

CHAPTER ONE

Everyone Is a Leader

Tuesday, September 11, 2001, dawned as a surprisingly cool and cloudless late summer morning in the northeastern United States. It would soon become memorable for all the wrong reasons. Between 8:46 and 9:03 a.m. Eastern time, hijackers flew two large commercial airliners into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan, New York City. The towers quickly caught fire. By 10:28 a.m., both towers, each more than 100 stories high, had collapsed. Meanwhile, at 9:37 a.m., a third hijacked plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, igniting an explosive fire. Within an hour, five stories of the Pentagon had collapsed. A fourth hijacked airline, United Flight 93, was rerouted toward Washington, DC. It never reached its target, likely the White House or the United States Capitol, thanks to heroic resistance by passengers who had learned through cell phone communication with loved ones of the previous attacks. Flight 93's hijackers decided to down the aircraft before passengers could breach the cockpit, and at 10:03 a.m., the plane crashed in rural western Pennsylvania.

All told, nearly 3,000 people died that day, and more than 6,000 others were injured. These coordinated attacks remain the deadliest terrorist operation in world history.

Osama bin Laden, who founded the radical Islamic organization al-Qaeda in 1988, was the mastermind of the September 11, 2001

attacks. Bin Laden was an unusually charismatic figure, obviously capable of influencing his followers to sacrifice their own lives to destabilize Western civilization. Under bin Laden's leadership, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were brilliantly conceived and diabolically successful.

Fortunately, bin Laden had competitors in the global leadership space, leaders committed to positive change based on universal principles and positive values. These leaders answered an urgent call to arms in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. One such leader, Ken Chenault, was well known to coauthors Doug and Chuck, then senior leaders at American Express Financial Advisors (AEFA). Ken Chenault, a 20-year veteran of American Express, had become CEO and chairman only 10 months earlier. Suddenly, Ken faced a leadership crisis of monumental proportions. At the time of the attack, American Express was headquartered at the World Financial Center, just across the street from the twin towers of the World Trade Center. The World Financial Center building sustained massive collateral damage from the attack and had to be evacuated. Tragically, the company also lost 11 employees who had worked in the American Express Corporate Travel office on the 94th floor of the World Trade Center's North Tower.

Ken immediately understood the impact of the terrorist attack on the American Express workforce. Ken's gift for empathy meant that he knew personally and deeply how the American Express community would respond to the attack, no more so than when he met with the families of the employees who lost their lives on that dark September day.

On September 20, 2001, only nine days after the attacks, Ken held a town hall meeting at Madison Square Garden for all New York City metropolitan area employees. Coauthor Doug, at the time one of Ken's senior advisors, recalls his conversation with Ken on the day following the attacks:

Ken and I were on the phone discussing the emotional impact the terrorist attack had and would have on the workforce. The American Express headquarters workforce would be displaced for at least several months across a three-state area: New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Ken knew it would be challenging to keep the American Express community together. So, he began by scheduling a meeting for all employees in the Northeast United States to be held at Madison Square Garden.

On the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Ken shared with us his thoughts at the time about preparing for the Madison Square Garden meeting:

The first thing that came to my mind was this quote from Napoleon, "The role of the leader is to define reality and give hope." I knew that's what I had to do, especially under those terrible circumstances. Second, I realized the need to demonstrate genuine compassion. Everyone's emotions were pretty raw, as were mine. Third, I felt it was important to be very authentic and personal, and to share my vulnerability without losing track of my strength. Finally, I wanted to speak from the heart.

According to the American Express employees who filled the seats of Madison Square Garden that day, Ken accomplished what he set out to communicate. He was authentic and compassionate. He supported the employees dealing with the trauma of their escape from the World Financial Center and the lower Manhattan area on September 11. He expressed his shared grief over the deaths of their colleagues. And he acknowledged the disorientation they would all face in the coming months. But Ken also voiced confidence in employees' ability to unite as a community to weather the difficult times ahead. As Ken recalls saying, "Our company is strong, but our hearts are stronger, and over time, our minds will get clearer. We will overcome."

