

Ten Developmental Themes of Mindful Leaders:
*And an Integrative Leader-Development Framework to Navigate
Your Transformative Journey*



By

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to all the leaders who deeply yearn to contribute to solutions to humanity's most urgent global challenges but who are currently hindered by past emotional wounding that perpetuates limited and destructive patterns of being.

May this book be of benefit to you and our world.

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Preface

In September 2010, at 45 years of age, I embarked on a journey to complete a doctorate by my 50th birthday. This educational goal was an aspiration I had held for many years, since falling in love with learning in my mid-20s. At that time, I returned to college to complete my undergraduate degree after a 4-year enlistment in the United States Air Force.

A few months before beginning my doctorate journey, I began another journey; one that has deeply changed me and my life in countless ways and converged with this educational journey in unforeseen ways. In April 2010, after reading numerous related books and sporadically practicing on my own for 5 years, I received formal instruction on two forms of meditation: concentration (shamatha) and mindfulness (vipassana). I received formal instruction on concentration meditation from teachers affiliated with the Shambhala Meditation Center of Boston located in Brighton, MA. I received mindfulness meditation instruction through an 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program with the University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness located in Worcester, MA.

While a long-time student of wellness and personal-development literature, as well as a spiritual seeker, I was motivated to formally learn meditation and maintain a regular practice to improve self-awareness, self-mastery, and interpersonal relationships. I yearned to make a positive difference in the world in my work and volunteerism; however, limited capacity in these areas coupled with defeating patterns stemming from longstanding deep emotional wounds repeatedly tripped me up. After a few months of a regular meditation sitting practice (initially, concentration meditation, then I moved to a mindfulness practice), I started noticing positive changes. For example, I noticed that my mind was more settled and less distracted and agitated. I

also noticed that I was a bit slower to react and becoming more aware of my inner world (i.e., thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations).

In 2013, my personal experiences of regular meditation (concentration and mindfulness techniques), along with my doctorate learning, inspired me to explore academic research on meditation and leadership as a possible research topic. As I delved into the scholarly conversations in these two areas, I discovered that a leading edge of meditation in the academic literature was on the promising health and developmental benefits (e.g., greater emotional well-being and enhanced self-awareness) of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for clinical and healthy populations.

I also discovered that an emerging thread of the management literature included investigations of employee work performance and mindfulness-based interventions. Although a few popular-press books were available on leadership and mindfulness (e.g., Carol, 2008; Gonzalez 2012), minimal academic research existed on the topic at that time. Consequently, I was able to identify a “research gap” in the academic literature: the topic of leader development and mindfulness meditation (the complete dissertation title is, *The Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Leaders Practicing Mindfulness Meditation: A Phenomenological Investigation*, available at <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/1583/>).

Fast forward 8 years to the present (February 2018), and I can truly say that my life has been transformed by a regular practice of meditation; my doctorate journey, which I completed in October 2015; and my ongoing study-practice of systems of self-transformation and the transformative practices associated with them. My life experience over the last 8 years included the inspirational and uplifting experience of interviewing 21* mindful leaders who dared to experiment with mindfulness meditation and inspired me to write this book. It is my heartfelt

desire that the developmental themes of these mindful leaders inspire you to experiment with mindfulness meditation and to explore systems of self-transformation that include not only Buddhism, but other systems and practices (see Chapter 5). Only direct personal experimentation and exploration will allow you to discover for yourself if these systems and practices foster the type of benefits I have discovered in my research and life.

This book explores a holistic or integrative approach to leader development from which to view and consider not only the developmental themes of the mindful leaders who participated in my doctoral research, but your transformative leadership journey as well. Thus, this book also explores self-transformation and includes introductory overviews on three universal or nonreligious systems of self-transformation and the core transformative practices associated with them. Last, this book includes cautionary words for those readers-leaders who have the courage to embark on the most extraordinary journey one can ever embark upon: the inner journey to self-actualization and self-realization! To begin, let's explore an integrative leader-development framework to contextualize the terrain ahead.

Chapter 1: An Integrative Leader Development Framework

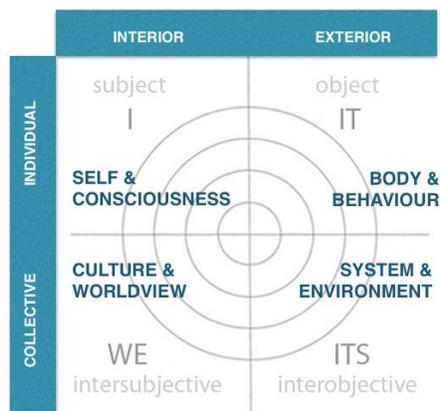
An integrative approach (to leader development) is essential because the human organism is a complex system that cannot be understood adequately based on any one particular discipline or theoretical perspective.

—David Day, Michelle Harrison, & Stanley Halpin
An Integrative Approach to Leader Development

As the rate of change continues to increase exponentially and our lives become more interdependent, complex, and uncertain, humanity needs holistic or integrative frameworks to better understand and respond to the unprecedented demands of the 21st century. These unparalleled demands include threats to our very survival as a species from pressures of climate change, terrorism, water scarcity, food insecurity, poverty and social inequality, political corruption, and economic instability.

Consequently, U.S. philosopher Ken Wilber (2000) proposed that any truly integrative or integral view of human and social phenomenon must minimally include the individual subjective/interior, the individual behavioral/exterior, the collective intersubjective/interior, and the collective interobjective/exterior (see Figure 1-1). Borrowing from Wilber's All Quadrant All Level or AQAL framework, an integrative approach to leader development addresses the individual internal and individual external dimensions while acknowledging the larger context of leadership development and leadership (see Figure 1-2). Thus, in this more expansive context, an integrative leader-development framework must first consider human existence and well-being from a holistic perspective, as well as the insights and learnings from adult-development theory.

Figure 1-1. Wilber's Integral Theory/AQAL



Source: Dr. Anna Storck, @interkultura, retrieved from <http://www.interculture.co.nz/intercultural-competence-training-new-zealand/>. Used with permission.

Given that leaders are first and foremost human, the foundation of this integrative leader-development framework is a comprehensive view of human existence and well-being or wellness. Wellness is a holistic and proactive view of health that regards humans as beings with physical bodies, mental bodies, emotional bodies, and spiritual bodies embedded in social and natural environments and dependent on a vibrant planet Earth. Wellness also emphasizes the overall quality of life and not solely the absence of disease. Wellness is highly significant to leader development because general wellness supports full and consistent access to current developmental capacities and provides the “fertile ground” necessary for ongoing self-development. Although various models of wellness exist, a general framework includes physical, mental-emotional, financial or material, spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions.

Physical well-being is a core dimension of wellness and generally refers to the capacity to meet the demands and potential crises of ordinary life. When physical health and vitality are compromised, it is more difficult to be one’s best self or tend to other areas of wellness. Physical well-being includes regular exercise or body movement, healthy weight, strength and flexibility,

rest and relaxation, and sleep, as well as individual food and beverage choices and how they affect one's overall being, including physical health, vitality, energy, mood, weight, body-mass index (BMI), and stamina.

Mental-emotional wellness refers to awareness, constructive expression, and healthy integration of thoughts and feelings. Thus, mental-emotional wellness includes numerous areas that are highly relevant to an integrative approach to leader development such as mental attitudes, beliefs, mindsets, thoughts, feelings, personality, shadow, identity, motivation, will, self-awareness, perceptions, and self-regulation. Financial or material wellness refers to having adequate financial or material resources to meet essential basic human needs (e.g., food, potable water, clothing, and shelter) and support the fulfillment of higher needs (e.g., self-actualization).

Spiritual wellness refers to a sense of interconnectedness or relationship to and with all life (immanent and transcendent), as well as a sense of awe and appreciation for the mysteries of life. Furthermore, spiritual (or existential) wellness relates to the meaning and purpose derived from contributing to ideals or causes beyond the self (e.g., justice, peace, and sustainability). Social wellness refers to one's ability to have and maintain healthy adult relationships in all areas of life (e.g., intimate, family, work, and community). Also, social wellness refers to a sense of belonging in the world as well as the capacity to engage in authentic, skillful, and constructive self-expression and communication. Environmental wellness refers to the overall quality and stability of one's social and natural environments.

Furthermore, as highlighted in Wilber's Integral Theory, the physical body can be viewed as three bodies, not one, which is also highly significant in an integrative leader-development framework. The three bodies are the gross body, the subtle body, and the causal body. The gross

body or actual physical body includes all aspects of the body we typically think about—our skin, bones, muscles, systems, organs, tissues, cells, blood, etc.

The subtle body includes energies of the life force associated with human existence. Wilber’s AQAL associates the subtle body with dream states where earthly laws disintegrate. However, the energies of the subtle body are not limited to sleeping states. They are activated and alive in times of vision, inspiration, and creativity. Thus, although still not formally recognized by Western physiology, growing appreciation for and acceptance of subtle energies enlivens our being, as found in Eastern healing and religious traditions such as tai chi, yoga, and Hinduism. Furthermore, as other leadership writers have emphasized (e.g., Jim Loehr & Tony Schwartz, 2005 and Bruce Schneider, 2008), leaders who understand the role of subtle body energies will increase their potential for effectiveness, especially in the turbulent times of the 21st century.

The third body, the causal body aligns with deep sleep and an infinite openness, stillness, and formlessness or the Ground of Being. This is the body or state that the great mystics of the ages speak of, as expressed in the poem, “Expands His Being,” by Meister Eckhart (1260–1328):

All beings are words of God,
 His music, His art.
 Sacred books we are, for the infinite camps in our souls.
 Every act reveals God and expands His Being.
 I know that may be hard to comprehend.
 All creatures are doing their best
 to help God in His birth of Himself.
 Enough talk for the night.

He is laboring in me;
I need to be silent for a while,
worlds are forming in my heart.

—In *Love Poems from God* (Ladinsky, 2002)

Thus, the three human bodies—gross, subtle, and causal—exist and are highly relevant to this integrative leader-development framework, as addressed further throughout this book. To further refine our integrative leader-development framework, let's explore the insights and knowledge provided by adult-development theory.

Adult development refers to the ongoing biological, cognitive, emotional, moral, behavioral, sociocultural, and spiritual development in young, middle, and late adulthood. Day and his colleagues, Michelle Harrison and Stanley Halpin, proposed three foundational components of functional categories addressed in adult-development theory essential for a comprehensive approach to leader development: identity formation, moral development, and sensemaking (see Table 1-1). Identity, rooted in the work of Erik Erikson, Jane Loevinger, and numerous other developmental psychologists, is a term that references how individuals view themselves in relation to others, society, and perhaps, the planet, the cosmos, and all that is. Also, self-identity refers to the integration of various dimensions of the self, which changes and evolves over the lifespan. Identity and identity formation have significant implications for leader development because developing as a leader, in part, requires viewing oneself as a leader. Furthermore, self-identity and moral development greatly inform and direct decision making and behavior.

According to moral-development theory, oriented in the work of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, and others, individuals develop more complex, inclusive, and flexible

views of right and wrong action over the lifespan due, in part, to life experiences such as socialization through parents, schooling, religious institutions, and culture. Practically every decision made by a leader has ethical significance. In addition, leaders are role models and frequently emulated by others, especially followers, and greatly influence organizational climate and culture. Consequently, moral development is a fundamental element of an integrative leader-development framework, along with sensemaking.

Sensemaking, influenced by individual differences and environmental factors, refers to the human ability to derive meaning from life experiences. Development reflects a progressive capacity to expand perspective while maintaining meaningful life commitments through self-knowledge and sensemaking. In addition to a holistic view of human existence and well-being, and these three core elements from adult-development theory, a more comprehensive approach to leader development would include many of the key concepts addressed in the current leader-development literature and further explored in Chapter 2: developmental experiences, emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence, spiritual intelligence, leader self-development, personal mastery, mental models, developmental readiness, and horizontal development. Furthermore, an integrative leader development framework would include vertical development/transformation, systems of self-transformation, and transformative practices (see Table 1-1).

Table 1.1. An Integrative Leader Development Framework for the 21st Century

Holistic View of Human Existence & Well-Being	Adult-Development Theory	Current Leader-Development Literature	Vertical Development/Transformation
Human Existence	Identity Formation/Change	Developmental Experiences	Leader self-transformation
Physical Body (gross, subtle, causal)		Emotional Intelligence	Transformative Systems & Practices
Mental Body	Moral Development/Reasoning	Cognitive Intelligence	
Emotional Body	Sensemaking	Leader self-development	
Spiritual Body		Personal Mastery	
		Mental Models	
Well-Being		Developmental Readiness	
Physical Wellness		Horizontal Development	
Mental-Emotional Wellness			
Financial/Material Wellness			
Spiritual Wellness			
Social Wellness			
Environmental Wellness			

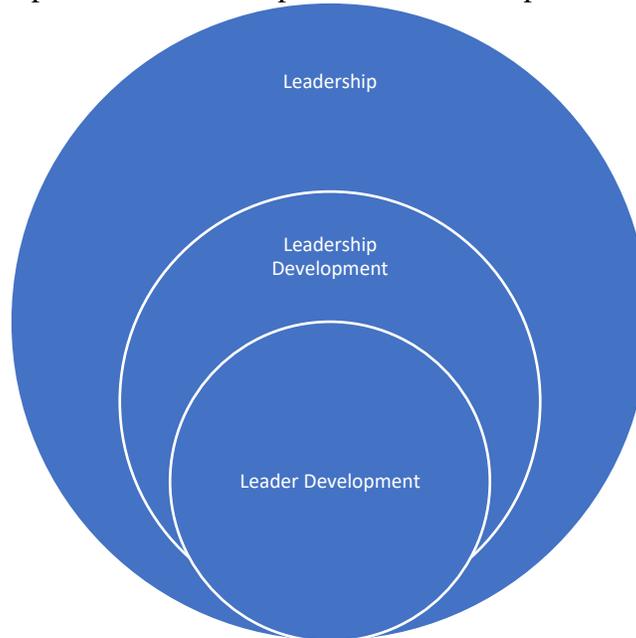
Chapter 2: Integrative Leader Development: A Deeper Dive

The process of becoming a leader is much the same as becoming an integrated human being.

—Warren Bennis
On Becoming a Leader

David Day (2001), leadership scholar and proponent for an integrative approach to leader development, proposed that leader development emphasizes the personal development of knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals to fulfill leadership roles, responsibilities, and tasks effectively. Other contemporary definitions of leader development emphasize “changes in the perceptions, motivations, competencies, and patterns of behavior of individuals in leadership positions” (Harms, Spain, and Hannah, 2011) and “the expansion of a person’s capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes” (Van, McCauley, Ruderman, and Center for Creative Leadership (CCL, 2010). Although these definitions of leader development may vary slightly, the common thread is the focus on the personal development of the individual leader. Thus, leader development lies within leadership development which lies within leadership (see Figure 1-2), which expand into the realms of interpersonal relationships, teams/groups, culture, and systems or Quadrants 3 & 4 in Wilber’s AQAL, introduced in Chapter 1.

