

CHOOSE TO LEAD

Leadership Skills for
All Aspect of Life



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The background of the slide features a light blue gradient. In the lower half, there are faint, semi-transparent silhouettes of three people standing on a rounded peak, with their arms raised in a celebratory gesture. A dark teal rectangular box is centered in the upper half of the image, containing the word 'INTRODUCTION' in white, bold, uppercase letters.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Across the years, the perception and definition of leadership have changed. Leadership used to mean a position or a role in a hierarchy. Today, leadership is more of a skill than a role. You can be in a leadership role and have no expertise in leadership. On the other hand, you can be in a non-leading role but demonstrate a lot of leadership and inspire those around you.

Leadership is one of those skills that never gets old and is always looked up to. Leadership definition can be many things to different people. Start by writing down your definition of leadership.

Leadership, for me, is:

We might have a different definition of leadership than you, but the exercises and techniques that you will learn here will help you become a better leader in your life.

One of the key qualities of leaders is that they are self-starters. That said, you can already check that one of your lists because

today, you have chosen to read this book and lead yourself to a self-development adventure!

In this book, we will teach you how to develop your leadership skills, no matter what role you play in your career. The skills you will learn here is a life skill that you can use at work but also in your daily interaction with your family, in your volunteer work or any relationships.

In the next chapters, you will learn about leadership, how it can improve your life, and what techniques or abilities you need to develop to become better at it.

CHAPTER 1

EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP AND HOW IT CAN IMPROVE YOUR LIFE



CHAPTER 1: EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP AND HOW IT CAN IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

We tend to underestimate our daily actions as an act of leadership. We celebrate significant events, big victories, but not necessarily our small gestures that can change the face of the world. Any daily action has the possibility to change the world of a person who crosses our path. Once you recognize that ability that you have, life becomes a series of opportunities to lead.

Leaders know their goals and do small things every day to reach their goal. But it's not always about them, and they help others to move forward in their projects, to remove their doubts so that they can take action.

In a study comparing average leaders to outstanding leaders, 90% of the variance was due to the Emotional Quotient (EQ). The most crucial factor that will predict if you step up and take the lead in life is your EQ.

If you compare people in a specific field, it is not their IQ or their personality that will make them successful; it is their EQ. This study also demonstrated that developing leadership skills without considering the cognitive strength of the student led to minimal improvement in their abilities to lead others. For that reason, we

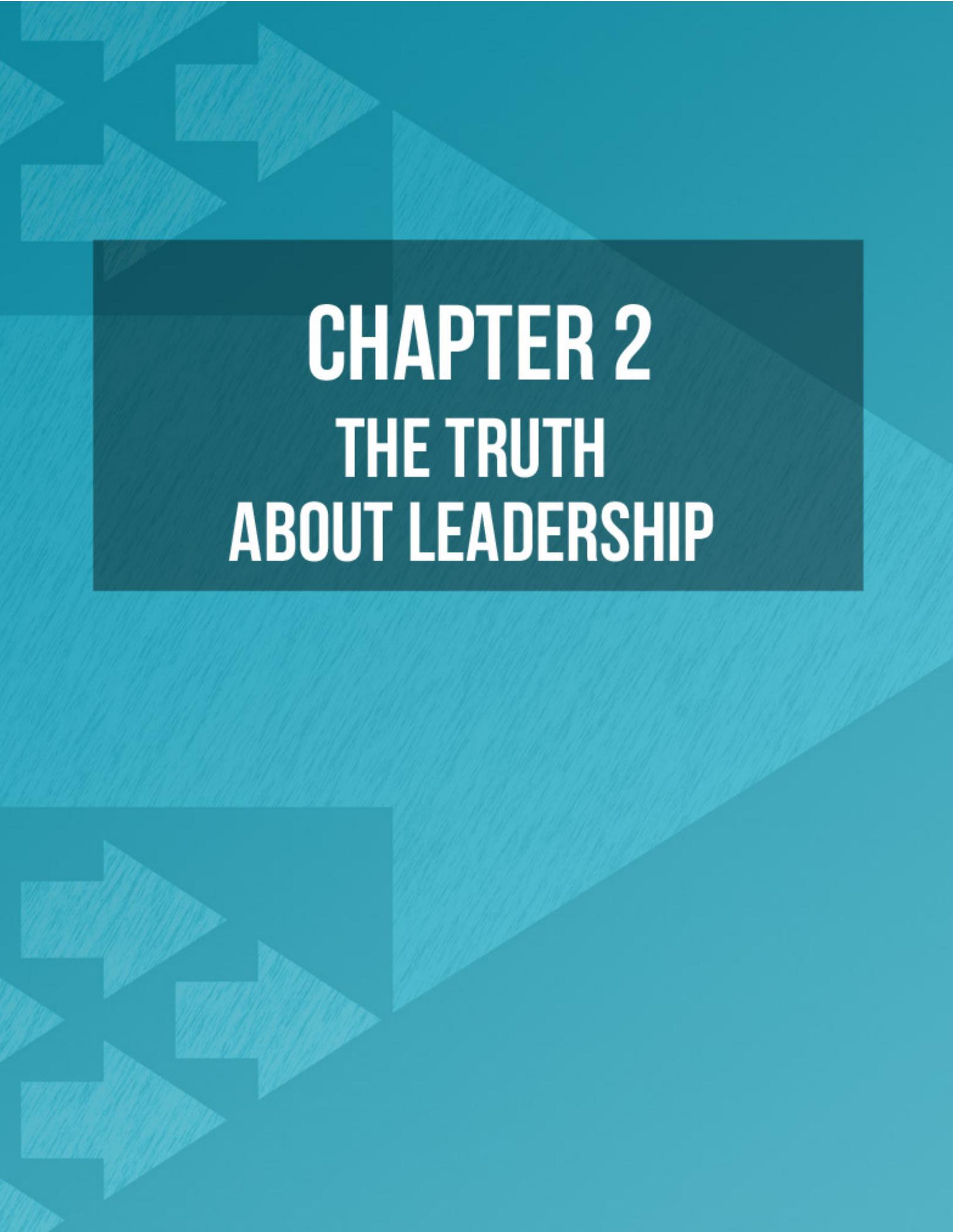
have a whole chapter on self-awareness and personal growth that will help you improve your emotional intelligence.

