

Foreword by Richard Rohr, Founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation

THE CONTEMPLATIVE LEADER

Uncover the Power of
Presence and Connection

PATRICK BOLAND

“Such a generous and skillful offering! If you want to use your power and influence for good in this world, here is your practice manual. May you have the discipline and commitment to use it well.”

—MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

Bestselling Author, *Leadership and the New Science* and *Who Do We Choose to Be?*

PRAISE FOR
THE CONTEMPLATIVE LEADER

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—Margaret J. Wheatley, Bestselling Author, *Leadership and the New Science* and *Who Do We Choose to Be?*

“This groundbreaking book gives a compelling vision for those who want to lead from a deeper place. More than just another book on tools and tips for those in positions of responsibility, it is a call to cultivate a depth of spirit, a care of soul, and a servant mindset. It reminds us transformational leadership flows not from titles or positions but on those who carry themselves with an inner authority that bears fruit in an authentic, loving, and generative life.”

—Daniel G. Groody, Vice President and Associate Provost
for Undergraduate Education, Professor of Theology
and Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

“*The Contemplative Leader* is timely in a constantly changing world; who we are and how we lead is more critical than ever. Patrick’s challenge to his readers to find the space to be their integrated selves—the goal of contemplation—is refreshing and speaks to the desire of people to be led by leaders who are authentic. From start to finish, he takes you through both ancient wisdom and the latest psychological theories in an insightful, practical, and a deeply engaging way. This book has the potential to re-define what it means to lead in the modern era.”

—Tom Hall, Global Head of Social Impact, UBS, and former
Head of Bank of Ireland Asset Management, Ireland

“In *The Contemplative Leader*, Patrick generously guides leaders of all types away from rigid and brittle tactics and toward a more natural

and heartfelt style where ideas and creativity can be shared in an effortless flow. It's pretty amazing. Somehow he's managed to put his intelligence into book form and, seeing as he's both brilliant and deeply charming, this is no small feat."

—Pete Holmes, Comedian, Writer, and Podcast
Host, *You Made It Weird with Pete Holmes*

"This exquisitely researched and written book is a must-read for everyone who aspires to stand up and lead. Harnessing ancient wisdom and cutting-edge science, it is a powerful and practical invitation to bring positive possibility to every moment through harnessing presence, purpose, and a deep connection to the both/and of the whole self."

—Louise Chester, Founder, Mindfulness at Work and Purpose at Work,
and Global Ambassador, Center for Compassionate Leadership

"Learning to see what's 'really real' is a lost art, and Patrick Boland is one of the most trustworthy guides I know. In *The Contemplative Leader*, he invites truly radical shifts of perspective and practice. This book is for leaders of all kinds who know that our work isn't about us at all, and who want to lead and be led toward matters more vital than mere success or failure."

—Michael Poffenberger, Executive Director,
Center for Action and Contemplation

"As revolution in leadership goes on, this book is a must-read for all leaders who would like to bring their authentic selves to leadership, who both care for and embrace their people, who care for both the means and the ends, who believe meaning and purpose can be found and lived through leadership."

—Gulru Atak, Transaction Banking Head of Europe, Barclays

“This book is a gift. The experience of reading Patrick’s book will stay with you. It opens up possibilities to personally reflect, to look at experiences through different lenses; and, to create fresh thinking about leadership presence. Patrick skillfully explains models in a way that is accessible and insightful. There is so much in this book that will inform the thinking, growth; and impact of leaders—at every stage—as they make progress.”

—Hannah Carney, Executive Coach, former Lawyer,
and Time to Think™ Coach and Facilitator

“With his book *The Contemplative Leader*, Patrick Boland has created something very special and unique. It is a tour de force spanning both wide scholarship and practical deep exercises. Patrick also makes authentic use of his own journey of contemplation, growth, challenges, and learning. I have no hesitation in strongly recommending this book.”

—Tom Finlay, Coach, Coach Supervisor, Therapist, Poet, Independent
Director, and Coauthor, *Deep Joy: Reflections on Life*.