Figure 1-2. Relationship of Leader Development to Leadership Development and Leadership



Consequently, life and work experiences that include leading and following are critical to leader development. Developmental experiences may include early participation in sports, music, theater, public speaking/debate, overcoming personal hardships, setbacks, disappointments, employment, volunteerism, appropriately challenging assignments of various types, and access to skill-based training opportunities. Furthermore, leaders can optimize developmental experiences by approaching them with a growth mindset, thereby viewing them as opportunities to learn, increase self-awareness, and build character and skills.

Openness to such experiences, coupled with a sense of self-confidence, are fundamental to the potential impact they have on leader development. Also, an ongoing reciprocal dance oscillates between the interpretation of events and the formulation of mental models (see a brief explanation of mental models below) about the experiences that frequently lie below the surface of awareness and influence the degree of openness and confidence toward future opportunities.

Over the course of a lifetime, experiences that demand new ways of seeing oneself and one's relationship to others and the larger world hold the most potential for learning. From this perspective, the purpose of leadership education is to facilitate experiences that challenge existing ways of seeing. This type of approach to leader development requires leaders to see, challenge, and rethink biases and mental models and to make sense of their experiences while also revising their inner narrative in a way that fosters growth. Consequently, dedicating time for reflection on and integration of challenging and disorienting activities are essential elements of leader and leadership-development programs.

However, fear and self-doubt can also result, typically from disempowering interpretations of learning experiences that could then hinder full engagement in future growth-oriented opportunities. Therefore, empathic support (see Chapter 4, Theme 7), especially for young and emerging leaders, is critical in maximizing the learning available from such experiences. Empathic support can take many forms, formal and informal, and may include mentoring, coaching, or a superior's willingness to be vulnerable about related struggles.

Furthermore, personality and variances in personal intelligences and capacities affect growth as a leader, which occurs over the course of a leader's life as part of a continuous process. As highlighted in the current leader-development literature, essential intelligences for 21st-century leader development includes emotional intelligence (EQ), cognitive intelligence (IQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ).

Psychologist, journalist, and author Daniel Goleman (1995), influenced by the scholarship of Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences and Peter Salovey and John Mayer on EQ, helped popularize the concept of and scientific findings on EQ. EQ refers to the degree of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management an individual

obtains. Goleman argued that EQ was as significant as IQ for leader effectiveness, work success, and life fulfillment. In addition, a person could cultivate and strengthen EQ at any age. We will explore EQ further throughout this book; however, before doing so, we shall consider adult cognitive development and leader development.

In their book, *Immunity to Change*, Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2009) presented three stages of mental complexity in adults: the socialized mind, self-authoring mind, and self-transforming mind. The socialized mind functions as a “team player and “faithful follower.” A leader at the team-player stage primarily lives by the definitions and expectations of their social environments. Thus, loyalty to their superior, organization, or community is dominant to this identity. Thus, appeasing pertinent others in their tribe motivates a leader’s thoughts, communications, and actions.

Leaders with a self-authoring mind, in contrast, are not motivated by maintaining approval of referent others and members of his/her affiliate community. Rather, they are motivated by personal goals and agendas. At the self-authoring mental stage, leaders have the capacity to objectively distance themselves from their social environments and offer perspectives grounded in their worldviews. However, their thoughts, communications, and actions are aimed toward gaining approval and support of their goals and agendas. Leaders at this stage of mental development are vulnerable to selective perceptions, as they may unconsciously filter out data that does not support their agendas. Despite this potential vulnerability, the expansion of mental capacity from the socialized mind to the self-authoring mind is highly relevant for leaders and the organizations and communities to which they belong.

The self-transforming stage represents a leap in mental capacities and allows leaders to see and appreciate the interconnectedness of life. Leaders at this mental stage prioritize learning

and seek to honor interdependence. Furthermore, leaders with self-transforming minds can objectively observe their weaknesses and shortcomings as well as the shortcomings of their environments. In addition, the leader with a self-transforming mind is more tolerant of uncertainties and paradoxes. Although leaders at the self-transforming stage are capable of advancing an agenda, they are also able to alter or drop the agenda if or when conditions change. In other words, leaders with a self-transforming mind can healthily and objectively distance themselves from emotions, identities, mindsets, and agendas. It is important to highlight that as leaders develop mental capacities, they do not lose the capacities associated with previous stages. Instead, as emphasized by Kegan and Lahey, what was once subject becomes object.

William Torbert (2004), educator and author of *Action Inquiry: The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership*, proposed that the demands of the 21st-century global work environment require organizational leaders with a *strategist* action logic or lens of interpretation. The predominant feature of the strategist action logic, the equivalence of a self-transforming mind in the Kegan–Lahey framework, is self and other awareness in action in support of individual and collective transformation. However, as Torbert and others (e.g., Bill Joiner and Steven Joseph, 2007) have highlighted, the majority of organizational manager-leaders currently function in a self-authoring mindset or Expert-Achiever action logic in Torbert’s framework. Consequently, it is imperative for individual leaders to prioritize vertical development, and to consider the role of meditation and other transformative practices in facilitating the type and degree of learning required to cocreate not only high-performing organizations, but more importantly, an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Cindy Wigglesworth, in her 2012 book, *Spiritual Intelligence*, proposed that SQ, along with cognitive development (or IQ), EQ, and physical intelligence (or body awareness and

skillful use) is fundamental to well-being and life-satisfaction as well as leadership effectiveness in the 21st century. Wigglesworth defined SQ as the capacity to maintain equanimity, regardless of internal or external circumstances. Her definition of SQ also includes a sense of interrelatedness with all life. Wigglesworth also distinguishes between the personal self of the ego from one's Higher Self or soul, the Divine Essence in all people and all life. The inclusion of spirituality in leader development has profound implications for leaders and organizations, which I explore more fully in Chapters 5 and 6.

Leader self-development—any self-initiated action taken with the intention of developing oneself as a leader—is an important dimension of leader development. Leader self-development requires the leader to accept responsibility for being and becoming the leader they desire to be and become by consistently initiating and assessing their leadership growth in their leadership ideal. This leadership ideal may be an actual person (alive or historical) or a concept, principle, or value (e.g., mindful, compassionate, or servant leader).

The complex, global, and turbulent times of the 21st century require that individual leaders engage in deeper personal work, in addition to the acquisition of traditional knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) traditionally associated with formal leadership roles. Historically, leader self-development, particularly inner work, has not received much attention from practitioners or scholars; however, regardless of whether one's employer offers or encourages this type of integrative leader self-development, if leaders truly desire to contribute to their field, particularly in helping to solve pressing global challenges, they must turn inward.

The next two elements of an integrative leader-development framework, popularized by scientist and author Peter Senge (2006), include personal mastery and mental models. Personal mastery refers to a high degree of self-awareness and self-regulation, two aspects of EQ outlined

above. Furthermore, leaders with personal mastery have visions and goals for their lives (not just their organizations or the world). They also have a unique sense of purpose underlying their visions and goals. Leaders with personal mastery can welcome current reality while also seeking opportunities to advance their visions in the world. They are curious and committed to seeing themselves, relationships, and the world more and more clearly. People with personal mastery feel a sense of connection to others and life itself. They also appreciate their individuality and their belongingness to a larger creative process, which they humbly realize they can influence but cannot control.

Mental models—deep and often unconscious assumptions a person holds about him/herself, others, and the world—shape perception, interpretation, and action. Therefore, personal mastery (and psychological healing and wholeness in general) requires the surfacing of mental models to make unconscious assumptions conscious. Once conscious, individuals can assess the truthfulness and usefulness of those assumptions to determine which to keep and which to release.

Developmental readiness (DR) is an essential element of all learning and growth, including leader development. As defined by Sean Hannah and Bruce Avolio (2010), who have researched and written extensively on the topic, DR is “the ability and motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and appropriate new leader KSAAAs (knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes) into knowledge structures along with concomitant changes in identity to employ those KSAAAs” (p. 1182).

However, it is important to acknowledge that organizational decision makers charged with making leadership-development investment choices have historically received minimal assistance from leadership- and organizational-development scholars on how to assess DR. The

underrepresentation of evidenced-based practices associated with DR assessment is puzzling, given the billions of dollars organizations invest into leadership development each year.

Fortunately, the fields of clinical psychology and education (e.g., Prochaska, Norcross, & Di Clemente's 2002 Stages of Change Model) provide alternatives for supportive guidance on assessing leader-development readiness. Our understanding of leader development continues to expand with contributions from countless scholars and practitioners whose work I've attempted to highlight in this Chapter and throughout the book. However, despite the few pioneers taking on the topic (e.g., Nick Petrie with the Center for Creative Leadership, 2014, 2015), our times demand a critically vital distinction between two general types of leader development: horizontal and vertical.

Horizontal development, or conventional learning, refers to the acquisition of general knowledge or skills (e.g., learning how to create a company budget). Vertical development or transformational learning refers to shifts in perspective to more complex and inclusive views or structural changes in intelligences or developmental lines. Vertical development can result from two different approaches to life, one constructive reactionary and the other proactive and voluntary toward the actualization of human potential.

As highlighted in the work of sociologist, educator, and author Jack Mezirow (2000), transformation can result from disorienting life events because such events disrupt or *thaw* underlying worldviews, beliefs, assumptions, and identities, thereby creating space for alternative ways of seeing and thinking. Thus, in a constructive reactionary approach, leaders view such disorienting life events as learning or growth opportunities and not disabling failures (see Chapter 4, Theme 9).

Leaders who take a proactive and voluntary approach to vertical development seek opportunities that support or foster peak experiences (as in Maslow, 2014). Peak experiences, although varying in intensity, align with feelings of deep joy, gratitude, and awe and an intuitive knowing or experience of unity. Such peak experiences can be quite disorienting; however, they also lift leaders to new heights or expand consciousness such that they are able to see themselves and life in a fresh and exhilarating way. The opportunity is for leaders who have peak experiences to integrate them into being, such that they can reimagine and reorient their lives around the elevated vision of themselves, others, and the world.

Taking this type of personal responsibility for one's inner development and transformation requires a commitment to self-observation and nonjudgmental self-honesty. Transformative practices such as mindfulness meditation are often an essential element of the inner journey as well as a reputable system or school of self-transformation (see Chapter 5) from which to contextualize and ground the inner journey. A supportive practice community, coach, or friend is also extremely valuable. Leader self-development also often includes proactively seeking challenging and diverse projects, asking for authentic feedback from collaborators, sincerely reflecting on that feedback, and altering behavior when themes emerge from feedback that are inconsistent with one's leadership commitments and aspirations.

Taking responsibility for one's growth as an adult and leader to this degree obviously requires the motivation to do so. Therefore, it is critical for leaders to connect with their deepest values, vision, and purpose around being and becoming a leader. Leaders must also honestly confront all potential dark or shadow motivations underlying aspirations to be and become a leader. Although trait theory and personality typologies may help explain elements of personal motivation for leader self-development, it cannot explain the entire complex phenomena of

human motivation. Therefore, it is essential that deeper self-examination and self-honesty occur for the type of vertical learning required of the 21st-century leader to result.

When supporting and encouraging leader self-development becomes an element of organizational strategy, the overall organization benefits from more mindful and mature employees who are increasingly capable of bringing their best selves to work place and working more cooperatively and constructively with coworkers and other stakeholders. Referring to the mission of the CCL, Ellen Van Velsor, Cynthia McCauley, and Marian Ruderman (2010) approached their work from the view that leader development is ultimately self-development. Consequently, they preferred to avoid classifying leaders or nonleaders but focused on helping people be more effective in their various leadership roles and functions.

Although, by definition, the leader initiates, completes, and evaluates leader self-development, in practice, organizations increasingly offer growth-oriented activities varying from voluntary to “highly encouraged,” blurring the line between voluntary and involuntary developmental programs. The topic of leader self-development, including increasing insights into individual motivation (higher/golden and lower/dark) and internal barriers, holds great promise for leader-development practice and scholarship.

As highlighted throughout this book, leaders have increasing pressure to complement traditional learning (i.e., skills, knowledge, and experience) with transformational learning to enhance their capacity for other intelligences: intrapersonal, interpersonal, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual. Hence, the 21st-century organizational environment requires a *metamorphosis* in how individuals and systems think about and approach leader development. As demonstrated in Chapters 3, 4, and elsewhere (e.g., *Mindful Work* by David Gelles, 2015) such shifts are beginning to occur.

Chapter 3: Leader Development and Mindfulness Meditation

Contrary to popular belief, cultivating the capacity for mindfulness is not just a nice-to-have or something to be done for private reasons: it is actually essential for sustaining good leadership.

—Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee, 2013
Resonant Leadership

It is highly likely that you have encountered numerous articles and reports about mindfulness meditation. You may practice a formal or informal mindfulness technique such as sitting meditation. Meditation, in particular mindfulness meditation, has been growing exponentially in the United States among the general public since the 1970s. A 2008 survey of Americans (prior to our mindfulness explosion) by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2008) found that approximately 20 million people (9.4 percent of survey respondents) meditate.

Mindfulness meditation has roots in the Eastern religion of Buddhism and generally refers to meditation practices that bring gentle, unbiased awareness to the moment. Mindfulness is an element of the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism (i.e., right/skillful speech, action, and livelihood, right/skillful effort, concentration, and mindfulness, and right/skillful understanding and thinking). Although Buddhism is a world religion with a growing number of Western adherents, many Western mindfulness-based interventions such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction are secular and deemphasize their Buddhist roots. Consequently, mindfulness-based interventions are readily accessible to a wide-range of people with diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, thereby also making them more conducive to secular environments.

The increasing body of scientific findings on the positive clinical and salutary effects of mindfulness-based interventions on human functioning and behavior are starting to influence even the most ardent skeptics. In general, findings indicate that mindfulness-based interventions

produce positive effects on self-awareness, interpersonal relating, and mental health and well-being that last beyond the actual time an individual is formally meditating. As a result, Western psychotherapy approaches increasingly include mindfulness meditation such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and dialectical-behavior therapy (DBT), all of which include experiential mindfulness techniques as a principal mechanism for treatment and self-development.