To be a leader is to be the catalyst of a positive event for others, and thus contribute to their development, help them in a necessary decision-making process. It can seem terrifying when you realize that you have so much impact on others, without knowing it, without being aware of it. It is essential to recognize that we are influential agents, and we have an effect on the lives of others that goes beyond money and power.

When you become a leader in your life, you empower yourself to lead the life of your dream. That is the most beautiful gift you can give yourself, as you will always benefit from the skills, experiences, and knowledge you have acquired on that journey to become a great leader. Some of the benefits are:

- Lead a productive life full of abundance;
- Increase your resilience and ability to perform without feeling the pressure of stress;
- Improve your relationships and how others perceive you;
- Become a better communicator and clearly state your goals;
- Acquire self-awareness, self-confidence, and courage;
- Grow your capacity to be creative and innovative;
- Be perceived as trustworthy and competent by others;
- Be more dependable, reliable, and competent.

In the next chapter, we will explore some facts about leadership and how it impacts our world.



CHAPTER 2
THE TRUTH
ABOUT LEADERSHIP

CHAPTER 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Leadership is not a natural skill in most of us. According to research, the best leaders are the ones that have a growth mindset. A growth mindset is a belief that any skills can be developed with dedication and hard work. That being said, it is a skill that you can develop and acquire with time, patience, and practice.

Leaders have a lot of influences, according to researchers, leaders'

behavior can influence the mindset of others, the environment in which they are, the cohesion and efficacy of a group, and it can even influence the amount of conflict that is experienced in the group. Even if only 10% of the population are natural leaders, we will all be asked to demonstrate leadership skills at one point in our life.

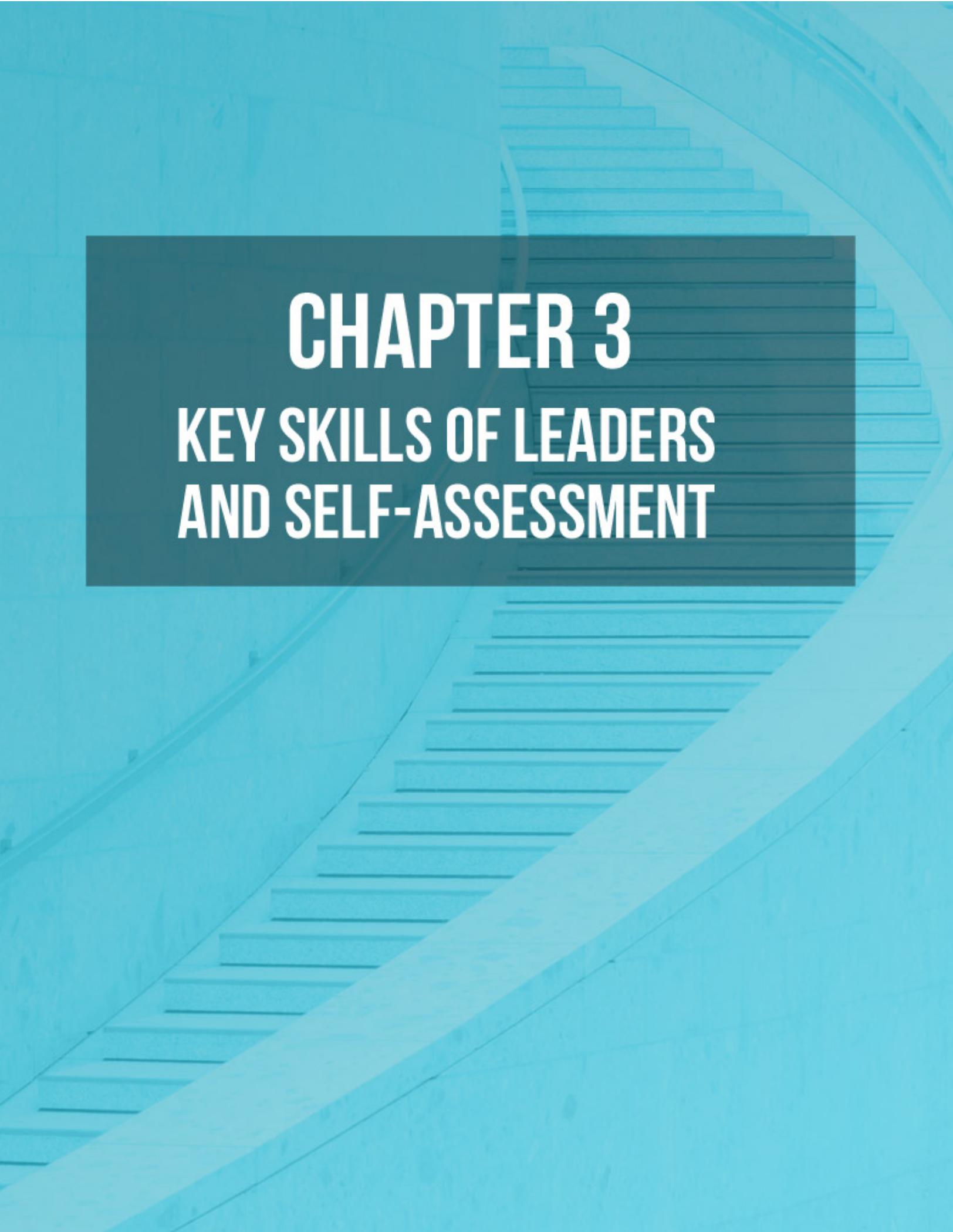
The good news is that leadership can be learned, and we hope to help you with this book. The other aspect of great leadership is their ability to be involved and engaged. All the work that you will be doing with this book will allow you to experience, first hand, what it is that you need to develop your leadership skills. Be

mindful of that experience, and do not hesitate to use that knowledge and experience in coaching others.

