

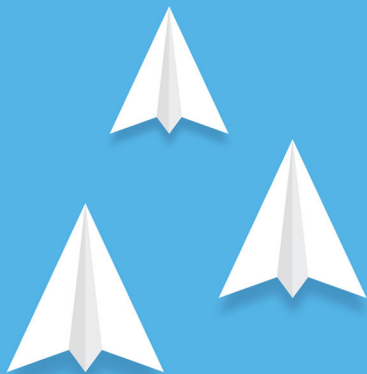
MATT MAYBERRY

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER



HOW THE WORLD'S BEST LEADERS **BUILD** TEAMS,
INSPIRE ACTION, AND **ACHIEVE** LASTING SUCCESS



WILEY

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Preface: Great Leadership Transforms Everything

LEADERSHIP ROOTED IN a genuine desire to drive lasting change and inspired by something greater than personal achievement has the potential to transform everything. In addition to the apparent benefits, such as increased production and inspiring others to attain peak performance, extraordinary leadership can help us transform entire companies, cities, states, and even the world.

Critics will claim this perspective is unrealistic and impractical, but they're missing something. They fail to recognize that humanity's most outstanding achievements are sparked by men and women who envision a brighter future and work tirelessly to make it a reality. Time and again, ordinary people placed in extraordinary situations step up to rewrite history and change the world, forging their legacies in the process.

Even though Martin Luther King Jr. endured hate, ridicule, and threats, he defiantly stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963 and altered the nation's trajectory with four words: "I have a dream." As an Albanian-Indian Catholic nun in her forties, Mother Teresa had few resources and even less name recognition until her mission in Calcutta cemented her legacy as one of the 20th

century's most remarkable people. As president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln exhibited resolute determination by abolishing slavery against the backdrop of a nation engulfed in civil war. He left an indelible mark on the nation's destiny by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, a historic declaration affirming that "all persons held as slaves . . . are, and henceforward shall be free." Nelson Mandela never deviated from his beliefs and refused to be silenced, leading to his 27-year imprisonment and subsequent election as South Africa's first black president. Legendary college basketball coach John Wooden transformed UCLA's basketball program and redefined coaching excellence at every level of sports. Despite being the winningest college basketball coach in history, his desire and ability to influence players truly set him apart.

I'm not suggesting that influential leaders must be world-renowned, larger than life, or change the world, but that said, anything can happen when you enter the sphere of influence known as transformational leadership. A great example is Rebecca van Bergen, the founder and executive director of the nonprofit organization Nest. Under her leadership, Nest became committed to advancing the causes of global workforce inclusivity, women's well-being, and cultural preservation. Van Bergen embodies the principles of transformational leadership: inspiring followers with a strong vision, challenging them to think creatively, and providing a supportive environment. Her many accolades and awards demonstrate her ability to inspire others and foster change. Her vision for a more inclusive economy and her commitment to innovation and learning underscores her effectiveness as a transformational leader.

It takes more than one person to turn around a struggling company, transform a good school district into a great one, or build a sports dynasty, but it often starts with one transformational leader.

You may say, "That's all good, but I'm nothing like these individuals. There's a reason they are who they are." Every great leader struggles with similar thoughts at some point. Still, as we proceed through this book, I will help you identify and develop your unique leadership style so that you can facilitate transformative change within yourself, your team, and your organization. It's time you see the possibilities and impact you can have right where you are.

Transformational leadership goes far beyond a job title or position. Whether you lead a business team, aspire to rise through the ranks, become an influential voice, or are a coach, teacher, or stay-at-home parent, if you want to impact those around you, keep reading.

Transformational leadership is more than a buzzword; it's a powerful way to galvanize teams, inspire action, and lead organizations and individuals toward unprecedented success. In this book, I'll unpack the principles of transformational leadership, and we will explore how to harness them to ignite change and reach new heights.