Not surprisingly, the mindfulness movement is also finding its way into the workplace with an increasing number of organizations offering employees mindfulness training of various types (see Table 3-1). For example, in 2007, Google started offering mindfulness training to employees throughout the company after a group of engineers came up with the mindfulness based emotional intelligence course, Search Inside Yourself, as a project of the company's "20 percent time." Google executive, Meng Tan (2012), one of the lead engineers on the project, explained Google's commitment to offer mindfulness training to employees throughout the company as a means to supporting their success in work and life.

Table 3-1. The Growing List of Organizations with Workplace Mindfulness Programs

Company	Type of Workplace Mindfulness Program Offered
Adobe	Mindfulness training available to employees
Aetna	Mindfulness training available to employees and customers
Apple	Mindfulness training available to employees
Asana	Mindfulness training available to employees
Cisco	Mindfulness training available to employees
eBay	Mindfulness available training to employees
Etsy	Mindfulness training available to employees
Facebook	Mindfulness training available to employees
Ford	Training in mindfulness & other contemplative practices available to senior executives
General Mills	Mindful Leadership Training available to employees
Genentech	Mindfulness training available for employees
Goldman Sachs	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Google	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Green Mountain Coffee	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Intel	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Juniper Networks	Mindfulness training available to for employees
LinkedIn	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Medtronic	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Salesforce.com	Mindfulness training available to for employees
Twitter.com	Mindfulness training available to for employees

Sources: Mindful Work by D. Gelles (2015), Mindfulness at Work by Glomb, T. M., Duffy, M. K., Bono, J. E., & Yang, T. (2011) and the “Annotated Bibliography on Workplace Spirituality” by Judi Neal (2016), funded by Fetzer Institute.

The growing interest in workplace mindfulness correlates with increasing emphasis on the role of effective leadership in organizational performance. This emphasis often includes greater attention to leader development. Furthermore, the growing complexity and volatility of the 21st-century organizational environment exacerbates the gap between the demands of the global work environment and the maturity of its leaders. Prevailing leader development best practices (e.g., 360° feedback or multisource feedback [MSF]) fall short of meeting the need to develop 21st-century leaders. This shortcoming is due, in part, to a lack of attention to the inner

worlds from which leaders lead, which include psychological (i.e., mental and emotional) maturity and spiritual understanding.

Hence, interest is growing in the developmental potential of mindfulness meditation and other transformative practices among business leaders. A burgeoning number of notable business leaders, including Bill George (Medtronic, former CEO), Bill Ford Jr. (Ford Motor Company, Executive Chairman), Peter Meehan (Newman's Own, CEO), and Jeff Immelt (GE, former President & CEO), regularly practice meditation. In addition, the late Apple founder and legend, Steve Jobs (1955–2015), was known to be a meditator.

Mindfulness meditation and other transformative practices allow a leader to appreciate the changing nature of reality and begin to release overidentification with one's role, beliefs, views, or outcomes. Moreover, regular and consistent mindfulness practice helps a leader cultivate the internal witness or observer who is better able to see and replace self-defeating habits with more productive responses.

Therefore, cultivating mindfulness allows leaders to make smarter decisions, because they are more aware of their inner worlds and, therefore, better able to connect with others and the conditions of their environments. Furthermore, leadership scholars have found a strong negative relationship in a diverse population of leaders between leader mindfulness and dysfunctional mental health outcomes (e.g., anxiety and depression) and concluded that mindfulness and an individual's positive psychological state of development may provide the type of psychological assets leaders need to maintain mental wellness. Moreover, mindful leaders tend to have stronger intrapersonal and interpersonal skills; therefore, they frequently become more effective in fulfilling their leadership responsibilities and functions. Consequently, mindfulness and other types of transformative practices offer leaders an assortment of techniques

to interrupt habitual thoughts and reactionary patterns while creating opportunities for re-perceiving and responding in ways that are more constructive.

However, as leadership scholars caution, the practice of mindfulness is far from an instant remedy. Cultivating mindfulness is comparable to starting an exercise program rather than learning a new skill, which may explain its underrepresentation in the leader-development literature. However, as I discovered from my life experience and 2015 research findings, when leaders commit to a regular and consistent mindfulness practice, the developmental fruits are bountiful!

Chapter 4: Ten Developmental Themes of Mindful Leaders

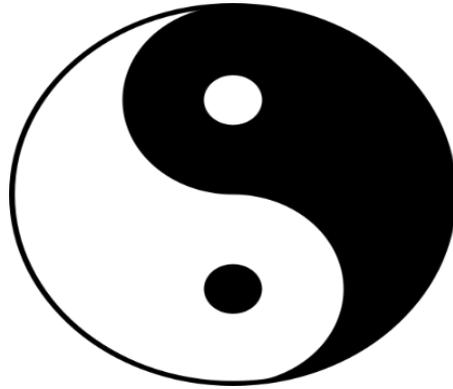
Perhaps millions of people throughout history who practiced mindfulness meditation were rediscovering something about being human—something so simple and so deeply profound that it could only be understood intimately rather than scientifically; something so direct and authentic that it demands vulnerability and heart rather than ambition and achievement.

—Michael Carroll
The Mindful Leader

As highlighted in the preface, in 2014–2015, as part of my doctoral work, I conducted a study to understand the perceived impact mindfulness meditation had on leader development for manager leaders who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months. The central research question associated with this inquiry was, how do leaders perceive and describe their experiences of the impact of mindfulness meditation on their development as leaders?

The primary data-collection method to answer this inquiry was open-ended interviewing (see Appendix A). Ten developmental themes emerged from the study: (1) more integrated or balanced leadership; (2) greater self-regulation; (3) commitment to the practice; (4) enhanced self-awareness; (5) greater inner calm and peace; (6) greater self–other empathy; (7) deeper listening and being present; (8) motivated by a personal/professional crisis, and (10) more tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty.

Theme 1: More Balanced Leadership



Although leadership has no universal definition, popular definitions often include a reference to power and influence that shape or inform others' thinking and acting. In Western societies, particularly the United States, leadership is markedly associated with traditional masculine qualities such as assertion, control, achievement, competition, and material success (see Table 4-1). In other words, leaders are typically rewarded for doing.

In contrast, in the United States, traditional feminine qualities such as receptivity, cooperation, relationship-orientation, humility, and harmony have historically been deemphasized in leadership. Although this is starting to change (e.g., the growing recognition of the importance of EQ in leadership effectiveness), the emphasis is still overwhelmingly on doing.

Table 4-1. Traditional Masculine and Feminine Qualities

Masculine Qualities	Feminine Qualities
Power	Love
Logic/linear thinking	Creative/abstract thinking
Authority	Service
Strength	Flexibility
Assertion	Receptivity
Power	Humility
Achievement	Relationship
Domination	Surrender
Expansion	Retraction
Competition	Cooperation
Control	Harmony
Material success	Care & concern for others/nurturance

Source: Adapted from *Psychosynthesis: A Psychospiritual Psychology For Today* by Stephanie Sorrell, 2011.

Consequently, today's organizational manager-leaders report long hours and high demands that leave them overstretched, depleted, and disconnected. Consequently, the modern organizational manager-leader often lives an extremely unbalanced life with work consuming most of their days (and nights) with minimal time available for self-care, family time, spiritual renewal, or community engagement.

Over time, this takes an immense toll on manager-leaders on many levels as they start "killing the goose," as illustrated in the wisdom of the Aesop Fable, *The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg*:

A man had a hen that laid a golden egg for him each and every day. The man was not satisfied with this daily profit, and instead he foolishly grasped for more. Expecting to find a treasure inside, the man slaughtered the hen. When he found that the hen did not

have a treasure inside her after all, he remarked to himself, “While chasing after hopes of a treasure, I lost the profit I held in my hands!” (Gibbs, 2002)

Ideally, managers-leaders make positive life changes before “slaughtering the hen.” Unfortunately, it often takes a significant crisis before manager-leaders recognize their self-destructive path. However, the first developmental theme of mindful leaders indicates that the growing interest in and practice of mindfulness-based interventions by increasing numbers of manager-leaders is resulting in a potential shift toward greater balance in their approach to leadership.

I guess another thing that changed for me is I’m starting to kind of shift my views on decision-making. And, so I mean that’s the primary role of a leader, right, is to make decisions about certain things. And I used to sit there and agonize, “Oh, well, what’s the right decision? What’s going to, you know, satisfy this criterion or, you know, make this person happy or, you know, achieve this goal or whatever?” And I still kind of do that, but now I’m shifting a little bit more towards letting go of that process a little bit. It’s not that I don’t make a decision. It’s that I see the decision as kind of emerging on its own, which is a little bit strange, but again, it ties back to that aspect of, you know, the not sell or, you know, not (over) identifying. (Male middle manager and academic in higher education)

Oh, I think I am a much better manager than I was 3 years ago. Much better. I think that I manage with an iron hand and that it particularly, well, it’s almost the Hillary thing. You know, if you’re a man you’re a strong leader, if you’re a woman you’re a bitch. And I

always felt like I needed to be tougher, I needed to be, you know, I needed to be tougher.

And I don't need to be tougher. (Female senior executive and business owner)

The other thing I didn't mention was it has allowed me to be more vulnerable around the people that I lead. And not, I don't know that I really started to explore vulnerability directly from the meditation, but I don't think I would have been able to explore it and practice it if I didn't have my meditation practice. And, then they [employees] see you as more of a person too, more of a well-rounded person, as opposed to just this image of boss or whatever. (Male senior executive and business owner)

I am not so focused on the outcome. I am focused on the process and that is a shift. It is not about outcome all the time. Umm—so there is a greater sense of satisfaction around that. (Female senior manager in the information-technology industry)

I'm much less worried about trying to fix things. I trust my team more. They're going to make mistakes, but you know what, they're going to learn. And they're going to learn way more by making their own mistakes than by me either micromanaging them or trying to prevent them from making mistakes. (Female middle manager in the marketing research industry)

Thus, a more balanced leadership style was the most represented developmental theme of the mindful leaders in this study. Integrated or balanced leadership style refers to a more harmonious blend of being and doing or a middle way of expression that honors the feminine and

masculine qualities in every leader, regardless of their gender identification. This developmental theme was followed by greater self-regulation.

Theme 2: Greater Self-Regulation

There is a Native American story called, *The Two Wolves*. It starts with an old Cherokee telling his grandson about a battle that often goes on inside people. He says, “My son, the fight is between two wolves. One is evil. It is angry, envious, jealous, sorrowful, regretful, greedy, arrogant, self-pitying, guilty, resentful, inferior, dishonest, proud, superior, and egotistical. The other is good. This wolf is joyful, peaceful, loving, hopeful, serene, humble, kind, benevolent, empathetic, generous, truthful, compassionate, and faithful.” His grandson thinks for a while, and then asks: “Which wolf wins, Grandfather?” The old Cherokee simply replies, “The one you feed.”

The second developmental theme of mindful leaders is greater self-regulation (i.e., regulating the feeding of the inner wolves). Self-regulation, which relates highly to self-awareness (Developmental Theme 4) and EQ, is the capacity to consciously and intentionally monitor and direct thoughts, feelings, and actions to stay in command of one’s experience of and expression in the world. Self-regulation is a dimension of psychological maturity and contrasts greatly with psychological immaturity, often characterized by habitually reactive and defensive behavior.

Self-regulation also relates to personal mastery in that it refers to a leader’s capacity to experience and express emotions in a balanced, consistent, and constructive manner. Leaders who are unable to self-regulate are vulnerable to being hijacked by extreme emotions such as rage, which can cause harm and hurt to individuals as well as adverse impacts overall. Persistent

neurotic leader behavior can result in toxic cultures that erode employee morale and greatly hinder organizational performance. Mindful leaders express their growing capacity for self-regulation in diverse ways, as depicted in these excerpts:

So mindfulness training itself, it—so paying attention to what’s happening in the moment, allows me to be, you know, to be nonreactive in situations, in challenging situations, that anybody that’s worked especially in any sort of leadership position, [has] happen. And that reactivity is—I think [is] a huge obstacle in dealing with other people in general. (Male middle manager and scientist)

There are good people in my organization who previously knew that I was such a fire-brain and that they could stoke the embers to get a response. And they would do that quite often, and I would usually have these reactions just ‘cause they knew they were going to happen. But now through the mindful practice I’m aware of who I am and what responses I’m having to any situations. And I’ve been far more mindful of what’s going on and can temper those responses right down or be far more appropriate or yeah, appropriate in my response in the way that I’m acting and behaving towards others. (Male middle manager with a New Zealand educational institution)

Yeah, I mean for me there’s something very, very specific. My natural tendency ‘cause I’m an operations person, my background is as a hospital administrator, is to react. You know, my natural reaction is to just go and do and what I’ve learned through—on the days that I can honestly tell you there’s a measurable difference on the days that I meditate I am better able to respond and not react, and it may be delay the response, you

know, sometimes it's delaying the response, sometimes it's saying nothing, sometimes it's running it by somebody else before I respond but I am so much more capable of doing that. My capacity for that is so much greater when my mindful meditation practice is strong. (Female senior executive and business owner)

Well I was more reactive, you know, I am sure that people would just not know is he going to take this calmly, is he going to lose it, is he—I was never a screamer but you don't have to scream to communicate your displeasure, your disappointment. You know, I mean it could just be a glance of the eyes and you can communicate that effectively to someone, especially someone who knows you well, whether it's a spouse, someone you work with on a regular basis. They get to know, you can communicate very effectively without saying a word. And so I am sure that I am less—more dependable, more steady, more helpful when acting as a leader. (Male senior executive and business owner)

Well, I think the main one for work is not reacting right away to something that is happening at work. And, I am calmer and, but also just you know if you have a problem that happens right this minute, you don't have to react to you. You can just take your time and address it the next day, which is something you already kind of know. It's not like there is any mystery to it but just to be able to do it is different. (Male middle manager in international corporate setting)

Thus, mindful leaders are more consistently able to feed the “good wolf” and regulate their internal world and behavior to live and lead more constructively. The third developmental theme of mindful leaders is commitment to the practice.

Theme 3: Commitment to the Practice

*Freedom is not the absence of commitments, but the ability to choose—and commit myself to—
what is best for me.*

–Paulo Coelho
The Zahir

Modern neuroscience is illuminating humanity’s understanding of the nervous system, including the human brain and the evolutionary discovery that the human adult brain has a quality of neuroplasticity, the ability to change. This ability to change permits rewiring of the neural pathways or circuits established by longtime habitual cognitive–emotional–behavioral patterns throughout the entire lifespan.

It is difficult to emphasize the significance of this finding (and numerous others in the field of neuroscience), because it undercuts a paradigm historically held by scientists and mental health professionals that the human brain becomes “hardwired” in childhood. Thankfully, humans can and do rewire our brains and form new habits throughout our lives, which is extremely good news for individuals, organizations, and humanity’s collective future! Despite the good news of neuroplasticity, we all know that changing longtime habitual patterns is not easy. This is due, in part, to our highly efficient human brains that naturally seek to conserve energy by autopiloting repetitive thoughts–emotions–actions loops to free cognitive capacity for new, creative, and more complex endeavors.