A study completed with 300,000 business leaders revealed the following top abilities:

- Strategic thinking
- Inspiring and motivating
- Critical thinking, analyzing and problem-solving abilities
- Demonstrating transparency, integrity, and honesty
- Developing others
- Driving results
- Communicating in a powerful and effective way
- Building relationships
- Displaying technical or professional expertise
- Creating and innovating

All these skills can be developed and utilized in various areas of your life. In the next chapter, we will explore the following subjects a bit deeper and also provide you with a leadership skill self-assessment.



CHAPTER 3

KEY SKILLS OF LEADERS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 3: KEY SKILLS OF LEADERS AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

There is no exact definition of what a leader does. A leadership style is influenced by his or her personality and the challenges they face. If you search for the word leadership on Google, you will soon find out that there are many styles of leadership. However, there are certain qualities that all good leaders share.

They are:

- Responsibility
- Awareness
- Confidence
- Decisiveness
- Empathy
- Focus
- Honesty
- Inspiration
- Optimism

Leadership plays a number of functions to ensure the smooth functioning of an organization. As you have seen in the previous chapter, the following skills are critical:

Strategic Thinking

One of the skills sought and expected of leaders in organizations is undoubtedly the ability to think, plan, and act strategically. This skill allows us to identify opportunities that will bring value to the

company; it also allows us to challenge the status quo and the premises on which the company is based to face current and future challenges. The absence of this competency will lead people to comply, to apply past solutions to future problems, to fail to identify threats as well as opportunities early on.

Inspiring and Motivating

An inspirational leader helps you bring out the best in yourself. A motivating leader pushes others' to do more and brings out the best in others. People who work for an inspiring leader are enthusiastic, encouraged, energized, motivated, and engaged. They believe that what they do is essential and that they are making a difference.

Critical Thinking, Analyzing and Problem-Solving Abilities

Too often, we focus on the symptoms rather than the cause. When a leader is faced with a problem, he utilizes critical thinking and analyzes the problem finding solutions. A leader will identify the real issues underlying the symptoms by asking the right questions. Instead of stating the obvious (or the problem), the leader will provide ideas for solutions.

Demonstrating Transparency, Integrity, and Honesty

To be successful in life, you have to be very honest because dishonesty always catches up with us. It is impossible to succeed

without developing a solid reputation for honesty and integrity. Interpersonal relationships are based on trust, and you cannot trust someone dishonest. As a leader, integrity is a crucial success factor, and the most critical persuasive tool a leader has. Honesty is the basis on which all other aspects are based. The leader is a model of integrity for others, and it's about being a role model to inspire others to behave similarly.

Developing Others

Great leaders are not afraid to recognize the skills of others and also support others in their development. A great leader realizes that it is essential to create an environment where exchange and knowledge transfer is a given. He truly believes that everybody has the opportunity to learn and grow.

Learning, Creating and Innovating

Not only are leaders supportive of others' learning, but they also thrive in learning new things. They love creating and innovating in their area of expertise. They are not afraid to say they don't know and learn about it. Leaders embrace changes as an opportunity to grow.

Driving Results

Leaders know how to drive results because their goal is clear, and they know how it relates to others. That is why they drive results because they know how to engage others in actions that will lead them to success. They understand how people are involved in the

goal and find ways to spark that passion in others to move forward.

Communicating in a Powerful and Effective Way

It is one thing to know where you are going; it is another to be able to communicate it in a clear way that others understand you. A leader's communication is clear, open, and in alignment with their actions. The biggest communication tool a leader has is his behavior. What you see is what you get.

Building Relationships

It is believed that most leaders who are in a leadership role have acquired that role because of the relationship they have built. You are probably familiar with the following expression: "It is not what you know, but who you know." Knowing how to build relationships is vital if you want to be a strong leader. Not many people will follow a person they cannot relate to.

Displaying Technical or Professional Expertise

People look up to people who know things and can demonstrate skills and knowledge in their field. The same applies to leaders. You can be a leader in your area if you are good at it. Others will look up to you for help when they struggle or advice to succeed like you.

Since leadership is not a natural skill for most of us, it becomes essential to be aware of where we lack and what we need to improve on. The following assessment will help you have an idea of your leadership skills and how much work you need to dedicate to your development.

Here are 15 questions that will help you define your leadership abilities.

1. Can you identify your three main strengths?
2. Can you identify your three main areas of concern?
3. Do your actions reflect your words and values?
4. Do you listen carefully to the ideas of those who disagree with you?
5. Are you bold enough to ask for feedback on your behaviors and use the information you gather as a tool to get to know yourself better?
6. When others do something wrong, do you take the time to help them see what they need to change and how they can solve problems?
7. Do you have the ability to assess the state of your environment and shape it to be better?
8. Do you have the ability to communicate a vision or goal?
9. Do you have the ability to mobilize people?

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10. Do you have a propensity to encourage rather than criticize?
11. Do you have the ability to take risks?
12. Do you have a sense of innovation and creativity?
13. Do you have the ability to make decisions quickly?
14. Are you inspiring and admired by your employees?
15. Do you recognize your mistakes rather easily?

The number of “no” answers provide an indication of the various behaviors you could develop or reinforce to reach your ultimate potential as a leader. This book will help you do exactly that.

CHAPTER 4

LEADING WITHOUT THE TITLE



CHAPTER 4: LEADING WITHOUT THE TITLE

To become a great leader, you have to be a leader of your life. That is why you do not need a title to be a successful leader. Before exploring this chapter any further, make a list of areas of your life where you are a leader, it could be as a parent, as a teammate, as a teacher or any other role that requires a certain amount of leadership.

