard	Yielding
Certain	Humble
Tight in Body	Relaxed in Body

I’d like you to notice a few things as you look at this chart. First of all, see how tight, certain, and black and white the Adaptive Child is? One of my clients said that her Adaptive Child was like a little fundamentalist who lived inside her. This is in contrast to the flexibility, humility, and appreciation of nuance that are characteristic of the Wise Adult—qualities you may also recognize, from the literature on adult development, as those associated with emotional maturity.



**TERRY REAL** is a Mobius Senior Expert and an internationally recognized Family Therapist, Speaker and Author. He founded the Relational Life Institute (RLI), offering workshops for couples, individuals and parents around the country along with a professional training program for clinicians wanting to learn his RLT (Relational Life Therapy) methodology.

A family therapist and teacher for more than twenty five years, Terry is the best-selling author of *I Don’t Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression* (Scribner, 1997), the straight-talking *How Can I Get Through to You? Reconnecting Men and Women* (Scribner, 2002), *The New Rules of Marriage: What You Need to Make Love Work* (Random House, 2007) and his most recent book excerpted here.

A senior faculty member of the Family Institute of Cambridge in Massachusetts and a retired Clinical Fellow of the Meadows Institute in Arizona, Terry has worked with thousands of individuals, couples, and fellow therapists. Through his books, the Institute, and workshops around the country, Terry helps women and men, parents and non-parents, to help them create the connection they desire in their relationships.

Terry’s work, with its rigorous commonsense approach, speaks to both men and women. His ideas on men’s issues and on couple’s therapy have been celebrated in venues from the Good Morning America, The Today Show and 20/20, to Oprah and *The New York Times*.



“Prophets and artists tend to be liminal and marginal people, 'edgemen,' who strive with a passionate sincerity to rid themselves of the clichés associated with status incumbency and role-playing and to enter into vital relations with other men [sic] in fact or imagination. In their productions we may catch glimpses of that unused evolutionary potential in mankind [sic] which has not yet been externalized and fixed in structure.”

— VICTOR TURNER



# Liquid Desert Project



**The Liquid Desert Project is an art-work of unusual scale and scope, as well as in its appearance and modus operandi in the public sphere. It is a sculptural and architectural project that combines and embodies both physical and metaphysical dimensions.**

In its essence, the Liquid Desert Project deals with the emergence and reflection of our hidden collective subconscious in the reality of our visible, physical existence, and in effect the site acts as an allegory to a three-dimensional sculptural diagram of the psyche. The Liquid Desert Project is an underground architectural site that is virtually located in the Negev Desert in southern Israel and consists of 49 hidden rooms spread across three underground levels. The different subconscious rooms and levels enable the artist to develop unique and unusual artistic and philosophical processes of an unusual collaborations.



Our collective subconscious sphere as a society functions as an invisible storage of life materials which have been repressed, denied and exiled in the course of our personal and collective historical journey, while frequently surfacing as enigmatic and bothersome events secretly running reality. These life materials have been processed and translated into an active component of mute works of art which re-activate them in the form of physical works displayed in real venues as disturbing and complex sculptural installations providing a non-verbal but sensual and physical experience.

The project is based on the principle of exposure/emergence/salvage and renewed synchronization of impacted life material frozen in time and its reactivation by means of the art viewer's eye, functioning as an active and necessary witness of an evolutionary movement related to the renewed emotional acknowledgement of the reawakened old life material. The viewing experience takes place via the physical consciousness at the actual exhibition scene. Thus, the Liquid Desert site offers a new and different mode of contemporary and advanced thinking in the form of a lively conversation with our world of shadows as a society and culture.



*Liquid Desert Site, Negev desert*





**Vertical Swamp no.4, 2015**

300X200 cm, Mixed media, engraving and ink drawing on wood,  
Liquid Desert Project, Core Element.

<https://www.instagram.com/yehuditsasportas/>



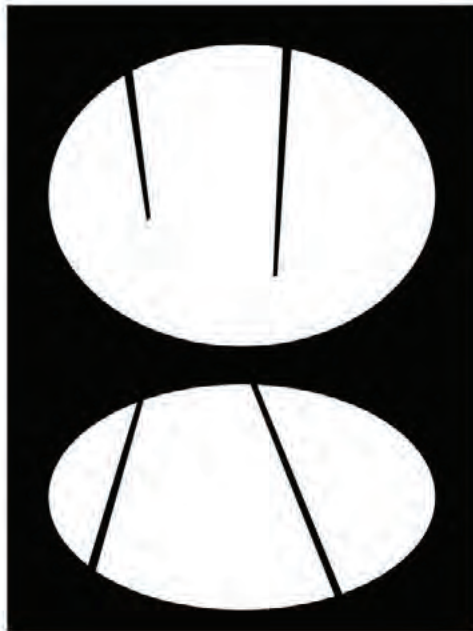
This parallel shadow world is represented virtually and functions as a metaphysical zone in the underground site located in Abraham's Path in the northern Negev Desert, which is a place of deep significance to the artist's nuclear family. According to tradition, this is the site of a historic dialogue between the human dimension in the form of Abraham and divine presence – as demonstrated by the change in Abraham's name – from Avram to Avraham, introducing the Hebrew letter ) נH) which symbolizes in the simplest and deepest sense the acknowledgment of God's presence in the manifest physical world. In this respect, the Liquid Desert project deals with the movement of structures and the lively dialogue between the overt dimension of our life and the hidden one – the one which contains important information essential for the actual movement.



*Architecture of Shadows no.9 & 6, 2018*

69X100 cm, Archival pigment print  
Chapter no. 7, Liquid Desert Project





*Architecture of Shadows no.9 & 6, 2018*

69X100 cm, Archival pigment print  
Chapter no. 7, Liquid Desert Project



The virtual rooms of the desert site host the reflections of actual / physical art works from the fields of drawing, sculpture, sound and video – which are simultaneously exhibited in an encoded and partial matter in the visible public sphere, such as in international leading contemporary art museums. This creates a unique correspondence between a physical and visible field and its hidden underground and metaphysical counterpart. The actual works of art maintain an active "conversation/resonance" with the metaphysical site throughout the exhibition.

The project is a distilled and profound new step for the artist, who has been mapping the subconscious space – personal and collective – for years, using drawing, sculpture and sound, which act as fragments of a muted and necessary witnessing in that space.





**Cad-Ot no.1, 2019**

46X34, Archival pigment print

Chapter no. 7, Liquid Desert Project





*SHICHECHA (Oblivion) no.35, 2013*  
150X200 cm, ink drawing on paper  
Core Element, Liquid Desert Project









SHICHECHA (Oblivion) no.35, 2013

150X200 cm, ink drawing on paper

Core Element, Liquid Desert Project









***Hashavat Aveda 1, 2019***

115X86.25 cm, Archival pigment print

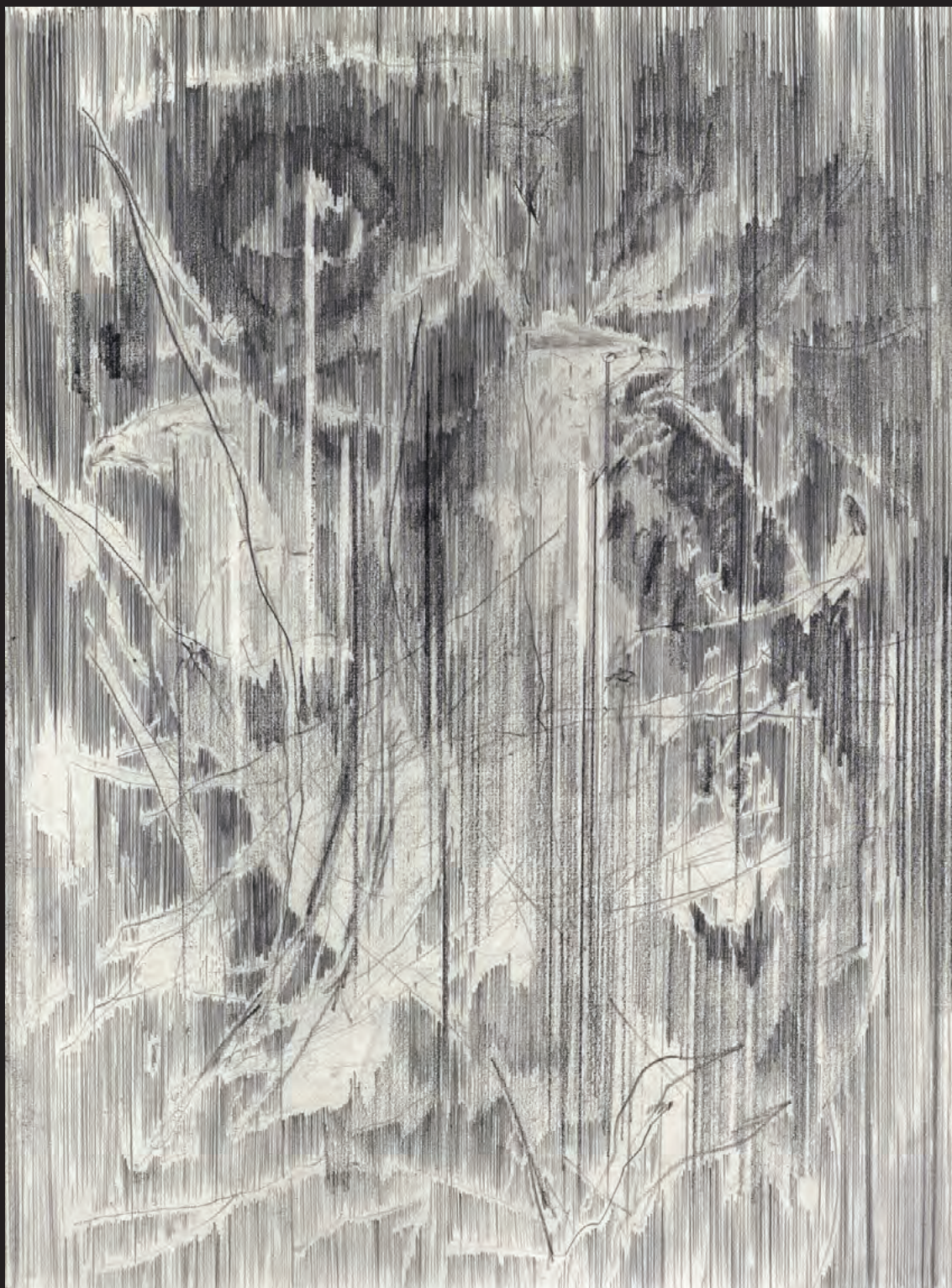
Chapter no. 6, Liquid Desert Project





The Archeology of the Unseen, exhibition view, 2020  
Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Germany





***The Witnesses no. 11, 2020***

61X45.7 cm, graphite drawing on paper.

Chapter no. 4, Liquid Desert Project





***Hadvarim wall, Installation view, 2022***

No-Man's Land - The Time Dwellers, Liquid Desert Project

Locus Solus, Arter Museum, Istanbul, Istanbul, Turkey





*Room Drawings Installation view, 2022*

No-Man's Land - The Time Dwellers, Liquid Desert Project

Locus Solus, Arter Museum, Istanbul, Turkey



## ABOUT YEHUDIT SASPORTAS




*Yehudit Sasportas is one of the most prominent and prolific Israeli artists working in the local and international art scene today. Her work is focused on site-specific installations, which include sculptures, drawings, video and sound works, and call for an intense sensory experience.*

*Her installations have gone through a process of adapting and responding to the architecture of various museum spaces while forming into artworks that present a new way of reading architecture itself, as well as the wider cultural context it was created in. Her sculptural installations deal with a fascinating correspondence taking place between subconscious materials, unspoken and unseen, and the way these layers of information activate conscious areas across the surface.*

*Sasportas represented Israel in the 2007 Venice Biennial, and has presented more than 17 international solo exhibitions during the last decade, in venues such as: The Archeology of The Unseen, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Wilhelmshaven. Germany, 2020. RIFTS OF ABSENCE, Villa Schöningen, Potsdam, Germany, 2017. HAMAKOM, GL STRAND Kunsthalle, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2016. Seven Winters, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel, 2013. HASIPUR – The Story, Herbert Gerisch Stiftung, Neuemunster, Germany, 2010. The Clearing of the Unseen, DA2 Domus Atrium, Salamanca, Spain, 2009. The Laboratory, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany, 2008. By the River, Matrix 200, the Berkley Museum of Art, San Francisco, USA, 2002. The Carpenter and the Seamstress II, Deitch Projects, New York, USA, 2001.*

*Yehudit Sasportas is a senior professor at the department of Fine Art in the BFA and MFA Programs since 94. She works simultaneously in Berlin and Tel Aviv, with a high level of international professional commitment and involvement.*





“The human body is incapable  
of not practicing. And what we  
practice we become.”