“The really great leaders in life are those who readily connect with people. This book should be on the desk of every leader who is aiming to bring their leadership and connection skills to a new level of excellence.”

—Helen Dooley, Group General Counsel, AIB Bank, Ireland

“This book gleaned from a contemplative mind is most definitely a departure from the plethora of books on leadership. Patrick Boland demonstrates how contemplation enables us to come home and be present to ourselves and be present and connected with others in a very deep way. It demonstrates that when we are centered and connected, we can think more clearly and creatively and lead

authentically. Through contemplation, we become more grounded and more aware and feel more connected to the world around us. Moving from a place of stillness we are more capable of having right understanding and taking right action. *The Contemplative Leader* teaches us to look directly at what authentic leadership is, with clarity and without judgement, and invites us to enter a process to get there. This is a very powerful and empowering book that has the potential to change lives.”

—Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy, Founder, FOCUS Ireland and The Sanctuary

“I wholeheartedly recommend *The Contemplative Leader* by Patrick Boland. Having worked closely with him, I have personally witnessed his passion and exceptional ability to guide people towards a profound understanding of wholeness. Patrick’s brilliance lies in his skillful translation of wisdom tools into practical and impactful resources for leaders seeking meaning and growth. This insightful and engaging book is a testament to Patrick’s years of research and his extensive experience coaching and inspiring world-class leaders to evolve in their roles. If you’re looking to elevate your leadership and embrace a contemplative approach, *The Contemplative Leader* is the perfect guide for you.”

—Kirsten Oates, Cohost, *Turning to the Mystics* Podcast

“To many people, ‘contemplative’ and ‘leader’ might seem like opposites. But read Patrick Boland and discover why this is not true—and need not be true for you or your organization.”

—Fr. Richard Rohr O.F.M., Founder, Center
for Action and Contemplation

THE
CONTEMPLATIVE
LEADER

ALSO BY PATRICK BOLAND

Every Thing Is Sacred (coauthored with Richard Rohr)

THE
CONTEMPLATIVE
LEADER

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Presence and Connection

PATRICK BOLAND



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For Patrick Luca

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FOREWORD

The word “contemplative” is still vaguely defined in most of our minds. It was repopularized in our times by the American Trappist monk Thomas Merton in the 1960s. He used it very positively and constantly but largely without ever precisely defining it. Yet it worked his magic. The very word “contemplation” still makes many of us jump to a strange attention, as if our deeper consciousness knows, “There is something important here!”

Patrick Boland is one of those people who has jumped to attention. He enjoys a rare combination of gifts and education, executive coaching, and years of serious interest in the contemplative mind and practice. The excellent result is this book. It is a well-integrated book that invites you, the reader, to join him in the jump! By integrated, I mean he has put many disciplines together in a way that feeds body, mind, soul, and spirit all at the same time. He could only write in such a way if he had first put the same together within himself. Then it is like breathing.

In this book you will find intelligence, developmental and leadership theories, psychological insight, poetry, and spirituality all assaulting you on the same page. You are being led. And that is what contemplative leaders cannot *not* do! They lead largely by

their presence and their vital energy—much more than with their words.

So, they are doing it all the time, even when you do not expect it—and they are not trying. They do not need a declared role or title, but they still lead you by the way they are with you and with others.

If this is so, there must be non-contemplative leaders, too. People who push you around, merely entertain you, or poison you while you strangely ask for more. Perhaps this explains a bit of why so many countries continue to elect utterly unqualified human beings to high office. Like is attracted to like, I guess. If you have done no inner work, you will applaud people who are just like you. You have to have a bit of contemplative quiet in you to even pick up a book like this. So, trust yourself and keep reading. You are jumping to attention now. And you have a good guide here.

Let's try this for an attempt at a description of contemplation. Even the Latin and English roots of the word imply looking or seeing—how you look and how you see the moment. In my own observation and lifetime of leading groups and retreat work, I have recognized at least three common ways that most people look at their world. I call them *glaring*, *glancing*, and *gazing*. Not only is beauty in the eye of the beholder; just about everything else is, too.