I am a leader in the following areas of my life:

To be a leader means someone who is leading others, who holds a position of authority, or a responsibility. In summary, it is someone who has followers who look up to him or her. And yet, it is a particular fact that no one can, durably and with impact, guide others if he does not know how to conduct himself. Leading a group without a clear vision for oneself is a grave mistake that will lead you to inevitable failure.

Values

The starting point of personal leadership is your values; principles that you do not negotiate. They are an integral part of your being and even define you as a leader. These values are the foundation of your life.

Check all the values that are fundamental to you:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Courage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Kindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty | <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Career | <input type="checkbox"/> Balance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connection | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanity | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Patience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Success | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> Change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosperity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Wellness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritualism | <input type="checkbox"/> Gratitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity | <input type="checkbox"/> Strength | <input type="checkbox"/> Grace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finesse | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertain | <input type="checkbox"/> Endurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love | <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Openness | <input type="checkbox"/> Speed | <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness |

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| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Power | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Order | <input type="checkbox"/> Affection | <input type="checkbox"/> Fame |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joy/Play | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship/Relationship | <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement | <input type="checkbox"/> Trusting Your Gut |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work Smarter and Harder | <input type="checkbox"/> Pride in Your Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Giving People a Chance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity | <input type="checkbox"/> Patience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun-Loving | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goodness | <input type="checkbox"/> Charisma | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Abundance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Reciprocity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caring | <input type="checkbox"/> Be True | <input type="checkbox"/> Happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Contentment | <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony |

Or any other values not listed above:

These values shape your reality, therefore your vision of the present world, your view of an ideal world. These values allow you to define yourself, to define your personality, and to position yourself clearly in your private or professional environment.

These values are most often linked to intrinsic qualities, qualities that are specific to you, that do not require much effort to be manifested; these qualities will be the foundation of your success. Knowing your intrinsic qualities increases your self-esteem.

Leadership is about leading to a goal, and personal leadership is about guiding you to your life goal. Moving away from your life goals would mean failure, but moving closer to it makes you shine brightly and reach your maximum potential.

Once your values and your qualities are known, once you have discovered your life purpose, you can take action. It is a matter of identifying all the activities necessary to achieve your life purpose. They will be grouped into objectives, i.e., groups of events that are coherent with each other and contribute to the same intermediate goal.

The objectives are essential to achieve your vision, without clearly defined missions, the vision would be only a wish. Once the mission has been chosen, it will allow you to focus on the essential and maximize the benefit of each effort.

Indeed, in the face of the multiple and diverse demands of life and others, it is essential to have a guideline which is the list of your critical missions to remain focused and, therefore, more effective.

This efficiency will allow you, day after day, to take one more step towards your life goal (or goals). Personal leadership means that you are fully responsible for reaching your life goal(s).

CHAPTER 5

LEAD YOURSELF TO SUCCESS WITH THE GROW MODEL



CHAPTER 5: LEAD YOURSELF TO SUCCESS WITH THE GROW MODEL

The best people to lead others in success are coaches. They are trained to do precisely that. One of the tools they use that is very efficient is called the GROW model.

What Is The GROW Model?

The GROW model is a simple and powerful coaching tool developed in the '80s by Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore. It is a straightforward four-step tool that is exceptionally intuitive and simple to put in action.

It is possible to use the GROW model on a personal goal or with a professional objective. Whatever the subject, whatever the problem, the mere existence of a solution to be found or a choice to be made can justify the four phases of the GROW model because it allows you to draw on your resources.

The GROW model's name is simply an acronym of the four steps, which are Goal, Reality, Options, and Will. Let's walk you through the steps.

GOAL (G)

We are going to start by identifying your goal or your objective. This can be the objective itself or the expected result. Be clear, concrete, and always focus on the target.

Here are some of the questions you can answer.

- ⇒ What do you want to accomplish in life?
- ⇒ Is there anything more important than this accomplishment?
- ⇒ How will you know that you have reached that goal?
- ⇒ How does life look like when you have accomplished that goal?

The goal should be specific enough to give you a direction. The objective can evolve during the various steps of the GROW model, but it should not be major unless it is an important lesson to learn.

REALITY (R)

In the reality phase, you will be describing the current situation and how is the current situation limiting you or empowering you to reach your goal. List the weaknesses and strengths you have for achieving this objective.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself in this phase:

- ⇒ How do I feel in regards to accomplishing my goal?
- ⇒ What are the barriers to my goal?
- ⇒ What are the values that are the most important right now?
- ⇒ What resources do I have to help me with my goal?
- ⇒ Am I resisting something in regards to my goal?
- ⇒ What limiting belief do I have in reaching my goal?
- ⇒ On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not at all, 10 being absolutely), how committed are you to that goal right now?

This phase will help you understand the situation and what led to it. It is useful to approach the situation from a cognitive, but especially emotional, perspective. This step uncovers the interferences (beliefs, objections, etc.) that oppose the achievement of the objective.

OPTIONS (O)

This step is essential. It is crucial to consider all options, including the most far-fetched ones. It is to know how to get out of standard solutions, being creative, innovating. Considering everything also makes it possible to rationally eliminate “halo,” those inappropriate solutions that haunt us (ex: the magic pill that will lead you to weight loss).

Here are some questions you can ask yourself in this phase:

- ⇒ How can you be more committed to your goal?
- ⇒ How can you lift the barriers that limit you from reaching your goal?
- ⇒ If you had a magic wand, what option would you choose to realize your objective?
- ⇒ If you had more time, what would you do?
- ⇒ What if you could start all over, what would you do differently?
- ⇒ List all the possible actions to help you reach your goal.

This phase allows you to think of new opportunities to achieve your goal; What has not yet been done and which could contribute significantly to the achievement of the objective. It will help you support the implementation of behaviors, improvement of a process, and modification of the time frame. It could even help with adopting a different position of perception. Brainstorm all the ideas that come to mind without judging them or limiting yourself. This phase is the time to dream.

WILL (W)

The last phase is about commitment and actions. It is the phase where you decide what you will do.