– RICHARD STROZZI-HECKLER



# Be the Change

## The Art of Becoming Our Own Innovation Project

By Mobius Friend Fran Cherny, Managing Director,  
Axialent Conscious Business



This book consists of four parts in which you will find space for reflection and inspiration – for tackling concrete ideas that challenge and invite us to go from ideas to action on the endless learning curve toward the next better version of ourselves.

In the first section, we will look at how the finite nature of life – so often feared and denied – can be a great ally. In the second section, we will look at why we find it so difficult to change, even for the things we really want. In the third section, we will analyze why it's not enough to understand our own individual dynamics and why we must also understand our contexts and the cultures to which we belong. In the fourth and final section, there is a new invitation to call you to action, but you will no longer be the same and you will be able to analyze and act based on new logic.

### The Four Essentials

Everything you will find in the coming pages is based on four axioms which I consider essential. They underpin where I am coming from when I say what I say and suggest what I suggest:

1. Our being determines our doing.
2. Being alive involves finding new challenges.
3. There's always room for improvement.
4. Without action, there can be no feedback.

### The Placebo of Unconsciousness

#### From Chapter Two

Often when I talk to clients or colleagues, I realize not many of them are clear on what their intentions are. They really have to think about it, and their answers are still vague. It's as if it were better to leave some things undecided. But why do that with something so central to our lives?

There are some advantages to not delving too deep into questions for which we have no answer. What is the meaning of life, how do we want to live, what do we want to leave behind: these are uncomfortable questions, and we don't always like to ask them. Our finiteness and our vulnerability are topics we don't like to touch upon unless absolutely necessary.

Many will remember the movie *The Matrix* (1999, Lana and Lilly Wachowski) and in particular one of its most troubling scenes: when Morpheus, played by Laurence Fishburne, reveals to Keanu Reeves' hacker Neo that everything he sees around him is part of a fabricated reality. He offers him a

We often want to bring into practice a virtuous self. There are things we want to change but find it difficult. What ensues is frustration, and we subconsciously enter a vicious cycle that, as we will see, that causes our brains and the muscles in our bodies to tense up and become increasingly rigid.

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dilemma: stay in the Matrix, with no awareness of what he has just been told, or disconnect from that automatic life and start living in “the real world.”

**Morpheus:** The Matrix is everywhere. It is all around us. Even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

**Neo:** What truth?

**Morpheus:** That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage. Born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back. You take the blue pill, the story ends: you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember: all I’m offering is the truth. Nothing more.

*The Matrix* functions as a metaphor for how far we are prepared to open our eyes at any given moment. To feel what we feel. To reflect on that degree of unconsciousness that enables us to live day-to-day without the burden of contemplating the irrefutable truth. But even if we shy away from it, sooner or later, life will take us to that place. Reality and all its perceptions will get us in the end.

When we least expect it, something affects us so deeply that it reminds us we are not eternal. That’s what happened to me on a trip to Peru, or it happens with the loss of a loved one, like when my paternal grandmother died. A global crisis, like the pandemic that began in 2020. Or any other extreme situation that befalls us and gives us a dose of reality.

Suddenly, we find ourselves looking at our lives from the outside, wondering about all the things we don’t want to think about, trying to understand how we got where we are, and sometimes realizing we don’t know how we got here, much less what our next step will be.

Just a few months ago, a colleague told me that a close friend of his had been diagnosed with a very aggressive type of cancer. He knew his friend was going to die soon. That moment of awareness had thrown his own life into perspective. But he also told me that he knew from previous, similar situations that after a while, he would get used to the new situation and everything would go back to more or less how it was before.

Death makes us so uneasy that we forget it exists. Until it bursts into our lives and gives us a moment of wake-up call that is.

Many of our daily problems, as well as our difficulties in expressing the best versions of ourselves, arise because we disconnect from anything that is painful for us without stopping to wonder if those parts of life aren’t what lend meaning to the things that we do want and yearn for. Without stopping to wonder if, perhaps, the sum of all those parts is what shapes who we are today.

“That which is impermanent attracts compassion.  
That which is not provides wisdom.”

— STEPHEN LEVINE, *A YEAR TO LIVE: HOW TO LIVE THIS YEAR AS IF IT WERE YOUR LAST*



## Adaptation, Evolution, and Transformation

### From Chapter Six

Rationally, we know that we could do things differently, and in many situations, we would like to. However, we find it difficult to set the necessary changes in motion, even though we know that the things that make us feel fulfilled and satisfied are the sum of all those little actions: every conversation we hold, every time we connect with an emotion or genuinely listen to the person we are speaking to, every time we begin a project that inspires us, every time we make a decision that takes someone else into account.

It's true that there are many things we can understand, implement or resolve in a relatively short space of time. We are able to change and improve, or simply to adapt to new situations. There are numerous examples: from traveling to a new country and quickly adjusting to the timezone, to going from living alone to living with friends or a partner.

We are used to constantly changing and adapting, but those are not the kinds of changes we are talking about when we want to make a qualitative leap or get ready for a significant new challenge. It's about another kind of change: The kind we declared we intended to make years ago, the kind our companies require from us in the face of new obstacles, or the kind that will better connect us with our own happiness, getting us closer to our dreams and aspirations. The problem is that these changes often remain exactly that: dreams. They stay as desires and aspirations that eventually turn into frustrations, ultimately reinforcing our perception that change is difficult.

But the real question is not about the specific change concerned or its circumstantial context –

it's about how we can make the process of change possible. In other words: How can we change the way we change? When we modify that, we will ourselves change, and with that, change the world around us. To do this, we must begin by understanding the nature of the changes we want to make.

To begin with, we will differentiate between four types of change, each of which requires a different type of response.

I am going to use sporting metaphors to explain them. The tension that we feel when making these changes is somewhat similar to the physical exertion involved in practicing various types of sports.

#### 1. *Exercising (low effort)*

There are certain changes that most people can make with relative ease. One example could be making the decision to do a little workout a couple of days each week. We know that it is beneficial and that we can do it if we set our minds to it, whether it's tagging along with a friend to the gym or going for a walk to get our heart rates up a little. It's enough to recognize that we want to do something a different way and simply start doing it. Nothing about it goes against our values, beliefs or customs. It is relatively easy to incorporate into our current lifestyle.

This category also includes all the changes we make daily without even realizing. They arise from our ability to adapt to our circumstances. Examples include incorporating a new food that we enjoy into our diet on a doctor's advice, leaving our car keys in a designated tray so that we can find them more easily, going to a new store for groceries, or simply doing something easy our boss asks us to do. In short, everything we integrate

© Heather Rhodes, Mobius featured artist





into our lives without really noticing. However, when we shine a light on these changes and begin to acknowledge and appreciate the fact that we made them, they become a great resource for our brains to get ready for the more relevant challenges still to come.

## **2. Training (moderate effort)**

There are some more demanding changes that require the incorporation of certain skills and more consistent practice than before. Sometimes, they even require us to lay ourselves bare, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and asking others for feedback to help us progress. The sports-related example here would be going from getting some exercise to being a part of a team, or practicing a sport that requires a minimum level of fitness. This means we have to train more often – perhaps even alongside others, who may play a casual role in helping us to move forward.

Translated into everyday situations, this happens when, for example, we decide to completely remove from our diets something we've been consuming habitually for years (ever tried to go cold turkey on sugar?), or commit to separating our recycling trash, or are asked by our bosses to upload information to a new system and we don't know how to use it. In many of these cases, in a couple of days, weeks, or months, we can improve and incorporate those changes permanently, in such a way that they become the new status quo. They become second nature, part of our routine. Of course, these processes require energy, because we have to learn something new rather than simply exercising what we already knew, but we can do it by ourselves. We modify a few behaviors, practice a little, and feel the challenge becoming more feasible as the days go on. Not

only do we understand it, but for various reasons, we don't find it so difficult to get started and turn it into part of our routine. Our own willpower and the knowledge we can acquire by ourselves are enough to train us to rise to the challenge. There are several changes we make that are like this.

## **3. Running a marathon (sustained effort)**

While I'm only an amateur runner, I have completed two marathons so far. The vast majority of people I know, whether they know it or not, are (or could be) fit enough to run a marathon. I don't know if they would say the same, but I would bet on their ability to do it. Of course, that isn't enough.

There are two things stopping it from happening: stories constructed about the effort it takes to make a big change, and the difficulty of sustaining discipline for the amount of time it takes to reach a better version of ourselves. At the beginning of these processes of change, just like in a marathon, we need someone to share their experiences with us, to guide us and keep us going through the tough moments (and those will come, sooner or later). Whether we call them a coach, leader, trainer, experienced friend, or whatever else, beyond their title or label, the idea is always the same: some changes require more than what we are currently capable of achieving yet. It's as simple as that: we need support.

No one prepares for a marathon in their bedroom, alone, eating the same way they always did, reading books and watching shows on how to run. You need the right diet, a good "trainer," and a solid internal commitment to not giving up on the first rainy day or with the first pulled muscle. And this is just the preparation: the marathon itself comes much later. Training to change the way our muscles burn energy, adapting to new foods, increasing our aerobic

**“In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.”**

– AMERICAN WRITER AND PHILOSOPHER, ERIC HOFFER



## FOUR KINDS OF HAPPINESS

*Excerpt from Chapter Three. Written by Nithya Shanti, Spiritual teacher*

"In my journey I realized that there are broadly four kinds of happiness:

**No Happiness:** This is when we focus on what is wrong or missing in our life. This is also when we overtly or covertly complain, compare and fault-find. This is the state of being a victim. We feel weak and disempowered. Our mind is saturated with thoughts of what has been wrong, is wrong and can go wrong in our life. We tend to be reactive, impulsive and fixated on short term distractions. Emotions associated with such a state are guilt, resentment, fear, anxiety, helplessness. The belief is that everything is imperfect and getting worse. However, it is also the rich soil from which the tree of the other kinds of happiness can blossom if met with acceptance and understanding.

**Happiness for the Wrong Reason:** This is an "outside-in" approach to happiness. The happiness of events going our way. When we fall for the twin myths of "more" and "when," it tends to be happiness for the wrong reason. "More" implies more money, time, opportunities, etc. will finally make us happy. "When" implies once loans are paid off, education is complete, kids grow up, etc. it will finally make us happy. This is the tendency to postpone happiness to the end point of some imagined ideal situation. While we can be more active, engaged and energetic in this state than in the previous one, it is often based on pursuing things that we have been told or conditioned to want. Emotions associated with this state include pride, frustration, anger, attachment, a sense of urgency and not enough time, restlessness, excitement followed by disappointment. The belief is that things are imperfect and hopefully will get better sometime in the future. Often people do a lot and even outwardly accomplish a lot in this state. Yet it does not usually satisfy and fulfill them in ways they had hoped it would.

**Happiness for a Good Reason:** This is the blameless happiness of enjoying the process no less than the outcome. So instead of doing things for joy, we do them with joy. Instead of doing things for peace, we do them from peace, with peace, as peace. The recognition that what we are really seeking is a state of being more than any specific outcome is strong here. It is an "inside-out" form

of happiness. Taking a walk in nature, spending time with close friends, enjoying a hobby, preparing a wholesome meal are some examples where many people experience this form of happiness. However, it is not limited to any such activities. Whenever we have the attitude "what can I bring to this" instead of "what can I get from this," we are happy for a good reason. Feelings associated with this state are: acceptance, gratitude, contentment, compassion, grace, lightness and fulfillment. The belief is that everything is perfect and keeps getting better. There is the trust that whatever will be, will be.

**Happiness for No Reason:** This is the shift from person to presence. When we no longer feel "we are living a life," instead we realize we are "life living life." We do not feel we are moving through the world, it appears like the world is moving through and around us, as we remain the silent witness. Every moment is complete. Every place is sacred. Every meeting is a holy encounter with another aspect of ourself. We have a sense of being awake within a dream, a dream that is without a dreamer. We approach life with few if any agendas and presumptions. There is spontaneous innocence accompanied with an uncontrived depth and wisdom in everything we do. We are no longer trying to please others, we express our truth authentically yet don't place ourselves in opposition to anyone or anything. In this state there is transparency, spaciousness, ease, bliss of being, flow, joy without an enjoyer, peace without a center. The attitude is that everything is in the right place. We realize that it takes something to be unhappy and it takes nothing to be happy. We embrace all of ourselves and all of life as it presents itself without resistance, calculation or manipulation. We do not "get this state of being," this state of being "gets us," the part of us that assumed it was controlling the flow of life. There is sweet relief and immaculate freedom.

*We can travel between these four kinds of happiness multiple times each day. We can spend as much or as little time in any of these states. In a sense the quality of our life is determined by which state we spend the most time in, (although in the last state even time does not limit or constrain us). We can only inhabit one state at a time, though it is possible to oscillate between them frequently. The one we visit most frequently, begins to feel like home."*



capacity, strengthening our minds to enjoy long training sessions and races – all of this takes around sixteen weeks.

The process is clear and accessible for anyone to understand. But to run and enjoy running, you have to do it, not just understand it. These experiences make us appreciate the value of determination and action. That's why we sometimes need someone else: someone to check up on us to make sure we're staying on track, or someone to go out running with come rain or shine, because their role is to help us remember what we said was important to us. They help us not to fall at the first hurdle – and that hurdle will crop up sooner or later.