Glaring: Looking with suspicion, judgment, and negation as the first lens.

Glancing: A normal default position; quick looking around; unconsciousness.

Gazing: A long, loving look at anything. Seeing that morphs into appreciation.

All three of them are learned and practiced, and until you recognize your practical addiction to one of them, you will not move toward another. *Glaring* is learned by hurts and aggressions,

sometimes even trauma, and it lives in the body even more than in the mind. So glarers usually cannot be *talked* out of their state. Notice how wounded leaders seem so unreasonable, even operating against their own happiness and freedom. They are usually fear based, and they call their fear “reality.” They must feel safe and loved *in their body*, or glarers will not change or grow.

Glancing is living on the surface of your own life. It comes naturally to leaders who have never learned from love and suffering, which are the master teachers. Glancing is really not seeing at all but merely skimming the surface and retaining yourself as the central reference point. It is *my* feelings, *my* hurts, *my* fears, and *my* opinions that alone keep them alive. Their frame of reference is thus very small. Glancing leaders tend not to talk about ideas or events but only about people—and how people affect them. And, forgive me, but nobody really cares except other glancers. Their blind spot, as M. Scott Peck says in *The Road Less Traveled*, is basically laziness and lack of curiosity about the world, creation, and even themselves. They lack soul. They also must learn from the master teachers of love and suffering, or they will never discover their own depths nor have any interest in others’ depths.

Gazing is a chosen, conscious state—even though you “fall into it” more than you consciously choose it, which at first sounds like a contradiction. It is precisely not *self*-consciousness except insofar as I recognize that I am the Seer here and my biases and blockages are always getting in the way. Gazing approaches pure consciousness—where I as the looker and the objects I am looking at move into the background. The art and act of *appreciation* itself takes over, and any depreciation seems almost impossible except by accident. Thus, it becomes the very act of loving. The contemplative leader can readily see the shadow, the broken side of everything, but the contemplative leader is not only fully motivated to “forgive” any imperfection but also to even include all shadow material inside of

its overwhelming light, not by killing it but by absorbing it. This is how light overcomes darkness.

Artists and poets are often the first to realize this state (it is a state), but so are many musicians and scientists, at least indirectly. I wish I could put clergy as commonly in this state, but we tend to be trained in making dualistic judgments instead, which keeps us glaring far too much.

Merton called those who gaze “masked contemplatives.” They are everywhere, in all cultures and religions, many not formally religious at all, and all they need is a more mature contemplative leader to model the way. It is a maturing process that never stops maturing. Let’s first look for *contemplative* leaders to lead us; age, nationality, religion, and formal education are much further down the list. Gazing might just be the most simple form of connection there is. Just stay with a long, loving look at just about anything until it turns *you* into the good, the true, and the beautiful. If you don’t get waylaid by negative glaring and mere glancing, I promise you it will.

Patrick Boland is showing you in this book how to lead yourself and, maybe more importantly, who is worth following.

Richard Rohr, OFM
Center for Action and Contemplation
Albuquerque, New Mexico

INTRODUCTION

*At the still point of the turning world . . .
Where past and future are gathered. Neither
movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the
still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.*
—T. S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*¹

THE INTERCONNECTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Whether we formally occupy a position of leadership in an organization or we simply interact with colleagues, friends, and family, every one of us influences the lives of those around us in ways that previous generations could not have imagined. From global video calls to trending social media platforms, we are leading and influencing more people than most of us realize. Political movements grow exponentially when one video goes viral. Influencers' posts can add or subtract millions, even billions, to or from the value of a company in a matter of hours. The long-term, steady growth of traditional organizations can be undone by the disruptive innovation of market

entrants in just a few years, even months. New organizations have flatter structures than ever before, with younger generations expecting to have access to senior leaders and for their insights to be acted upon. Seasoned leaders who have risen to roles of positional leadership over many years are faced with competing, ever-changing external pressures that are out of their control.