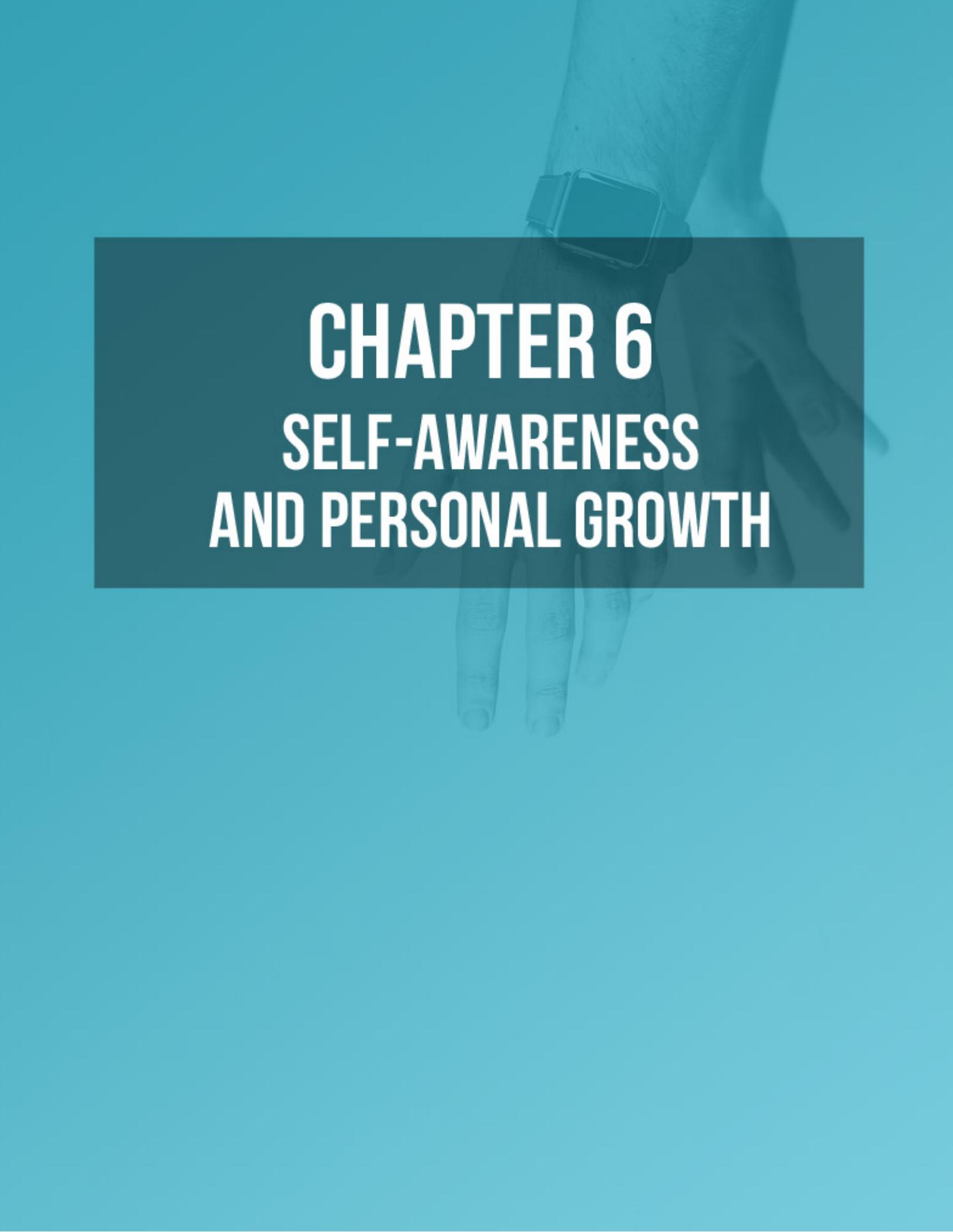
Here are some questions you can ask yourself in this phase:

- ⇒ Which option is your best and most actionable? What is the first step or action? When is your start date? What else needs to happen?
- ⇒ On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not at all, 10 being absolutely), how committed are you to that first step now? And how can you increase your score to be closer to 10?
- ⇒ How will you hold yourself accountable for that first step?
- ⇒ How will you know that you have completed the first step?
- ⇒ How will you celebrate your accomplishment of that first step?

The steps that will be made among the different options will involve a strong commitment to action that can produce change. This action may consist of doing nothing, changing a way of doing something, or a way to stop doing something. The important thing is to check the congruence of the commitment to action.

Once you have completed a cycle, go back to the option phase, and see if you can accomplish another action, repeat it until you reach your goal.

As you can see, the GROW model is adaptable and straightforward. It can take hours or the time of a coffee break. It is a perfect tool for taking a step back, and its regular use becomes quickly instinctive. In private life, the framework of the model allows you to assume your choices and often to identify them faster and more relevant.

A person's hand is shown from the wrist down, wearing a dark smartwatch. The hand is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame. A dark teal rectangular overlay is centered on the page, containing white text. The background is a solid light teal color.

CHAPTER 6

SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

CHAPTER 6: SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH

The GROW model allows you to be aware of your goals, but there is another type of awareness that is critical in leadership: Self-awareness.

Self-awareness also means developing the ability to know oneself as a leader. Learning to spot what is going on inside us when we are stressed and under pressure, when we are on the autopilot or when our mental chatter takes up all the space and cuts us off from the direct experience of the present moment and the possibilities of being proactive.

We now know very well how harmful chronic stress is to both physical and psychological health. It might not be well known, but the stress we carry overwhelms those around us. In the workplace, this information is of prime importance because it has a direct effect on the quality of leadership.

Our brain is designed for survival, and it continually scans our environment for potential threats. Thus, any perceived threat (real or relative stress) then triggers the secretion of stress hormones. The body and mind are then in a state of alert. What happens

when a leader is stressed by too much pressure? The brain of people around the leader instinctively perceives it as a threat, and the leader then becomes a potential danger. Concretely, their ability to think, make good decisions, and be creative will be reduced to its simplest expression, or worse, may become inaccessible.