In the weeks and months following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, Ken unfailingly aligned his leadership actions with the compelling messages he had conveyed at Madison Square Garden. Fortunately for the American Express team, Ken's leadership positively influenced the company's employees well beyond those who had been eyewitnesses to the New York City tragedy. For example, coauthor Chuck was at the time group vice president for the Southeast Michigan and Northern Ohio region of American Express Financial Advisors. Chuck recalls Ken's leadership in the days following 9/11 in this way:

During the 16 years I had worked for American Express, I had great pride in the brand. I was proud of our company's reputation for helping people when in trouble, especially while traveling. When September 11th struck, it was personal to us, not just in New York, where the trauma of the attacks was most acute, but also in Detroit, my region's headquarters, and everywhere American Express employees were stationed across the

globe. Ken's response to the September 11 attacks was inspiring but not surprising. Ken embodied the kind of leadership I expected from our company. Ken carried the baton forward in the difficult months that followed September 11, 2001. Ken's reach extended well beyond the fabled Madison Square Garden meeting. He was a great leader who inspired my colleagues and me to be the best leaders we could be during a time of enormous crisis. Ken made us believe that, even in this unprecedented time, it was our opportunity to shine and not shrink from the situation. We paid attention to how Ken dealt with things and did our best to emulate his leadership in supporting our people.

Though Ken needed to make tough decisions to deal with the financial downturn post-9/11, ultimately including layoffs, he succeeded in his mission to accurately define reality and give hope to the expansive American Express community. He communicated often, holding frequent town hall meetings with employees across the globe so they always knew what to expect going forward. Ken encouraged employees to develop innovative products and services that would excite customers and help offset losses in struggling post-9/11 business lines. Because Ken demonstrated such compassion and respect for employees, even people laid off told him how much they appreciated how compassionately he had connected with them throughout the crisis.

What explains the remarkable leadership Ken Chenault demonstrated in the wake of 9/11? Ken had a high degree of *leadership intelligence*—*the capacity to positively influence and engage the best efforts of others*.

More than 20 years after 9/11, the entire global community suffers increasing threats to human happiness and security, including a European war, nuclear saber rattling, terrorism, a persistent pandemic, an endangered climate, anti-democratic movements, racial injustice, and economic disruption. Sadly, there is a worldwide shortage of leaders with the leadership intelligence to help us overcome these crises.

Consider, for example, the impact of inadequate leadership on the response to the coronavirus pandemic that exploded in early 2020. At that time, the World Health Organization (WHO) commissioned an independent panel of experts to analyze the causes of the pandemic and make recommendations for preventing and mitigating future pandemics. One media outlet reported on the panel's findings with this headline: *World leaders had the ability to avert the COVID-19 pandemic*

*but failed to do it, a scathing WHO-commissioned report said.*¹ Years from now, history books will tell the story of global heads of state who ignored their duty to protect the health of their fellow citizens.

Fortunately, there are heartening examples of political leadership, such as New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, widely credited for taking swift action to help New Zealand avoid the mass infections and deaths that devastated the United States and Europe at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. As Vox reported:

*Ardern responded swiftly, with an early lockdown that essentially eliminated the spread of the virus. She also spoke directly to New Zealanders with a warmth and empathy that's been lacking in other world leaders, helping to soothe New Zealanders' anxieties and getting them on board with coronavirus restrictions. To date [April 2021], New Zealand has reported fewer than 2,000 cases and 25 deaths due to COVID-19.*²

Arden's leadership during the pandemic also inspired in New Zealanders "a rare sentiment in the COVID-19 era: A deep sense of pride in the country's response,"³ according to Dr. Robert Borotkanics, a senior research fellow at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. By January 2022, with the highly infectious coronavirus omicron variants raging, Arden continued her leadership with stringent measures designed to protect life. New Zealand, with just over 5 million population, was determined to combat a weekly average of just 33 daily cases. Since the beginning of the pandemic, New Zealand had suffered a minimal death rate of 10 cases per million. Compare this to the United States death rate of 2,600 per million. There's no doubt that leaders' decisions accounted for many of the differences in the impact of the pandemic on different countries.

