

**“A COMPELLING BUSINESS CASE FOR  
BENEVOLENCE AND COMPASSION,  
OPTIMISM AND HOPE.”**

**—From the foreword by DANIEL GOLEMAN**

# **RESONANT LEADERSHIP**

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H A R V A R D B U S I N E S S S C H O O L P R E S S

# Great Leaders Move US

- Resonant leaders are inspiring people in their own organizations , institutions, and communities.
- They are finding new opportunities within today's challenges, creating hope in the face of fear and despair.
- These leaders are *moving* people – powerfully, passionately, and purposefully.

# Resonant Leaders Inspire

- They do so while managing the inevitable sacrifices inherent in their roles.
- They give of themselves in the service of the cause.
- They also care for themselves, engaging in renewal to ensure they can sustain resonance over time.

# Great Leaders are Resonant Leaders

- They are exciting and get results
- Resonant leaders are inspiring their organizations and communities
- To reach for dreams that even a few years ago were impossible. And these dreams are being realized

# Great Leaders

- Great leaders are awake, aware, and attuned to themselves, to others, and to the world around them. They commit to their beliefs, stand strong in their values, and live full, passionate lives.
- Great leaders are emotionally intelligent and they are mindful: they seek to live in full consciousness of self, others, nature, and society.
- Great leaders face the uncertainty of today's world with hope: they inspire through clarity of vision, optimism, and a profound belief in their – and their people's ability to turn dreams into reality.

- Great leaders face sacrifice, difficulties, and challenges, as well as opportunities, with empathy and compassion for the people they lead and those they serve.
- They understand that while fear and anger may mobilize people in the short term, these emotions backfire quickly, leaving people distracted, anxious, and ineffective. Such leaders have empathy. They read people.
- They give us courage and hope, and help us to become the best that we can be.

- In other words, in addition to being great to work with, they get results. Of course, to be great, a leader needs to understand the market, the technology, the people, and a multitude of other factors affecting the organization
- Resonance enables the leader to use this expertise in pursuit of the company's performance.
- It allows the leader to engage the power of all the people who work in and around the organization.

- To sustain effectiveness once it has been achieved, we need to manage the syndrome of sacrifice, stress, and dissonance – not be its victims. Returning to resonance again and again.
- There are good models out there. They turn situations around, finding opportunities in challenges and creative ways to overcome obstacles. They are able to motivate themselves and others by focusing on possibilities.

- They are optimistic, yet realistic. They are awake and aware, and they are passionate about their values and their goals.
- They create powerful, positive relationships that lead to an exciting organizational climate.
- Leaders who sustain their resonance understand that renewing oneself is a *holistic* process that involves the mind, body, heart, and spirit.

- They see clearly that the self-sacrifice they inevitably must make in their jobs only works if the “self” is somehow still attended to.
- Without regular renewal the sacrifice becomes too great and dissonance results – with often devastatingly destructive results.

# Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion: The Keys to Renewal

- **MINDFULNESS:** conscious awareness of one's whole self, other people, and the context in which we live and work.
- **HOPE:** enables us to believe that the future we envision is attainable, and to move toward our visions and goals while inspiring others toward those goals as well.
- **COMPASSION:** to understand people's wants and needs and feel motivated to act on our feelings.

# Positive Emotions

- Cultivating the capacity for mindfulness, hope and compassion – and creating or sustaining resonance – does not happen by accident. For most of us, developing ourselves this way requires a process of *Intentional Change*.
- *INTENTIONAL CHANGE*: deliberate, focused identification of our personal vision and our current reality, and conscious creation of and engaging in a learning agenda.

# The Leaders Challenge

- Our negativity causes us to close down and to stop functioning effectively. At the same time, our stress and negative emotions are actually contagious, so our people also begin to feel frustrated, empty, and unfulfilled – not to mention ineffective. It becomes a vicious cycle: power stress, sacrifice, dissonance, more stress and more sacrifice.
- Although dissonance is all too typical in the rough-and-tumble environment of recent years, resonance is possible – and leads to infinitely better results.
- Even the most inspiring values are not easy to sustain overtime.
- Treat each other, customers, suppliers with respect and compassion.

# Bringing Out Your Best

- When we are around resonant leaders, they bring out the best in us. They help us to see when good fortune is smiling on us and they make us feel good about our efforts and ourselves.
- People follow resonant leaders because the leader's *heart* is so clearly in the work.
- Resonant leaders manage their emotions well and read individuals and groups accurately. They consciously attune to people, focus them on a common cause, build a sense of community, and create a climate that enables people to tap into passion, energy, and desire to move together in a positive direction.
- They are optimistic and realistic at the same time.

