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TRUE NORTH
FIELDBOOK



A Personal Guide to Leading Authentically in Today's Workplace

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**NICK CRAIG, BILL GEORGE, AND SCOTT SNOOK
WITH
LAUREN SCHWENK AND JOSH HALL**

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EMERGING LEADER EDITION

The Emerging Leader's Guide to Leading Authentically in Today's Workplace

WILEY

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Emerging Leader Edition of True North: Leading Authentically in Today's Workplace Bill George and Zach Clayton (2022)

Emerging Leader's Guide to True North with Nick Craig, Scott Snook, Josh Hall, and Lauren Schwenk (2022)

*Bill George dedicates this book to his colleagues Nick Craig and Scott Snook,
who have devoted their lives to enabling leaders
to discover their True North.*

*Nick Craig dedicates this book to the authentic leaders in his life, who showed
him the way by being just themselves.*

*Scott Snook dedicates this book to his wife Kathi, and their five children,
Sean, Kyle, Megan, Robby, and Jessica.*

*Lauren Schwenk dedicates this book to her children, Haley, Ethan,
and Elsie, who turn her world upside down but always keep her grounded.*

*Josh Hall dedicates this book to his wife, Meredith, in appreciation
of her unwavering belief in him and relentless support.*

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Preface

Emerging Leader's Guide to True North

This guide is your way to become an authentic leader who follows your True North. It will lead you through a series of introspective exercises that enable you to reflect on yourself as you strive to reach your full potential as a leader. The chapters parallel the chapters in the *Emerging Leader Edition* of *True North*. In using this guide, you should first read the chapter in the book, and then work through the exercises in this guide.

We have organized this guide around the proven process of becoming an authentic, effective leader. This means starting with the inner journey of understanding *who you are* because the hardest person you will ever have to lead is yourself. First, you will explore your life story and its relationship to your leadership.

After a broad review of your life story, we'll ask you to unpack significant crucibles, or searing moments that seem to hold great meaning. By mining your life stories and exploring your crucibles, you begin to uncover unique patterns that help to define who you are—your authentic self. To keep you from losing your way, we'll also highlight several common patterns that might distract you from realizing your True North.

Next you will work through the key developmental steps to becoming an authentic leader: developing your self-awareness, living your values, finding your sweet spot, and leading an integrated life.

Having completed the inner journey, you are ready for the outer journey of leading people. It starts with the journey from I to We. Then you are ready to find your purpose in leading—your North Star, a fixed point that guides your leadership. You will then learn how to be a coach to other leaders to enable them to reach their full potential.

In taking on today's challenges, we need authentic leaders who will create sustainable organizations dedicated to making this world better for everyone. This includes taking on today's greatest challenges of

being an inclusive leader, leading through crises, and becoming a moral leader who is true to your beliefs and your values as you carry out your purpose.

After completing this work, you'll be ready to create your own Leadership Development Plan (LDP). This is a dynamic document that you can return to in future years to assess your progress, make any necessary updates, and use as a lifelong guide to remain oriented toward your True North.

WHY THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU

Leadership matters. It matters a great deal—to our organizations and institutions, to the people who work in them, and to the people who are served by them. As a leader, you have the opportunity to influence the lives of thousands of people and have a positive impact on organizations and the greater society in which you live.

We wrote the *Emerging Leader Edition* of *True North* because we have a passion to see more people in all walks of life lead authentically and because we wanted to help people like you discover your authentic leadership so you can make this world a better place for everyone.

No longer is leadership just about the people on top. Today's challenges require all of us to step up to the challenges of leadership. Any time you make a decision that impacts others, you are leading. In a crisis it is often the people with no titles who rise to the occasion to meet the challenges. Thus, whether you are a student, parent, bus driver, army officer, CEO, grandparent, or citizen of the world, you have the opportunity to step up and lead.