¹Marianne Guenot, "World leaders had the ability to avert the COVID-19 pandemic but failed to do it, a scathing WHO-commissioned report said," *Insider* (May 12, 2021), <https://www.businessinsider.com/leaders-could-have-stopped-covid-19-pandemic-but-failed-who-says-2021-5>.

²Anna North, "New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern wins historic reelection," *Vox* (October 17, 2020), <https://www.vox.com/2020/10/17/21520584/jacinda-ardern-new-zealand-prime-minister-reelection-covid-19>.

³Annalies Winny, "In New Zealand, A Response to be Proud of," *Global Health Now* (April 15, 2021), <https://globalhealthnow.org/2021-04/new-zealand-response-be-proud>.

It's a no-brainer that the world is fortunate to have star leaders such as Jacinda Ardern or Ken Chenault. But we can't sit back and hope that the leaders we need to help us survive and thrive will magically appear. Fortunately, we don't have to rely on a relatively small set of enlightened traditional leaders to improve the world. Outstanding leadership comes from unexpected places. It comes from us. We are the leaders we have been looking for! Creating a safer, happier, and healthier world is in our hands. You may think you're "not the leadership type." You may have no interest in being a leader, but like it or not, you *are* a leader.

You don't get to choose whether or not to be a leader.

You only get to choose what kind of leader you'll be.

For instance, look at the choices made by a COVID tester in India, one of the countries hardest hit during the coronavirus pandemic:

Shilpashree A.S. (Like many people in India, she uses initials referring to her hometown and her father's name as her last name.) dons PPE, including a protective gown, goggles, latex gloves, and a mask. Then, she steps inside a tiny booth with two holes for her arms to reach through to perform nasal swab tests on long lines of patients.

. . . To prevent the spread of the coronavirus, she is not allowed to have contact with her family. For the last five months she's only been able to visit with them on video calls. "I haven't yet seen my children or hugged them," she said. "It is like seeing a fruit from up-close but not eating it." Still, there is no other job she would rather be doing right now. "Even though this involves risk, I love this job. It brings me happiness," she said.⁴

The sacrifices Shilpashree made embody the essence of good leadership. Shilpashree is anything but a marquee leader. She was an ordinary person down in the trenches of the coronavirus battle. Shilpashree took on the dangers of a COVID-19 tester in her community in service of the common good. She could have isolated herself at home and tried to stay safe in the company of her husband and children. Instead,

⁴Bill Gates, "7 Unsung Heroes of the Pandemic," GatesNotes (September 8, 2020), <https://www.gatesnotes.com/Health/7-unsung-heroes-of-the-pandemic>.

she chose the route of influencing others in service of doing good. How many of us would make the sacrifices Shilpashree endured to make a positive difference in her pandemic-ravaged community?

Reading Shilpashree's story, you might think, "I could never do that." Maybe not, but each of us can make a difference as leaders in our own way. Leadership is not about having a certain title or performing a particular role. Leadership is about the power to influence others. Everyone is a leader because everyone influences others, through what they do and what they don't do. Take these examples of nontraditional leaders who have influenced others to have a positive impact on our world:

Albert Einstein. Einstein's famous scientific theories, such as his general theory of relativity, were created primarily between 1895 and 1904. Perhaps because they were so revolutionary at the time, people in the scientific community were reluctant to adopt them. Many of them thought Einstein was essentially a crackpot. Faced with such skepticism, Einstein could have retreated into a corner and licked his wounds. Here's where leadership intelligence comes into play: Einstein spent the rest of his life trying to influence people to accept his scientific findings. Today most people think of Einstein as a scientist, not a leader. But had he not used his leadership intelligence to advocate for his theory of relativity, his scientific discoveries might easily have been lost.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Justice Ginsburg is most famous as a long-serving member of the U.S. Supreme Court. However, her most enduring legacy may be her trailblazing work in advancing gender equality and women's rights, including winning multiple anti-gender discrimination cases before the Supreme Court early in her legal career. As with Einstein, we don't think of Justice Ginsburg as a leader in the traditional sense, but she is undeniably a role model when it comes to influencing positive change. Acknowledgment of her leadership influence included the \$1 million 2019 Berggruen Prize for Philosophy and Culture, which recognizes "thinkers whose ideas have profoundly shaped human self-understanding and advancement in a rapidly changing world." Late in 2020, Justice Ginsburg passed away after a life well-lived. In years to come, her leadership impact will only grow as she continues to influence others to pursue their passion for justice and equality of opportunity.