The satisfaction this leads to is boundless. So much so that we tend to want to do it all again. Because we can connect with the pleasure of having put in the effort, of having been able to change a deep-seated belief and of having undergone a transformation that takes us to a place from which we can no longer see the world the way we did before.

#### 4. *Playing a new sport (unknown effort)*

There are so many sports we are unfamiliar with, with rules, moves, guidelines and techniques we have never attempted. When adults try something for the first time without having done it as children, when they had the capacity to absorb and learn things subconsciously, the challenge is enormous. It's not just about how difficult it is to do – it's about how much more difficult it is to accept that we don't know how to do something.

The world is changing so fast. New knowledge, technology, theories and methodologies are constantly being developed. If we want to be a part of it, we cannot keep believing that what we learned ten, twenty or thirty years ago is still valid today. We know that, but it's still difficult to accept the idea of once again having to study in order to learn new things. Paradoxically, when as adults, we most need to develop new tools to stay in touch with the world around us, that is when we dedicate the least energy to doing so. Why? Perhaps it's because all those mental blocks we have are activated simultaneously. Who's going to teach me something, with my big professional career, with hundreds of people under me and all the big business deals I close? Why would I go back to formal studies, when I'm a parent and it's my kids who go to school now? Why would I need lessons

when I'm a successful adult with the respect of my colleagues? Our minds ask themselves questions like these, even if we don't realize it. The problem, in this case, is not the questions themselves but the answers we have for them. When we realize what these profound changes involve, every warning light on the *enemies of change* board starts flashing at once: ego, vulnerability, perfectionism, *what will people say*, judgments we think others will make, and above all, our own judgments and our own minds, who constantly whisper in our ears all the things that hold us back from doing what we want. And we go through life this way: explaining to everyone how important it is to learn, progress, transform, and change, while debating with ourselves on how to do that without having to expose ourselves. How to get results without taking any risks. How to maintain our image based on knowledge, rather than creating one based on what we have yet to learn in order to keep growing.

If we don't break this cycle, we will become expert know-it-alls, telling everyone else what they need to do to improve without ever putting it into practice ourselves.

#### **Start Studying Again (and never stop!)**

Recognizing that there are different types of change requires a greater degree of awareness of our own limitations: it means being able to say: "I don't know how to do it yet, I'm going to need some help." Appealing to that vulnerability is a source of energy for beginning the journey that enables us to be good learners. That same vulnerability requires admitting that perhaps we are not as perfect as we believe, or seem, or would like to be. ■



**FRAN CHERNY** is an entrepreneur and facilitator of cultural transformation processes in organizations. He is a managing partner of Axialent Global, a pioneering international consultancy in promoting conscious change in organizations. His work, together with leaders of multinational

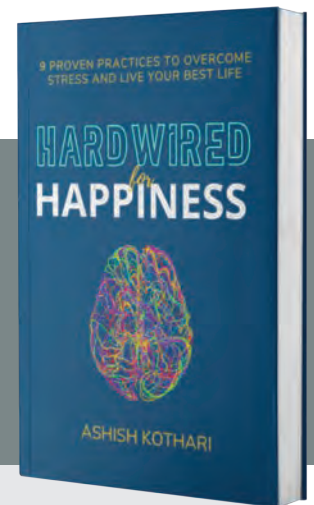
companies and their teams, is recognized for generating effective practices that make it possible to solve complex challenges in a sustainable and scalable way. Originally from Buenos Aires, he currently lives in Barcelona, with his partner, Gemma, and his two children.



# Hardwired for Happiness

## 9 Proven Practices to Overcome Stress and Live Your Best Life

By Mobius Friend Ashish Kothari



“Beautifully combining storytelling and research, Ashish Kothari provides a map that can help you find the path to your best self. A powerful and accessible guide.”

– TAL BEN-SHAHAR, CO-FOUNDER OF HAPPINESS STUDIES ACADEMY

“Ashish Kothari’s book has given us a foundational and sweeping description of the embodied path to awakening and joy. His offering is at one moment intimate, raw, and a deeply truthful portrayal of his own journey as a seeker and student of truth, and at another moment the output of his years of scholarship and study of the disciplines of well-being from sleep to diet to movement to prayer. This beautiful book is a companion on the journey that can guide one through the cultivation of mature emotional and spiritual intelligence and the development of a truly generous and open heart. The fruits of this inner work are well captured throughout the book in chapters on compassion, kindness, and the path of living with intention. In a truly timely way Ashish will help meet those of us turning afresh to the profound questions of meaning, purpose, community, and service. I urge you not to miss this gem.”

– AMY ELIZABETH FOX, CEO, MOBIUS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

### Introduction

We live in a world of four major paradoxes. First, we exist in a time of abundance and are more prosperous than ever, with most people in middle class enjoying more comforts and conveniences than kings and queens of the past. However, we are not necessarily more joyful or satisfied. Studies show that happiness among adults has been on a slow decline over the past twenty years. Americans who consider themselves in “excellent” mental health fell from 43 percent to just 34 percent in 2019, according to a Gallup poll. We experience heaviness, meaninglessness, and even the smallest things can trigger and upset us.

Second, we are living longer than ever but not necessarily in better health. Breakthroughs in medicine have extended our life span as we have found

cures and eliminated most of the diseases caused by external organisms (microbes and viruses) that used to kill us one hundred years ago, like influenza, tuberculosis, and diphtheria. Today, the top three causes of death are heart disease, cancer, and stroke, which are primarily lifestyle related. Approximately 85 percent of older adults have at least one chronic health condition, and 60 percent have at least two chronic conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Third, major advances in technology have connected us globally, significantly increased our pace of communication, and allowed us to collaborate over long distances. A century ago, it took two weeks for a post to arrive from England

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to the United States. Today with email or text messages, we can communicate across the world within seconds. Not only that, with Google translate, it is possible today for me to talk to someone in China even if I don't understand Mandarin, and they don't understand English. This speed and ease of communication should allow us to better understand other perspectives, resolve differences, and come closer. But global tension and distrust has never been higher. Across the world, we are seeing a rise of nationalist sentiment and anti-globalization movements. We are also lonelier as individuals than ever, with a 2018 report from Cigna and Edelman highlighting that 61 percent of Americans reported feeling lonely, up from 54 percent the previous year.

Fourth, technology has made everyday tasks much more efficient. Think about how complicated it was to book a trip to another city twenty years ago: you would have to call a travel agent, who would look up the available options, share them with you, and then you'd wait two weeks for paper tickets to arrive in the mail. Today you can go on a travel-booking website like Kayak or Travelocity and complete the whole process in less than five minutes. The same is true for things like banking, ordering food, hailing taxis, and the list goes on. Yet despite these conveniences, we are busier than ever. Our modern, fast-paced world comes at a steep price: each day feels like a race against the clock, executing a long list of "to dos" and collapsing every night, exhausted, in front of a screen with more bad news. We often feel like boats lost at sea, at the mercy of the winds and waves, without a

North Star to guide us. When we come face-to-face with obstacles, we are reactive and defensive. Our anxiety has manifested into a perennial state of stress, exhaustion, and fatigue.

So what explains these four paradoxes that are a core part of modern existence? I believe these paradoxes are a direct result of our brains being maladapted to the world we are living in. The very intelligence that allowed the human species to climb to the top of the food chain—despite not being the strongest or the largest—has turned against us. You see, neurobiologically, we are wired to look for danger. Our brains evolved to keep our bodies safe and alive, not necessarily to keep us content and joyful. Up until around 20,000 years ago, before we as humans settled down, our ability to sense a saber-toothed tiger hiding in the shadows and react with lightning speed made all the difference between life and death. We had to choose fight or flight to survive.

Today, dangerous wild predators have been replaced by an increasingly complex modern existence: balancing a demanding career with equally busy family life, absorbing the 24/7 news and social media cycle that is filled with bad news (because bad news sells!). We see (on continuous replay) reports of volatile and uncertain wars breaking out, climate change driving fires or floods, and weekly if not daily reports of shootings and violence. Feeling the world is spinning out of our control, we are triggered multiple times in a day. Our brains have a hard time separating physical threats from those to our fragile egos and still react in the same way: fight or flight.

© Michael Robbins, Mobius featured artist





We find ourselves constantly trying to make sense of it all and desperate to stay safe. The truth is, despite all our resources, we are living in a heightened state of psychological scarcity and fear—a fear of not being smart or successful enough, a fear of being left behind, a fear of not being loved. As a result of this scarcity and fear mindset, we may experience some joy when things go our way, but the *mood* of joyfulness is not accessible to us.

I grew up in a middle-class family in India and was blessed to have wonderful parents who prioritized my care, education, and stability. From an early age, they instilled in my younger sister and me the core values of family, hard work, and academic excellence. Mathematics came easily to me, and I remember conversations with my parents about my report cards that mixed congratulations for my high marks with gentle encouragement to do better. From the age of eleven my singular focus was to earn an engineering degree after high school. I studied relentlessly and felt only as good as my next test score.

Despite growing up in the birthplace of Yoga and Buddhism, I became hardwired to follow a traditional path of “success” that measured my grades, where I went to school, and the prestige of the companies that hired me. My passport to a better life was the opportunity to escape to the United States, which I did after university when I applied for a computer science job at IBM. At age twenty-three, I walked out of Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport with

\$5,000 and the name of another Indian programmer I had never met. I spent the next twenty years seeking happiness through professional and financial success. I worked sixty to one hundred hours each week, traveling extensively across two to three cities. I had unconsciously normalized an unhealthy level of work to climb the ladder and was afraid of slipping down if I stopped moving.

At forty-two, I had checked all the items that were supposed to bring me happiness: I met my wife, Lizzie and had our son, Ashwin. I had built a wonderful network of friends, mentors, and colleagues. I worked for the most prestigious consulting firm in the world, which also brought great pride to my parents. My work was highly impactful: generating significant return on investment on fees that clients paid for our services. And I had moved to Boulder, Colorado, which some described as “a town nestled within mountains and reality.” I should have been blissfully happy and satisfied, yet I continued to hustle faster, harder, and longer.

In truth, I lived in a state of high anxiety and stress. I had built a deep expertise with over 20,000 hours of consulting work in a field that no longer brought me happiness and in fact was incoherent with my own views. I had gained weight over the years and no longer slept well. Each day left me feeling emptier, but I was frozen in place by fear. I wanted to change my area of expertise but wasn’t sure what would bring me joy. Then there were all the doubts and fears that arise when one contemplates a change: What if I did something different and failed at it? Would

**“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries.  
Without them humanity cannot survive.”**

THE DALAI LAMA



I disappoint those who had supported me? Would I maintain the same lifestyle for my family?

Then opportunity knocked. I was invited to a leadership program at McKinsey & Company, led by Mobius Executive Leadership, that was designed to create space for introspection and self-awareness, foster connection, and increase effectiveness. The program was held at a site that housed one of the oldest monasteries in Europe. Over the next five days, leveraging the techniques I learned and supported by the mystical, spiritual energy that surrounded me, I discovered three key insights which would change the trajectory of my life.

First, I realized I was happiest and most energetic when I was building and maintaining connections and making a positive impact in people's lives. Second, I saw that I sought safety and success in the external world at the cost of driving emptiness within. I was also exposed to techniques like mindfulness and journaling that had a dramatic effect on my overall effectiveness and how I experienced life. I understood that if I could break away from my fears and shed the layers of armor I had donned to hide them, I could unlock more joy and lightness in my life. Third, I was not alone. Everyone in the class came alive. I realized how quickly relationships develop and love flourishes when we release our deep fears and let others see us as the beautiful, imperfect humans we all are.

Together, these insights helped me discover my personal *Ikigai*, or reason for being. A Japanese word dating back to the Heian period (794 to 1185), *Ikigai* is the intersection of what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and is willing to pay for. I was going to dedicate the rest of my life to helping others flourish and find happiness to unlock their human potential and live their best lives, too.

The fields of psychology, neurosciences, and ancient wisdom traditions were completely new to me. Luckily, I was grateful to be at a wonderful company that allowed me to go part time (70 percent) to pursue my passion. The next five years were a tremendous period of personal growth and learning. I read over 500 books and listened to more than 2,000 hours of lectures from thought leaders. I took courses in ontological coaching, neurosciences, and psychology, as well as studying with mystical teachers from the

East, and I formally trained to become a coach myself. I turned myself into a living laboratory, continuously experimenting with new techniques and practices. I didn't accept anything unless it worked and made a difference in my life.

Two decades in consulting meant I was really well-versed in the art and science of helping organizations and people make sustainable shifts in their behaviors and habits to achieve their goals. I had used this to help my clients make substantial and long-lasting improvements in performance, whether it was driving revenue improvements, reducing costs, or increasing the speed of execution. I was going to turn that expertise into helping people integrate what I was learning from these new fields to transform their lives, too. I began helping my clients and colleagues using these techniques through one-on-one coaching sessions. Eventually, at my company, I helped create a brand-new leadership program to support leaders and organizations build adaptability and resilience capabilities to combat rising stress, fatigue, and burnout (specifically from the raging pandemic). On this journey of personal growth, we could help design organizations where people could operate without fear, show up fully, and deliver high performance not at the expense of wellbeing, but because of it.