This book is for those who wish to become authentic leaders so that when they have the opportunity to lead, they will step up to the challenges and lead effectively, while living meaningful lives. As you navigate the unchartered territory of the 21st century, we hope our guide assists you in becoming a highly effective—and authentic—leader, one who follows your True North and discovers your North Star.

DISCOVERING YOUR AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Becoming an authentic leader is hard work. The process is not much different from becoming a world-class musician or a successful athlete.

To become great in any endeavor—whether in your career, your family, or your community—you must leverage the unique strengths you were born with, while acknowledging and learning from your shortcomings.

After searching for a role model for many years, I learned that I could never become a great leader by emulating someone else or by minimizing my shortcomings. As National Association of Corporate Directors “Director of the Year” Reatha Clark King says, “If you’re aiming to be like somebody else, you’re being a copycat because you think that’s what people want you to do. You’ll never be a star with that kind of thinking. But you might be a star—unreplicable—by following your passion.”

Many books offer quick fixes or seven easy steps to leadership. Unfortunately, leadership development doesn’t work that way. To realize your potential as a leader, you need a systematic plan to enable your growth. That’s the goal of the *Emerging Leader’s Guide to True North*: to offer a clear and detailed path to guide your development.

We encourage you to take on as many leadership experiences early in life as you can. Don’t sit back and wait for them to come to you. Seek them out! After each experience, process them by returning to your development plan, make necessary changes, and reengage with a clearer sense of your True North. This is a lifelong process. Start now.

As you embark on this journey, recall the fundamental messages from the *Emerging Leader Edition of True North*:

- You do not have to be born with characteristics or traits of a leader.
- You do not have to be at the top of an organization.
- You can step up and lead today.
- You can discover your True North right now.

HOW SHOULD I USE THIS GUIDE?

Your responses to the exercises and your notes in this personal guide are your confidential work. However, we do encourage you to share them with trusted others, including mentors, coaches, and members of your support team or True North Group. Their feedback will be invaluable to you in developing your Leadership Development Plan.

As you share your personal story and insights with others, we encourage you to take some risks; experiment with being a bit more vulnerable than perhaps you might ordinarily be. We've found that sharing your story can be incredibly liberating and in fact deepen ties with those you trust.

There are several ways you might use this guide:

1. As an individual, you can complete these exercises and draft your LDP on your own.
2. You can work through this personal guide in a True North Group (TNG), with friends or even with new acquaintances. Everyone should complete the exercises individually, and then discuss the insights openly with other members of the group. Then it can be helpful to go back to the exercises and update them, based on the feedback. Your group can be led by a professional facilitator, who guides your discussion and keeps the group on track. Or you can create a peer-facilitated group, in which leadership of the group rotates to a different group member for each session. I pioneered this approach using peer facilitators in six-person True North Groups in the Authentic Leadership Development classes at Harvard Business School.
3. To enhance the process, you can also use the *Emerging Leader's Guide to True North* in conjunction with a personal coach or mentor. Experienced partners can help deepen your learning, provide feedback, and add an additional layer of insights and discipline to the process.
4. You can also use this personal guide with your team at work. As team leader, you can guide your team through the process yourself or enlist a professional team-building consultant or facilitator to enhance the process.
5. You can use this guide along with the *Emerging Leader Edition* of *True North* as the basis for a course on leadership development, either in an academic setting or in an organization. This material is flexible enough to support leaders at all stages in their careers: young leaders, including college and graduate students; midcareer leaders; leaders at the top of their organizations; and leaders embarking on the third phase of their journeys after having completed their principal leadership roles.

In the case of a larger group, you may need a professor, teacher, or leadership development professional to help structure the material and lead the group. Many others have used this book as the backbone for executive MBA courses on leadership.