Bill Gates. Gates is the legendary cofounder of Microsoft Corporation, the world's largest software company. Gates is widely recognized for helping transform modern life through technology. Over the last 20 years, Gates has shifted his focus from business success to philanthropic leadership. Gates' reputation has been clouded by personal failures, prompting a divorce from his former wife, Melinda French Gates. Despite their marital challenges, Gates and his former wife Melinda continue co-chairing the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's largest private charitable foundation. Gates sold \$35.8 billion worth of Microsoft stock to fund the Gates Foundation. According to the *Economist*,

The Gates Foundation is central to the global alliance trying to eradicate polio by vaccinating everyone and to ease the burden of malaria and find a vaccine against it. It has been several years since he [Bill Gates] warned that a new disease causing a global pandemic was a matter of when, not if, and called for the world to hold "Germ Games" along the lines of the wargames carried out by armies.⁵

Since 2020, the Gates Foundation has allocated more than US\$2 billion to the global COVID-19 pandemic response.

These are famous examples of nontraditional leaders. But for every Albert Einstein, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, or Bill Gates, thousands of ordinary people are untapped resources for the kind of positive leadership that can change the world. The world needs you to be the best leader you can be. That's true whether you're a CEO or a soccer coach, a senator or a social worker. Leadership happens everywhere. And even small acts of leadership can make a positive difference.

You are a leader at work—even when you help a new teammate learn the ropes.

You are a leader in your family—even when your teenage kids roll their eyes at your parental wisdom.

You are a leader in your community—even when you send an email to officials about a dangerous traffic intersection.

⁵"The Covid-19 Pandemic Will Be Over By the End of 2021, Says Bill Gates," *The Economist*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/international/2020/08/18/the-covid-19-pandemic-will-be-over-by-the-end-of-2021-says-bill-gates>.

Right now, the world is calling you to “step it up”—to use your leadership intelligence to encourage others to join you in positively impacting your world, whether that world is your family, your community, your workplace, or the whole planet.

Take Denny Bavaria. Denny has stepped it up throughout his adult life, influencing others through his passion for basketball. Denny was born and raised in a tight-knit working-class community in northeastern Pennsylvania. His father was an expert slater and volunteer firefighter. His mother was a gifted tailor. Though Denny’s family lacked material wealth, they enjoyed the riches of a loving and deeply religious family. Denny’s mom and dad did everything they could to support their neighbors in times of trouble. His mom repaired clothes at no cost for neighbors during tough times. Each Friday night, his parents turned their garage into a social hall where neighbors stopped by for food, music, and laughter. Denny’s mom and dad were community leaders long before the term existed, and Denny never forgot what he learned growing up in a family culture of compassion and leadership.

Denny’s first formal leadership experience came when he served as captain of his high school basketball team for several years. After graduation and a brief stint at community college, Denny joined the United States Air Force, where he served worldwide before retiring as a highly decorated noncommissioned officer.

Denny, who had played and coached basketball wherever he served with the Air Force, parlayed his love of the sport into a series of rewarding coaching jobs in central Pennsylvania. Over the next decade, he coached high school basketball. He expanded opportunities for girls’ basketball. Denny also established the first Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, area youth basketball program, which included travel teams, expanding opportunities for high-potential players. Before long, Denny developed the reputation as “Mr. Basketball” for central Pennsylvania. Denny’s commitment to helping players grow was part of his life purpose. Denny always points out that he could never have accomplished all he did in making central Pennsylvania a basketball force to be reckoned with without his wife’s consistent support, although she had imagined a more leisurely retirement.