A study published in the *XIMB Journal of Management* underscores the power of this leadership approach; it revealed that teams under transformational leaders show a performance increase of 78.1%.¹ Research conducted at the University of Central Florida found that three in four employees agree that transformational leaders support a healthy work-life balance, and more than half agreed that their skills have improved under this leadership style.² When Walden University's College of Management and Human Potential examined the impact of transformational leadership on Global Virtual Teams, it found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee productivity. The study also found that employees motivated by this leadership style impact organizational growth.³

When we look at these studies, many envision the business world, but transformative leadership is a powerful tool often used in schools to achieve positive outcomes. According to a study published in the *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, educators who practice it often see higher student engagement with course material and other school pursuits. When discussing school management, the article reveals that "subordinates of transformational leaders have less role conflict, higher task performance, and higher satisfaction with a task than [those] with non-transformational leaders."⁴

These statistics are a testament to the power of transformational leadership, but they're just the tip of the iceberg. Behind each number are countless stories of individuals and teams who've been inspired, empowered, and transformed. There are stories of organizations that have shifted from struggling to thriving, from mediocrity to excellence. You may ask, "How can a leadership style have a substantial impact?" Well, the magic of transformational leadership lies in its core

attributes: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Over the last decade, I've been obsessed with leadership and organizational development, working with hundreds of corporate leadership teams, transforming underperforming teams into top performers, and coaching executives to become the leaders their organizations need. I have witnessed firsthand what can occur when exceptional leadership answers the call.

My passion for transformational leadership isn't just professional; it's personal. I've been on both sides of the leadership equation. My life has been profoundly impacted and irrevocably altered by a few individuals who never gave up on me and sparked a sense of hope that enabled me to discover my inherent greatness. I've also been the unengaged member of a team yearning for more and the struggling leader searching for a better way to inspire and make a difference. These experiences fuel my mission to help others discover the power of transformational leadership. Why? Because great leadership changes everything. It changes how teams work and organizations operate; most importantly, it can change you as a leader, team member, and individual.

In the coming chapters, I distill a decade of real-world experience and research into a comprehensive, seven-part guide. In Parts I and II, we'll examine the ever-evolving nature of leadership, discuss practical ways to overcome barriers, and work to better understand the mindset required to lead successfully. In Part III, we'll dissect and crystallize the definition of *transformational leadership*, a term that many use but few understand. Part IV emphasizes the importance of self-growth and development, further detailing the foundation of leadership. Part V delves into the intricacies of leading and the honor of helping others reveal their best selves. In Part VI, the focus is on building high-functioning teams. Finally, in Part VII, we'll address the importance of impacting the greater good rather than pursuing narrow, self-serving interests.

Transformational leadership isn't just about managing teams; it's a revolutionary philosophy that redefines the very core of *leadership*. In much the same way, this book is more than just a guide; it's a call to action that challenges you to step outside your comfort zone; create a culture in which everyone feels valued, heard, and inspired; and

nurture an environment of shared vision and purpose. Essentially, it's an invitation to bring out the best in yourself and others.

That's the journey ahead, and it won't always be easy. There will be challenges, obstacles, and moments of doubt, but remember, transformative leadership changes everything. That promise alone is worth the commitment.

PART



**Dismantling
the Leadership Crisis**

1

The Catastrophic Leadership Crisis

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

—John F. Kennedy

IF YOU'VE EVER experienced a summer day in Chicago, you know it's magical. With clear, blue skies and a gentle Lake Michigan breeze, locals and visitors alike stroll the paths of Millennium Park, the air filled with children's laughter and the distant melodies of street musicians. The first day of summer in 2022 was no different. The weather was beautiful, and I was in Chicago finishing the manuscript for my second book, *Culture Is the Way*. I had just returned from a speaking engagement in Los Angeles to conduct one of the final interviews for the book. I was scheduled to meet with Horst Schulze, cofounder of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, and was looking forward to the conversation. One of my favorite aspects of writing a book is meeting extraordinary leaders and hearing firsthand how they've achieved such incredible success.