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An ancient Cherokee tale describes a grandfather and his grandson having a conversation about life. "I have a fight going on inside me," the old man says. "It's taking place between two wolves. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

The grandfather looks at his grandson and continues. "The other wolf embodies positive emotions. He is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. Both wolves are fighting to the death. The same fight is going on inside you, too."

The grandson takes a moment to reflect on this. At last, he looks up at his grandfather and asks, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee says, simply, "The one you feed." Over the course of this book, I will introduce you to



nine practices that will enable you to feed the good wolf on your own journey toward connection, fulfillment, and happiness. As I learned the hard way, trying to fit into an external model of success only keeps you in a place of fear, always afraid of not being enough. If you can tune inward and use your internal compass, you can rewire your brain to seek joy, health, love, and meaning.

### Introduction to the Nine Key Practices That Help Us Become Happier

Each of the nine practices are supported through both scientific research in the fields of psychology and neurosciences, as well as through teachings from ancient wisdom traditions like Buddhism and the Yoga Sutras. Furthermore, I will share evidence of the positive impact of these on the lives of 1,000+ leaders across different fields whom I have supported and coached over my career. Throughout the book I will share examples from my own life as well as stories

from others to demonstrate the great benefits of these practices and to inspire you to forge ahead on your own journey.

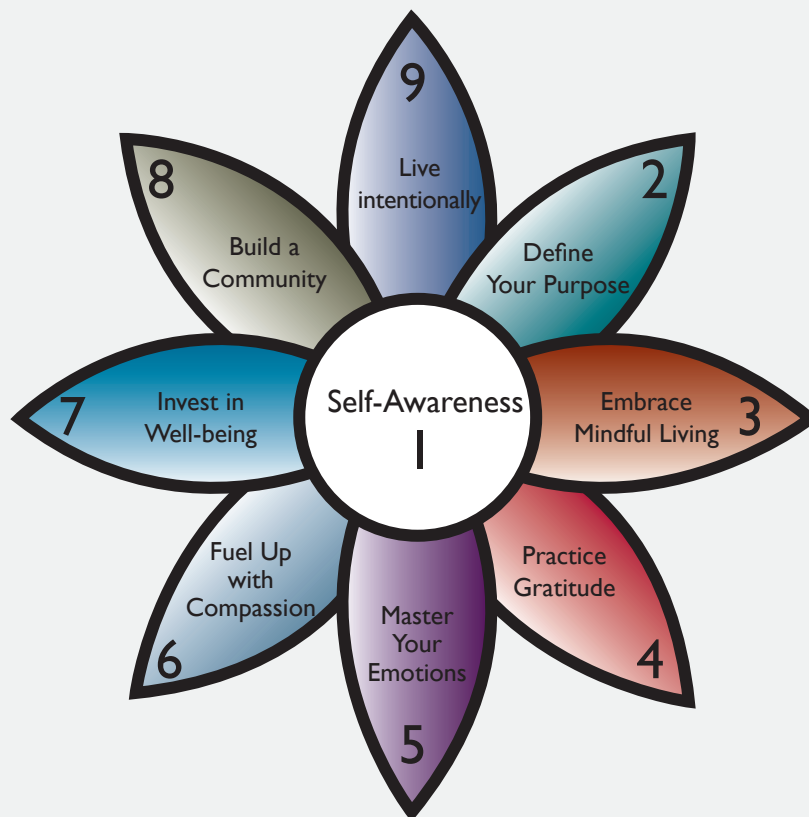
#### 1: Cultivate Self-Awareness to Know Who You Really Are

We are all unique observers who are shaped by the broader cultural contexts in which we grew up: what we learned from our parents, teachers, and role models; and schooled by our own life experiences. In this practice, you will understand who you really are and develop strategies to move past the fears that hold you back. You will deepen your awareness of your starting point as well as habitual responses to stressors; pause to create space; and choose a more conscious response driven not from fear but freedom to evolve into what life is asking from you.

#### 2: Define Your Purpose

Viktor Frankl, an Auschwitz survivor and the father of logotherapy, which describes a search for a life

### Hardwired for happiness practices





meaning as the central human motivational force, said, “Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for.” Discovering your personal purpose is critical and will become your North Star to guide you when you are lost in the ever increasing complexity of the world. In this practice you will discover your personal “why” to reveal your core values and beliefs. These are the guiding lights to illuminate the path ahead of you.

### **3. Embrace Mindful Living**

We are blessed with the highest developed brains of any species on Earth. Unfortunately, for most of us, our minds are crowded with too many thoughts all running in different directions. We are unable to focus on any given thought as it is happening, and therefore miss out on the enjoyment at that moment. According to Harvard University research, 47 percent of study participants had a wandering mind, which directly related to their unhappiness. The good news is that all of us are born with the ability to refocus using mindfulness and use this superpower to transform any experience, day to day, moment to moment.

### **4. Practice Gratitude**

In our haste to accumulate more, be more, and do more, we lose track of all the good that we already have and what truly matters to us. By consciously developing a gratitude practice, you will redirect your energies toward more “being” and less “doing,” and break free from the golden shackles that bind you to goals and belongings that no longer nourish you. In the words of Willie Nelson, “When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”

### **5. Master Your Moods and Emotions**

We are blessed with a rich memory and a vivid imagination, but these gifts can also cause suffering and high levels of anxiety. Too often we remain stuck in the past, reliving negative events, or obsess over

controlling our future, imagining all that can go wrong. At its worst, those experiences can become rooted in our bodies and harden our hearts, closing us off from growth and joy. This practice introduces radical acceptance to open your heart and create lightness and new possibilities in your future life.

### **6. Fuel Up with Compassion and Kindness**

Practicing self-compassion is of utmost importance, especially at the beginning of your journey of self-discovery. You must give yourself permission to make mistakes. This practice begins with you, introducing simple techniques that allow you to stoke the flame of love and compassion that is universal in us all, from the moment you wake up to the very end of your day. Only through compassion for yourself are you able to offer kindness and generosity to others, which in turn fills your life with satisfaction, trust, and optimism. As the Dalai Lama said, “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.”

### **7. Invest in Your Wellbeing**

In this practice you will learn to invest in your physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing to thrive and perform at your very best. You’ll consider how much daily movement your body needs, what and how you eat, and minimize the effects of aging. You will refocus and break your dopamine addictions, recharging your brain every night through better quality and quantity of sleep, and make learning a lifelong habit. You will integrate play into your daily life, create space to spend time with loved ones, and deepen your personal connection to the universe.

### **8. Strengthen Your Community**

We are social beings biologically wired for connection. When we are young, we depend on our family relationships and thrive on friendships and joy that come from play. As we grow up, there just does not seem to be enough time to keep up with those social

**“We see the world  
not as it is, but  
as we are.”**

**ANAÏS NIN**



connections, and in the blink of an eye, decades pass by and our relationships atrophy. This practice will help you build and strengthen a vibrant group of friends and connections, whether it's three or 300, who will share in your successes and support you when you need to get back on your feet.

#### 9. *Live with Intention*

In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, we lose track of what truly matters to us. We make an unconscious over-investment in our careers and the pursuit of “more,” and we get used to making regular withdrawals from the areas that offer tangible returns in the short term. Keeping what truly matters to us front and center and allocating our time and energy accordingly to live in coherence and harmony with our dreams is critical. Learning to live intentionally allows you to practice setting intentions and to form new habits that will enable you to live into those commitments, in service of making the shift you want to make.

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Overcoming our deeply rooted fears of not having enough, doing enough, or being enough is a lifelong journey, with many challenges along the way. It is common to feel anger, anxiety, uncertainty, lethargy, shame, guilt, and frustration as you bump up against each hurdle. As you start to stretch into new possibilities, it's human nature to pull back to the comfort zone you know (even if it doesn't actually bring you much “comfort”).

However, if you are willing to commit to taking the journey inward, the benefits and rewards are life changing. The fear and anxiety melt away, and you begin flowing smoothly like water through any obstacle or resistance. Professionally, you will achieve

higher successes with lower levels of effort, as you tap into the power of your teams by creating a higher level of psychological safety. When you are not leading from a place of fear but have a deeper inner compass guiding you toward what matters, you will be able to help others in a similar journey. In turn, together you will be able to harness the collective wisdom of your team to truly drive a step change in performance. You will be able to become joyful and happy regardless of the external environment around you.

A life free of fear is hard won, but all the richer for it. ■



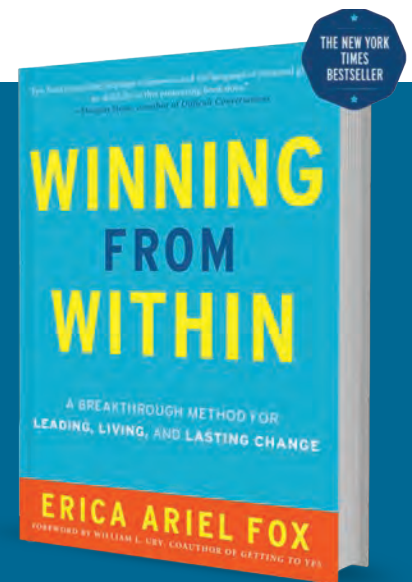
**ASHISH KOTHARI** is an executive coach, author and consultant. After twenty-five years in consulting with the last seventeen at McKinsey & Company, in September 2022 Ashish became CEO of Happiness Squad, the organization he founded. Happiness Squad seeks to catalyze human flourishing and help unlock full potential at individual, team, organization, and community levels.

The company will be based on the framework in his book, excerpted here in the Mobius Strip.



## Selected Writings from Erica Ariel Fox

In this series of recent articles, Mobius Co-Founder and Chief Thought Leader **Erica Ariel Fox** explores how leaders can step into this profound moment of upheaval and much needed change to address the complex issues of our times. From guiding people to face the enormity of the moment with more resolve and optimism to deescalating increasingly intolerant approaches to *shared* problems, these articles provide practices and insights for us all.



## Forbes

# How To Hold It Together In Chaotic Times

By Erica Ariel Fox | August 15, 2022

In the 2021 movie “Don’t Look Up,” two astronomers discover a massive comet hurtling toward Earth. The comet will destroy life as we know it unless humanity bands together to stop it.

The movie represents the perfect metaphor for our times. The comet in “Don’t Look Up” stands in for climate change but that’s just one of the many existential asteroids pummeling us these days. We are living in one of those periods when the world as we know it is collapsing and a new world is yet to be born.

Our perspective in this uncertain time will define our actions. Those actions will create our future.

“Don’t Look Up” presents the film’s characters with a choice of perspective. The scientists, Dr. Randall Mindy, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, and doctoral candidate Kate Dibiasky, played by Jennifer Lawrence, adopt a “confront it” mindset, as represented by the “Just Look Up” movement, while the movie satirizes the fictional president of the United States and her government lackeys as comet deniers focused solely on opportunities to monetize impending disaster. This “ignore it” perspective surges into the public consciousness when fictional president Janie Orlean delivers the slogan “Don’t Look Up!” at a rally.



## Wrapping Our Brains Around The Big Problems

Whether or not the characters in “Don’t Look Up” could “see” the comet didn’t depend on “looking up” or “looking down.” Making the choice of confrontation or denial involved a different type of perception that goes beyond seeing with our eyes. It is not visual. It requires seeing with our mind’s eye. It is an act of comprehension.

Our mind’s eye can only see what we can comprehend, and we only comprehend what we are willing to tolerate.

If we can’t handle the enormity of a problem, when our mind’s eye can’t accept a new reality, we avert our eyes, we look down, we ignore, we deny.

It is challenging to perceive through our mind’s eye when we’re caught between a world that is familiar, even if uncomfortable, and a new, unfamiliar reality that threatens life as we know it.

Scottish anthropologist Victor Turner popularized the term “liminal space” as a way to describe the state of being “betwixt and between.” We can see our lives clearly in the review mirror but the windshield that should give us visibility to the road ahead is fogged.

We encounter such uncertainties in various forms throughout our lives, such as when we have left our old job but haven’t yet found a new one. These are bumpy, but manageable, moments of transition. We can hold them in our minds.

## Holding The Paradox

Today as we experience an accelerated dissolution of the world we know without sight of the world of our future, we are not in an individual moment of transition, but a collective one. Our traditional workplace disappeared in the miasma of COVID-19 yet the future of work remains amorphous and undefined. We transitioned our businesses to the digital world only to face the unknowns of the metaverse. It’s hard to wrap our minds around what is real when our reality hovers amid VR, AR and AI.

Even that doesn’t capture our collective disorientation. The challenge facing us now is to comprehend the world’s all-consuming, existential problems — climate crisis, rising authoritarianism, wars, pandemics and a reshaping of global powers,

## The world as we know it is collapsing and a new world is yet to be born.

among others — while we navigate our personal role in averting universal disaster. This requires each of us to hold a paradox: You alone can’t stop the destruction, yet at the same time, what you individually do matters.