Despite Denny’s contributions to youth basketball, he knew he could do more. Denny was dissatisfied with the limited opportunities for girls to develop skills to play basketball at the college level.

With the support of community leaders, Denny established Capital AAU, central Pennsylvania's first AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) program for girls. At the time, the region had several AAU programs. However, none were exclusively girls' programs. What is more, most were primarily money-making ventures rather than programs designed to help kids with the potential to maximize their performance.

Denny already had too much on his plate and already was missing too many nights and weekends with Claire. Still, Denny agreed to stand up the new AAU girls' program under certain non-negotiable conditions. First, as leader and coach, he would refuse any compensation. Denny's insistence on working pro bono contrasted with other regional AAU programs that paid coaches' salaries. Second, Denny wanted to ensure that it would be affordable for kids to play. This contrasted with most area AAU programs that were expensive for players to join. Third, the program would only play tournaments that college coaches attended so that players could showcase their talents to the decision-makers who counted. That contrasted with other regional AAU programs that sent players to tournaments that would be easy wins for their players, thus giving players and their parents overly optimistic views of their potential to play at the college level. Finally, Denny vowed that Capital AAU would never mislead families about their kids' potential. He did not want players' parents to waste time and money participating in the AAU program if their girls had no realistic future as college players. This contrasted with other regional AAU programs that accepted any players with the financial resources to play, even if they lacked the talent to get to the next level.

Denny's leadership attracted many aspiring players to the program. During the 10 years that Denny led the Capital AAU, 50 girls achieved college basketball scholarships.

In 2013, the love of his life and chief cheerleader, Claire, died suddenly and unexpectedly from pancreatic cancer. In addition to staying involved in girls' basketball, Denny has taken on a new leadership challenge, organizing frequent fundraising events for the Lustgarten Foundation, the largest private funder of pancreatic cancer research worldwide.

Denny is only one of many inspiring leaders who answered the call to step it up to use their leadership intelligence to make a positive difference. For instance, coauthor Doug's older daughter, Mary Lennick,

is someone who stepped it up by dedicating her career to helping others. Mary, who has a master's degree in social work, is the executive director of Family Alternatives, an innovative family-based foster care program intended to overcome the limitations of the Minnesota state foster care system. Mary is a mindful leader of 13 staff members who provide enhanced training and support to 150 foster parents. When it comes to foster care, crises are the norm. Mary takes her responsibility as a crisis leader seriously. She understands exactly how much her behavior influences those she leads. For example, a while ago, one of Family Alternatives' foster parents was arrested for soliciting a minor and killed himself. Mary's staff was understandably traumatized by this event. In responding to that challenge, she saw her job as helping her people stay emotionally in the here and now so they could continue to be effective and help the kids affected by such a disturbing situation. In circumstances like these, Mary says, "I need to stay level-headed because leaders set the tone. My energy matters if I want to help people move through the mess."

In addition to leaders like Mary Lennick and Denny Bavaria who achieve formal leadership roles, volunteer leaders like Kristin Pradko step it up in service to a meaningful cause—in Kristin's case, gun violence prevention. In December 2012, when the public mourned the horrific Sandy Hook elementary school massacre, Kristin was three months pregnant with her second child. Kristin was profoundly affected by the tragedy, though it took several years for her to decide how best to respond. In the aftermath of Sandy Hook, the gun control advocacy organization "Moms Demand Action" was formed. By that time, Kristin had already resigned from her job as a kindergarten teacher in northern Virginia to become a full-time mom, which is a significant leadership position in its own right. In leaving her teaching career, Kristin made a critical decision about how she wanted to influence the trajectory of her family life.