A FINAL WORD TO USERS OF THIS GUIDE

As you embark on this journey of self-discovery, let us offer our personal welcome. We encourage you to be as open and honest as possible when you complete these exercises. The more truthful and vulnerable you are with yourself, the greater the impact of this personal guide. Have the courage to explore your life deeply to understand who you are as a human being, to discover where you really fit in this world, to recognize how you can use your leadership to impact others in a positive way, and to leave a lasting legacy of which you'll be proud.

We have witnessed deep and lasting transformation in leaders who have taken this journey as they shaped their century organizations and institutions. Whether they were leading in business, government, education, or religion, they discovered that the journey was not only about becoming more authentic themselves, but about helping everyone they touch become authentic leaders as well.

Your dedication to finding your True North will make this world a better and richer place for us all.

Introduction

Developing as an Authentic Leader

Crises are hitting us from all directions. It is increasingly clear we need an infusion of strong, new leaders to help us navigate safely.

—David Gergen, *Hearts Touched with Fire*

Why is it important for you to become an authentic leader?

Leading in the 21st century is vastly different from leading in the 20th century (Figure I.1). People in organizations have changed dramatically—to the point where they will no longer tolerate “command and control leaders” of the last century. Nor are they impressed by charismatic leaders who say one thing and do another.

Characteristics	20 th Century Leaders	21 st Century Leaders
Philosophy	Command-and-control	Authentic leadership
Organizational Approach	Hierarchical management	Empowering leadership
Image	Charismatic	Purpose-driven
Motivation	Self-interest	Institution's best interest
Experience	Perfect resume	Learning through crucibles
Time Frame	Short-term	Long-term
Greatest Strength	IQ	EQ
Personal Measurement	External validation	Intrinsic contribution

Figure I.1 Differences in 20th- and 21st-Century Leaders

Over the past 50 years, many of us worked for powerful leaders who seemed to know where they were going, only to discover later they were leading us down destructive paths, or that these leaders were in it mostly for themselves and were largely unconcerned with our well-being. Organizations expected us to be loyal to these leaders and wait in line for our turn to lead, if it ever came. And then we learned that our loyalty was not returned, as many lost their pensions and health care. As a consequence, we lost trust in our leaders. More recently, many of us were dazzled by charismatic leaders who impressed everyone with their charm, yet went off the deep end.

People in organizations today seek authentic leaders whom they can trust, but they are not so easily fooled or so quick to offer their loyalty. People are willing to work extremely hard, but they will do so only for leaders they trust and organizations whose purpose they believe in, as they are seeking meaning and significance in their work. They are willing to trust their leaders only if these leaders prove themselves worthy of their trust.

If you want to be effective as a leader, then you must be authentic. If you are not authentic, the best people won't want to work with you, and they won't give you their best work.

What do authentic and effective leaders do?

- They align people around a common purpose that inspires them to peak performance.
- They unite people around a common set of values so that everyone knows precisely what is expected.
- They empower others to step up and lead so that people throughout the organization are highly motivated and give their best.
- They are in constant dialogue with all constituencies; as leaders, they bear the responsibility of engaging not only shareholders, but customers, employees, and communities as well.

This is not easy. It is the hard side of leadership.

The easy side of leadership is getting the short-term numbers right. Many smart people can figure out how to do that. It is much more difficult to get people aligned, empowered, and committed to serve a broad set of constituencies.

Being *authentic* as a leader creates a virtuous cycle; the best people will want to work with you. As a result, the performance of your teams will be superior, and you will be able to take on ever greater challenges.

The bottom line is this: In the 21st century, without authentic leaders, there will be no sustained effectiveness in organizations. With authentic leaders, the possibilities are unlimited.

WHAT IS AN AUTHENTIC LEADER?

Authentic leaders have discovered their True North, align people around a shared purpose and values, and empower them to lead authentically in order to create value for all stakeholders.

Discovering your True North is about mining your life story for deep insights, discovering the unique gifts that you bring to the world, being clear about your values, and knowing the underlying purpose of your leadership.