## What Do We Do In This Daunting Moment?

We must heed the call of our fictional scientists: Just look up. Stare the problem straight in its glowing, meteoric eyes. Push away the instinct for denial. Perceive through our mind’s eye — what some spiritual traditions call ‘the eye of the mind.’

For many years, I have helped business leaders learn to negotiate with their often-conflicting inner qualities — the visionary Dreamer, the analytical Thinker, the empathetic Lover and the determined Warrior — to deliver their best selves to both their jobs and their personal lives.

The next steps in this journey of the mind require learning how to confront those external truths that may threaten our sense of self, our center of well-being and even the world as we know it.

In the movie, the comet travels so close to earth that it’s visible to the naked eye.

“There it is! Look! It’s right there,” Mindy exclaims.

“You can see it!” Dibiasky says.

In a profound snippet of dialogue, Mindy points out the paradox, “It’s horrific and it’s beautiful at the same time,” as Dibiasky urges the crowd to “Just look up — into the sky! Just look up!”

Indeed, the unvarnished truth of transformative change can be horrific and beautiful at the same time. Seeing it — just looking up — means stretching the ability within yourself to take the terrible along with the good. It requires expanding your capacity to tolerate what you can’t know and welcoming the unknown.



**Stepping Up To The Chasm Of Uncertainty**

To begin the journey to the “just look up” perspective, try these three key first steps:

- **Take it all in.** Let your mind comprehend fully what is happening and what’s at stake. Don’t pretend the stakes aren’t high when they are, but remember this cuts both ways. Uncertainty brings with it the potential for creative destruction, which can ultimately bring forth something magnificent.
- **Feel it.** Allow yourself to feel the dread and the horror of the situation, deep down, but feel the other emotions, too, including optimism and hope. We don’t know what the world will be on

the other side of this great convulsion of history, but it may be splendid. Could plowing through the bad bring us to a greater good?

- **Act on it:** Our fate is not sealed. When everything is falling apart is often when we bring our best selves forward, our greatest creativity and our deepest passion. With wise action and audacity tempered with humility, we can change the course of the future.

Ours is a potent moment when we can see with our mind’s eye even when our instinct, as the comet barrels toward us, is to duck and cover. Our times beseech us to step into the chasm of uncertainty and become the agents of transformation our future needs. ■

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**Forbes**

# You Need A Personal Code Of Conduct. Here’s Why.

By Erica Ariel Fox | February 16, 2022

In the business world, companies articulate their values in a code of conduct. They display them prominently in employee handbooks, on their websites, and in human resource departments around the globe.

In the rough and tumble of business competitiveness, these corporate codes are sometimes brushed aside as just so many words. At times, the platitudes pale against the backdrop of real world problems or organizational complexity.

It’s hard to “put people ahead of profits” when shareholders press for short-term results or boards demand on-going growth. Practicing “transparency” sounds great, but what about protecting confidentiality? If the principle isn’t clear and compelling to you, your conscience won’t cry out when you fail to follow it — especially when you face intense pressure about the bottom line.

Crafting your own code of conduct that will stand up under such pressures is an essential act of leadership.

As leaders in a post-pandemic workplace in which employees demand purpose along with the paychecks, drawing those ethical lines that we will not allow ourselves to cross is a crucial step in creating the positive work cultures we need.

Customers, too, insist that company leaders live by principles that align with their company’s stated values and will punish companies whose leaders don’t meet the bar.

**Go Beyond The Generic**

Personal codes of conduct are as old as the handshake. An earnest promise of “my word is my bond” served as a contract in a bygone era. Now we can Google up a generic code of conduct.



What was once driven by biblical imperatives, such as the Ten Commandments, can now be determined via algorithm-driven websites, such as Indeed, which offer templates for drafting your code of conduct.

Yet a fill-in-the-blanks code of ethics spit out by your computer is hardly the stuff of deep meaning or inner conviction.

Amid relentless market pressure and global upheaval, we need personal codes that support us as we make the tough decisions that leadership demands. This means we need to reach inside ourselves to find our own principles, ones that remind us of who we are and who we want to be, as leaders, as professionals, and as human beings.

Genuine personal codes don't require employees or customers to hold us accountable. We generate them to hold ourselves accountable.

Many of us care about, if not feel bound by, a general set of values, such as integrity, kindness or honesty. We accept behavioral norms – don't lie, don't steal, don't murder – that derive from religious texts. Some of us gain fulfillment from what we perceive as moral acts, such as donating to philanthropies at year end. We act accordingly.

### **Forget Google. Follow Your Inner Compass.**

Yet how many of us have taken the time to look inside ourselves to assess which of these values are truly meaningful to us and whether they are sufficient to keep us on track when pressures intensify? Have we bothered to go the extra step to write them down? Do we revisit them from time to time to update them as our circumstances change? Codes lose their impact on us when they get stale.

As individuals, we hold our ethics and noble precepts as dear, but often mainly in theory. In real life, we make exceptions and then rationalize our actions. We rarely hold ourselves accountable for our transgressions. Instead, we justify them.

In a corporate setting, task forces or committees review company codes of conduct, build consensus around the values, and make them public. As individuals, by intentionally creating our personal Code of Conduct we force ourselves to reflect on our own core values, to articulate them, prioritize them and actively commit to them. This conviction enables us to be honest with ourselves before we deviate from them.

**"Values are like fingerprints,  
nobody's are the same,  
but you leave them all over  
everything you do."**

– ELVIS PRESLEY

We need not channel Hammurabi or Moses. Indeed, a simple set of broad principles may offer a greater chance of applicability in our everyday lives rather than something we save for making the "big" decisions.

In the interest of practicing what I preach, I spent a quiet hour thinking about how I will hold myself accountable this year. Here is my list:

1. To refrain from harmful speech and to practice kind speech.
2. To refrain from taking that which is not given and to practice generosity.
3. To practice responsibility in all relationships, including hospitality to visitors.
4. To practice mindfulness before saying yes or no.
5. To honor the dignity, worth, power and vulnerability of each person.
6. To practice curiosity when I don't understand, express opposition when I disagree, and stand up for people and policies that need my support.
7. To practice love, compassion and presence to my close friends and family by prioritizing attendance at life events that are important to them. To not use "busyness" as an excuse not to attend.

What's a principle on your list? I'd love to hear them. Tweet your thoughts to me @ericaarielfox if you feel comfortable sharing them. ■



**Forbes**

# Getting To Yes: Our Angry Society Needs This 1981 Business Book

By Erica Ariel Fox | January 18, 2022

A current of discontent pulses through our society. We face an erosion of civility and an embrace of violent threats as legitimate ways to communicate.

A paradigm exists for resolving differences that has proven effective in negotiating some of the most intransigent conflicts in the world, including the apartheid-riven society in South Africa and a centuries-old border dispute between Ecuador and Peru.

## Business Leaders Employ These Techniques Every Day.

Corporate leaders know the late Roger Fisher and William Ury's 1981 bestseller *Getting to Yes* as a business bible for closing the big deals. Yet at its core it teaches practical wisdom for resolving conflict.

Whether applied to business challenges, community disputes, or even armed conflicts, the principles developed back then to 'get to yes' – finding that win-win solution – give us powerful lessons for our anger-fueled society today.

The hope of 'getting to yes' might sound quaint given the brokenness that surrounds us. But the principles developed for *Getting to Yes* created a strategic and mature way to solve thorny problems together.

One of its fundamental axioms seems particularly urgent for people to understand and put into practice as we navigate the political polarization that plagues us.

## Separate the People From the Problem

It's a common assumption about negotiation that your approach is either "tough" or "nice." Hard bargainers see the parties as adversaries. They take extreme positions, make threats, dig in, and aim to win a contest of wills. Soft bargainers hope the parties can be friends. They make concessions to protect the relationship, yield to pressure and give in to avoid conflict. Both approaches are fundamentally flawed.

*Getting to Yes* introduced a third style: being "hard

on the problem" and "soft on the people." It debunked the idea that people with different views – even strongly held views – need to treat one another aggressively.

Developing a win-win solution requires identifying the shared problem and working on it together. Negotiations break down when either party thinks the problem is the people on the other side. The *Getting to Yes* method reframes the negotiation by seeing the people in the room, regardless of their initial position, as resources to deploy together against the shared problem.

## It's Gotten Ugly Out There

A few moments spent on social media these days will expose you to a barrage of vicious name-calling and angry diatribe. One might shrug them off as just words with the "sticks and stones" childhood retort, but the more acceptable and entrenched the online behavior has become, the more it appears to creep into "in real life" society.

We have all seen the viral videos of beleaguered store employees harangued by customers who refuse to wear masks and school board meetings that devolve into profanity-laced shouting matches over required reading or Critical Race Theory.

And now we seem to have gone one step farther. Death threats and physical violence are becoming normalized as a way to say "I disagree with you" or "You make me angry."

A hospital in Missouri outfitted healthcare workers with panic buttons after assaults by patients tripled from 2019 to 2020. Two men came to blows last month at a school board meeting in Glastonbury, Connecticut, to decide the fate of a school mascot and logo. In 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration received 5,338 reports of unruly airline passengers, including 3,856 mask-related incidents.

Nor is this a uniquely American problem. In the Netherlands, Belgium and elsewhere in Europe



protests over reinstated COVID-19 restrictions have turned violent. In Rotterdam, protestors on November 19 set fire to cars and threw stones at police, shocking local politicians.

“The center of our beautiful city has turned into a veritable war zone tonight,” a local political party wrote on Twitter. “Rotterdam is a city where we are allowed to disagree about issues, but violence is never, ever, the solution.”

All of this signals one thing: Too many of us believe that disagreeing with someone’s opinion, particularly if strongly held, means we owe that person no decency or civility.

### Re-Learning How To Disagree

Our issues are prickly. They require the best thinking and best strategic tools we have – collectively. Threats won’t resolve them, nor will throwing punches or stones.

On the contrary, seeing your neighbors as personal enemies because they support outcomes with which you disagree is the jagged worldview that is unraveling the fabric of society.

When *Getting to Yes* co-author Roger Fisher engaged with the leaders of Ecuador and Peru to help them settle a border dispute that had roiled these

South American neighbors for centuries, his first act was to stage a photo op. He placed the two leaders side by side, heads angled toward one another, perusing the same document. This simple tableau set the tone for the negotiation as an exercise in joint problem-solving: I’m not against you. I’m against the problem.

Reframing the negotiation created an opportunity to find a creative, win-win solution.

Perhaps you and your neighbor do stand on opposite sides of the proverbial fence when it comes to COVID-19 restrictions or appropriate books for the high school curriculum. Perhaps those views make you angry. If you can separate your animosity toward your neighbor from your goal of solving the problem — whether it’s protecting the community’s health while respecting personal freedom, or creating an honorable, inclusive, age-appropriate learning experience for your kids — we can literally put our heads together and increase our chances of finding the solution that feels like a win for everyone.

As we wrestle with the issues – large and small – that divide us as a society, it is imperative that we bring down the temperature of exchange and re-engage in dialogue by sitting side by side and looking at our problems together. ■



Erica Ariel Fox is the author of the New York Times bestselling book, *Winning From Within: A Breakthrough Method for Leading, Living and Lasting Change*. The methodology is based on twenty years of Erica’s research at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School and extensive experience as a C-suite advisor. Considered a seminal work in leadership and executive development, the book forms the basis for the proprietary Winning from Within Method® – the transformational model and methodology we teach in many of our offerings.

More information about our multi-client programs conducted in collaboration with our partners at Egon Zehnder and based on Winning from Within (the Executive Breakthrough Program and the Executive Discovery Program) can be found on both the Egon Zehnder and Mobius Executive Leadership websites. For information about other programs based on the Winning From Within® methodology, visit Flagship Offerings on our website. Also, Erica’s teachings are now available through Mobius Touch, our online learning experience.

Visit [www.ericarielfox.com](http://www.ericarielfox.com) to access a collection of resources designed to bring to life Erica’s Winning from Within® insights and wisdom. Follow Erica on LinkedIn and on Forbes for her latest thought leadership.



# IN MEMORIAM



## David Kantor (1927-2021)

Director of the Kantor Institute  
Family and Organizational Theorist  
Author, *Reading the Room*

*Since our founding we had the privilege of including David among the luminaries in our field who serve as Mobius Senior Experts. David was a pioneer first in the fields of family therapy and later in the field of team intervention and organizational consulting. He was a passionate scholar, practitioner, theorist and teacher. We were always inspired by our time with him, refined by his precision, elevated by his brilliant model-making and uplifted by his humor and deep warmth. We will miss him greatly and consider ourselves honored to be among those who are part of the lineage of practitioners who seek to carry his work forward.*

David Kantor, Ph.D., was a systems psychologist, organizational consultant and clinical researcher. Over four decades, he established four institutes of learning, including the Kantor Family Institute, a postgraduate training and treatment center founded in Cambridge in 1979, and the Kantor Institute, a center for training consultants and coaches which he founded in 2008. Between 2000 and 2008, he served as Thought Leader for Monitor Group, a strategy consulting firm, and directed Monitor Kantor Enterprises, a unit devoted to leadership development. Over more than forty years, he taught thousands of students – at Harvard University, Tufts University Medical School, Northeastern University, and Harvard Medical School, as well as his own institutes.