Mindfulness, therefore, teaches leaders to be proactive, to recognize the signs of stress as soon as they appear so that they can respond appropriately to keep them healthy and maintain team cohesion through mobilizing leadership. Self-awareness allows the leader to become aware of automatisms. The automatic pilot is the mental program that opens the door to behaviors that are deeply rooted over time, such as habits, prejudices, narrow perceptions, or ruminations.

These automatisms, which keep us within the framework of what we know and which we unconsciously reproduce despite ourselves, limit innovation, lead to the repetition of negative experiences and block the ability to change. Learning how to recognize them and how to flush them out is of primary importance for the leader.

Self-awareness allows us to recognize the mental chatter that leads us through a maze of thoughts and opinions rather than keeping in touch with direct experience. We mistakenly believe that what this inner discourse tells us must be accurate, but

experts in neurology tell us that it is more like a brain cleanse. Moreover, it cuts the leader off from all available relevant information obtained through active listening and authentic communication with others.

Cultivating self-awareness means developing the ability to observe yourself with patience and benevolence to get to know yourself and recognize your ways of functioning as a leader to transform them. It is the fundamental foundation on which other skills and qualities can be built to ensure the well-being of yourself and those around you.

Mindfulness meditation is the training of the mind. It is the gym of the brain that invariably brings us back into the present moment away from unconscious programs to develop self-awareness. This transformation is possible because our brain can transform and reshape itself as a result of daily training. Building on this capacity means encouraging the adoption of new leadership skills that are better adapted to the mobilization of teams and the human management of resources.

In chapter 9, you will learn techniques that allow you to become more self-aware, but first, let's take a look at how you can be an inspiring agent of change.

CHAPTER 7

BE AN INSPIRING AGENT OF CHANGE



CHAPTER 7: BE AN INSPIRING AGENT OF CHANGE

Being an agent of change is not a natural role, especially when you have to go against the grain of the culture or the established behaviors and comfort zones of the people around you. However, it is something that does not scare leaders.

Changes, as a whole, comes with a lot of resistance, but only patience will overcome it. As a leader, you have to learn to embrace change and see it with the mindset of growth instead of a threat.

Humans are rarely open to changing their lifestyle or habits since their comfort zone has been carefully established. In other words, during the years, they have been with their family, their spouse, their colleague, and their friends, they have adapted their behavior to the needs of the moment.

No matter if the change you want to make is at work, at home, or in your social life, it will likely impact others.

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To be an inspiring change agent, you must support and show compassion toward others. Nothing is accepted radically or by forcing the transition. Keeping an open communication with the people who are impacted by the change is critical. Regularly inform people before, during, and after the change. Reassure the people involved by allowing them to contribute to the change.

In time of change, the principle is simple: lead by example. As an agent of change, you must become what you want others to become. You need to set an example, and you are one. Every word you say, every behavior you are responsible for, will have an impact on the community as a whole.

Change is something we experience every day in our daily lives. Even if we believe in a routine, our lives are continually changing. Change has allowed us to reinvent our lives and our living environment since the dawn of time.

CHAPTER 8

BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP



CHAPTER 8: BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP

“With great power comes great responsibility” ...and significant barriers. It is essential to be aware that leadership is not an easy skill to acquire. There are many barriers that you may come across during your development as a leader.

Here are a few to help you be aware of them.

Being Open to Feedback

Even when we feel that criticism is unfair and subjective, it is best to open up and learn from it. Here are three ways for responding to feedback proposed by the Harvard Business Review:

Don't react immediately: Feedback should not be dismissed when given. By being calm and respectful, you allow the space for the feedback to be heard. Most people who provide feedback has a good intention, the intention being to improve something. You might not agree with the opinion, but it might trigger a good thinking process.

Understand the feedback: Since the objective of constructive feedback is to improve. It is essential to understand what we are being asked to correct. Make the other person feel heard by asking questions to clarify their point and bring some insight into the reason behind the feedback. You can use an old trick by therapists, which is to rephrase what you have heard to make sure it is understood clearly.

Don't let it get to you: It might come across as you are the problem, or the problem is directly connected to one of your behavior. If that is the case, don't let personal criticism get to you and your confidence. Use the information to help you grow and let go of what you cannot control (such as people's opinion of you).

Moving Into Action

Many will get stuck in the planning mode, implementing a change or an action is harder than it looks. Do not get stuck in the planning and make sure that you take small steps or actions, every day, toward your goal. Another aspect that will stop you from moving into action is getting stuck in the busy pace of life. Not having time is an excuse for not taking action; the reason is that you did not make your goal a priority.

Accepting Responsibility for Mistakes

Leadership comes at a price, the spotlight is often on you, and if you do not accept the responsibility of your mistakes, people will notice it. If you want to be a great leader, you need to be a role model and show others that it is OK to make mistakes. Mistakes do not define who you are; they define who you were and allow you to grow and become a better version of yourself.

Facing Disagreement

Learn to embrace conflict and disagreement in a way that you do not take it personally. Leaders thrive in conflict because they know that any conflict will bring growth and improvement. Conflict resolution might be one of the most challenging aspects of relationships, but when you learn to be comfortable with them, you do not run away when they happen.

Confidence When Facing Failure

Failures are imminent when you are trying something new or trying to change. It might be a big or a small failure. As a leader, you need to see failure as an opportunity to learn why it did not work and what needs to change. As Thomas A. Edison sophisticatedly said: “I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

Maintaining Focus

As a leader, it is often very easy to be distracted. You need to figure out ways to stay on track to your goal and reduce all the distractions that stir you away from your accomplishment.

Because you will be known to be a problem solver, you will be consistently interrupted by others to help them with their problem. Find ways to empower others to be leaders in their life and remove some of the tasks you do for them.