As each of her children started school, Kristin felt increasingly uneasy. "I never felt safe sending my kids off to school," she worried. Finally, Kristin saw an opportunity to do something about her concern. In June 2016, the Pulse nightclub massacre in Orlando got her attention, even though Kristin was a busy mom and only a month away from giving birth to her third child, an adorable sister for her two growing boys. Not long after, Kristin noticed a mention on social media about

a meeting of the Alexandria, Virginia, chapter of *Moms Demand Action*. The invitation spoke to her fears about her kids' safety and her hopes for their future. *Moms Demand* was planning an annual event to bring attention to the cause of sensible gun control. Kristin signed up to help and before long was asked to join *Moms Demand's* local leadership team. As Kristin recalls, "Gun violence prevention has always called to me. Even with a full plate at home, I decided to get involved. *Moms Demand Action* was an easy organization to be involved in, and over time I've made so many friends, so I look forward to meetings."

Kristin relishes her opportunities to advocate for gun control legislation with members of Congress, noting that "Friendly legislators are delighted to talk with us." Kristin's experience underscores that stepping it up has many benefits beyond the opportunity to serve a worthy cause. She is burnishing key leadership skills that will help her when her kids are older, and she is ready to re-enter the job market. Meanwhile, her involvement in *Moms Demand Action* offers the social benefits of meaningful friendships along with the satisfaction of working to make her community a safer place for all.

Doug Bavaria, Mary Lennick, and Kristin Pradko are powerful role models who show how we can make a difference in our communities, whether in paid or volunteer leadership roles. That said, other ways, seemingly more internal than externally focused, allow us to influence others. Dana Marie Ferrell, CEO of Bellevue, Washington-based Servitium Wealth Management, focuses on changing her world through self-leadership. Dana has an enviable track record as a successful leader and respected member of her local business community. Not long ago, Dana had an epiphany. In her interactions with people, she had to admit that she often wasn't very nice. That bothered her, so she found a coach to help her learn to be more kind. Dana's coach helped her see that she wasn't just hard on other people; she was tough on herself. If she wanted to be consistently compassionate toward others, she'd have to be more compassionate with herself. To help her develop the habit of kindness, her coach asked her to send a daily text about something she did to be kind to someone and something she did to be kind to herself. For example:

Christmas Eve—I picked up poop in the dog area so someone else wouldn't have to.

I slept in and cuddled with my puppy.

Over time, the nature of her acts of kindness has become more profound and has stirred more self-reflection. For example,

I went to a conference. I smiled and was kind to people I previously had some resentment toward. I really feel like I let that go and just felt at peace.

I took a trip to Hawaii. I sat with a socially awkward gentleman who was alone on our tour. I engaged with him. He was slow to respond but then started talking. It was a good conversation and an essential human moment for me. I realized I shouldn't prejudge others. I can learn from all different kinds of people.

The more Dana practices acts of kindness toward others, the more she discovers that she is not just influencing others but improving her state of mind. She says, "Being kind is becoming a habit that makes me feel good. I get more by being kind and humble than in any other way. And that's the way I want to live." Dana's kindness practice also seems to have positively impacted her business. Her wealth management practice has been doing better than ever. Dana doesn't think that's a coincidence.

As Dana's experience demonstrates, the choices you make about what kind of leader you will be begins with the decisions you make about the type of person you want to be. Our friend and colleague Richard Leider, best-selling author and legendary personal and business coach, sees those choices as part of a process of discovering your purpose in life. Richard tells us that there are two aspects of purpose: The "Big P," your life purpose, that is, "what I'm meant to do and be while I'm here on earth," and the "little p," those countless things you do every day to fulfill your Big P. Big P and little p come together as a "cradle-to-grave, 24/7, moment-to-moment choice in our daily lives."

Though your Big P sets the overall direction of your life, it is all those little p's that define the direction of the influence you have as a leader. You can be an effective leader, that is, skilled in influencing others to act in certain ways. But unless your little p's support a worthwhile Big P, your effectiveness as a leader will be wasted, if not harmful.

So, take a few seconds right now to think about your Big P. Then ask yourself:

Is my purpose a self-centered one, or is the life I'm trying to live focused on having a positive impact on the world?