In this rapidly evolving environment, we are tempted to react, to fix, to problem-solve—to try anything that will give us some sense of stability. But the interconnection of these unpredictable and evolving relational, economic, and political forces means that we will never “be in control.” It doesn’t matter what title we have or how much experience we have with leading within a closed, predictable system. Our ability to effectively lead is now less dependent on any formal position that we hold and much more dependent on our capacity to engage with people and evolving systems from a place of inner poise. But cultivating this inner poise, what I call *contemplative presence*, can be very challenging in the busy environment of everyday leadership.

The Irish phrase *grinn aithint* beautifully proposes the antidote. It describes people who have “awareness with discernment,” an ability to see “through the superficial and the surface to the core essence of someone or something.” They are able to recognize “the true nature of an object, an event, or a person.”² But how do we develop this capacity to see the essence of what’s happening with people within our organization in the wider global context of our leadership? To go outside ourselves and lead others requires us first to go within. This book will cover how to develop as a contemplative leader who embodies a deeply rooted presence and has a capacity to meaningfully connect with others as we lead.

PRESENCE AND CONNECTION: FROM EDUCATORS TO EXECUTIVES

My experience of contemplative leaders began with some teachers I had in school. The most memorable of them had two key characteristics in common: a sense of personal presence about them and an ability to connect with others. The teachers who did a really great job, whom we still remember for all the right reasons, were comfortable being themselves. A few were quirky or funny, some were sharp, and others were strict—but what they all had in common was a high degree of self-acceptance, which translated as an ease in how they showed up. They were authentically themselves. And although they were often quite aware of what we thought of them, our opinions weren't the main driver influencing their behaviors.

But even though many teachers had a strong sense of presence, few were able to translate this into communicating their message and getting us to follow along. Only those who could meet us where *we* were at, who could really connect with us, earned our respect and our buy-in. By communicating a real interest in us and in our world, they successfully inspired us to take responsibility for our own learning.

Teachers of this kind used a variety of styles and approaches with different students. From asking us incisive questions to occasionally sharing personal stories, referring to famous examples or referencing pop culture, they had a way of piquing our interest to the point that we became personally invested in knowing more. They influenced us to engage in topics in ways we hadn't previously imagined. And when we became stuck or disinterested, it was our respect for them that kept us focused. Their presence and personal connection inspired us to dig deeper and continue along our own path of development.

Originally, I supposed this dynamic only applied to great teachers. But as I started my career, I observed this same “presence and

connection” factor across all my experiences of excellent leadership. From sports coaching to banking, tech firms to the nonprofit sector, spiritual leadership to the fast-moving consumer goods industry, the most effective leaders within each type of organization have an ability to connect with others from a place of authentic presence. Amidst the accelerating pace of Eliot’s “turning world,” these leaders focus on “the still point” of *this* moment. Aware that here is “where past and future are gathered,” they honor the past and prepare for the future by fully engaging with *who* and *what* they experience in the here and now.

Presence is what great leaders have
and connection is what they do.

Whether they get paid for it or not, whether they lead a large team of executives or work as an individual contributor, those who influence and lead with great resonance delve deeply into the source of their own presence in ways that allow them to meaningfully connect with those around them.

I went on to pursue the twin tracks of performance-based and presence-based leadership: I studied international commerce while also leading men’s groups; I worked as a strategy consultant and then completed a master’s degree in counseling and trained as a psychotherapist; I worked as an executive coach and leadership consultant while also running retreats and Mindfulness programs. These two paths of engaging with contemplative traditions while also working with leaders seemed to weave their way into my life. As I made my way in my career journey, I continued to ask: How can we lead from a place of depth and authenticity while also pursuing excellence and meaningful impact? Across all my diverse experiences, I

found these various fields used different language to explain similar concepts of leadership based on presence and connection. I became fascinated with the inspiration behind and essence of our leadership, wondering:

- Why do certain situations inspire us to speak up and actively contribute?
- What does this say about who we are?
- How do we seek to lead and influence as a result?