# Resonance is Contagious

- Show celebrations of achievement, special events, and ordinary, everyday workers being honored.
- There is a sense of pride and hopefulness about the future. Common sense and good judgment are expected, cultivated, and celebrated.
- For leaders to sustain their effectiveness, they must learn how to sustain themselves.

- Scientists studying stress would call leadership a role involving “chronic stress with periodic occasions of acute stress”
- Some people attempt to cope by overreacting to situations, or they begin to take foolhardy risks just to feel powerful again. Others become habitually cynical; still others find excuses and blame others for the problems they see as too difficult to tackle. Some of us start doing things that do not seem to fit who we are (or who we thought we were).
- When feeling like this, it becomes increasingly difficult for most people to maintain focus, think clearly, or make good decisions.

- We often end up playing and replaying mental “tapes” that actually accentuate our negative emotions and feelings of hopelessness.
- Some psychologists call this “self-talk”. When we are feeling down over a long period of time, this self-talk centers on messages that undermine us and, in turn, our power to change bad situations
- “it’s not my fault” (“My life will never be really happy”) or messages that weaken our sense of efficacy. (“This situation is beyond my control, I’m just stuck with it”)

# Resonance and Renewal

- When a leader habitually orders people around, demands perfection, or is emotionally neutral or unavailable, people tend to feel frightened and very reluctant to engage.
- We need to make renewal a way of life. This requires conscious action and, for most people, intentional change.
- Compassion is a combination of deep understanding, concern, *and a willingness to act* on that concern for the benefit of oneself and others.

# Mindfulness

- Enables us to counter the effects of the Sacrifice Syndrome and is a first, and crucial, step in renewal. Awareness of one's self enables us to notice the detrimental effects of power stress (and then, we can do something about it before it becomes a big problem).
- Attending to ourselves also enables us to stay the course – living healthily and in accordance with our values even when the pressure is on.
- Living mindfully means that we are constantly and consciously in tune with ourselves - listening carefully to our bodies, minds, hearts, and spirits. The best among us consciously develop the capacity for deep self – awareness, noting and building on our understanding of our inner experiences.

- It takes some effort to train oneself to be mindful. Some people, deliberately organize their lives to include practices that help hone skills of awareness, attention, and reflection. There is no way to do this – meditation, prayer, listening to music, aerobic exercise, and being in nature all provide opportunities.
- Patrick Cescau, CEO of Unilever, hones the skill of learning by deliberately seeking new experiences and by consciously using life as a laboratory. He is passionate about exploration.
- We can become a shadow of the person we once were, playing roles rather than living authentically.
- It is often the case that people who seem most self-confident, whose self-esteem may even seem over the top, are the people who are actually the most fragile.

# Defining Your Practice

- Mindfulness is the practical application of self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness; in short, developing mindfulness means developing emotional intelligence.
- Hope is driven, we believe, in part by the belief that the desired image of the future (the dream) is possible. You must actually *believe in your dream*.
- Optimism, such as seeking opportunities and deliberately overcoming obstacles to a goal, as well as overtly expecting the best from people and situations.

# Compassion

- Compassion is empathy. Empathy enables us to connect with people. Compassion means giving selflessly
- Compassion - like mindfulness and hope – works as a renewing agent for leaders, it decreases stress levels and improves leader's overall effectiveness, among other things.
- In an organization an approach to culture that is not founded on understanding and caring usually backfires. Negative techniques or strategies designed to drive favorable performance results. Like creating a crisis to spur urgency or focusing on bad budget numbers to emphasize how dire things are, rarely engage leaders or the people around them.
- A positive, compassionate stance, can lead to much better results.

- Leading with compassion can favorably impact bottom line while enabling leaders to sustain their effectiveness for longer periods of time.
- The most compelling argument for compassion may be this: to sustain one's effectiveness as a leader, manager, or professional, the experience of compassion will set in motion restorative mental, emotional, and physiological process.
- And all of this leads to a more positive environment in an organization, which research has shown affects how that organization actually performs.

- Leading with compassion can favorably impact bottom line while enabling leaders to sustain their effectiveness for longer periods of time.
- Cultivating compassion starts with listening
- Listening plays a key role in our ability to feel compassion.
- Coaching others with compassion can be an antidote to narcissism because the leader is genuinely focused on others.

# Becoming a Coach

- To be effective, a coach, like a leader, needs to *build resonant relationships* with others.
- That means finding ways to stimulate mindfulness, hope, and compassion in oneself, first. Otherwise, there is absolutely no chance of inspiring those qualities and experiences in the people you coach.
- Emotional intelligence competencies help, and certain ones are key.