This journey is not about style. This is a common misconception. Authentic leadership is about the deeper you; by knowing and living from your leadership purpose and values, you are able to let go of seeing yourself as one type of leader (strategic, tactical, introverted, extroverted, etc.). You begin to realize that who you are, your True North, gives you the flexibility to excel in a wide range of situations, all while being true to your authentic self.

Aligning others around a shared purpose and values becomes possible when you can see and feel the connection of your own purpose and values to those of your organization. This enables others to really trust you, increase engagement, and produce higher levels of performance.

This does not mean you have to be perfect—far from it. Like all of us, you can have your weaknesses and be subject to the full range of human frailties and mistakes, and still be a successful authentic leader. In fact, by acknowledging your shortcomings and admitting your errors, you will connect with people and empower them.

HOW WILL THIS GUIDE HELP YOU BECOME AN AUTHENTIC LEADER?

To develop as an authentic leader, start by mining your life story for patterns and inspiration. Anchor your current leadership by reviewing your

past leadership experiences in order to learn from them. Identify and unpack significant life crucibles to discover how they influence and shape who you are and how you lead. Explore reasons why you could lose your way by not discovering your True North—becoming an imposter, rationalizer, glory seeker, loner, or shooting star. These elements are covered in Part I of this guide.

Part II turns to leader development by drilling down on several elements that define the True North compass:

- *Leading with self-awareness* requires you to ask for tough feedback, be vulnerable, and have compassion for yourself—the cornerstone of authentic leader development.

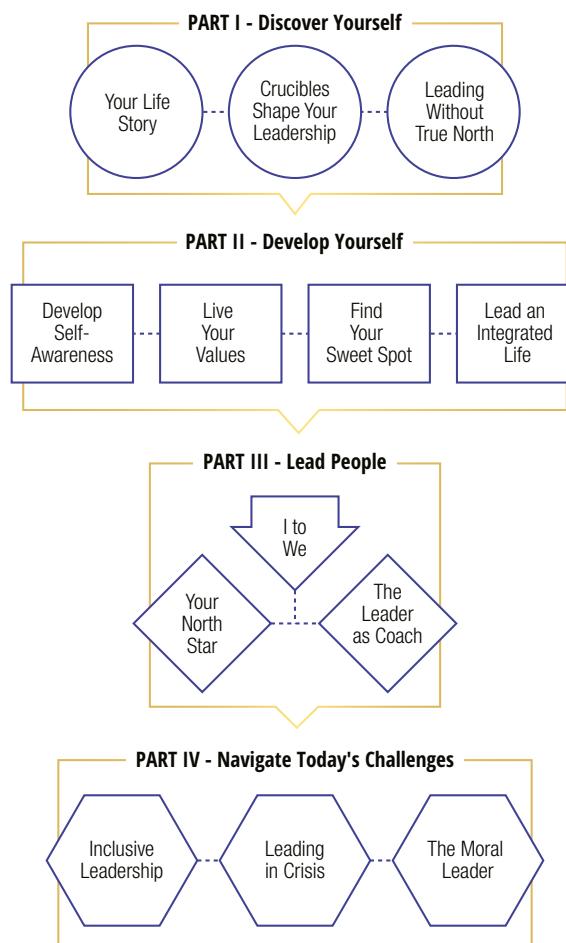


Figure I.2 Book Map: Part I, Part II, Part III, and Part IV

- *Leading through values* asks you to gain some clarity about your values, leadership principles, and ethical boundaries.
- *Leading from your sweet spot* encourages you to define when you are at your best by discerning patterns of essential strengths and passions.
- *Leading an integrated life* demands that you show up the same in every domain in your life and encourages you to define what it really means to live an integrated life with the support of others.

Part III focuses on leading through today's challenges. We examine the importance of creating inclusive cultures and leading through crises. Finally, we challenge you to be a moral leader serving society by committing to solving some of the world's most difficult problems.

We conclude by asking you to summarize and integrate everything you've learned in this guide by preparing your own Leadership Development Plan (LDP).