Through his teaching and the publication of dozens of articles and six books, he made a significant contribution to the fields of family systems and organizational consultation theory and practice. Structural Dynamics, his theory of face-to-face communication, began in the 1970s in a study of families in situ. In the 1990s, the theory was extended in a study of couples in therapy. From 2000, Kantor applied it to corporate and other teams, culminating in the publication of his sixth book, *Reading the Room*. Kantor, himself, as well as innumerable practitioners trained by him, have used his theoretical models in consulting with businesses, law firms, consulting firms, human service organizations, and research enterprises.



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# OUR SERVICES



# THE VOYAGER PROGRAM

## Take Your Leaders on an Extraordinary Journey

Businesses need leaders who are purposeful and transformational. People who can impact their organizations and the world. Leaders who can face our uncertain world and disrupted industries with a steady hand, an inspiring vision, a clear strategy, an agility to adapt, and an authentic presence that holds diverse and virtual workplaces together. Business schools don't prepare leaders to play this role. By and large, executive education programs don't either.

We know that knowledge and skills can only take you so far. For experienced leaders to grow, they need respectful challenges to their assumptions, their modes of operation, their blind spots. Sometimes they need help to embrace their greatness. We also know that hypothetical, general examples don't focus on the specific leadership characteristics that your organization needs to cultivate right now to achieve your business imperatives. The Voyager Program is co-designed with you to reinforce your company's values and distinctive ethos while fostering the deep shifts your executives need to make to lead your organization into the future.

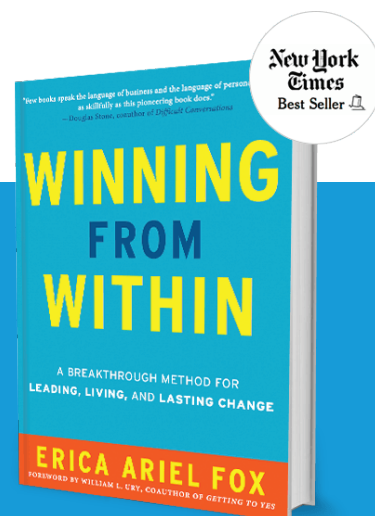
For more information, visit: <https://www.mobiusleadership.com/the-voyager-program/>

## Transformational Learning Led by World-Class Faculty

- A customized learning program co-designed with you for your top talent and closely linked to your organization's values, vision, and business imperatives
- The only leadership program available based on the New York Times best-selling leadership book *Winning From Within*, created by Erica Ariel Fox, the global thought leader who wrote the book and developed the proprietary *Winning From Within®* methodology. Led by the only faculty in the world trained by Erica
- A strong focus on experiential learning, drawing on a wide set of "right-brain" modalities that bring insights to life and embed learning over time
- A 3-4 day immersive workshop format that can stand alone, or can be coupled with small group coaching, digital learning or individual development
- One-on-one expert coaching for each participant, as well as partner and group exercises, breakout groups, team dialogues, and very little lecture
- Cohorts of between 12-24 people, with a high faculty-to-participant ratio
- Typically delivered to your top 100-300 senior leaders

**"The 'voyage' is a timeless motif for self-discovery and fulfilling your potential, both as a person and as a leader. As Voyagers we live in a state of paradox. We need audacity and humility. The hunger to grow and acceptance of where we are now. The urgency to act and the patience to let things ripen."**

- ERICA ARIEL FOX, *WINNING FROM WITHIN*©







# MOBIUS TOUCH

A DIGITAL EXPRESSION OF HIGH TOUCH LEARNING PROGRAMS



ASYNCHRONOUS  
LEARNING,  
POWERFUL  
PLATFORM



PROPRIETARY  
CONTENT



ENGAGING USER  
EXPERIENCE



STAND-ALONE OR  
ADAPTABLE TO YOUR  
ORGANIZATION  
CONTEXT



INCORPORATES  
BEST PRACTICE  
AND NEXT  
PRACTICE

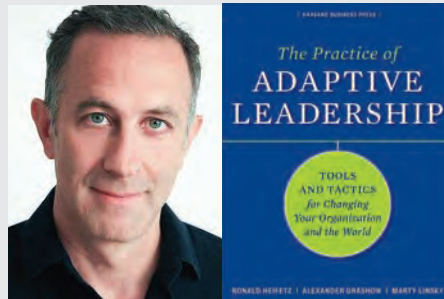
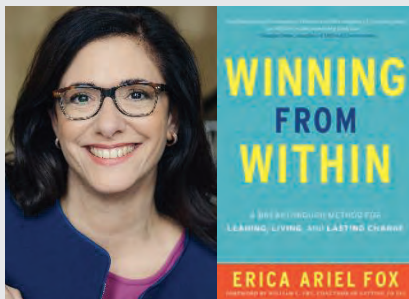
## OUR CORNERSTONE PRODUCTS COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER

To build adaptive teams and learning-oriented organizations, it is critical leaders first learn to lead themselves, and undertake their own inner development work to cultivate mature leadership capacities. In turn, demands of external uncertainty require leaders to simultaneously refine their change agility and executive fluidity.

These two e-learning programs are a two-part journey for becoming *Future Ready*: **Leading adaptively**, cultivating intuition and centeredness, and preparing for the life-long journey of **self-discovery**, service and innovative leadership.

### WINNING FROM WITHIN®

How to lead your self and cultivate: Innovation and audacity; trust and connection; focused willpower; resilience; cognitive flexibility; and creative self-expression

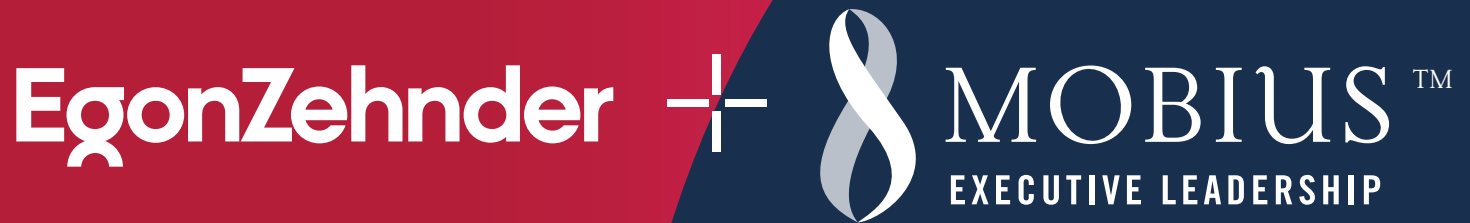


### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

How to build key capacities to adapt and evolve each participant's work and life to constantly changing landscapes

MORE INFORMATION: [www.mobiusleadership.com/digital-offerings](http://www.mobiusleadership.com/digital-offerings)





**Egon Zehnder, the world's foremost leadership advisory firm and Mobius Executive Leadership, a pre-eminent leadership development firm are proud of the global business partnership launched in the Fall of 2018.**

The historic partnership combines the firms' proprietary methods for accelerating the personal and professional development of senior executives and for stimulating an organization's ability to transform.

The partnership focuses on three capstone executive development programs: the Executive Breakthrough Program, the Executive Discovery Program and the Voyager Leadership Development Program.



[www.egonzehnder-mobius.com](http://www.egonzehnder-mobius.com)



# MOBIUS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP+GOOD WOLF GROUP COLLABORATION : FOUR CONSULTING OFFERINGS IN ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP



**BUILD ADAPTIVE CAPACITY.  
MAKE THE DECISIONS.  
DO THE WORK.  
THRIVE TOMORROW.**

The world is and will be different post COVID-19. Adaptive Capacity is being viable today and “future ready” for tomorrow. Adaptive Leadership is mobilizing the needed changes in yourself, your team, organization and systems around you.

## FOUR CATALYTIC INTERVENTIONS

### **ADAPTIVE CAPACITY WORKSHOP**

Internalize  
evolutionary  
frameworks, tools  
& skills

### **LEADING TEAMS THROUGH CHANGE WORKSHOP**

Build the roles,  
practices & norms  
for shared progress

### **ADAPTIVE AUDIT CONSULTATION**

Determine readiness  
& capacity for  
change across  
your organization

### **DECISION MAKING CONSULTATION**

Address the  
needed crossroads  
& choices facing  
your organization





In partnership with Mobius Executive Leadership,  
Seven Stones Leadership is proud to offer our distinctive  
Equity, Power and Belonging (EP&B) learning programs  
for transformational change agents, teams and organizations.

This is a new moment for the work of **Equity, Power and Belonging**.

At Seven Stones, we believe the traditional language of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is rooted in a model of scarcity that replicates the assumptions of society's dominant models. EP&B is about acknowledging that inclusive leadership is the new way of enabling us all to make ethical, sound, wise and sustainable decisions that positively impact all. We can reframe what it means to live and lead inclusively now and into the future.

Our road map to travel from this place of scarcity to our new future is called **Sustainable Abundance**.  
**Sustainable:** ethical, reciprocal, just. **Abundance:** grateful, radiant and present to the bounty everywhere

**Our partnership focuses on supporting change through:**

- Our Signature Learning Journey: *Heal Collective Trauma and Embody Anti-Racism*,
- Curated executive development programs offered through three (3) lenses:

The Personal	The Interpersonal	The Structural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive and Peer Coaching</li> <li>• Racial Autobiographies</li> <li>• Embodied Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive and Group Coaching</li> <li>• Team Values Alignment</li> <li>• Defining Terms</li> <li>• Assessments</li> <li>• Embodied Practices for Repair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding Coalitions</li> <li>• System-Wide Workshops</li> <li>• Structured Inquiry</li> <li>• Industry Racial Autobiographies</li> </ul>

Our Signature Learning Journey and our programs can, and should be, customized to the client context.

If you're interested in finding out more, [contact us](#) ↗

This work takes **courage** and a sustained **commitment**, but the capacity and possibilities to co-create can change our organizations and our society.

**A new way of living and leading is possible.**







## About Us

Seven Stones is a leadership journeys company founded in 2009 by Gina LaRoche and Jennifer Cohen. Our learning programs, coaching practice, organizational consulting engagements and groundbreaking thought leadership work are all designed to help bring about a world that is loving, courageous and just.

## Our Philosophy

Sustainable Abundance is both a philosophy and a concrete learning program that teaches applied leadership strategies and frameworks. Our goal is to support you in developing new habits by equipping you with practices and tools that you can use in work and in life to transcend society's scarcity myths and embrace the belief that who you are and what you have are, simply, enough.



## The 7 Laws of Enough




"The 7 Laws of Enough" is about the most radical kind of change, at the personal, organizational, and societal level: a shift from scarcity to sustainable abundance. Essential for spiritual seekers, business leaders, and environmentalists alike, "The 7 Laws of Enough" points the way towards a new way of living and leading.



## Online Learning Community

The Seven Stones Community provides you with the experience of belonging. You'll learn the practices and tools needed to go beyond what's probable, imagine anew, invent what is possible and forge a path forward. Our Community is for everyone interested in creating and leading from a place of Sustainable Abundance.