INFLUENCING WITH PRESENCE

When I was sixteen, I asked my parents for a copy of Niccolò Machiavelli's classic Renaissance-era book *The Prince* as my Christmas present. It might seem strange, but I'd just read an excerpt in history class, and it had sounded like perfect reading for any young person looking to make their way in the world. There's a lot of pragmatic wisdom in *The Prince*, all focused on achieving significant leadership goals. However, as the critics of its time so succinctly put it, one key message of the book is that, when it comes to leadership, "the ends justify the means." Although it is now often regarded as an outdated manual for acquiring and maintaining power, some of the utilitarian conclusions that Machiavelli draws are very similar to how outcome-oriented leaders rationalize their achievements today.

We can easily forget that the way we participate in everything we do communicates the kind of leader we are. This greatly impacts the way we show up in every interaction, impacting the quality of our presence in each meeting and our ability to authentically connect with, and influence, the wider organizational context. When our focus is on achieving big results, we can become too task-focused to consider the means we are using to get things done. We need to

find ways to focus on both the means *and* the ends. This is where a contemplative approach to leadership is most valuable.

Reframing the concept of leadership as our ability to influence others is a helpful first step in actively taking responsibility for what we do and how we do it. When our external world is ever-changing, we need to go inside to our internal world and connect with what is most valuable, meaningful, and true of ourselves. It's only as we do this that we build a solid foundation on which to base the *why* and the *how* of our leadership.

**We can only lead others as far as
we have first gone ourselves.**

From my experience coaching leaders in a variety of global organizations, as well as my work as a psychotherapist, it's clear to me that we can only meaningfully engage with others to the extent that we have already engaged with ourselves. Our capacity to lead others is based on the overflow of our own sense of presence and inner connection. This book focuses on this most foundational aspect to leadership, exploring the various components of our presence, connecting and reconnecting us with the essence of who we are.

No matter how much we know about our organization, our people, and our own capabilities and leadership, the uncertainties of tomorrow and the complexities of our contexts and relationships today all invite us beyond a tips-and-techniques approach to leading. We need to practice holding the tension between influencing from a place of authenticity and accepting that we cannot *fully* control any situation or outcome. Contemplation helps us look out on the world with a humble attitude of accepting that we are not fully in control; that we will never have *all* the relevant data to make a decision or

know *exactly* what to do in every situation; that there will always be more to see, to learn, and to experience in our lived moments of leadership. But instead of growing despondent at this awareness, we can instead use contemplation to help us focus our attention on our lived experiences in *this* moment.

Leading in a contemplative way is both process oriented and outcome oriented. It endows us with a humble confidence that awakens and opens us to experiencing what *is* happening rather than simply projecting our own version of reality into every situation we face. We can listen to others because we have first listened to ourselves. Sitting with the challenges that have shaped us, far from something negative, teaches us to notice when we are spurred to act out of scarcity and fear. This helps us become aware of our deeper motivations for building, overcoming, and achieving “great goals.” Contemplative leaders notice the energetic difference between doing something just to feel good about themselves and acting from a place of inner conviction. They don’t *need* to lead anything. Power, position, and proving oneself are not that important to them. What is most important is how they bring their energies into the causes that compel them to lead.

No matter how much we long for it to be the case, most real-world leadership challenges don’t have simple solutions. They require a nuanced kind of processing on our part. And this is where non-dualistic ways of thinking and seeing come in:

- I can be friendly with my colleagues *and* have clear boundaries with them around work.
- I can stand behind my actions *and* know that the board members may not be happy with the decisions I have made.
- I can recommend that we proceed with this merger *and* accept that I cannot totally control how things will pan out in five years’ time.