I anticipated a straightforward discussion with Schulze about building culture and embedding values as behavioral norms. However, the conversation took an unexpected turn when he shared a perspective that has stuck with me ever since. "We are currently experiencing a

leadership crisis,” Schulze stated. This statement reframed the entire conversation, elevating it from routine to revelatory.

It didn’t seem unusual during the interview because I was preoccupied with finishing on schedule. When I reviewed my notes later that day, I became fixated on the statement, so much so that I underlined it three times. Since then, I’ve invested countless hours into understanding the meaning of those seven words. On longer flights, I’d take pages of notes to decipher the statement’s potential value for leaders who want to make a lasting impact.

The Real Crisis

Leadership, as we know it, is extinct. Much of what we thought we knew about management and leadership was wrong; thankfully, it no longer applies. Leadership has been synonymous with using people to build your organization and rise to the top. Once there, it became about inflicting your will by enforcing a command-and-control management style on those around you.

Many leaders still use management competencies learned early in their careers despite changing workplace dynamics. As a result, they fail to engage the hearts and minds of those they lead, forcing their people to pursue new opportunities in search of belonging and fulfillment. Sadly, ineffective leadership is a widespread problem that affects nearly every field, not just business. Let’s look at a few examples of outdated leadership:

- A school district requires students to memorize antiquated material that will be irrelevant in 10 years so they do well on standardized testing, which brings more federal funds into the district.
- A highly paid college coach lets their ego get the best of them and engages in unethical behavior because they believe their title and winning record make them untouchable.
- A religious leader preaches the virtues of morality and selflessness from the pulpit, but spends their free time committing adultery and coveting wealth.
- A politician secures power by telling voters they will always serve their best interests only to do the opposite by pushing the party’s agenda.

We've all heard the term *crisis* used over the years, including economic, health, financial, and housing crises. Nearly every crisis, past, present, and future, can be traced to a collapse in leadership. I now know that I was so captivated by Schulze's words because they felt all too familiar. Why shouldn't they? After all, the only real crisis we've experienced is the continuous leadership crisis.

It's just that, given where we are and what we've been through, those words struck a deeper chord within me. A large part of this is that even with so much discussion about current and future crises, there is rarely an honest conversation about what shapes them in the first place. Natural disasters and many other things are beyond our control. As such, I'm not suggesting that great leadership can solve all the world's problems, but I am saying that many of our perceived crises originate from failed leadership.

The disastrous 2008 financial crisis can be traced back to failed leadership. The executives at the center of the meltdown disregarded the fundamental business principles of serving your customers exceptionally well and contributing to healthy markets.¹ Fast-forward to today, not much has changed when you look at the 2023 downfall of Silicon Valley Bank, the second-largest bank failure in U.S. history. Jerome Powell, head of the Federal Reserve, provided a transparent explanation for the collapse, saying, "At a basic level, Silicon Valley Bank management failed badly."²

While there have been positive and negative global changes since 2008, one thing remains consistent: failed leadership remains central to collapsing countries, institutions, and organizations. Case in point: what caused the devastating war between Russia and Ukraine? The answer depends on whom you ask. However, what doesn't is that wars are rarely waged for rational reasons. Instead, geological cleavages are often driven by the egos and emotions of world leaders. Poor and unethical decision-making is only part of the problem; we must also consider how leadership has evolved. We will explore this topic at a granular level in the following pages.

Confronting Reality

We must confront reality and start an honest, transparent conversation to build a future marked by excellence, prosperity, and unity.

Leadership isn't just a title; it's a ripple effect. Great leaders can inspire us, but bad ones, driven by ego, can wreak havoc.

Consider how just one reckless decision by a leader can destroy a nation, undo decades of progress, and harm millions of people. Much like a small group of executives at a large company can impact the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of employees with a single poor choice. And it's not just in politics or business. An unethical religious figure can cast a shadow over an entire faith, erasing the contributions of those who exemplify and live the values preached.