Are my daily actions and decisions aligned with a worthwhile purpose?

If you can answer yes to both questions, you are already doing an excellent job of stepping it up. And you are also demonstrating leadership intelligence. Like most of us, you know that you can always do better. Being a good person and someone with leadership intelligence is not a lifetime achievement award. It is something you need to work on actively every day. But many of us have an idealized view of our leadership impact. In numerous surveys, corporate employees rate their leaders as far less competent and engaging than leaders themselves do. For example, a 2022 survey by Deloitte found the following:

More than 8 out of 10 global executives believe their people feel “excellent” or “good” in their physical, mental, social and financial well-being, according to a February [2022] survey of 2,100 people from Deloitte and Workplace Intelligence. However, employees rate how well they're doing in each category much lower. In one big misalignment, though 81% of C-suite leaders think their employees are doing well with their finances, just 40% of employees actually feel that way.⁶

In another survey by Gallup, in 2016, employees indicated that 82 percent of managers are not very good at leading people. Gallup estimated that this lack of leadership capability costs U.S. corporations up to US\$550 *billion* annually.⁷ Though these two surveys come from the world of corporate leadership, their results would likely be similar for leaders in any area of life.

What's the solution? How can you eliminate the gap between the leader you are today and the one you aspire to be? Practice. Every day. Just as daily physical exercise maintains physical fitness and strengthens

⁶Jennifer Liu, “88% of Executives Think They've Made Excellent Leadership Decisions During Covid—Only 53% of Workers Agree,” *CNBC* (June 22, 2022), <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/22/executives-are-overestimating-how-well-theyre-supporting-employees.html>.

⁷Rasmus Hougaard, “The Real Crisis in Leadership,” *Forbes* (September 9, 2018), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rasmushougaard/2018/09/09/the-real-crisis-in-leadership>.

it, daily practice of certain leadership essentials will sustain and grow your leadership intelligence.

As authors, we have spent our lives in all sorts of leadership roles—in corporations, in education, as sports coaches, and in various community organizations. When we founded our company think2perform in 2002, we felt a strong sense of gratitude and responsibility to the many leaders who had influenced us over the years. We wanted to step it up by sharing what we had learned from them to help others. That is why the heart of think2perform is a team of people dedicated to helping leaders at all levels and in many different walks of life enhance their leadership intelligence. That's also why we wrote this book—to help you—no matter what kind of leader you are—step it up in a way that allows you to fulfill your purpose in life. To step it up with maximum impact, you will need to strengthen your leadership intelligence. Every day.

When we use phrases such as “step it up,” “leadership intelligence,” and “making a positive difference,” we are not talking platitudes. We are talking about a purpose-driven, concrete approach to leadership that will allow you to be the best leader you can be in any area of your life and at any stage of your life. In the following pages, you will discover eight practices essential to stepping it up and cultivating your leadership intelligence. We call these practices “the eight leadership essentials.” We developed the eight essentials model with the help of a variety of sources:

What we have learned from our own leadership successes and failures throughout our lives.

What we have learned from numerous leaders and thought leaders around the globe about the skills needed to become the kind of leader you want to be.

What we have learned from an extensive body of research on the keys to purpose-driven, high-impact leadership.

We authors—Doug and Chuck—invite you to join us on a challenging, lifelong leadership learning adventure. Take advantage of the eight leadership essentials to turbocharge your positive impact on everyone in your life. As your leadership guides, we want you to know that *we* know we are by no means perfect. We have made our fair share of

mistakes as leaders and have learned that mistakes can be some of our best teachers. We think of ourselves not just as guides but companions on our shared leadership journey. As leaders and followers, experts, and students, we are always learning more about outstanding leadership from everyone around us—our colleagues, clients, family members, and friends. If you were here with us in person right now, we would also be learning from you. And if you believe, as we do, that no matter your life circumstances, you *are* a leader, and want to have the most significant positive impact in your world, then step it up! Commit to mastering the eight leadership essentials! Now, let's dive in!

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