However, a growing body of scientific findings on meditation and the brain indicate that practices such as mindfulness meditation support the replacement of self-defeating habits with more constructive habits (including meditation itself!) while also facilitating structural changes that enhance well-being. The mindful leaders in my 2015 study demonstrated the capacity of the

adult brain to rewire neural pathways and form development-oriented habits through a commitment to their mindfulness practice, as depicted in the following examples.

And so I would say that I've been pretty consistent, but there have been times where life has been crazy busy, or I haven't had that community support or tapped into it, and have sort of drifted away. But I always come back to it. I never take more than a couple of months off. And try to incorporate it in, as I said, everything I do, but really try and sit down and have a formal sitting practice every day, even if it's just for five minutes.

(Female middle manager and marketing researcher)

I mean truly, I think there is an aspect of kind of like no turning back. I'm not going to go back to—no matter how hard the practice is or how hard it is to be very aware, I know the sort of pain and the feeling of loss and how difficult it is for the alternative, to kind of just rest in our comfort zones and not examine the way we do things. (Male middle manager and wellness professional)

And when I don't practice, I miss it. I long for it, and I feel, it helps being married, having a barometer [laughs] that lives with you. Who says, you know, "Has it been a couple of days since you sat?" "Or a couple of weeks, perhaps?" You know, "What's going on?" You know, and usually he doesn't have to say that. Usually just my own reactivity speaks to me, his responses to me speak to me that show me that I'm off base. And I do miss it and it's, you know, it was profound for me when I realized that meditation is like food. It's nurturing. So there's no longer the hammer of a should, if I

don't practice there will be negative consequences. It's more that I really long for my own sanity I think, you know. (Female middle manager and technical writer)

You know, it's a difficult thing. It takes time, and for me it has to become a habit. I have to try and do it at the same time. I am—my goal for myself is at least 5 mornings a week. I don't always achieve that goal but I generally try. What I found was I had all sorts of excuses for myself if I didn't, if I left it too far along in my day. So now, I was getting up at 6:40 every morning, I mean 6:10 every morning, and now I get up at 5:40 every morning, because there are no other demands on my time at that hour. That's when I try to do it. (Male senior executive and business owner)

Without the practice, I don't trust myself. [pause]. So, I need it every day to you know to check in with myself and um and I need it to interact with colleagues and patients. I need to have that beginner's mind every time I may go in to see someone who has historically been a pain in the ass type patient and you know so leave my judgments at the door, and it's the path I am on. That's how I look at it. (Male middle manager and physician)

Thus, the mindful leaders studied appear to be experiencing the fruits of their practices and the promise of neuroplasticity. They are freeing themselves from unproductive habitual patterns and choosing new constructive habits for better lives that include commitment to their meditation practices.

Theme 4: Enhanced Self-Awareness

Self-aware leaders are attuned to their inner signals. They recognize, for instance, how their feelings affect themselves and their job performance. Instead of letting anger build into an outburst, they spot it as it crescendos and can see both what's causing it and how to do something constructive about it.

—Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee
Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence

An ancient teaching of philosophy and the world's wisdom traditions to “know thyself” speaks to the significance of leader self-awareness, an element of EQ. EQ represents a developmental concept, supported by a weighty body of research that examines “how should I feel about this?”

The interest in EQ has been growing in popularity and influence since 1995 when Daniel Goleman published his seminal book based primarily on the research findings of scholars Peter Salovey and John Mayer. Since that time, thousands of research papers and hundreds of books have been published on the topic. Despite being a trendy and popular topic of the leadership literature for years, EQ and its four elements (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management) are as relevant today, if not more so, in buoying leader effectiveness in our ever-increasing volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment.

The good news is that the ten developmental themes that emerged from my research (and my experience as a meditation practitioner for the last 8 years) reinforce the growing understanding that mindfulness meditation can and does cultivate self-awareness and EQ in general. Without self-awareness, leaders are inclined to react from unconscious habitual patterns of thought, word, and action (i.e., blind spots) that often have negative impacts in the work

environment and beyond. The more blind spots leaders have, the more at risk they are for costly missteps.

Greater self-awareness provides the “inner-space” one needs to notice sensations and see thoughts arising within and to choose a constructive response over a destructive reaction. Expanding self-awareness also typically evolves into the capacity to comprehend more complexity, which naturally involves a transition toward a more inclusive self-identity. Consequently, greater self-awareness translates into more intentional leading and living over time, illustrated in the voices of these mindful leaders.

I think with this practice you become more aware of things that really matter to you about decisions being made and you speak your truth about it, even if you're in disagreement with other people. But because you're doing it in the context of having the mindfulness practice, you're doing it in a very calm, deliberate way. So it's not that you're getting angry or you want to create an argument with somebody or something, it's just a very calm disagreement that you express and really raise awareness around something else that's more important to you. (Male senior executive and administrator in Canadian healthcare system)

So, it has helped me to notice how I am in relationship and how I come across. It has helped me to continue to refine how I am with others so that I can work better with people. It has helped me to manage conflict with people when there is conflict, better. It's helped me to just kind of have a better sense of my strengths and weaknesses and how to bring that into meetings and working with the team. (Female middle manager in the personal-development industry)

I think another piece that I just thought of is I think I have greater emotional elasticity as a leader because of mindfulness. What I mean by that is I'm more aware now of things that are tweaking me and in the awareness of that, I'm more apt to take a step backwards if I'm kind of feeling out of sorts or something is frustrating or I was caught off-guard or surprised by something. Or on the positive end, being aware of, oh my gosh, wow she—almost everybody who reports to me is a she, so I have two guys out of my 23 people that report, but usually it's a she who I get really kind of energized by if I'm hearing something that is kind of a moment of breakthrough for them or insight or just something they've done that wow, I want to celebrate that, that was awesome, that was great. (Male middle manager in the healthcare industry)

And with mindfulness, you can kind of, you know, when it's present, then you can kind of detect that and be like, "Oh, yeah, I'm just getting angry, and that's actually not a skillful thing to inflict on other people." So I actually want sort of a pause ... Yeah, you actually want to pause and kind of say, "What's a more skillful thing to do here?" Now, you know, I wish I could say I did that all the time, but I still react sometimes. There's still, you know, buttons that people push, but I'm certainly moving in the direction of reducing that ... (Male middle manager and academic researcher)

So through self-awareness again, I take a bigger picture approach, so I'm more open to what they are wanting to achieve and I can see the bigger context of why decisions are made and in direct relationship experiences where superiors I find that I'm more, probably more balanced, more open to discussion as well and having more confidence in myself and belief in my ability as a leader and manager of a group then I can integrate

with persons of a higher authority and I'm not feeling challenged or inferior, that I can see not necessarily as an equal in status or rank but an equal as a person to person kind of thing ... discussing the ideas and then making it happen, so that's been a definite change in me. (Male middle manager and higher education professional)

Thus, mindful leaders are more attuned to their inner worlds through growing self-awareness that makes a positive and powerful difference not only in their formal leadership roles but in all areas of their lives.

Theme 5: Improved Work Relationships

Relationships are the bridges that connect authenticity to influence and value creation.

Leadership is not influence for its own sake; it's influence that makes a difference, that enriches the lives of others. Leadership does not exist in a vacuum. It always operates in context, in relationship.

—Kevin Cashman

Leadership from the Inside Out: Becoming a Leader for Life

The distinction between leader and leadership development is relatively recent and one I find helpful. The emphasis of leader development is on intrapersonal capacities such as identity, self-awareness, and self-regulation. Leadership development includes leader development while expanding into the critical realms of interpersonal relationships, culture, and systems. Healthy work relationships that include successful communication (i.e., mutual understanding) are fundamental to manager-leader effectiveness. The very definition of management—achieving shared outcomes with and through other people—assumes both. However, as manager-leaders and anyone who has worked in organizations knows, neither successful communication nor manager-leader effectiveness can be assumed in today's workplace.

Dysfunctional and contentious work relationships hurt morale and hinder performance at every level of the organization. In contrast, two fundamental characteristics of high-performing organizations are constructive human relationships and honest communication grounded in general trust and positive regard for coworkers, manager-leaders, production or service workers, mission, stakeholders, and the organization overall. Consequently, it is highly significant that the mindful leaders in my 2015 study reported improved interpersonal work relationships at every level—interpersonal (coworkers, direct reports, superiors, and other stakeholders), team, and group, as a developmental result of their mindfulness practice, demonstrated in the following narratives:

Sitting helps me slow down, and I think it has helped me—um—in all my interactions with coworkers, um, so that you don't have, you know, if you feel irritation you feel it first before you react and, ah um, you know, you—if you feel anger, you feel that too, before you react. So, it kind of—I guess for me, it's slowed me down enough to, um, to make those kind of more difficult relationships better or more positive. (Female middle manager in higher education)

So I think that's, I don't know how to quite encapsulate that, but I think maybe remembering a bigger context of my relationship with the direct report and never just being too goal-oriented to remember that there's a relationship happening as well.

(Female middle manager and technical writer)

So the relationships become more collaborative. I think that invitations to be participating in things tend to increase because people see you as telling it like it is but doing it in a

way that's not combative. So I think you'd have to look at each individual relationship, but I think that the relationships tend to grow. (Male senior manager with a Canadian-based hospital)

So it has switched. It has changed a lot of things. I think even with my relationships with people. So, letting go of the blame and how things should be done and really saying, "how can we work together? We all want the same thing?" So, I think I am a little—much more compassionate type of leader now than I was before just because of my own understanding of myself. (Female business owner and former senior healthcare executive)

A male middle manager in the health and wellness industry explained, "But what the practice actually taught me was the importance of interconnection and the power of connecting with other people" and a male middle manager and scientist stated, "Relationships become much more pleasant [laughs] and—yes, very pleasant and actually also more productive, I think."

A male middle manager in the UK retail industry stated, "I think it's helping me work better with people," and a female middle manager with a personal development organization explained, "Yeah, so well, I guess the things that I mentioned, it has helped me to improve relationships with people that I manage."

Thus, active and consistent mindfulness meditation practice facilitates leader and leadership development in powerful and highly relevant ways, enhancing healthy and productive interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Anyone who works (or has ever worked in organizations) knows that healthy and productive interpersonal work relationships greatly impact their workplace motivation, satisfaction, and commitment.

Theme 6: Greater Inner Calm and Peace

There is a criterion by which you can judge whether the thoughts you are thinking and the things you are doing are right for you. The criterion is: Have they brought you inner peace?

—Peace Pilgrim

Although people use the term *spiritual* in different ways, for this book I am using the term to refer to a sense of relatedness or connection to others, life, and all that is and ever shall be (i.e., God, Spirit, Source, Creator, etc.). In addition, the term spiritual includes finding meaning and purpose in a way that contributes or benefits others/life beyond the self.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, Cindy Wigglesworth defines SQ as the capacity to maintain inner calm and peace, regardless of circumstances, internal or external, while also having a sense of relatedness to life in all its diverse expressions. Wigglesworth's definition of SQ strongly resonates with the sixth developmental theme of mindful leaders: greater inner calm and peace. Thus, the findings of my 2015 research complement Wigglesworth's (2012) work as well as a growing body of leadership literature that correlates mindfulness meditation with SQ.

For example, scholar Amishi P. Jha and colleagues (2010) concluded that mindfulness practices helped foster positive moods in military personnel, and scholar Maree Roche and colleagues determined that mindfulness and an individual's positive psychological state might support the type of psychological resiliency leaders need to maintain mental well-being. The narratives of mindful leaders from my 2015 study that further demonstrate this growing inner calm and peace include the following:

It's interesting, through a downsizing, I started practicing formally, approximately 2, 2 and a half years ago, almost 3, in the middle of that time period, we had a major reshuffle

or reorganization by my employer, so my role expanded in size by about 40 to 50% of what it was previously. So we had two smaller departments, the two were merged and became one super department. So we still had the same amount of hours in a day to get the work done, still the same amount of limited resources, however, I found that myself that through mindfulness I'm able to better handle and focus on the different tasks that are coming at me at any given time. I'm able to free my mind to keep that calm atmosphere and a particular focus on the paths [projects] given, and I'm also able to complete more tasks in a more timely manner. (Male middle manager working in higher education in New Zealand)

I think too there's a sense of peace you get when you meditate. It really is a stress reducer and anxiety reducer. And, I don't know if you [have to] do (experience) that necessarily ... but it's a really nice byproduct that I think allows you to be a better leader. (Female middle manager and marketing researcher)

You know, as an educator I hate to use the term "feel better," ... but I do feel better. I feel calmer. I'm trying to not just keep using the same buzz words, but I do—I feel calmer, I feel less stressed, I oftentimes meditate at night and I sleep so much better when I do than when I don't. I literally feel like my heart rate and my blood pressure lowers. I physically feel my heart rate lower, and I just feel, I don't know. I'll use this word. I feel like a conqueror. I feel like I can do anything. (Male senior manager in higher education)

A female senior manager in information technology explained, "Oh, there is a much bigger sense of calm for me because there is time. There isn't as much frantic energy

being expended. It is a lot more—softer. It's not a hard push. There is an acceptance, a peace around it that I know the resolution will come. Let's just give it the time and the opportunity and staying with it.”

And I think with this practice you become more aware of things that really matter to you about decisions being made and you speak your truth about it, even if you're in disagreement with other people. But because you're doing it in the context of having the mindfulness practice, you're doing it in a very calm, deliberate way. So it's not that you're getting angry or you want to create an argument with somebody or something, it's just a very calm disagreement that you express and really raise awareness around something else that's more important to you. I think that that is a very fulfilling thing to do so that from the standpoint of being that person in that chair in the orchestra, you're putting your heart into each note that you're playing and it's coming out in the music that's actually occurring. It doesn't mean that the decision will be changed, but you're more integrated in terms of what you stand for. (Male senior executive in Canadian healthcare sector)

Perhaps, we can borrow from Peace Pilgrim's quotation at the beginning of this section and extrapolate that the criterion by which you can determine if a developmental practice is right for you is, has it brought you greater calm and inner peace? For the 20 mindful leaders in this 2015 study, the answer is *yes* and perhaps unbeknownst to them, all the while cultivating SQ.

Theme 7: Greater Self–Other Empathy and Compassion

The struggle of my life created empathy—I could relate to pain, being abandoned, having people not love me.

—Oprah Winfrey

We need the compassion and the courage to change the conditions that support our suffering.

Those conditions are things like ignorance, bitterness, negligence, clinging, and holding on.