Humility Versus Success

When you become popular or successful as a leader, humility can quickly disappear from your qualities. While humility is essential in great leaders, you can make sure that you do not lose it by always being aware of others and their contribution. Be a collaborative member of society and remain in integrity with who you are and where you are going.

Learn When to Step Aside

Leaders may often be seen as being in front of the pack, but like Simon Sinek's latest book title, "Leaders eat last." That is a lesson we can learn from great military leaders. Allowing others to lead the group, or the goal, is good and mostly very motivating to the group. Be aware that you do not always have to come up with solutions or ideas; allow the space to get help from others.

CHOOSE TO LEAD

Now that we have talked about the barriers to leadership let's explore the blueprint that will lead you to become a successful leader for all aspects of your life.

CHAPTER 9

**BLUEPRINT TO DEVELOP
YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

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In this chapter, we list ways that you can develop your leadership skills through two fundamental abilities, which are mindfulness and courage.

Practice mindfulness

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is: “Being able to pay direct and open attention to what one is doing at the moment one is doing it, in a non-judgmental conscious way.” Mindfulness is also an invitation to get out of the autopilot responses, reactions, and habits that push us towards movements of impatience, lack of listening, or even indifference towards others.

A leader is not a perfect or heroic being, but by the charisma and self-confidence, he exudes one wants to be like him. The qualities of a good leader are recognized in his vision of the future and his pursuit of excellence. Credible and with integrity while possessing deep respect for others, he has developed his emotional intelligence and knows how to demonstrate flexibility and open-mindedness. You can feel all the authenticity in him. Mindfulness brings additional skills that act as a catalyst for the leader and allow him to easily bring people in a collaborative mode while stimulating their creativity.

Inspired by Ellen Choi and Michael Rouse, here are four characteristics that distinguish Mindfulness Leaders and allow them to have an impact on the effectiveness of their teams:

- ⇒ ***Their vigilance and attention:*** Contrary to the belief that persists, full presence does not make you nonchalant or amorphous. On the contrary, it allows you to develop a quality of alertness and an unparalleled capacity for focus. While having a precise vision of the objectives to be achieved, open attention in the present moment allows one to seize opportunities as they arise, and to adjust the focus when necessary.
- ⇒ ***Self-awareness:*** Self-awareness allows the leader to develop an awareness of his physical, mental, and emotional state. He learns to recognize what is going on inside him.
- ⇒ ***Self-regulation:*** Self-regulation provides control to achieve one's goals. By developing the ability to keep focus and attention in a particular direction for a specific period of time, productivity and performance are increased while reducing mental fatigue and the risk of errors.
- ⇒ ***Transcendence of self to understand the other:*** Self-transcendence is the ability to consider the needs of others and to choose the course of action that reflects the best interests of a larger group of people. This ability to make appropriate and informed choices is essential to ensure the sustainability of the business, and it promotes positive and satisfying relationships with the team and the organization.

Here are two activities that will help you practice mindfulness and become a better leader.

Exercise 1: Breathing Consciously

Regularly during the day, take short breaks between tasks, and take a few seconds just to breathe. You stop everything you are doing 30, 20, or even 5 seconds and concentrate only on your breathing.

When you practice mindfulness breathing, you forget what you were doing, what you are going to do next, and you focus only on your breath. You are just observing the air come in and watching the air go out. You feel your belly inflation with air and then deflation. You visualize the path of the air when you inhale and when you exhale. And as soon as you become aware that you are giving energy to a thought, then smile and slowly return to your breathing. Try it now.

Stop reading and take a few conscious breaths. Or just one. Stop what you were doing and take a deep breath in and out. Put all your attention on it, not only your lungs breathing, but your whole body. Every cell in your body stops and enjoys that breath.

Practice this exercise many in your day, and you will soon realize that you are more mindful of your breath throughout the day.

Exercise 2: Walking with awareness

During a walk, a stroll, or even at home, you can also practice mindfulness by walking. Be fully present during your walk. It does not matter where you go. It does not matter where you come from, either. Observe every step and how they feel.

Every step is a destination in itself. With each step, you can try to feel the sensation of your foot touching the ground. First, you will feel the heel touching the ground, then the rest of the foot. You can also slow down your walk a little to be present with each step. Try to act as if you were hugging the ground with each step. Be as gentle as possible with every step on the ground.

Everything can become an exercise in mindfulness. Every action of daily life can be transformed into mindfulness meditation if it is lived fully. Every task in everyday life can be mindfulness training: whether it is gardening, washing dishes, or driving a car.

Whatever the situation is, it is simply a matter of being more present to what we are doing and devoting our full attention to it. Living life with a clear conscience is simply living life, and it will help you become a great leader and, mostly, an inspiring leader.

Practice Courage

We all need a strong leader who knows how to make difficult decisions, who knows how to protect others and stay the course in difficult times.

A good leader does not give up at the first difficulty encountered: he accepts failures as tests and knows that the path to the goal is not a long, calm river. In the face of adversity, the leader must sharpen up, show even more determination to reach the goal, and must have learned from his mistakes.

You know it as well as I do: before committing ourselves behind someone, we always wait to see their courage, their determination, their perseverance. A group of people will be much more willing to show courage if their leader sets an example. But how does one become courageous? Here are

Step 1: Admit That You Are Afraid

Being brave does not mean that you are not afraid; it means you can move forward no matter how scared you are. If you try to push your emotions away, they will only get stronger. You have to recognize that fear is present. Identify your fears, consciously. You do not have to tell anyone else, just yourself.

Step 2: Accept Your Fear

Your emotions are normal and neutral. It is the feeling that we are attached to the emotion that becomes good or bad. You will not help yourself by judging yourself on this emotion, and you will not become braver. It can be helpful to read stories of people who have faced their fears. It can help you understand that you are not alone in your fear and help you to accept that fear more quickly.

Step 3: Observe Your Fears

Take the role of the observer and observe your emotion. We are afraid when we perceive a situation as being wrong. Some fears are legitimate, but others are very irrational. Observe your fear and decide if it is logical or something you can move forward with.