See what's happening on our social sites:

 @7stones
  SevenStonesLeadership Group
  @SevenStonesLeadership





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# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES





## SAVE THE DATES

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### PRIVATE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES OF ENERGY MASTERY WITH LYNDA CAESARA

**February 20-24, 2023**

The Light Side of the Patterns | *Monterey, California USA*

**March 17-26, 2023**

Energy Mastery | *Warren Conference Center, Ashland, MA USA*

**April 21-20, 2023**

Energy Mastery | *Rothenbuch, Germany*

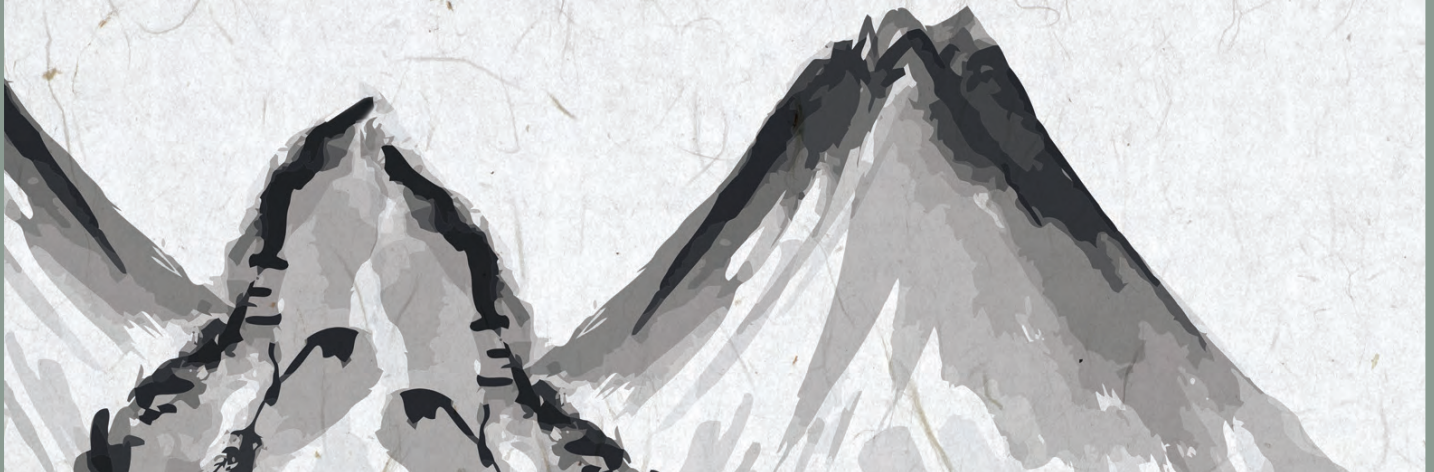
**July 17-21, 2023**

Reaching | *Warren Conference Center, Ashland, MA USA*

**November 13-17, 2023**

The Light Side of the Patterns | *Warren Conference Center,  
Ashland, MA USA*

For further details, please contact: [npi@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:npi@mobiusleadership.com)







## STUDY MYSTICAL HEALING IN A HOLY LAND: IMMERSIVE PRIVATE RETREAT *with Thomas Huebl, PhD*

### SAVE THE DATE

**Monday, April 17 – Friday April 21, 2023**

Many in the Mobius community of practice has spent the last seven years studying with Thomas through supervision groups, mystical study groups, on line learning, one on one healing sessions and participation in his two year trauma healing program the Timeless Wisdom Training. We have also had the privilege of hosting him each year as the central collective faculty member at the Next Practice Institute.

As such he felt as a sangha we are ready to go deeper into the mystical principles he offers and very specifically to better understand this particular moment in the history of Humanity and our collective role in the restorative process.

This retreat will accept 108 students and include intensive meditation, teaching, the study of sacred texts, transparent communication exercises and time together in Jerusalem at the Western Wall.

For those who elect to stay for Shabbat following the retreat we will be hosting a smaller session in the sacred city of Tsfat and make pilgrimage to the graves of some of the great Kabbalists to receive their transmission.

We hope you can be with us for this extraordinary time together.

Registration link coming soon.

*\*Participation in the NPI supervision groups or the TWT a prerequisite for attending this retreat.*



Thomas Huebl is a rare guide: a masterful mystic able to navigate advanced realms of spiritual mastery while presenting himself in a delightfully warm, transparent, brotherly way. He is the best of 21st-century enlightenment: deep thinking, clear-seeing, and radical in his stance. Thomas's work focuses on healing collective trauma to restore a healthy cultural architecture.





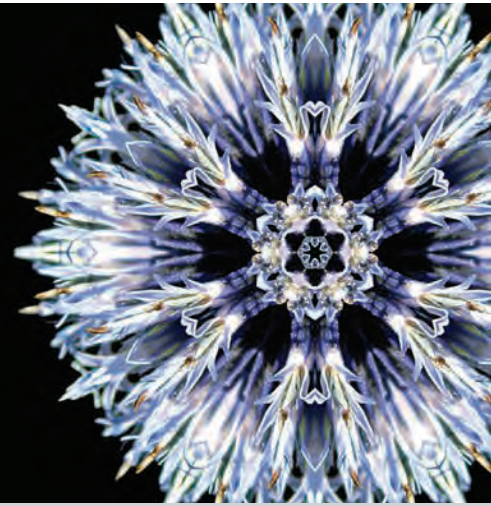
*The Next Practice Institute is Overjoyed to Invite You to An Invitation-Only Workshop*

# INVOKING A RENAISSANCE FOR HUMANITY

*A Retreat of Mystical Teaching, Practices and Initiations*

**WITH PATRICK CONNOR**

**MAY 2023 | WARREN CONFERENCE CENTER, ASHLAND, MA**



*The forces of the Light want to work through beings who are ready to make themselves available to serve the Divine Plan and to participate in a Renaissance of Human Civilization. There is no greater privilege than to be used in service to these forces. This brings assistance, healing, incredible grace, and the power to heal the objects of your own self-concern quickly and efficiently. To participate in Earth's furthest dream, to be used for Light, beauty and high guardianship is our most noble purpose. It allows Love to flow through you and heal you so it can flow freely and powerfully into the world.*

*These times desperately need beings who are ready to embody the Light. It doesn't take many who are called to be guardians of the Light, to serve the Light, to bring unstoppable inspiration, to heal and resolve the split between the worldly and the mystical.*

For more information about Patrick, please visit:  
[www.sharmada.org/about-us](http://www.sharmada.org/about-us)

## **DATES AND TIME:**

**May 2023: Dates and times to be announced in Fall 2022**

## **LOCATION:**

**Warren Conference Center & Inn**  
529 Chestnut St,  
Ashland, MA 01721

## **REGISTRATION:**

<https://cvent.me/oKX1bK?RefId=InvokingARenaissanceMay2023>

## **MORE INFORMATION:**

For questions, please contact  
[NPI@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:NPI@mobiusleadership.com)



## **PATRICK CONNOR**

**Master Transformational Facilitator | Mobius Faculty**

*"Until we learn the inner secrets of Self-Mastery, we will have little influence over the course of our Destiny. And we will continue to believe in good and bad luck. Ascending the 'Sacred Mountain', Everything becomes possible through us."*

— PATRICK CONNOR



# REGISTER NOW FOR 2023 NEW COURSES TO GROW YOURSELF WITH OTHERS

2 Feb- Coaching, Leading and Living  
11 May Inclusively: Gender, Sex, & the Body

This program is coach training and leadership development that expands both professional capacities and possibilities for life by building participants' capacities to be present to diverse human experiences of our bodies, erotic energies, and relationships to gender.

11 Jan, Women Scaling Their  
8 Feb Leadership

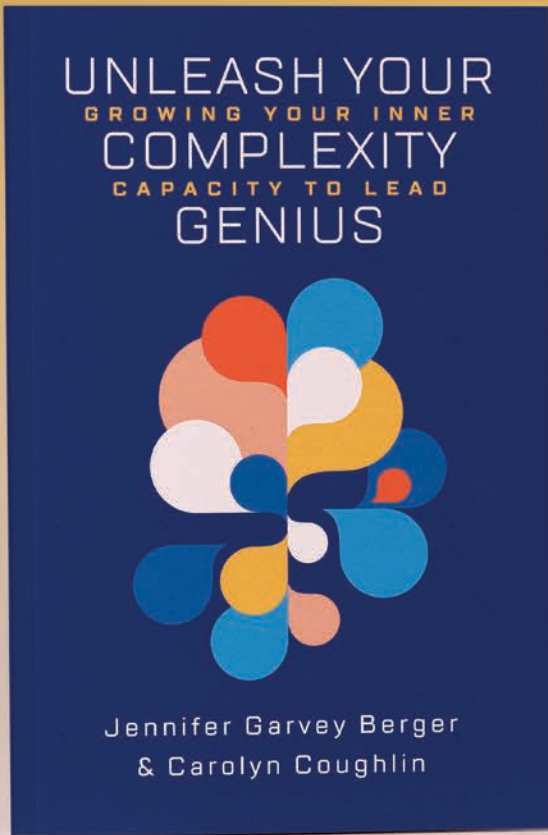
The sessions comprise a group of senior level women, who share a belief that expanding their leadership capacity is a critical means to achieve their developmental and professional objectives. The Growth Circle offers a resource to focus on exploring ways to mutually benefit from the richness of a group setting by embracing and sharing common experiences, challenges and varied perspectives.

Delivered  
in 2023 ~ Growth Edge Coaching

Our well known series of three courses – Conversations at the Growing Edge, Expanding Client Horizons Openly, and Psychologically Spacious Coaching – offers coaches a map of hidden forces operating in the lives of adults—forces that shape every interaction and yet are most invisible to all of us.



# New from Stanford University Press



It feels like the world is spinning off its axis right now, and this underscores what's always been true: there's much about life, work, and the world that we just can't control. But, as Jennifer Garvey Berger and Carolyn Coughlin show in their insight-packed new book there are methods—both mental and physical—to manage the confusion that paralyzes us in the face of unpredictability and compounding challenges. The authors explain how to tap into our innate human ability to handle the unknown and the overwhelming by using a genius that lies within all of us, and which **is often switched off just when we need it most.**

## Jennifer Garvey Berger



Jennifer has helped thousands of leaders around the world thrive in complexity. Founder and CEO of Cultivating Leadership, she is the author of *Unlocking Leadership Mindtraps* and *Changing on the Job: Developing Leaders for a Complex World*.

## Carolyn Coughlin



Carolyn is Board Co-Chair and Founder, Cultivating Leadership. She has been an executive coach, facilitator, and leadership development specialist for over 20 years, helping leaders use the wisdom of their bodies to find success with ease.



# minds at work

Overturning the Immunity to Change



## COACH TRAINING PROGRAMS

Learn how to help your clients identify and overturn their

**Immunities to Change™**

Register for an upcoming workshop at:

[www.mindsatwork.com/programs-services/coach-development/](http://www.mindsatwork.com/programs-services/coach-development/)



[office@mindsatwork.com](mailto:office@mindsatwork.com)



[www.mindsatwork.com](http://www.mindsatwork.com)



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/minds-at-work/>

## WHY IS CHANGE SO DIFFICULT?

The **Immunity to Change™ (ITC)** approach, based on over 20+ years of research at Harvard University, says that our minds, just like our bodies, have immune systems of their own. These are wonderfully innovative, adaptable processes designed to keep us safe. If our attempts to make change involve any element of psychological risk, our immune systems automatically activate to protect us. We resist changing, while often remaining completely unaware of how or why we resist.

The ITC approach allows us to identify these immune systems, to examine and ultimately overturn any self-limiting mindsets that activate our immune systems inappropriately or unnecessarily. We make significant and lasting improvements in our mindset and performance.

**Immunity to Change™ offers an actionable model for transforming our lives and organizations.**



# Leading Through Relationships

*A five-day advanced development workshop*

May 7- May 12, 2023

Successful leaders create cultures of accountability, commitment, and learning. They build robust relationships that enable people to work across boundaries, integrate diverse perspectives, and foster collaboration. They make the important conversations happen. This unique, intensive workshop is for those who want to thrive and to help others thrive in such a world.

## Who Should Attend:

- **LEADERS** who take seriously their role in transforming their organization
- **INTERNAL STAFF** who act as business partners and trusted advisors
- **CONSULTANTS, COACHES**, and other **PROFESSIONALS** who are in the business of helping people in organizations improve their capabilities

Early registration discount of \$250 before February 6, 2023

[Learn More](#)

## You Will Learn To:

- **RECOGNIZE** the dynamics that strengthen or undermine working relationships
- **CREATE** productive conversations on tough issues
- **INTERVENE** to help people learn from their differences
- **USE** emotions to deepen learning and strengthen relationships
- **HELP** others improve their interpersonal effectiveness

[Register Now](#)

*"Some things can only be evaluated over time, and the concepts and skills related to organizational and personal learning you shared with me almost 20 years ago have been among the most important in my professional and personal life. I keep coming back to them with great results."*

VP of Human Resources,  
hospitality industry

## Workshop Design:

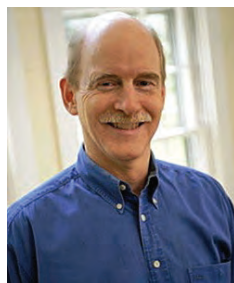
- **PLENARY FORUMS** introduce key conceptual frameworks
- **SMALL GROUPS** led by senior faculty enable participants to apply these concepts to their own work challenges and practice new skills
- **LEARNING TRIOS** guided by coaches enhance your development throughout the program

This workshop is **limited to 18 participants**

## Workshop Faculty



Bob Putnam



Phil McArthur



Annie Marks





## ADVANCED MASTERCLASS

# Systemic Intelligence and Organisational Constellations

AUGUST 21–25, 2023 | ITALY

### Systemic intelligence and constellation work in organizations.

*Addressing underlying dynamics and restoring flow in companies and teams, using systemic intelligence and constellation work.*

Not understanding the deeper systemic dynamics in organizations often leads to inadequate solutions. Leaders are spending their precious time and energy on fighting repetitive symptoms and are not solving the underlying root cause dynamics.

In this 4-day forum we are applying the foundational principles and systemic intelligence from organizational and family constellation work, in combination with different fields of work - energy and force field mapping, somatics coaching, trauma in organizations - to find the levers to debottleneck organizational dynamics and support leaders to navigate in their complexity.

Small interventions on the deeper systemic level will create significant breakthroughs in the whole system. Often, the dynamics become crystal clear when we stop talking and experience what a constellation of the key players and structures reveals to us. This highly experiential and practical track will provide you with a new lens and tools to look at business issues and will fundamentally shift your view on the effort it takes to solve complex organizational challenges. We encourage you to bring real client cases.