—Sharon Salzberg

Monica Worline and Jane Dutton’s (2017) work on compassion in the workplace offers a helpful lens from which to think about the significance of our seventh developmental theme of mindful leaders: self–other empathy and compassion. They equate empathy with compassion, the feeling of “suffering with” another person in a way that emotionally connects and elicits compassionate response. It is important to note that self-compassion is an essential element of empathy and compassion toward others, as it is extremely difficult to give to others that which you do not give yourself.

Worline and Dutton’s research indicates that employees who experience empathy and compassion from organizational leaders and the organizational context of culture, structure, and norms feel seen and affirmed in their pain and thus bounce back more quickly with increasing satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, employees have more constructive emotions in the workplace while exhibiting more supportive behavior toward other stakeholders. Therefore, the growing empathy and compassion of mindful leaders act as a positive contagion in the workplace on the employee and organizational levels, as illustrated in the following narratives.

Another thing is just a kind of emotional empathy. Like I think I'm much better able to read emotional states. I think I'm still working on that, but a lot of times I can very quickly pick up on, "Oh, this person is distraught right now. I can't really come down on them about some technical question. I need to, like, address their personal issues." And, so that empathy is, again, something that builds very naturally. (Male middle manager and professor)

I tend to be quite self-critical and mindfulness helps me be more—well, forgiving sometimes, to say, "okay, this is not, you are not living up to your own expectations," but try not to be so, so, hard on myself with that", and say, "okay, well, you are trying, you know what you tried to do and that is your effort and if, if you are not happy with it, okay, not happy with it but—work goes on and life goes on" and it, yeah, maybe be more forgiving would be a good expression. (Male middle manager and production manager in Switzerland)

I've used mindful self-compassion prior to some very difficult conversations that I've had to have with team members. Sometimes performance improvement kinds of conversations. And looking at how can I as a leader be as empathetic as possible when I'm delivering, say, a complaint that's been shared by a patient or a family member or even an employee to an employee kind of thing. (Male middle manager in the healthcare industry)

It is different now. I mean now, it is part of my life and I have gained so much wisdom along the way and I have noticed so much about myself which helps me see in that in

other people. I can see when other people are stuck in the stress cycle and I am not taking it personally. I am able to bring some compassion to them and some kindness and help calm them even though they don't know I am doing that. So we come to a space where we can problem solve together. (Female entrepreneur and former healthcare senior executive)

We may not associate empathy and compassion with important qualities of organizational managers-leaders or for our workplaces. However, the mindful leaders in my 2015 study, as well as a growing body of research including the work of Worline and Dutton, indicate differently. These two lines of scholarship—mindful and compassionate leadership—demonstrate that being able to “stand in another’s shoes” and see as they see and feel as they feel, enhances the subjective states of both the manager-leader and the direct report, as it relates to how they feel toward one another and toward their organization. Furthermore, as highlighted above, such positive inner states ripple outward and favorably impact the larger organizational culture, climate, and performance.

Theme 8: Deeper Listening and Being Present

Most of us have had the experience of listening to someone and realizing how different they are from us. We don't share any of their experiences, values, or opinions. But surprisingly, at the end of listening at them, we feel more connected to them.

—Margaret Wheatley
Turning to One Another

The eighth developmental theme of mindful leaders is the experience of deeper listening and being present, highly aligned with interpersonal developmental themes: integrated/balanced leadership, improved work relationships, and greater empathy and compassion. As highlighted in

the section on developmental Theme 5, effective communication or reaching mutual understanding is fundamental to productive work relationships, positive employee morale, and organizational performance. Deeper listening and being present take effective communication to the next level because, for many of us, listening means waiting quietly and patiently until our turn to talk and make our case or share our story.

In stark contrast, deeper listening and being present mean something profoundly different, as communicated in the narrative of our mindful leaders. Deeper listening and being present requires the listener to set aside one's internal commentary and agenda to sincerely and intently listen to what the speaker is communicating in and through words, but also through nonverbal communication (e.g., body language, tone, and pace). Furthermore, the listener drops some of his/her protective armor that is so common in the workplace and opens his/her heart to the shared humanity with the other person.

I guess also, like, being kinder to people. That's also coming up. Although, again, something I'm still very much working on. When I just noticed, like, today I felt like I spent some time with a student and, you know, rather than trying to rush him through the problems that he was having, I actually sat there and listened to him and, you know, tried to not give away too much—this was a homework problem he was struggling with—not give away too much, but still, you know, assist, and that's always a tricky balance. (Male middle manager and professor)

I think that if I had one management skill that I have developed that's key, it's listening, and I tended to talk, and I still probably do more than I'd like to, you know, tend to talk more than I listen. (Female senior executive in the healthcare industry)

Being able to listen more or being able to understand where people [have] disagreements, you know. I work at a place that has a lot of cultural things and cultural barriers because, my new place, our office is in France. We cover all the Americas, and there are a lot of cultural barriers to be able to listen and let people say, letting people speak and seeing their differences and being able bridge that gap. It is a little bit easier [now]. It's not things I didn't know to do. It is just I know to do them better. (Male middle manager and lawyer)

I think the biggest benefit I've noticed is the willingness to ... listen and to really you know pay attention and to you know not get lost in my own thoughts and um, react. I think listening which is an important aspect of leadership is um, was the biggest benefit for me. (Male middle manager and physician)

But what I noticed was that it made me aware of how much I hadn't been listening as much as I thought I had. And how much being driven by kind of busy schedules and kind of high stress environment and really sort of challenging, real sort of challenges and challenging goals, really made me not listen as well as I could have and also not develop—even though I saw these folks every single day—not develop the sort of day to day organic communication that would have really kind of helped prevent certain issues that arose, certain misunderstandings that arose as well, and really reduce everyone's stress level to a much greater extent. Since then I really see the power of how just basic communication, asking people how their weekend was, really listening for the answer, not just asking for advice or feedback in a formal setting but really how much more comfortable feel in an informal setting and that day to day openness that wasn't always

there before the practice helped me just kind of be more open moment to moment. (Male middle manager in the health and wellness industry)

And I think that most of my employees would tell you that they've noticed a shift over the last three years and a shift towards those directions of my listening more, of my asking more questions and then shutting up. (Female senior executive in the health care industry)

Although we often pay lip service to listening in our models of the communication process, the norms for many of us, inside and outside our organizations, emphasize speaking over listening. However, our mindful leaders remind us of the power of deep listening and presence that becomes available with enhanced self-awareness and greater compassion.

Theme 9: Personal/Professional Crisis

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity.

—John F. Kennedy

Transformations are often found to follow learning cycles initiated by disorienting dilemmas, in other words, acute internal personal crises.

—Adapted from Jack Mezirow
Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress

As emphasized in the management literature, employees frequently resist organizational change for a variety of reasons that include fear of the unknown. As we all know from our own lives, resistance to change also occurs on the individual level as well as the organizational level. Consequently, individuals and collectives tend to be more open to learning and growth

opportunities when they face personal or professional crisis. When a personal and professional crisis propels a person/leader to move into unknown territory in and through constructive action, it can serve as a transformative learning opportunity.

Transformative learning occurs when radically new experiences induce a tectonic shift in perspective in the way one views him/herself, others, and the world. Long-time leadership scholar and author Warren Bennis refers to these types of transformative events as crucibles. He and coauthor Robert Thomas (2002) wrote, in their seminal article, that highly effective leaders are the people who can find meaning in and learn from their most painful and difficult crucibles. Such leaders emerge from the ashes more confident, strong, and more committed to the things that deeply matter to them.

Effective leaders who use their crucibles as learning opportunities have growth mindsets. In her work on mindsets, Carol Dweck (2016) makes the distinction between fixed and growth mindsets. Leaders with fixed mindsets view themselves and others as being born with a limited amount of capacity and potential for learning. Thus, the emphasis is on protecting their image and proving themselves. From the fixed mindset, people fear failure and avoid it at all costs.

In stark contrast, leaders with growth mindsets hold the view that they and others can build on the capacities with which they were born. They see failure as a natural and welcomed dimension of learning and development. Leaders with a growth mindset also know that success does not simply happen to them. They celebrate the notion that success (as they define it) requires passion, effort, training, and, yes, failure. The stories of our mindful leaders illustrate the growth mindset.

At the time, I was really struggling with depression and anxiety, and it had been recommended for me to take that [Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction] class. And the unexpected side effect was the really powerful impact of helping me create a daily mindfulness practice, which for me is a combination of meditation, daily taking time out for just mindfulness moments, trying to do things in general, everything I do, more mindfully, being more aware of it. (Female middle manager and marketing researcher)

Well, I didn't really know what else to do. It was kind of like, I mean, there was some curiosity about it, but I was also in a place where I felt like, "you know, I'll kind of try whatever to see if I can, you know, kind of get back to normal," whatever that is supposed to mean. And so it was a very emotional time, and I was like, "Okay, well, I'll try this thing and see what happens." After that, of course, I learned a lot more and saw kind of how things worked a little better. (Male middle manager and professor)

I sometimes jokingly say when people ask me about this—there is nothing like a life crisis to get you interested in meditation! I do feel there was a bit of that as well. There was a sense that I had gone through some difficult times and this interest had always been there in a way. Well, maybe you could say mysticism and philosophy and at the right time with an opportunity and I took it. It was a mixture of being in a life situation I was ready for and the opportunity was there—but it was a viable path for me to go. (Middle manager and production manager in Switzerland)

So, I thought, "well, I better take that stress management class (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction)." I said, "because I have tried everything else and now I am really up against

the wall and I have to do this so let me take the class.” So, I went to take the class. And you know, I was in my little business suit and my heels and my hair was all done and I got to the class and I realized after the first class it was, a meditation (laugh) and had someone told me this was going to be a meditation class, I don’t think there was anyway I would have taken it because it would have been, you know, too out there for me. So, I said, “I don’t care what it is I am going to take it because I am desperate, and I am just going to do whatever they tell me.” So, I took the class. It was 8 weeks and it was based in mindfulness. And at the end of the 8-weeks, it was very interesting, I had to deliver a large presentation. Now, I had done a few before and this one was to 100 directors and usually I would clam up and not be able to take it and would have that typical (garbled tongue tied reaction) and with this presentation I was laughing and it was an excellent presentation and I was explaining things to people and I was very animated and I realized that this was so different than how it had been in the past and I knew it was because of the mindfulness. (Small business owner and former senior health care executive)

But in terms of my more recent delving into it (mindfulness), it’s been maybe about 3 years, 2 and a half to 3 years where I’ve been seriously getting into meditation, and to be perfectly honest with you, what prompted me was my wife’s illness and being able to get myself to a place of being able to deal with and handle that. The self-awareness, the centeredness, the calm, the ability to sort of control the uncontrolled, I think were the more attractive things about it and just not only that, the relieving of stress was one of the things that attracted me to it, ‘cause I was undergoing a lot of stress and I felt like I needed to get a handle on it. I exercise, I walk, I do those things, but you know, I felt that

there was a, maybe a better way to attain that, I think, so yeah. (Male senior manager and administer in higher education)

I went through a crisis period about two, two and a half years ago and a little notice popped up on mindfulness saying that there was a meditation class. Well, knowing that I had some interest to learn [meditation], I went along to this meditation class. So that was essentially my starting point was, it was almost like I don't know if you'd say I tripped over it or whether it was a potential, but one of those moments where something happens to you when it's supposed to. ... And, I've noticed changes within myself in the way that I lead my team and the way that I interact with others, particularly in my own self-confidence and self-belief and the way that I interact with others as well has definitely changed through the mindfulness. (Male middle manager in public higher education in New Zealand)

Thus, leaders yearning to be and become more self-aware and effective turn their crises into opportunities for constructive action. By choosing growth mindsets over fixed mindsets, they open themselves to unforeseen possibilities that alter their lives in powerful and profound ways. So, next time you face a personal or professional crisis, follow the lead of mindful leaders who turned their crises into opportunities: turn inward and experiment with mindfulness meditation and other transformative practices.

Theme 10: More Tolerance for Ambiguity

The goal is to live a full, productive life even with all that ambiguity. No matter what happens, whether the cancer never flares up again or whether you die, the important thing is that the days that you have had you will have lived.

—Gilda Radner

How can we relax and have a genuine, passionate relationship with the fundamental uncertainty, the groundlessness of being human?

—Pema Chödrön

Living beautifully with uncertainty and change

In 1989, business scholar Peter B. Vaill coined the phrase, “permanent white water” to describe the changing business environment. Recently, the management and leadership literature adopted the military acronym VUCA to describe the global environment in which organizations operate. Furthermore, management guru Gary Hamel frequently reminds his audiences that the “nature of change is changing.”

Consequently, a growing body of leadership literature emphasizes the importance for leaders to enhance their tolerance for uncertainty or ambiguity. For example, leadership scholars Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky (2009) propose that adaptive leadership is critical, given the reality of VUCA. Heifetz and colleagues argue that “diagnostic failure” is at the root of humanity’s inability to solve our most pressing challenges. They argue that leaders are approaching humanity’s unprecedented global challenges as technical challenges; challenges with knowable solutions. However, as evident in the repeated failure of technical solutions, the challenges humanity faces are adaptive challenges. Adaptive challenges are beyond current individual and collective knowledge, capacity, and expertise. Therefore, they require higher

psychological maturity, as well as capacities and competencies that many, if not most, leaders have not yet developed.

This developmental gap makes leaders and the organizations they lead vulnerable to costly missteps, performance declines, and legitimacy losses. Although the literature purporting the necessary competencies for effective global leadership is vast, three comprehensive categories, highly related to the capacity to tolerate uncertainty, frequently emerge: perception management, relationship management, and self-management. I explore these further in the next section. Thus, in summary, a growing body of mindfulness scholars have indicated positive correlations between these three comprehensive categories and mindfulness-based interventions, which my research on mindful leaders supports.

And I think in the past I probably would have made a much quicker perhaps more decisive decision in the moment and not embraced that time of interim or uncertainty. So I think mindfulness allowed me to do that and to say “it’s okay not to have all the answers right now,” and let it kind of be. (Male middle manager in the health care industry)

I think embracing that sense of adventure, that sense of adventure and sometimes adrenaline that I had been avoiding [with] people sometimes ... because I associated it with maybe danger or risk, but now being much more comfortable living on that leaning-toward perspective as opposed to kind of leaning on the safe side of the fence. (Male middle manager in the health and wellness industry)

Well, I think that I'd say that your capacity or my capacity to tolerate ambiguity has gone up. My capacity to tolerate many different ways to get something done has gone up, relative to versus speed and efficiency. (Male senior executive in the healthcare industry)

Yeah. I guess the only other thing that I can think of with relation to mindfulness for me is that over the last year my organization's gone through a major merger with another health system, and in the midst of that there's been a lot of change across the entire organization, especially in the leadership structure. And there's been a lot of uncertainty over the last year as to positions and scope of positions. ... And so I really feel like over the last year mindfulness has helped me keep a much more even keel as we've gone through this massive change. (Middle manager and administrator in healthcare)

Thus, mindful leaders experience a growing tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity that supports them not only in their work roles, but in all areas of their lives. The VUCA environment appears to be here to stay for the foreseeable future, perhaps intensifying. Therefore, the critical decision we each face is whether we will continue to attempt to navigate the white waters of our lives in the boats we have or build stronger boats.