Step 4: Be Vulnerable

Accept everything as a risk. Try not to see things in terms of failures or successes, but as experiences that you can learn from. Uncertainty is the source of many fears. You can learn to tolerate risk by working it out little by little in your daily life.

Step 5: Surrender

Certain things in life cannot be controlled, such as the future. There is no way that you could know the future with certainty. Let go of the need to control the outcome and simply live in the present moment. Remember that you cannot control the outcome of a situation. You can only control what you do. Instead, focus on your actions, not the results.

Step 6: Find an Inspiration

Find a role model, and it could be someone you know or a famous leader. If they are close to you, or accessible, ask them how they faced their fears. Try to copy the behavior of someone who has faced adversity. And do not forget, you can always ask for help. Others can be a great source of courage when they hold our hands during something scary.

Step 7: Be Resilient

Resilience is the ability to face adversity, and, in some ways, it is a form of courage. Courage requires resistance in the face of a frightening or painful situation. Work on your ability not to become a victim and to find new ways to approach a problem or situation. You need to deal with it. Courageous people look at the situation and identify a way to approach it, rather than trying to ignore the problem. Things are not always going to be easy or

straightforward. Resilient people understand this and get up after they fall.

Step 8: Nothing Is Perfect.

It is often believed that perfectionism is the same as ambition. In reality, the desire for perfection is responsible for fear paralysis. We may be paralyzed by fear and stop all efforts to accomplish our goals. This prevents us from experiencing loss or failure, which is not possible in life. The quest for perfection can make you so hard on yourself. Focus on the process rather than the outcome.

Step 9: Try Something Difficult

You might feel more confident in achieving something you found insurmountable. Think of this challenge as an opportunity to learn and remember that you can take the time you want to learn. Find ways to set goals and challenge yourself. Courage is not always visible. Sometimes having courage just means standing up and trying again.

Step 10: Train Yourself to Be Conscious

Practice conscious, non-judgmental acceptance techniques (like the one above) to help you accept negative and positive emotions. Mindfulness meditation is an excellent way to examine your fears and give you more courage.

Step 11: Create a Plan

It is easy to get scared when you do not know what to do. Consider the possible obstacles that could stand in your way. Think about all the obstacles you might face and create a plan of action. All of a sudden, your fear of the unknown will be irrelevant since you have a plan and know how it will move forward.

In the next chapter, we will explore what can lead you from being a good leader to a great one!

CHAPTER 10

BEING A GOOD LEADER TO BECOMING A GREAT LEADER



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There are a few qualities that will make you move from a good leader to a great leader. The essential qualities are the following:

- ***Self-confidence:*** Developing your self-confidence is essential to be able to give confidence to others and communicate your vision and ideas effectively.
- ***Vision:*** Not only do leaders have a goal, but they also have a vision where many goals can take place in the long term.
- ***Open-mindedness:*** Be open to learning; no one holds the truth. Knowing how to question oneself and remaining curious about any new opportunity or possibility is essential to make a dream come true. The leader knows that alone, he cannot achieve much. Unity, and therefore collective intelligence, is strength.
- ***Exemplarity:*** This is a fundamental principle. To be listened to and followed, one must set an example and apply oneself to what one preaches.
- ***Consistency is one's values and convictions:*** A great leader will not be able to convince himself if he is not genuinely in agreement with the project and the ideas he defends.

- ***Multidisciplinary intelligence:*** A good leader instinctively senses what his collaborators are capable of, but also their personality and way of working. With this in mind, he can orchestrate his world and lead it to the best possible success for everyone.
- ***Empathy:*** An integral part of a developed emotional intelligence that enables the leader to get the best out of each person by allowing them to develop fully.
- ***Freedom:*** Independence of thoughts and action is intimately correlated with self-confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- ***Responsibility:*** Linked to the previous point, the leader, free in his choices, must take responsibility for his decisions, risk-taking, and mistakes.

In addition to the qualities detailed below, a great leader must know:

- ***Take the initiative:*** This is often where the great leader is admired and respected because he is determined, confident, and daring.
- ***Defend and impose his ideas gently and respectfully:*** What is the point of having good ideas if one is not able to present them in a respectful and courteous nonviolent way? Knowing how to convince is, consequently, a significant asset.

- ***Communicate effectively:*** An essential skill to get your ideas across and to win the support of your troops. Feedback is an integral part of this, as it allows the leader to remain attentive to his collaborators, to hear new possibilities and opportunities, etc.
- ***Recognize the talents of others:*** One of the pillars of leadership, which consists of identifying, developing, and orchestrating individual and collective skills to lead everyone to success.
- ***Invite change and innovation:*** Disruption and innovation are two dominant notions in leadership. They allow you to continually question your ideas, your work, and the entire group to reach the heights you dream of.
- ***Motivate and recognize others:*** A great leader must also manage his troops, and play on motivation and meaning at work, to maintain his position as an ongoing leader.

CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

As you have seen in this book, leadership is a state of mind and not a position in an organization. Therefore, being a leader is, above all, a state of mind. It is the ability to put into action their ambitions and objectives while staying the course and leading others to a common goal.

It also means having courage. Mastering one's strengths and weaknesses to make them pillars of your daily actions and to inspire others. Accept yourself and accept all life challenges around you. By doing so, you will realize that in so many ways, you are already a leader in your life.

Be mindful that leadership is not a skill that we develop overnight, it takes time and effort, and it is, in many ways, the constant development of skills. As a leader, there will always be a moment of doubt or a complex problem that you cannot figure out. That is why it is so essential to build a support group around you. Find people that are there to support you when you need them and vice-versa.

Great leaders are always surrounded by amazing people who do not hesitate to step forward and lead the leader in a difficult time.

CHOOSE TO LEAD

Continue being open to learning new things, explore the world around you, and be humble; you will see that others will respect you for it. And most of all, be yourself. Integrity and authenticity are always admired in leaders that are not afraid to be themselves and embrace who they truly are, flaws and all.