As we learn and practice non-dualistic thinking, we become less attached to controlling outcomes to go exactly our way. This “letting go” frees us to experience the kind of change and evolution that is fundamental to all organisms and systems. When we let go of some of our assumptions about leadership, we allow ourselves to experience the situations we face without a list of preconceived ideas of “how things should be.” The goal of dualistic thinking is to feel in control, but the goal of non-dualistic, nonattached thinking is to be open to what unfolds as a result of our participation and best efforts, which, paradoxically, creates the conditions for even greater things to happen than what we could have planned. The paradoxical theory of change tells us that it is only when we stop trying to control how and when change takes place that we allow the conditions for change to occur.³

Contemplative leadership trusts that great outcomes follow great processes, so once an overarching strategy is in place, it then turns its attention to focusing on the process. It is this “both/and” way of thinking about things that makes contemplative leadership different. It focuses on, for example:

- *Both* the financials *and* the people
- *Both* the results *and* the road that gets us there
- *Both* the personal benefits to me *and* the impact on the wider organization and community

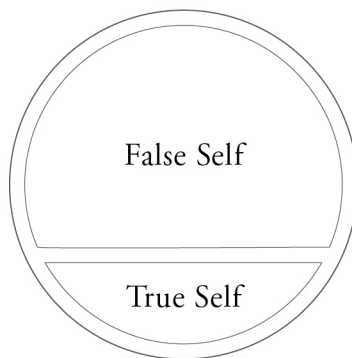
When we lead from this contemplative standpoint of nonattachment, we become comfortable embracing paradox, sitting with the tension of not always knowing how things will play out. Tempting as it is to seek more and more control in the face of uncertainty, contemplative leaders instead focus on being present to themselves, listening to others, and connecting with their environment.

BECOMING A CONTEMPLATIVE LEADER

The regular practice of self-examination, combined with embodied exercises of contemplation, allows us to return to a fundamental groundedness—a foundational presence from which our everyday leadership influence emanates. To journey toward this foundational source, we need to explore the inner workings of our interior world. Borrowing the language of Thomas Merton, this interior world is made up of our False Self and our True Self.⁴ The False Self is who we think we are, who society has told us we need to be. This includes roles such as “parent,” titles such as “Senior Vice President,” and identities such as “I’m a results-oriented leader.” None of these examples has to be inaccurate, *per se*, but if we overidentify with these labels, we don’t get to connect with or lead from our True Self.

Our True Self is who we are at our core. As some Zen Buddhist masters teach, it is “the face you had before you were born.” When we remove all our masks, the noise of the roles, titles, and identities that have served to develop us as leaders in the world, then what is left is our True Self. It’s always been there. It’s the part of us that philosophy and religion often call the soul.⁵ I like to refer to the combination

Whole Self



of our False and True Selves as our Whole Self, as this term is broad enough to encompass our conscious and unconscious awareness, facets of ourselves we are comfortable with as well as facets we struggle to see or accept. There is a place for all these facets in our Whole Self. It's not that the False Self is "bad" and the True Self is "good"; they both play an important role in how we show up in daily life.

We are always leading and influencing from this Whole Self. We often lead from our False Self with its roles and titles, self-importance, and need to be right, but every now and then we catch a glimpse of our True Self peeping through. We remove the mask and accept the person, the situation, ourselves. And we sense an authority that comes from deep within, a presence that connects with others.

As we uncover more of our Whole Self, we come to deeply embody our values and evolving motivations across the span of our life. We acknowledge the different masks we wear in various scenarios and accept that there's a place for each of them. We very slowly come to see the shadow that we carry, the parts of us that everyone else sees that we struggle to recognize or accept. We become aware of how this shadow sometimes adversely affects the ways we interact with and influence others, and we can take steps to alleviate its more challenging side effects. Our convictions deepen, our ability to influence develops, and the teams, organizations, and communities that we help shape can thrive.

Over time, as we dedicate ourselves to exploring and taking responsibility for our Whole Self, our internal world becomes mirrored in our external world.