Takeaways for Manager-Leaders

These ten developmental themes of mindful leaders increase our understanding of how leaders experience the impact of mindfulness meditation on their growth as leaders. Furthermore, they provide insight and guidance for individual leaders and organizations on practices that foster leader development. Although one can easily dismiss mindfulness as the latest fad in leadership, the mounting body of scientific literature supports a correlation between mindfulness

practices and developmental benefits for nonclinical populations, challenging such a position (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2: Supportive and Complementary Research on Developmental Potential of Mindfulness Meditation

Developmental Theme	Self-Regulation	Self-Awareness	Improved Work Relationships/ Greater Self-Other Empathy/Deeper Listening	Greater Inner Calm & Peace
Supportive & Complementary Research on Developmental Potential of Mindfulness Meditation	Karssiens et al. (2014)	Karssiens et al. (2014)	Boyatzis and McKee (2013),	Chiesa and Serretti (2010)
		Bishop et al. (2004)	Goldman Schuyler (2010),	Hülshager et al. (2012)
		Boyatzis and McKee (2013)	Newberg (2011)	Jain et al. (2007)
		Brown and Ryan, (2003)	Wallace and Shapiro (2006)	Keune and Perczel Forintos (2010),
		Gonzalez, (2012)		Jha et al. (2010)
		Ruderman et al. (2014)		Roche et al. (2014)

Source: Frizzell, D. A., Hoon, S., and Banner, D.K. (2015). *The Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Leaders Practicing Mindfulness Meditation: A Phenomenological Investigation* (Doctoral dissertation). Note: Please see Notes section for full references.

As highlighted above (Theme 10), although such findings are promising for all populations, they are particularly significant for leaders, organizations, and our world, in that several qualities associated with regular mindfulness meditation correlate with essential competencies for effective 21st-century global leadership (e.g., perception management, self-management, and relationship management).

Perception management refers to leaders' awareness of their lens of interpretation as well as the capacity to see and value situations from perspectives other than their own. Perception management is a dimension of cognitive maturity highlighted in previous chapters. It is a metamechanism or overriding mechanism of mindfulness. Perception management strongly

relates to SQ, discussed in earlier chapters as well. As you may recall, SQ refers to the capacity to see the interconnectedness of all life.

Self-management, an element of EQ and SQ refers to leaders' capacity to monitor and regulate their thoughts, speech, and actions. Self-management also refers to SQ or the capacity to maintain equanimity, regardless of external circumstances. Relationship management, also an element of EQ, refers to a leader's capacity to understand and constructively engage the wide span of diverse interpersonal relationships characteristic of many organizational management-leadership roles.

According to the growing body of research, mindfulness practices may simply foster, or, according to U.S. philosopher Ken Wilber (2000), accelerate the innate human capacity for development, thereby expanding one's ability for perception management, self-management, and relationship management. As the pace of change and unprecedented global challenges facing organizations and humanity increases, many leaders find themselves developmentally unready to effectively respond to the 21st-century global environment. Furthermore, current approaches to leader development fall short of supporting the type of transformative learning required as the demand for transformative-leader development also increases. Consequently, mindful meditation and other transformative practices deserve serious consideration by leaders and organizational decision makers.

However, transformative practices are not panaceas or quick fixes for leaders or organizations, nor are they easy "do when you please" activities, as they require courage and a long-term commitment to regular self-observation and self-honesty, which includes facing the shadow sides, dark and golden, of the psyche. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the Eastern approach to mindfulness, with roots in Buddhism, is part of a comprehensive, transformative system

known as the Noble Eightfold Path. Although one does not need to be or become a Buddhist to practice mindfulness, the Eightfold Path includes three general categories of practice, ethical conduct (right or skillful speech, action, and livelihood), mental discipline (right or skillful effort, concentration, and mindfulness), and wisdom (right or skillful understanding and thinking; Gunaratana, 2012).

Therefore, without consideration of and commitment to these other dimensions, the transformative potential of mindfulness meditation and other transformative practices is limited. The key is to find a comprehensive system of self-transformation that resonates with you and to sincerely experiment with its ideas and practices yourself to get a direct taste of its transformative potential. Once you find a supportive path or system, then make a long-term commitment to work with the ideas and practices consistently. To assist with the exploration of potential transformative practices and paths, I briefly introduce the transformative practices associated with three ancient-wisdom traditions of the West, then provide an overview of three universal or nonreligious systems of self-transformation: The Fourth Way, Integral Life Practice (ILP), and Psychosynthesis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Three Systems of Self-Transformation: An Overview and an Invitation

Meditation is central to many systems of self-transformation, including ancient-wisdom traditions not only of the East but also the West. However, meditation techniques are not the only transformative practices associated with these ancient wisdom traditions (see Table 5-1). By ancient-wisdom traditions, I am referring to the inner or esoteric traditions associated with the world's religions, in contrast to the public or exoteric expressions of the world's religious traditions with which we are most familiar. Despite great diversity in and among the ancient-wisdom traditions, they all share an emphasis on the transformation of the inner world (i.e., mental, emotional, and spiritual) of the seeker. Thus, they all offer paths to self-actualization and self-realization, or realization of one's potential and ultimate identity and union with God/Creator/Spirit.

Table 5-1. Examples of Transformative Practices Associated with Ancient-Wisdom Traditions of the West

Wisdom Tradition	Examples of Transformative Practices Associated with Wisdom Traditions of the West				
Christianity-Inner	<i>Lectio divina</i> (sacred reading)	Centering Prayer (meditation)	Contemplation	Prayer	Service
Islam-Sufism	Chanting	Prayer	Breathing Exercises	Music & Dancing/Whirling	Meditation
Judaism- Kabbalah	Study of the Torah, Talmud, the Zohar and other sacred texts	Meditation	Prayer	Pilgrimages to Holy Places	Shabbat/Sabbath

Sources: Christianity-Inner: Amis, R. (2003). *A different Christianity: Early Christian esotericism and modern thought*. Chicago, IL: Praxis Institute Press, Smoley, R. (2002). *Inner Christianity: A guide to the esoteric tradition*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, and Wikipedia, Esoteric Christianity; **Islam-Sufism:** Fadiman, J., & Frager, R. (1999). *Essential Sufism: Selections from the saints and sages*. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins. Helminski, K. E. (2000). *The knowing heart: A Sufi path of transformation*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, and Wikipedia, Sufism. **Judaism-Kabbalah:** Scholem, G. G., & Werblowsky, R. J. Z. (1990). *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Sherwin, B. L. (2006). *Kabbalah: An introduction to Jewish mysticism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, and Wikipedia, Kabbalah. **All:** Luke, Timothy (2008). *Mystical tradition: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* [MP3]. Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses. Spirituality & Practice [website], <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/>

Given that I highlighted mindfulness meditation and Buddhism throughout the book, I offer this summary of the transformative practices associated with the ancient-wisdom traditions of the West to acknowledge that they are and have been available to Western seekers since the tradition's beginnings, albeit unbeknown to the masses. The foci of this chapter, however, are the transformative practices associated with three contemporary and universal, or religiously neutral, systems of self-transformation: The Fourth Way, Integral Life Practice, and Psychosynthesis. In presenting this material, I claim no mastery of it. However, I am a student-practitioner of wellness, personal development, and self-transformation (including the three nonreligious systems presented here and Buddhism), and I have "walked an inner path" for over 25 years, albeit very imperfectly. Furthermore, as I highlighted in the preface, the powerfully deep changes that have occurred in my life since starting a regular meditation practice in 2010 and seriously working with the teachings presented here, are sources of my motivation for writing this book. I yearn to share what I have learned thus far with those longing to bring more of their potential to humanity's most pressing and urgent challenges in these difficult and dark times of the early 21st century.

Consequently, I will introduce you to transformative practices associated with three contemporary systems while providing a short summary of these systems in hope that at least one might stimulate your appetite for further investigation. Let's begin with the Fourth Way.

Table 5-2. Transformative Practices Associated with Contemporary Systems of Self-

Transformation

System	Core Transformative Practices				
The Fourth Way	Self-Observation Exercises: Divided attention, internal–external considering, negativity, multiplicity, and nonidentification.				
Integral Life Practice (ILP)	Physical Exercises (e.g., aerobic exercise, yoga, martial arts, balanced diet, etc.)	Mental Practices (e.g., reading, studying, writing, journaling, pursuing a degree, etc.)	Spiritual Practices (e.g., meditation, prayer, worship, song, chanting, etc.)	Shadow Work (e.g., dream work, psychotherapy, journaling, etc.)	Optional life modules include ethics, work, relationships, creativity, soul.
Psychosynthesis	Awareness Cultivation/ Self-observation Exercises	Imagery/ Visualization Exercises	Disidentification Exercises	Meditation	Free Drawing Exercises

Note: Not intended to be a complete list of practices associated with these systems/schools.

The Fourth Way

Brief background. The Fourth Way is a term used to refer to a body of teachings and practices with roots in the work of G. I. Gurdjieff (1866?–1949; Nicoll, 1984). Gurdjieff, born in Armenia, is a bit of an enigma and controversial figure, but writings about his life consistently report that he studied various schools of religious and philosophical thought as a youth and traveled extensively as a young adult throughout the East (reportedly areas of Central Asia and the Middle East) in search of spiritual truths. He then returned to Russia and began sharing what he had learned and experienced. He developed The Fourth Way as a path of self-development and transformation that integrated singular paths of the body (the fakirs of Sufism), mind (the yogis of Hinduism), and emotions (the monks of Christianity) that he studied and encountered in his travels.

Shortly after he returned to Russia, Gurdjieff met P. D. Ouspensky who became one of his most well-known pupils until they parted ways in 1918. Ouspensky then relocated to England

and became a teacher of The Fourth Way in his own right, through lectures and writings.

Gurdjieff, whose life was greatly impacted by social upheavals and military conflicts (revolutions and World Wars I & II) traveled and taught in Germany, England, and France throughout the 1920–1940s and visited the United States during that period as well. He had two serious and life-threatening auto accidents during this period but recovered from both. Gurdjieff died in France in 1949.

Overview of the System. While the most recent study and practice of the three systems covered in this chapter, I find The Fourth Way teachings powerful and highly supportive of self-transformation. Similar to the other two systems of self-transformation highlighted here, The Fourth Way posits that the majority of people live in mechanical or sleep states. Consequently, most of humanity reside in lives of quiet desperation, filled with suffering, and destructive habitual patterns of thinking, speaking, and acting. According to The Fourth Way and many systems of self-transformation, this “fundamental infirmity of man” referenced by the founder of Psychosynthesis, Roberto Assagioli (see below for section on Psychosynthesis), is so because we do not remember who we are and why we are here because of longstanding dysfunctional patterns, particularly overidentification, negativity, and internal considering; blocking self-remembering (or self-awareness).

Overidentification is a fundamental obstacle to self-remembering and occurs whenever we lose ourselves to an identity such as a belief, characteristic, demographic (e.g., gender or political affiliation), personality, or role. Overidentification occurs so unconsciously and quickly that most of us are completely unaware when (which is most of the time), we are stuck in overidentification. Indications of being in a state of overidentification include feelings of

defensiveness, anger, resentment, self-pity, and self-indignation. When overidentified, one can easily feel they are in a constant state of attack, which locks us into a toxic state of negativity.

Negativity refers to thoughts, emotions, words, and actions that constrict our minds and hearts and cause harm to ourselves and others. Negativity is so toxic because it infects our inner and outer environments and locks us into destructive patterns. Negativity closely aligns with overidentification and internal considering. Internal considering refers to a degree of self-absorption and narcissism that sees life only from the impact events will have on oneself, with little or no concern for the impacts events may have on others or our planet. The consequences of living in a state of mechanicalness and sleep include being trapped in overidentification, negativity, and internal considering include misery, suffering, sense of disconnection from oneself, others, and God, loss of energy and power, and ultimately, violence.

Core Practices. To begin to awaken from sleep and cultivate self-awareness requires self-observation, the main transformative practice associated with The Fourth Way. Writings and teachings of The Fourth Way offer numerous practical exercises to cultivate self-observation, including an activity frequently referred to as “divided attention.” Divided attention instructs aspirants to periodically place attention on their inner experience and outer experience of a select phenomenon. For example, as a practitioner enters a doorway, he/she would place attention on an aspect of their internal experience (e.g., thoughts, bodily sensations, or feelings/emotions) as well as an aspect of the external experience (as experienced by the five senses). Repeated practice of such exercises builds one’s capacity for self-awareness such that over time, the practitioner can eventually use divided attention in more challenging life circumstances (e.g., an interpersonal conflict) thereby increasing the likelihood of constructive social interactions and outcomes.

Other self-observation exercises such as “stop” and working with internal considering directs seekers to notice negative or self-absorbed states along with any harm to themselves and others that may result. Essential to all self-observation exercises is an objective and nonjudgmental attitude toward all noticings. A nonjudgmental attitude toward one’s noticings allows a healthy disidentification from them as well as an expanding psychological space in which to choose more constructive states from which thoughts and actions can arise. Over time, sensitivity to and dislike of negative states and attraction to positive states act as motivational forces for ongoing relinquishing of lower or negative states in favor of more positive states.

Psychosynthesis

Brief background. Psychosynthesis is a holistic approach to psychology developed by Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974). Assagioli (2000) was a private person who preferred to focus attention on his professional work rather than his personal life. Thus, little biographical information is available on his life, particularly in English.

However, the biographical information available indicates that Assagioli was born in Italy as Roberto Marco Grego. Leone Grego (?–1890), Assagioli’s biological father, died when Roberto was a young child. Assagioli’s mother, Elena Kaula (1863–1925), remarried Dr. Alessandro Emanuele Assagioli shortly thereafter. During his youth, Assagioli was exposed to diverse languages, art, music, religions, and philosophies. Reportedly, he could speak 18 languages by the time he was 18 years of age. His family moved to Florence in 1904 to support Assagioli’s decision to study medicine.