Failed leadership happens in public and private institutions, including the government, academia, law enforcement, and sports. Every day, we learn of another prominent figure mired in scandal. Sadly, we're so accustomed to leaders abusing power that it barely registers. However, ignoring wrongdoing or labeling it as someone else's problem only ensures history will repeat itself. Evil and chaos will always exist, but that's no reason to turn our collective heads and pretend they don't. We must make our light shine even brighter against the darkness of corruption and greed. Progress begins with confronting reality; real change starts with admitting that yesterday's solutions won't solve today's problems.

As we stare down at a rapidly evolving world, we must reevaluate the very nature of leadership. With recent strides in artificial intelligence and innovation happening at every turn, our leaders have no choice but to keep up or get left behind. If it's the latter, the cost will prove far too significant.

The Greatest Challenge

It's tough when things go in a direction we disagree with; it can leave us feeling lost and defeated. When life throws its worst at us, we must stand firm and push the boundaries of what's possible. In the past few years, tough times have touched us all, impacting some more than others. While enduring relentless hardships and setbacks is challenging, the ability to push through while maintaining hope for better days sets great leaders apart. It's been a defining characteristic of every transformational leader throughout history.

Amid the chaos, leaders who make a lasting difference dream of a brighter future and roll up their sleeves to make it a reality. This combination of vision and responsibility enables them to inspire, empower, and capture the hearts and minds of people from all walks of life. Their true power rests in this ability to unify and bring about consensus.

2

The Road Leading Us Here

Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.

—Stephen Covey

THE PATH TO this catastrophic leadership crisis was not a straight line with obvious warning signs. While the tides were already beginning to turn before the nation went into lockdown, the pandemic accelerated the timeline for many of today's most pressing leadership struggles and workplace challenges.

Before the pandemic, 61% of leaders reported receiving leadership training and support when entering a new role, compared to just 48% afterward. As a result of increased complexity, challenges, and uncertainty, support for transitioning leaders was eliminated in the initial wave of cost-reduction measures. While priorities had to shift during these disruptive times, coaching and training for leaders should not have been sacrificed.¹ What message did that send?

In 2021, the Global Leadership Forecast revealed only 11% of companies believe they have a strong leadership pipeline—the lowest this decade.² Although many factors contributed to the current predicament, ineffective practices and long-held misconceptions prolonged the crisis. We've glorified outdated archetypes of the leader

for far too long, teaching the next generation to prioritize personal success over the fulfillment, growth, and development of those on their teams.

However, in a relatively short period, we've undergone a significant course correction marked by unprecedented change, interdependence, and flux. While dwelling on the past is generally ineffective, we must explore prior shortcomings to understand how we arrived at this inflection point.

The Main Culprit

We must identify the root causes of workplace dysfunction and the leadership challenges that paralyze organizations and individuals today. As we explore these shifts, you'll notice a trend of radical advancement across nearly every aspect of life. The difference is that leadership practices fail to evolve at the accelerated rate of the rest of the world. Due to this stagnation, leaders and managers must focus on areas that do not enhance their level of impact.

Don't get me wrong, the technological innovations reinventing how we work and interact with others are crucial for progress. Still, the issue is not solely the velocity at which the world has changed over the past two decades but also the perspective and lack of intentionality in advancing workplaces and leadership archetypes.

The pendulum of digital and technological innovations causes seismic shifts across industries, resulting in many net positives. Of course, when the pendulum swings back, it reaches a new extreme in the opposite direction. When transformations occur too rapidly, they impede organizational performance and overwhelmingly impact employees and shareholders. Consider the case of Ford Motor Company.