[www.thepowerofsystemicintelligence.com/events](http://www.thepowerofsystemicintelligence.com/events)



#### PAUL ZONNEVELD

Paul, co-author of *Emergent: The Power of Systemic Intelligence to Navigate the Complexity of M&A's*, has more than 15 years of experience in family and organizations constellations and systemic thinking

and over 25 years of international business experience. He is an executive coach and a senior member of the transformational faculty with Mobius Executive Leadership.



#### MIEKE JACOBS

Mieke, co-author of *Emergent: The Power of Systemic Intelligence to Navigate the Complexity of M&A's* (her second book), has 20 years of global manufacturing and industry experience and has been consulting multinational corporations

and executive teams in all major industries.

#### DATES

**4 Full Days in Person: Monday, August 21, 2023** (arrival on Monday evening) – **Friday, August 25, 2023** (departure not before 4 PM)

#### LOCATION

We are gathering in an idyllic location: Mandali. Mandali sits high on a hilltop overlooking Lake Orta with views across to the Swiss Alps. Our program takes place in the magical Diamond Room. <https://mandali.org>

#### YOUR INVESTMENT

Forum fee: €3927 (Note: VAT will only be added for participants with residence in the Netherlands). *If you are currently financially constrained, you can reach out to us to explore a payment plan.*

**FURTHER DETAILS AND REGISTRATION:**  
[www.thepowerofsystemicintelligence.com/events](http://www.thepowerofsystemicintelligence.com/events)





# Transforming Team Performance

Corentus, Inc. is a consulting, coaching, and professional development firm dedicated to helping organizations improve their performance and results through increased team and group effectiveness.



## Learn the art and science of teaming

We have trained practitioners and non-practitioners in the art and science of team development—with a special emphasis on team coaching—for more than two decades.



### **Essentials of Teaming**

Live Virtual Course



### **Team Coaching Foundations**

Live Virtual Course



### **Team Coaching Intensive**

Cohort-Based Program



### **Team Coaching Practicum**

Custom 1:1 Experience



### **Team Tools On Demand**

Virtual Courses



### **Train the Trainers On Demand**

Virtual Courses

For more information, visit  
[corentus.com](https://corentus.com)





# Business Application Coaching for Leaders



Train with us to enhance your impact as a leader and as strategic partner of leaders, learning how to coach your people to be at their best.

Faculty will be composed of experienced Axialent facilitators and coaches.



**FRAN CHORNY**

Axialent Managing Director and Business  
Leader Advisor



**BERNHARD ZIMMERMANN**

Managing Partner Con-TACT and Former  
President ICF Germany



**RICHI GIL**

Axialent Founding Partner & Chief  
Culture Officer

Contact Us: [info@axialent.com](mailto:info@axialent.com)



## RECOMMENDED PODCAST

### LEADERSHIP 2050 with ANDREW WHITE



Leadership 2050 is a podcast exploring the leadership we need to successfully transition to 2050. Who are the innovators setting the agenda for a more equal and sustainable future? In this series you'll meet them. In each episode Andrew White talks to a visionary leader from the business community who is confronting the challenges humanity faces and finding solutions.

Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMME OPPORTUNITY

### SARAH HILL'S LATEST PROGRAMME & BEHAVIOURAL ASSESMENT



We are very happy to be offering 'Coaching the Childhood Story' as an Open Virtual Programme in 2022/2023. This is the training that accompanies Sarah's book, 'Where Did You Learn To Behave Like That?'. The programme prepares participants to work with behaviours emanating from an individual's childhood story. Many coaches and leaders alike describe feeling unprepared to engage in this territory, avoid it altogether or enter conversations purely instinctively.

'Coaching the Childhood Story' will provide you with a model for embarking on childhood story coaching. It will take you deep into the inner processes of working with the impact of the Story in an appropriate and skilful way. This is an in-depth experiential programme learning how to unearth and work effectively with formative experience in order to enable profound behavioural change and eliminate involuntary shadow behaviour under stress.

#### It consists of:

- bMap assessment
- Dialogix Download Training Film: 'Reading the Room: Changing the Outcome'
- 2 x 1-hour pre and post-programme individual coaching sessions
- 5 consecutive days of training

#### PROGRAMME DATES AND COST

28th November - 2nd December 2022  
@ £1,950

24th to 28th April 2023  
@ £1,950

For more information or to register go to:  
<https://dialogix.co.uk/programme/> or  
contact [sarah.hill@dialogix.co.uk](mailto:sarah.hill@dialogix.co.uk)





FUTURE TRAINING RETREAT OPPORTUNITY

# The Art of Facilitating Transformational Fields

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SEPTEMBER 19<sup>th</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

Facilitation literally means 'making easier'. As facilitators, our core role is to support the group, and the individuals within it, to move more easily through the topics they are meeting to consider and the issues that arise in doing so. This means that, in addition to paying attention to content, we need to practice deep presence and cultivate both inner and outer awareness, a 50/50 practice. We need to engage with the energetic movement of the group, its coherence and fragmentation, and how to harness the catalysing power of shared intention.

Robin will be weaving the teachings of Thomas Hubl, Otto Scharmer, Arny and Amy Mindell, Eileen Caddy, Clare Graves, Don Beck, Ken Wilber and others who have inspired him, into his own unique teaching style.

The focus and content of the training will also emerge according to the interests and experience of the group – we will be practicing what we preach, balancing structure and emergence.

For more information on this training event, please visit:

**[www.vimeo.com/737509231](https://www.vimeo.com/737509231)**



**ABOUT ROBIN ALFRED** - Executive coach, facilitator and organisational consultant; designer and co-facilitator of the New Story Summit, Climate Change and Consciousness conference and parts of the New York UN Global Compact – and dedicated to practicing facilitation as a dialogue with the self-organising principle of the group





## INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS (IFS)

Internal Family Systems is a powerfully transformative model that gives us the tools and context to understand, connect with and heal our inner worlds. IFS Institute provides professional training, a provider directory and resources to learn IFS.

*Learn more at*  
**[www.ifs-institute.com](http://www.ifs-institute.com)**



“...parts are not imaginary or symbolic. They are individuals who exist as an internal family within us — and the key to health and happiness is to honor, understand, and love every part.”

- Dr. Richard Schwartz, Ph.D, IFS Founder





**ConsciousU**  
creating conscious tribes

**"In self organised teams, everyone needs to be a leader and everyone needs to have leadership skills such as self-reflection, compassion, ownership and dialogue. Therefore, personal development is a requirement - for all employees, not just a select few."**

**Are you developing everyone in your organisation?**

Scaling personal development accross  
all levels and all departments.

**[www.conscious-u.com](http://www.conscious-u.com)**



Mobius Leadership in

# The Wonder Dome

On this podcast, Andy Cahill and his guests tap into **big dreams, deep wisdom, bold creativity, and fierce hope**. Each episode features conversations with an incredible array of practitioners from across disciplines, including: artists, healers, philosophers, scientists, coaches, psychologists, activists, and organizational leaders.

All of these people are working at **the edge of what's possible** for humanity, striving to help us all become more resilient, adaptive, creative, and compassionate.

Dive into these episodes featuring Mobius Senior Experts, Practitioners and Friends:

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Sparkling Purposeful Leadership  
*Karin Stawarky*

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The Strength Beyond Our Fear  
*Yotam Schacter*

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Embracing Your Wholeness  
*Ishita Sharma*

20

The Lives We Carry with Us  
*Dr. Richard Schwartz*

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The Poetry of Being Here  
*Dr. Srin Pillay*



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Systemic Elegance  
*Paul Zonneveld and Mieke Jacobs*

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What if Money Isn't What We Think? • *Nadja Taranczewski*

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Awakening the Healing Organization • *Raj Sisodia*

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Systems Thinking, Systems Sensing  
*Robert Hanig*

98

Camping in the Heartlands  
*Cat Tweedie*

TBA

Plus a forthcoming conversation with *Amy Fox, Mobius CEO*

**Andy Cahill** is a transformative coach and facilitator who excels at inspiring culture makers, innovators, and change agents to dig deep, dream big, and do their greatest work. He's spent 20 years working in education, public service, and human development. He's also an essayist, musician, and the author of the critically acclaimed sci-fi novel *Gradient*.

Visit [thewonderdome.buzzsprout.com](http://thewonderdome.buzzsprout.com)



# Sleepawake Camp

## What do you wish you had been taught when you were 20?

Sleepawake Camp is a modern rite of passage for 18-24 year olds weaving lineages of practice, experimentation, and play in support of human thriving.

What if young adults were given access to the healing modalities many of us only found in our forties? In the context of rising anxiety and depression, what could maximize positive effects over a lifetime?

We cover all the topics we wish we were taught, including:

- Emotional understanding, fluency, and expression
- Attachment disturbances and healing
- Attention training and metacognition
- Authentic movement and unbridled creative expression
- Somatic attunement, embodiment, energetic basics
- Psychological projection and limiting beliefs
- Core strength and fitness
- Cooking, nutrition, community living

Our month-long summer intensive with a 9-month integration program focuses on long-term impact over short-term intensity, all in a community of unconditional support.

"This has been the best experience of my life." – **JL**, camper

"[After camp] I feel less tense. I feel an acceptance of the whole range of emotions and an understanding of their wisdom and beauty, and how sharing them will always lead toward deeper connection. And I feel a profound commitment to that." – **MI**, camper

"It's taught me how to be a human. What does it mean to be truly human and to meet life at the fullness of its potential depth, and to meet yourself at the fullness of your own potential depth, the depth that's already waiting, calling, begging you to meet it. Sleepawake is the space you come to, to meet it. To meet your fullness, your wholeness. To dance life, and be danced by life." – **MK**, camper



Founders Jeff Lieberman and Cat Tweedie (Mobius/NPI alum)



## Know someone who would be a great fit?

Visit us for details of upcoming Winter + Summer programs.

[www.Sleepawake.Camp](http://www.Sleepawake.Camp)






# What is your vision?

Challenging times need  
your positive, conscious  
future vision.

Visualized.



LET'S TALK

I visualize  
your vision  so that  
you can evolve doing  
the great thing you  
came here to do!



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**Mathias Weitbrecht,**  
visual facilitator at NPI  
events since 2016



**VISUAL  
FACILITATORS**







# Coming Back to Center Revealing the Naked Self

## South Africa - Cape Town

*Jan 28th - Feb 2nd, 2023*

**Coming Back to Center Africa** workshop aims to reveal and remove the many characters and masks that we have learned to wear in our life, it is an experience that will move us towards our naked selves, the fuller, more authentic, expanded self that has a broader capacity to move through life from a place of creativity, drive and inspiration.



The content of this workshop has been developed and will be delivered by experienced International coaches who have been working in the field of somatics, bioenergetics, gestalt methodology & expressive arts since many years.

For Coming Back to Center Africa we have chosen **Bodhi Khaya** Nature Retreat, a wonderful venue 164km south of CapeTown.

For more information or to book the workshop please contact:

Giulio Brunini [giulio.brunini@gmail.com](mailto:giulio.brunini@gmail.com) or  
Gila Şeritcioğlu [gilaincrea@gmail.com](mailto:gilaincrea@gmail.com)

[www.comingbacktocenter.com](http://www.comingbacktocenter.com)







## SAVE THE DATES

**2023**  
**ANNUAL GATHERING**  
**OCTOBER 15 – 20, 2023**  
*Boston, MA*

**2024**  
**ANNUAL GATHERING**  
**NOVEMBER 10 – 15, 2024**  
*Boston, MA*

For more information, please email [NPI@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:NPI@mobiusleadership.com)

[www.mobiusleadership.com/next-practice-institute](http://www.mobiusleadership.com/next-practice-institute)



## NEXT PRACTICE MEETS BEST PRACTICE:

The intellectual tributaries under Mobius Executive Leadership's Next Practice Institute



To receive our monthly newsletter email

[info@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:info@mobiusleadership.com)

Connect and contribute to the dialogue by following

Erica Ariel Fox and Mobius Executive Leadership





**“If we do act, in however small a way,  
we don't have to wait for some grand  
utopian future. The future is an infinite  
succession of presents, and to live now,  
as we think human beings should live,  
in defiance of all that is bad around us,  
is itself a marvelous victory.”**

**– HOWARD ZINN**





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For more about the offerings of Mobius Executive Leadership please go to [www.mobiusleadership.com](http://www.mobiusleadership.com).

To discuss bringing Mobius leadership programs, trainings or executive coaching to your organization  
please write [John.Abbuzzese@mobiusleadership.com](mailto:John.Abbuzzese@mobiusleadership.com)

*All images herein by Mobius Featured Artists, Heather Rhodes, Michael Robbins, Jim McManus and Yehudit Sasportas.  
Design by Mobius Art Director, Mary Allen.*

*This magazine has been edited by Mobius Chief Knowledge Officer, Nathalie Hourihan.*