He completed his medical degree in 1910, then traveled to Switzerland to complete training in psychiatry under the tutelage of Eugen Bleuler. While in Switzerland, Assagioli befriended C. G. Jung whose work he viewed as most compatible with his views on the human

psyche. Upon completing his psychiatric training, he started the first psychoanalytic practice in Italy. As part of his medical degree, he completed a dissertation on the topic, *Psychosynthesis*, which introduced his ideas and provided a critique of psychoanalysis. Throughout his life, Assagioli published numerous articles on psychoanalysis and psychosynthesis and three books.

Assagioli closed his psychiatry practice to serve in World War I as an officer-doctor. After his WWI service, he met and married his wife of 40 years, Nella Ciapetti, and they had one son who died around 30 years of age from complications related to tuberculosis. His mother died in 1925 and shortly thereafter Assagioli founded his first organization in Rome, Italy, dedicated to advancing psychotherapy and psychological training. The organization was forced to close by the Fascist government of Mussolini around 1938 when it arrested and imprisoned Assagioli for his Jewish background, humanitarianism, and internationalism.

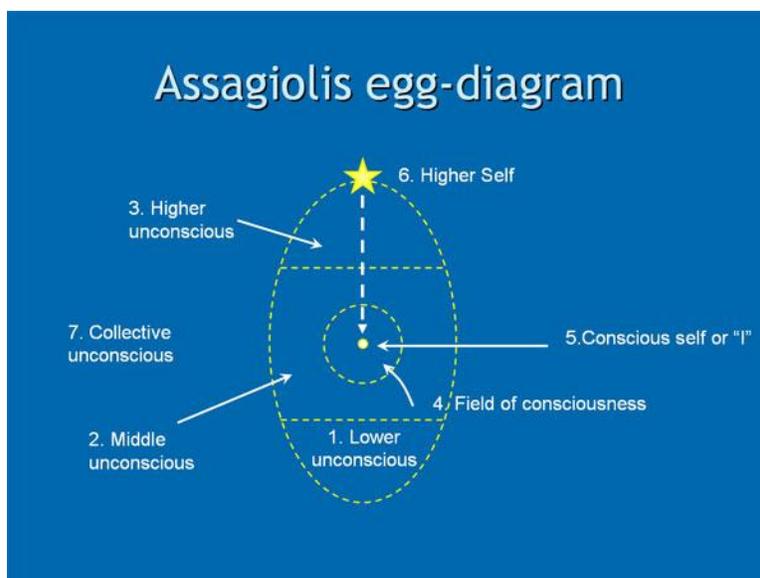
However, Assagioli reportedly turned his time in prison into an opportunity for transformation as he focused on his inner world, including sitting hours every day in meditation and writing about his experiences. After release from prison, Assagioli and his family were forced to live underground, as he was a target of Nazi aggression. Reportedly, the Nazis plundered and destroyed the Assagioli family farm in Florence during this time. Obviously, World War II was an extremely difficult time for him and his family.

While he lost his son to illness associated with the evils of WWII, thankfully, Assagioli survived and afterwards revived his organization, the Istituto di Psicopsintesi (Institute of Psychosynthesis) in Florence, where he worked and lived until his death in 1974. Between 1946 and 1977, Assagioli lived a highly productive life, advancing the ideas of psychosynthesis through his writings, lectures, teaching, and private counseling work. In addition, several

psychosynthesis-oriented organizations and conferences began with many of them still in operation today.

Overview of the System. Psychosynthesis is a holistic approach to psychology that incorporates psychoanalysis but significantly transcends it by emphasizing health, development, and spirituality. Assagioli illustrated his view of the human psyche in his “egg-diagram” (see Figure 5-1) with seven elements:

Figure 5-1. Assagioli’s Egg Diagram



Source: Kenneth Sorensen, <https://kennethsorensen.dk/en/>. Used with permission.

1. The Lower Unconscious

The lower unconscious, according to Assagioli, contains the basic psychological activities that conduct the operative and intelligent coordination of the body and bodily functions. This dimension of the psyche also holds one’s foundational drives and animalistic urges, as well as emotionally intense established thematic patterns (i.e., psychological complexes), dark dreams and fantasies, negative unregulated parapsychological processes, and

some pathological disturbances such as paranoid delusions, uncontrollable urges, obsessions, and phobias.

2. The Middle Unconscious

The middle unconscious, according to Assagioli, includes psychological dimensions comparable to waking consciousness with ready access to it. Life experiences are integrated, and standard cognitive and creative intelligence activated in a type of psychological incubation before entering conscious awareness.

3. The Higher Unconscious or Superconscious

The higher unconscious or superconscious is the region that holds our highest inspirations, aspirations, and intuitions for ourselves, humanity, and our world. This realm is also the source of our higher emotions such unconditional love and higher intelligences. It also holds the deeper experiences of insight, contemplation, and bliss, as well as potentials for higher spiritual experiences and psychic abilities.

4. The Field of Consciousness

For Assagioli, the field of consciousness, a term he thought useful but not quite precise, referred to the part of our personality of which we are conscious, including the thoughts, bodily sensations, emotions, desires, and impulses we are able to see and evaluate.

5. The Conscious Self or “I”

The conscious self or “I” is the term Assagioli used to refer to the “the point of pure-awareness,” not to be confused with the field of consciousness highlighted above, which refers to the content of experience. The conscious self or “I” refers to the experiencer. He compared the “I” to a projector light and field of consciousness to a screen onto which images are projected.

6. The Higher Self

Unlike Freud's psychoanalysis, which only includes a lower unconscious, Assagioli's psychosynthesis includes the higher self or soul depicted above the conscious self in the egg diagram. According to Assagioli, one can experience the higher self through the use of psychological methods such as meditation.

7. The Collective Unconscious

Assagioli's collective unconscious, similar to Jung's conceptualization of the term, refers to universal, nonpersonal common forms or archetypes that surround and influence us on a collective level. Assagioli distinguished between primitive archaic forms and higher, progressive forces of a more spiritual nature.

Although not depicted in Assagioli's original egg diagram (though some contemporary illustrations do include it), another key element of psychosynthesis is the concept of subpersonalities. Subpersonalities, similar to Jung's persona, refers to parts or formed habit patterns in the human psyche, conscious and unconscious, that we repeatedly express in our lives. For the healthy person, subpersonalities are conscious and in the field of self-awareness and self-regulation. In psychosynthesis, subpersonalities may reside in the lower, middle, or higher unconscious, unlike Jung's persona or false self. Additional fundamental concepts of psychosynthesis, which highlight stages of self-realization, include self-knowledge, self-control, disidentification, unifying center, and psychosynthesis, as the peak stage in his model (see Table 5-3).

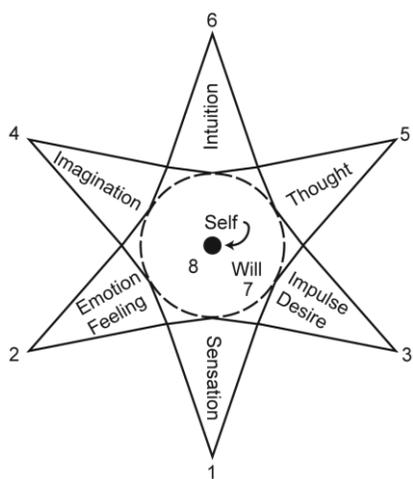
Disidentification refers to the necessity of separating oneself (the conscious I) from overidentification with everything outside or beyond oneself. Overidentification can happen any time we identify with an aspect of our life experience such as a subpersonality, our ethnicity, fear, anxiety, or a role to such an extent that it dominates our lives. Thus, healing and growth

opportunities lie in seeing when and where one overidentifies and, with the help of exercises and practices, severing the control of the overidentification on oneself or “I.”

Over time, former objects of overidentification can be healthily integrated into the middle unconscious and accessed more intentionally. The unifying center refers to the discovery or creation of an ideal around which one can reach or reorganize one’s life. Psychosynthesis, in addition to referring to Assagioli’s entire approach to psychotherapy, refers to the peak of the developmental process that establishes a new personality around a primary unifying center: one that is “coherent, organized, and unified” (2000, p. 23).

Consequently, personal will (the Will) is a highly significant concept in psychosynthesis such that Assagioli dedicated a book on the topic entitled, *The Act of Will*. The will is an element of Assagioli’s Star Diagram of Six Psychological Functions (see Figure 5-2), which he developed later in his life to complement the egg diagram of the psyche. Lamenting the state of psychology in 1958, Assagioli is quoted as stating, “After losing its soul, psychology lost its will, and only then its mind and senses” (2007, Foreword).

Figure 5-2. Assagioli’s Star Diagram of Six Psychological Functions



Source: Wikipedia Foundation. <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/79/Star-diagram.png>

In referring to the will, Assagioli wrote, “who and what are we if not willers? By our very nature we ‘will,’ whether consciously or unconsciously, whether in a healthy or dysfunctional way” (2007, Foreword). Assagioli proposed that healthy, mature adult human beings have wills that are strong, skillful, and good. By strong will, Assagioli meant the awareness and intentional use of will for living a rich and full life. By skillful will, Assagioli meant the capacity to obtain desired results with the least amount of effort; and by good will, Assagioli meant will applied in service to constructive action for oneself and others.

Furthermore, Assagioli held the view of the existence of a transpersonal will, which he viewed as a dormant potentiality for most people. Assagioli’s transpersonal will aligns with what Maslow referred to as “higher needs” and the growing field of transpersonal psychology refers to a variety of terms that include Christ consciousness, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, mystical experiences, being values, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, self-transcendence, spirit, oneness, and other such similar concepts.

As mentioned above, psychosynthesis proposes a dynamic five-stage healing and realization process (see Table 5-3). Stage zero highlights the predominate stage of humanity, characterized by what Assagioli called, the “fundamental infirmity of man.” John Firman (?–2008) referred to this human condition as “primal wounding”; wounding resulting from not being seen and heard for who we truly are by significant others in our lives. Stage 1 relates to the tuning in of one’s inner experience and the cultivation of greater self-awareness. Self-awareness is the foundation of all growth and development. Without self-awareness, we tend to react out of instinct and habitual responses or what Firman referred to as, *the survival personality*. As self-awareness expands, we start to see our tendencies, preferences, and shortcomings.

Table 5-3. Psychosynthesis Stages of Healing and Realization

Levels	Assagioli	Firman & Gil
Level 4	Psychosynthesis—the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the new unifying center	Synthesis: Self-realization Listening & responding to highest self/soul
Level 3	Self-realization and the creation/discovery of a unifying center	Inclusion: Make contact with the highest self
Level 2	Self-control (master/regulation) of personality to include subpersonalities	Acceptance: Disidentification & cultivation of the witness
Level 1	Self-knowledge (self-awareness) of personality to include fears, phantasms, repressed memories and qualities, unconscious negative subpersonalities	Recognition: Turning inward/self-awareness and shadow work
Level 0	Fundamental infirmity of man	Primal wounding/survival personality

Source: Assagioli, R. (2000). *Psychosynthesis: A collection of basic writings*. Amherst, Mass: Synthesis Center Inc. (in cooperation with the Berkshire Center for Psychosynthesis) and Firman, J., & Gila, A. (2002). *Psychosynthesis: A psychology of the spirit* [Kindle edition]. Retrieved from <http://www.Amazon.com>

Eventually, we (often with the help of supportive practices or a skilled guide) begin to free ourselves or *disidentify* from our habitual thoughts, feelings, reactions, and roles, thereby cultivating the witness or individual observer “I” (Stage 2). Over time, we may start sensing a more expansive identity or connectedness to life and begin to feel new vocational urges, creative impulses, or directive promptings (Stage 3). From a psychosynthesis perspective, this involves surrendering and inviting a more intimate, conscious relationship with the transpersonal self or soul. The fourth stage of psychosynthesis corresponds to a period in which we are formally responding to the invitations of the transpersonal self (in contrast to the personal self) and developing more spiritually.

Survival of wounding, exploration of the personality, the emergence of I, contact with the transpersonal self, and response to the transpersonal self represent the five stages of psychosynthesis. However, Assagioli and others (e.g., Firman & Gila, 2002 and Brown, 2009)

cautioned that these stages do not represent a developmental sequence, but potential responses to the human condition that can occur at any age.

Core Practices. It is important to note that Assagioli presented psychosynthesis in two subcategories: personal psychosynthesis and transpersonal psychosynthesis. The emphases of personal psychosynthesis are self-awareness and self-regulation. The emphases of transpersonal psychosynthesis are on the realization of one's true self/soul and the actual psychosynthesis, the reformation of the personality around a new unifying center or ideal.

Numerous practices and exercises align with psychosynthesis overall and in these two categories. Thus, to identify a narrow set of core practices is inconsistent with this reality. However, it is fair to say that visualization, drawing, self-observation, and meditation are common practices among psychosynthesis-oriented counselors, therapists, and coaches. In addition, as highlighted above, disidentification is a core concept of psychosynthesis and activities aimed at freeing oneself from overidentifying with a dimension of our being or life other than the center of pure awareness or "I." For example, Assagioli offered this exercise for disidentification (2000, pp. 103–104):

Affirm with conviction the following:

- 1) *I have a body, but I am not my body.*
- 2) *I have an emotional life, but I am not my emotions or my feelings.*
- 3) *I have an intellect, but I am not that intellect.*
- 4) *I am I, a center of pure consciousness.*

Given today's pressing global challenges and the subsequent demands on human beings, psychosynthesis offers a holistic and hope-filled paradigm for the journey toward healing, well-being, self-actualization, and self-realization.

Integral Life Practice (ILP)

Brief background. ILP is a comprehensive and holistic approach to self-development rooted in integral theory, developed by U.S. philosopher and writer, Kenneth Wilber II (born 1949). Wilber (2000, with others, 2008), born in Oklahoma City, currently resides in Denver, CO, where he continues to study, write, and present his work primarily through the Internet and Colorado-based outlets, albeit on a limited basis due to a severe and chronic illness. He is the author of more than 30 books and countless articles on consciousness, mysticism, psychology, science, religion, and his own integral theory, a comprehensive synthesis of Eastern and Western knowledge.

Overview of the System. As highlighted in Chapter 1, Wilber refers to his version of integral theory as AQAL, the abbreviated acronym for all quadrants, all levels (all lines, all states, all types, etc.). The elements of quadrants and levels refer to the key explanatory principles Wilber uses to examine the development of individual mind, body, soul, and spirit in self, culture, community, and nature. The four quadrants include the Upper Left or individual interior, the Upper Right or individual exterior, the Lower Left or collective interior, and the Lower Right or collective exterior (see Figure 1-1). Wilber (2000) further simplifies the four quadrants with the “three basic domains” of I, we, and it (p. 52).