Ford embarked on a digital transformation in 2014, launching a unique division known as Ford Smart Mobility; the goal was to produce cars equipped with advanced digital features. However, problems surfaced as the venture failed to blend with Ford's longstanding operational framework. Still, the company continued investing significant resources into the division instead of pulling back and addressing the growing issues. As a result, signs of distress spread throughout the company. The leadership team's lack of flexibility significantly impacted Ford's stock price, causing it to plummet. The company's CEO, Mark

Fields, never fully recovered professionally from the miscalculation and resigned a few years later.³

What good is investing in a digital platform that streamlines core objectives and changes how teams interact if leadership fails to connect with employees, foster future leaders, and promote a culture of continuous learning? Such failures make it impossible to supplement rapid change. Unfortunately, I've witnessed this exact scenario unfold across industries. Leaders become excited by the promises of innovation, products, and processes, only to be disappointed when the benefits fail to materialize. The reality is that the technology didn't fail them; they failed to innovate before implementing it. We must grow as leaders and expand our knowledge base before diving headfirst into exciting innovations that promise to bolster our pursuit of excellence.

The root cause of our crisis lies not in rapid advancement but in the stagnation of our leadership practices. We've raced forward technologically while leaving our leadership capabilities behind. To address this, we must shift our focus from adapting to the technology to transforming our entire approach toward leadership. What exactly does this require? It means strengthening connections with teams, cultivating a culture that values continuous learning, and reevaluating leadership philosophies in the face of constant change. Through these transformations, we can begin mending the issues that have surfaced in our workplaces.

Clinging to Comfort

A common leadership pitfall is returning to an emotional state of comfort—refusing to deviate from what we know and what makes us feel safest. Reluctance to let go of the familiar is the enemy of great leadership. Peace may come over us when engaging in familiar activities or returning to old habits, but that doesn't mean it's healthy. Quite the opposite. Comfort is not only the enemy of great leadership but also the death of excellence and everything we label best-in-class.

Consider the exhilaration and joy experienced early in a romantic relationship. Why does this excitement and willingness to try new things allow you to step outside your comfort zone? Because it feels good. Even if you're hesitant, there's a force that encourages you to put yourself out there in ways that may be uncomfortable. But what happens

as love matures and novelty turns to regularity? Your enthusiasm and excitement for trying new things and abandoning your comfort zone gradually diminish. Those early behaviors and feelings become foreign, and your detachment from reality peaks. This growing inability to understand how we once made our partner feel loved leads to the dissolution of many otherwise happy relationships.

How can two people become so estranged and detached when they were once head over heels in love? The answer is simple in theory but difficult in practice. The longer we spend with someone, the more comfortable we become. Soon, we begin believing the solution is recreating the spark that brought us together. This idea is misguided; it fails to consider that as people grow, the sparks that keep them together must also evolve. Relying on the same magic 10 years into a relationship is unrealistic and sure to end in heartbreak.

Our current leadership crisis follows the same logic. To understand how, let's look at John, a former executive at a multinational firm. For years, John relied on a leadership style that had brought him considerable success. However, as the business environment evolved, his methods became less effective. The strategies he was comfortable with no longer yielded the same results, and his team's performance declined. After taking a significant loss on a major project, John realized that his comfort was holding him, his team, and his organization back.

While difficult initially, he began embracing the discomfort that came with growth and was soon thriving. Too many leaders today fail to recognize the critical importance of continuous evolution. Instead, they adopt the misguided belief that the qualities, skills, and convictions that got them this far will carry them further. Adhering to this false reality stunts our desire to grow and prevents us from adapting to a changing world, and it'll continue to do so. Why? Because the pull of convenience and familiarity is just too great. Chapter 4 will explore the changes required for effective leadership and discuss breaking free from the shackles of comfort.

In leadership, as in life, remaining in our comfort zones is a recipe for stagnation. The reluctance to venture beyond the familiar and push the boundaries of our abilities is what's holding us back from becoming exceptional. We must recognize the danger of clinging to comfort and seek out the unfamiliar instead. This shift requires us to constantly question our methods and beliefs, evolve with the changing times, and