HOW TO APPROACH THIS BOOK

*Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will
direct your life and you will call it fate.*

—Carl Jung

The temptation when reading any book on leadership is to skip to the diagrams, to the sections on “what to do,” and directly apply a model or a technique to your leadership environment to “see if it works.” This book, however, requires a different approach. It focuses on the essence of who we are and provides a sequential framework for exploring this in the context of contemplation. As we shine a light on our False Self and True Self, our growing awareness becomes the bedrock of any significant inner change that, in turn, affects our development as a leader. The practical work for you is to read with an open attitude, to bring your curiosity and a sense of possibility to what’s contained in the pages that follow. You will likely encounter new tools and different perspectives on leadership than what you’ve seen before. But if these just remain “interesting ideas,” then you will not develop as a contemplative leader; of most importance is that you might become aware of new dimensions within yourself. Completing the exercises and practices at the end of each chapter will be crucial for any inner changes to occur. And as these changes become part of who you are, you’ll integrate this contemplative presence into your daily leadership experiences, deepening your connection to the people and organizations you lead.

What follows in the chapters ahead is a framework for developing as a contemplative leader. We begin by considering the nature of contemplation and what it means for us in a leadership context.

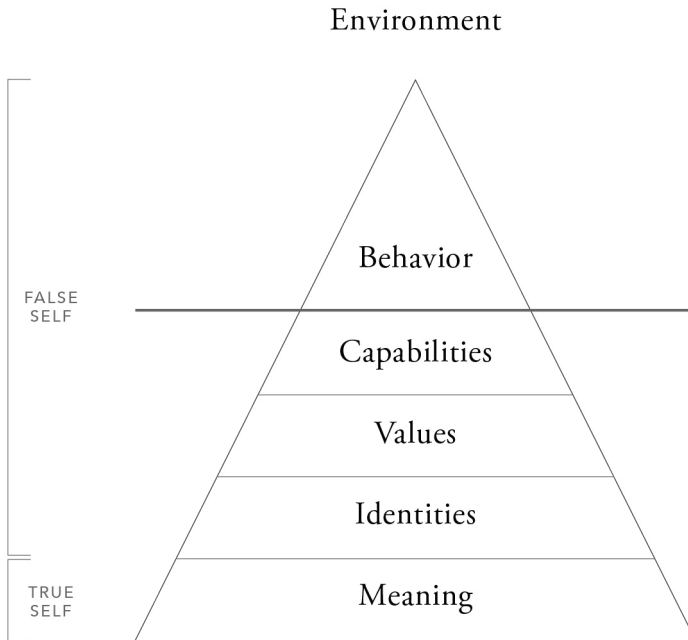


The first section of the book, “The Inner Journey of Contemplative Leadership,” is a guide to examining the inner landscape of our lives as leaders. In chapter two, we consider the narratives that have shaped us and the cyclical nature of change that’s part of our development. We complete an exercise that deconstructs the origins of our leadership narratives, creating the space to author new narratives as we move forward. Chapter three looks at the physiological underpinnings of our leadership presence. It outlines the different nervous-system states that influence our moment-by-moment awareness and how these affect our capacity to lead. Then, chapter four asks us to reflect on our experiences of challenge and failure in our leadership. Building on the insights of the previous chapters, we integrate growth-mindset research and examine the roles that fear, shame, and guilt can play in unconsciously shaping the choices we make as leaders.

In chapter five, we look at some of the underlying values and beliefs that shape our everyday behaviors. As part of this, we are introduced to the Logical Levels model of personal change, which can help us understand some of the dynamics and interconnections between our False Self and True Self.