ILP, informed by Wilber’s AQAL, is an approach to enhanced personal wellness, development, self-actualization, and spiritual awakening. ILP addresses the whole person and all of life through four basic modules of practice and five auxiliary modules. The four foundational modules are body, mind, spirit, and shadow. The five auxiliary models are ethics, work, emotions, relationships, and soul (see Table 5-4).

Table 5-4. Integral Life Practice Matrix

The Integral Life Practice Matrix

SAMPLE PRACTICES	CORE				AUXILIARY				
	Body (Physical, Subtle, Causal)	Mind (Framework, View)	Spirit (Meditation, Prayer)	Shadow (Therapy)	Ethics	Sex	Work	Emotions	Relationships
Weightlifting (Physical)	Reading & Study	Zen	Gestalt Therapy	Codes of Conduct	Tantra	Right Livelihood	Transmuting Emotions	Integral Relationships	
Aerobics (Physical)	Belief System	Centering Prayer	Cognitive Therapy	Professional Ethics	Integral Sexual Yoga	Professional Training	Emotional Intelligence Training	Integral Parenting	
E.I.T. (Physical, Subtle)	Integral (AQAL) Framework	Big Mind Meditation	3-2-1 Process	Social & Ecological Activism	Kama Sutra	Money Management	Bhakti Yoga (Devotional Practices)	Communication Skills	
Diet: Atkins, Ornish, the Zone (Physical)	Mental Training	Kabbalah	Dream-Work	Self-Discipline	Kundalini Yoga	Work as a Mode of ILP	Work as a Mode of ILP	Couples Therapy	
ILP Diet (Physical)	Taking Multiple Perspectives	Compassionate Exchange	Interpersonal	Integral Ethics	Sexual Transformative Practice	Karma Yoga	Emotional Mindfulness Practice	Relational Spiritual Practice	
Tai Chi Chuan (Subtle)	Any Worldview or Meaning System that Works for You	TM	Psychoanalysis	Sportsmanship	Vows & Oaths	Community Service & Volunteering	Tonglen (Compassionate Exchange Meditation)	Right Association (Sangha)	
Qi Gong (Subtle)		Integral Inquiry	Art & Music Therapy			Work as Transformation	Creative Expression & Art	Conscious Marriage	
Yoga (Physical, Subtle)		The 1-2-3 of God							
3-Body Workout (Physical, Subtle, Causal)									

It's as simple as:

- Pick **one practice** from each of the **Four Core Modules**
- Add practices from the **Auxiliary Modules** as you wish
- Go!

(We particularly recommend the Gold Star Practices ☆)

Source: *The Integral Life Practice Matrix*, by K. Wilber, 2007, retrieved from <http://www.kenwilber.com/personal/ILP/MyILP.html>

Core Practices. An ILP approach to self-transformation does not include core practices per se. Rather, the ILP framework invites adherents to select at least one practice from each of the four core modules and to add practices from the auxiliary modules, as highlighted in Table 5-4. The practices listed in the matrix offer example practices for each module; however, options are not limited to those listed. Developers of the ILP approach outline five principles on which it builds:

- The Ultimate in Cross-Training, working synergistically in body, mind, and spirit in self, culture, and nature.

- Modular, allowing you to mix and match practices in specific areas or modules.
- Scalable, adjusting to however much—or little—time you have, down to 1-Minute Modules.
- Customizable to your lifestyle: you design a program that works for you and adapt it on an as-needed basis.
- Integral, based on AQAL technology, an *All Quadrant, All Level* framework for mapping the many capacities inherent in human beings (Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli, 2008, p. 8).

Furthermore, all modules include Gold Star Practices, recommended as “a synthesis of exemplary techniques from across cultures and time” (2005, p. 10). Also, quick versions of the Gold Star Practices, 1-Minute Modules, are offered for times when practitioners are pressed for time.

The Fourth Way, Psychosynthesis, and Integral Life Practice represent three different contemporary and universal systems of self-transformation. Mindfulness meditation, the transformative practice I focused on in my 2015 dissertation research and highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, is part of the Eightfold Path of Buddhism as well as an element of a growing body of secular Western approaches to stress management (e.g., Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction), and psychotherapy (e.g., Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy and Acceptance Commitment Therapy). While the primary purposes of this book are to inspire readers to turn inward, to provide an integrative leader-development framework to help navigate the inward journey, to increase knowledge of the systems of self-transformation presented here, and to

encourage experimentation with transformative practices, I must also offer words of caution for the inner journey of self-transformation.

Chapter 6: Words of Caution for the Inner Journey of Self-Transformation

The three systems of self-transformation outlined in Chapter 5 offer examples of comprehensive psychospiritual approaches to the inner journey of self-transformation. The transformative practices highlighted throughout this book are elements of these three and other systems of self-transformation. Thus, by themselves and isolated from the system or school of which they are part, transformative practices are limited and potentially harmful for numerous reasons, which I will outline in this chapter.

Transformative practices isolated from the systems or schools in which they are embedded are limited and potentially harmful because the psychospiritual frameworks in which they are part provide the container for sensemaking and integration of potentially disruptive experiences that may arise from the use of these powerful practices. Remember, the purpose of these practices is inner transformation. Thus, disruption of one's inner and, most likely, outer life is highly likely and desirable from the perspective of fulfilling this purpose. However, although such disruption is uncomfortable, the degree of discomfort must not exceed the capacities of aspirants to integrate the experience into life in a way that allows them to function in the world. Thus, unrooted transformative practices have little developmental value and may cause harm.

Additional dangers, often referred to as spiritual emergencies, include obsession with mystical experiences rather than disciplined attention to steady incremental inner shifts occurring over time through the difficult and often emotionally painful work of consistent and persistent self-observation and work with transformative practices. This lure is so seductive and persuasive that American psychologist and spiritual teacher, John Welwood (1984) coined the term, "spiritual bypassing" to warn contemporary seekers of this potential pitfall.

Furthermore, people may be in danger of ego-inflation and self-aggrandizement arising from exhilarating experiences when using transformative practices. It is critical to note that proper motivation (i.e., desire for development and transformation for nonegoic, preferably virtuous, reasons) and a commitment to ethical living are essential elements of the three systems of self-transformation outlined, as well as the ancient-wisdom traditions highlighted in Chapter 5, and the mindfulness-based interventions and Buddhism discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, the potential for self-inflation and other forms of self-deception significantly diminish with the assistance of a spiritual friend, coach, director, or teacher.

The literature on spiritual emergencies also warns of the potential for physical symptoms such as uncontrollable shaking. Accompanying the growing field of transpersonal psychology is increasing awareness and understanding of these types of phenomenon such that more therapists can help clients integrate these experiences in a healthy and constructive manner that facilitates growth and does not hinder it. After all, ideally, “spiritual experience is viewed as desirable and spiritual seeking is seen as natural, healthy, and in the final analysis, the only truly fulfilling answer to the challenge of existence” (Cortright, 1997, p. 158) This is certainly the case when the experience builds slowly and incrementally over time, or a sudden powerful experience arises after a solid practice and support foundation are in place to facilitate healthy integration.

Another word of caution is that if you join a psycho-spiritual group associated with any of the three contemporary systems outlined in Chapter 5 or others and the group promotes exclusion or intolerance of people outside the group, leave that group immediately and find one that does not. Exclusion or intolerance toward people outside the group is a flashing warning light of cultish tendencies. All aspirants need to avoid such groups as they are highly inconsistent with the inner journey to self-actualization and Self-realization.

Furthermore, if affiliation with a psychospiritual group or community places sexual expectations, excessive financial demands, or attempts to control the personal freedom of its members in any way, quickly move on and out! Last, I would like to caution that although the three psychospiritual systems (i.e., The Fourth Way, Psychosynthesis, and Integral Life Practice) outlined in Chapter 5 are universal and nonreligious maps for the journey of self-transformation; they are not the territory. The territory is one's life, lived and experienced. Also, these three systems work with the psychological and spiritual dimensions of the human experience. However, the emphasis is on the psychological dimension of the spectrum. Consequently, at some point along the journey, albeit different for everyone, typically after many years of consistent practice, it becomes helpful, perhaps necessary, to pick a defined spiritual path (i.e., root oneself in an established religion).

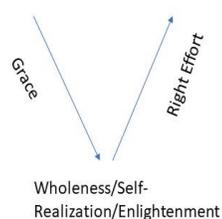
I acknowledge that for many 21st-century seekers, perhaps those of us who identify as “spiritual not religious” (an inner struggle of which I am quite familiar) may reject the previous statement. This is quite understandable given the painful failings of our religious institutions over the years. However, I have come to realize that I have no need to throw the baby out with the bathwater, and I invite you to consider this as well. As highlighted, many, in not all of the world's great religions have inner (esoteric) traditions as well as outer (exoteric) traditions. Most of us are familiar with the exoteric versions of the world religions, which typically emphasize rituals, beliefs, morals, doctrines, and creeds.

In contrast, the inner traditions emphasize self-transformation and ultimately Self-realization, or the realization of one's supreme identity and union with God. However, the purpose of this chapter or book is not to provide an overview of the inner traditions of the great monotheistic religions, which I am not equipped to do; rather I offer a cautionary note as it

relates to the inner journey of self-transformation. If the reader would like to explore any or all of the inner traditions mentioned here, I offer a few possible references in the Additional Resources section along with resources for The Fourth Way, Psychosynthesis, and Integral Life Practice.

Lastly, before concluding, I humbly acknowledge that while the inner journey to wholeness takes consistent and persistence “right effort” as emphasized throughout this book, there is a mysterious dimension of the journey that is completely beyond human effort. While there are different names for this mysterious dimension, I will simply call it grace as taught in the Christian tradition. Grace invites surrender, patience, humility, and detachment as it has little to nothing to do with human effort and more to do with our Creator’s infinite love for us and all Creation (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1. The Inner Journey to Wholeness: Grace and Effort



Conclusion

Individual leaders and organizations have a growing interest in the use of mindfulness meditation and other transformative practices for developmental purposes. In Chapter 1, I introduced an integrative leader-development framework that includes a holistic view of human existence and well-being, knowledge from the field of adult development, current leader-development literature, and knowledge from the realm of self-transformation (i.e., systems of self-transformation and transformative practices) to better understand and inform the complex phenomenon of leader development in the 21st century. In Chapter 2, we took a deeper dive into the current leader-development literature. In Chapter 3, we explored the growing trend of mindfulness, in the workplace and for leader development. In Chapter 4, I introduced my 2015 research on the developmental experiences of manager-leaders of mindfulness practices and the ten developmental themes that emerged from that research. In Chapter 5, we explored three universal systems of self-transformation: The Fourth Way, Psychosynthesis, and Integral Life Practice. In Chapter 6, we paused and considered the potential pitfalls one can encounter on the inner journey, as the terrain can be quite challenging with significant potential for traps and steep cliffs along the way.

As I conclude, I would like to restate my purposes for writing this book. One purpose is to inspire and support leaders who yearn to contribute solutions toward humanity's most urgent global challenges but are currently consistently hindered by self-defeating patterns stemming from inner woundedness in turning inward and embarking on the most important journey of their lives. The second purpose is to help advance a more comprehensive or integrative leader-development framework. The third purpose is to provide a baseline of knowledge on the topics of leader self-development and leader self-transformation, including three universal systems of

self-transformation that I have found to be highly supportive of the inner journey. The fourth purpose of the books is to introduce transformative practices associated with the systems presented in the book and to encourage readers to experiment with them directly. Simply reading this book will be of minimal value; rather, the value comes from exploring one or all of these systems more deeply and experimenting with the transformative practices associated with them so that you, your life, and the larger world reap the fruits.

If I have fulfilled any or all of these purposes for you, I invite you to contact me (www.tenddevelopmentalthemes.com) as I would love to hear about your experiences with this material. If I have not fulfilled any of these purposes, I would to hear from you as well and understand where I missed the mark. Like you, I am a sojourner on the journey of self-transformation, which translates to a commitment to life-long learning. Happy travels!

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Appendix

Appendix A: Participant Interview Protocol Form

Research Project: The Perceptions and Lived Experiences of Leaders Practicing Mindfulness

Meditation

Date of the interview: _____ Time of interview: _____

Location of interview: _____

Interviewee: _____ Interviewer/Researcher: Denise Frizzell

Questions

1. What is your experience with mindfulness meditation on your development as a leader?
2. How did you first learn about mindfulness meditation?
3. How has mindfulness meditation influenced how you see yourself as a leader?
4. How has mindfulness meditation influenced how you express yourself as a leader?
5. How has your mindfulness practice influenced your work relationships?
6. What motivated you to pursue this practice and what motivates you to continue mindfulness meditation?
7. What else would you like to share with me as it relate to your development as a leader?

(Reminder: Thank the individual for participating in the interview and study. Review next steps and assure him or her of the confidentiality of responses.)

Appendix B: Data Collection

The sampling population for this qualitative exploration consisted of adults who served as organizational leaders—middle and senior managers—who had a regular mindfulness practice. The sampling strategy for this qualitative, phenomenological exploration included criterion sampling of participants who met the predefined criterion of importance: a person who worked in a manager-leader position in an organization (middle or senior management) who had a regular (at least 3 days a week) mindfulness meditation practice for at least 3 months. My sampling strategy included recruiting potential participants using professionally oriented mindfulness groups on the social networking site, LinkedIn.

Twenty-one manager-leaders engaged in single in-depth interviews. After initial, brief telephone meetings and the collection of informed-consent forms, I conducted interviews. The duration of the interviews ranged from 35 to 60 minutes. I recorded all interviews using two digital audio recorders.

Although I implemented the data-collection plan presented, I made minor variations to adjust for real-time learning. For example, in addition to posting the recruitment announcement to the five largest mindfulness groups on LinkedIn, I also used LinkedIn to send recruitment announcements to individual group members, primarily an Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction graduate group. In addition, I posted recruitment announcements with related professional discussion groups, Academy of Management, Management Education and Development; Academy of Management, Organizational Development and Change; and the Association for Contemplative Minds in Higher Education.

About the Author

Denise Frizzell is a contemplative, scholar, leadership coach and consultant, writer, and sustainability advocate. Currently, she offers leadership coaching and consulting services as well as presentations, workshops, and courses on topics covered in this book. In addition, she has over 15 years experience in health and human services management, over four years experience in higher education (adjunct professor) and served eight years in the United States military (Air Force and Air Force Reserves).

Denise earned her B.S. in business administration from California State University, Sacramento, and a Master of Public Administration (MPA) from California State University, Hayward. In 2015, she completed her PhD in management through Walden University, specializing in leadership and organizational change. Denise holds a number of certifications, including a Certificate in Coaching for Transformation (Certified Professional Coach) from Leadership that Works, a Certificate in Psychosynthesis from Psychosynthesis Palo Alto in Palo Alto, CA, and a Certificate in Theological Studies from Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, MA.