YOUR IDEA OF LEADERSHIP

The *Emerging Leader Edition of True North* is for all leaders, regardless of what group or organization you lead, whether you have already established yourself and are trying to develop further, if you plan to be a leader in the future, or even if you don't typically think of yourself as a leader.

Consider these contrasting examples:

“From my earliest days I have been fascinated with leadership,” said Kevin Sharer, CEO of Amgen. “When somebody asked me at 10 years old, ‘What do you want to do when you grow up?’ I said, ‘I just want to be in charge.’”

“I don’t think other people think of me as a leader,” said David Kelley, founder of IDEO. “‘Leader’ is a funny word for me. You see, I’m a collaborator. If there is a problem, I call all the smart people I know and get them in a room and have them figure it out.”

How about you? How do you think of yourself as a leader?

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISE 1: LEADERSHIP IMAGES IN YOUR LIFE

You first encounter leadership and leaders through the examples of others. These examples give you patterns from which to learn. They are the raw material from which you build the conceptions of leadership you carry into your work and your life.

The purpose of this exercise is to draw on the thinking that you have already done on the topic of leadership. The exercise starts with your existing models of leadership.

Think of five leaders, past or present, whom you have admired. Write their names below, and then answer for yourself the questions that follow.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Which of these leaders have had the greatest impact on your conceptions of leadership?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What specific examples of leading stand out in your mind for each of these leaders?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Which three of these leaders do you consider to be the most authentic?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What reservations or concerns might you have about following each one?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

How did the context in which each of them led differ from what you face today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What qualities, if any, of these three leaders would you like to emulate?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What qualities, if any, would you like to avoid?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NO LEADER IS PERFECT

The biographies of those most often placed on the media’s “best leaders” lists can be surprising at times. Even the most widely admired leaders have very human weaknesses: notable failures as well as successes, startling inconsistencies in relationships or behaviors, and times of intense struggle with their values and principles. These shortcomings do not disqualify anyone from being a source of inspiration, a role model for others,

or a teacher. Indeed, leaders, teachers, and mentors must know and understand their own developmental needs in order to help you work on yours.

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISE 2: YOUR PREPARATION FOR LEADING

The purpose of this exercise is to establish your starting point for your work with this personal guide.

What are the most important qualities you bring to leading?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

All good leaders are continuously developing. Which leadership qualities would you like to develop further?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

It is important to keep in mind those qualities that you want to work on. This personal guide is intended to help you fulfill your aspirations to become a more authentic and effective leader. No one can give you the leadership qualities you seek. You already have them within you. This guide is designed to help you gain a clearer understanding of what they are, identify those aspects of yourself that you like and want to embrace, as well as those that you'd like to change.

LEARNING FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

In Part I, you will begin your leadership journey. You will go beyond the standard signposts of leadership by looking through the lens of your life story, examining significant crucibles, and learning from times when you lost your way.

SUGGESTED READING

Bennis, W. *On Becoming a Leader*. Addison-Wesley, 1989.

Boyatzis, R., and McKee, A. *Resonant Leadership: Renewing Yourself and Connecting with Others Through Mindfulness, Hope, and Compassion*. Harvard Business School Press, 2005.

Gardner, J. *On Leadership*. Free Press, 1990.

Part I

Discover Yourself

When you're in trouble and all your defenses get stripped away, you realize what matters and who matters. That's when you need to get back to your roots and to your values.

—David Gergen, counselor to four U.S. presidents

Your life story is the foundation for your leadership. Your development as an authentic leader begins by analyzing your life story and your formative experiences. As you reflect on your past, you will develop tools to see yourself clearly, understand your leadership achievements, and embrace your goals for future leadership development.

In Part I of this guide, we begin with your life story.

Chapter 1: Your Life Story

Chapter 2: Crucibles Shape Your Leadership

Chapter 3: Leading without True North