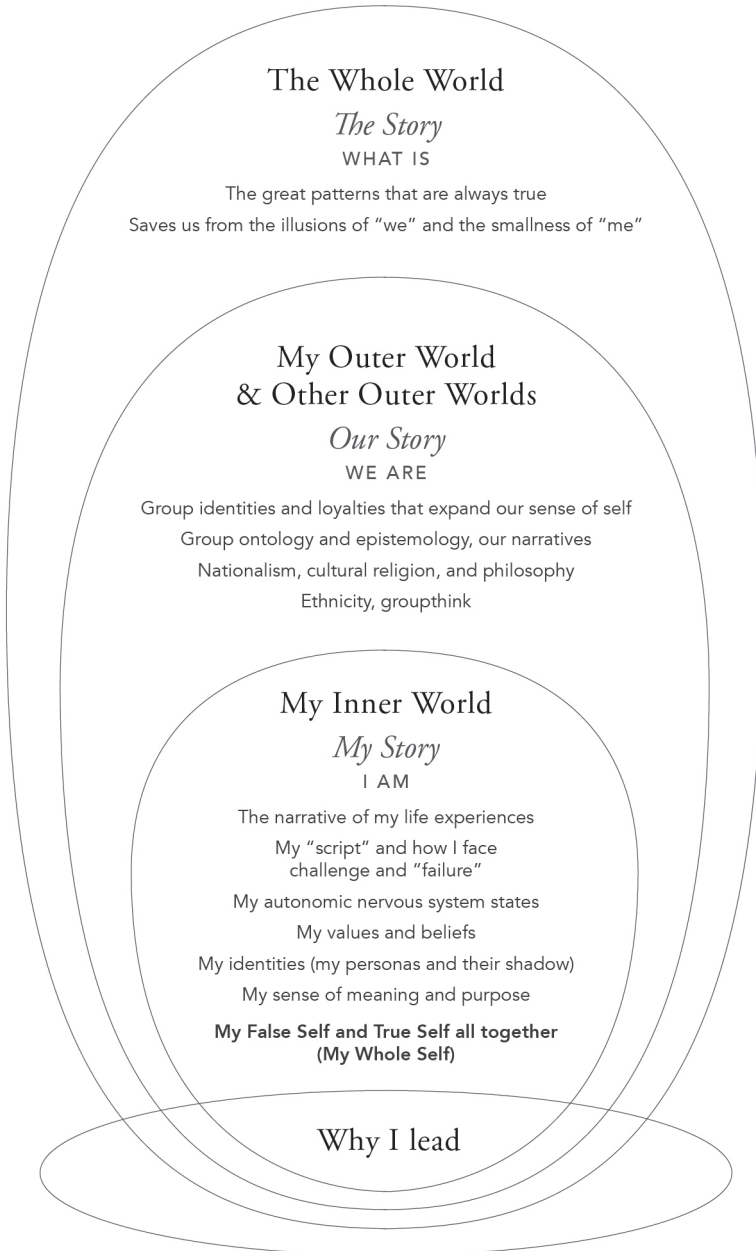
This model⁶ helps us frame the conscious as well as the unconscious aspects of who we are as leaders, who we’ve learned to become to “fit in,” and who we really are and long to bring to the forefront in how we lead. Chapter six looks at the interplay of the various roles and identities that unconsciously shape how we view ourselves and therefore how we show up and are present to others. It’s predominantly focused on a powerful, creative exercise that helps us

Logical Levels and True and False Self



integrate all the work of the previous chapters. The final section of part one, chapter seven, ties all the content together by inviting us to reflect on our True Self. We examine the sense of meaning and purpose that we bring to each moment of our lives, the foundation of what inspires every leadership initiative in which we participate. This chapter introduces us to the Three Domes of Meaning, a simple yet profound model that frames all of the narratives of our leadership:⁷ My Inner World (all of the work of part one of this book) in the context of My Outer World and Other Outer Worlds (all the people we lead and influence and interact with in our organizations and beyond) in the overall context of The Whole World (the bigger picture, all the interconnecting narratives and systems that exist, within which we live and lead).

The Three Domes of Meaning



The second part of the book, “The Outer Journey of Contemplative Leadership,” provides some approaches to connect our inner contemplative leadership presence with the individuals, groups, and teams with whom we work. We begin chapter eight by looking at some of the fundamental dynamics of interpersonal relationships and reflect on how to connect our contemplative presence with others. Chapter nine then considers how we lead groups of people with a contemplative presence, the role of psychological safety in team development, and a multifaceted approach to identifying and improving trust. In chapter ten, we consider the leadership applications of Spiral Dynamics, a framework for the evolution of leadership that encompasses My Inner World, Our Outer World, and The Whole World. The book closes with a chapter that integrates the key exercises and learnings from each section. This prepares us to take our insights and practices and integrate our contemplative presence into the daily leadership situations we encounter.