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—MARSHALL GOLDSMITH

{ NEW AND REVISED }

# DISCOVERING THE LEADER IN YOU

HOW TO REALIZE YOUR  
**LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL**

SARA N. KING, DAVID G. ALTMAN & ROBERT J. LEE

CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

Ranked in the Top 5 Worldwide for Executive Education by *BusinessWeek* and *Financial Times*

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## **About the Center for Creative Leadership**

# ***Praise for Discovering the Leader in You***

“An excellent guide for both new and seasoned leaders on the unique and complex challenges of leadership in the 21st century. This well-written, concise book will take you through the steps needed to make conscious, deliberate leadership choices in our 24/7 world of constant access and rapid change—choices that will help you better shape and control the influence you want to have.”

—**Molly Corbett Broad**, president, American Council on  
Education

“When managers or executives drift into leadership positions, simply as a step in their careers, they can find themselves tossed about by change and complexity. The authors of *Discovering the Leader in You* plot the coordinates of values and visions against which leaders can set their compass and navigate unknown seas. I highly recommend this book for emerging and established leaders.”

—**Robert W. Bryan**, CFO and SVP, Roll International  
Corporation

“Leaders are made, not born. Effective leadership requires deep passion, an unwavering commitment to serving others, a bold vision of future possibilities, and a conscious commitment to lifelong learning. The authors, all associated with the world-renowned Center for Creative Leadership, have written a book that will help leaders in all sectors of society enhance their leadership skills and, in turn, improve the human condition.”

—**Shirley Chater**, Ph.D., R.N., former commissioner, U.S.  
Social Security Administration; president emerita, Texas  
Woman's University

“Being a leader can be one of the most gratifying roles in life. *Discovering the Leader in You* spells out an effective process that leaders or aspiring leaders can go through to unleash their ability to effect change in the world. This is a compelling book that I recommend highly.”

—**Vice Admiral Cutler Dawson (USN Retired)**, president  
and CEO, Navy Federal Credit Union

“King, Altman, and Lee have written an important book that will reward those who are willing to learn, improve, and think expansively about personal passion and growth.”

—**Ben Feder**, CEO, Take Two Interactive Software

“Discover who you are as a leader with the world's top experts on the subject!”

—**Marshall Goldsmith**, world-renowned executive coach;  
author of the *New York Times* best sellers *MOJO* and *What  
Got You Here Won't Get You There*

“Where does leadership fit in your life? Readers can count on this book to help them answer this question confidently. The authors weave compelling stories of leadership in action with their own extensive coaching experiences to make this book an engaging, active force for creating the leadership our world calls for and deserves.”

—**General John W. Handy (USAF retired)**, president,  
JHandy Consulting

“Strong leadership is one key to a healthy and vibrant organization. Building a cadre of leaders who can navigate the challenges ahead is the work of our educational institutions. *Discovering the Leader in You* helps by providing a practical road map for emerging leaders to examine who they are as leaders and which opportunities

present the best fit with their style, strengths, and experiences.”

—**Nathan O. Hatch**, president, Wake Forest University

“Most leadership books give you answers, but too few ask pointed questions so that you can reflect on and come up with your own answers. *Discovering the Leader in You* does exactly that—and hence it is an important book. Read it.”

—**Prasad Kaipa**, Ph.D., CEO coach and advisor, Kaipa Group

“Through their hands-on work unlocking the leadership skills of numerous CCL classes, these authors have distilled the leadership discovery process and key behaviors into an engaging and easy-to-read book. Everyone can learn to build on his or her unique strengths and become a more inspiring leader.”

—**Harlan Kent**, CEO, Yankee Candle Company

“All great leaders strive for excellence by committing and periodically recommitting to self-improvement. In *Discovering the Leader in You*, the authors help leaders hone their awareness of self and environment in this must-read guide on the journey to betterment.”

—**Risa Lavizzo-Mourey**, M.D., MBA, president, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

“The most effective leaders know who they are, why they want to lead, what they want to accomplish, how they can lead authentically, and how their experience teaches valuable lessons. The authors of *Discovering the Leader in You* help emerging and experienced leaders gain more clarity about these very issues so that they lead with more purpose and navigate the challenges and rewards of leadership.”

—**Kim Martin**, president/general manager, WE tv and Wedding Central



“In *Discovering the Leader in You*, CCL continues a rich tradition of drawing insight from the study of leadership while also presenting a tangible call to action for the practicing leader. What is distinct in this work is how CCL speaks to both the ‘formal’ leader—someone with a title or job description that embodies leadership—and the ‘informal’ leader—the person who steps up and takes on a community service project or a role on a school board. The authors ask us to reflect on the question, ‘Why do I want to lead?’ In a world that appears more and more self-centered, the call for leadership has never been more important. This book inspires us to be intentional in the impact we want to have at home, at work, and in our communities and to step up and lead toward this purpose.”

—**Steve Merrill**, VP of Human Resources, OGE Energy Corp.

“An effective leader has to have keen self-awareness, which can only be obtained through a systematic process of self-discovery and evaluation. This book will take you through a proven discovery process that will help hone your leadership skills. I highly recommend it.”

—**Donna Noce**, president, White House Black Market

“Leaders are increasingly called upon to lead in a world that is rapidly changing, complex, and uncertain. The authors of *Discovering the Leader in You* have done a marvelous job in calling out the key dimensions of effective leadership for these times of challenge and opportunity. I heartily recommend this book.”

—**Nenad Pacek**, president and founder, Global Success Advisors Ltd., Oberwaltersdorf, Austria

“This book has plenty of practical advice about how to be an effective leader. It will make a notable contribution to each leader's reflective journey. The ideas will spark renewed energy for readers with years of leadership

experience and provide sound advice to individuals who are new to leadership.”

—**Kristen M. Swanson**, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., dean and  
Alumni Distinguished Professor, School of Nursing,  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“*Discovering the Leader in You* isn't about finding what's inside you or recovering what you've lost. It's about recognizing your situation, embracing its challenges, and making the necessary changes to overcome the challenges you face. This book helps leaders at all levels frame leadership discovery as a choice—a decision to make a difference to improve the lives of other people. Leadership is essential no matter the situation.”

—**General James D. Thurman**, commanding general, U.S.  
Army Forces Command

“Leaders can make or break an organization. With *Discovering the Leader in You*, the authors supply us with a systematic approach to excelling as a leader. The principles defined in this book can help you become the effective, impactful leader you want to be!”

—**Eric Wiseman**, chairman, president, and CEO, VF  
Corporation

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How to Realize Your  
Leadership Potential

*New and Revised*

SARA N. KING  
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# ***Preface***

Over many years, we have had the privilege of working with a large number of senior leaders and managers from different organizations all over the world. While many of them have impressed us as individuals with high achievement and even higher aspirations, many have not yet reached their full potential. In recent years, we've noticed that more of these individuals are expressing doubt about their role as leaders. Sometimes they aren't clear about what they should be doing or where they should be heading as leaders. Some are frustrated, conflicted, or downright unhappy. Some wonder if leading is worth the time, effort, and sacrifices they have to make.

We believe doubt has increased because of the growing complexity of the leadership tasks and the interconnected world in which we live. The speed of technological developments, rate of change, economic challenges, the daily pressures to meet ever more aggressive goals, and the 24/7 access expected of leaders have left many people with too few hours and too little energy to bring their best leadership to bear. As a result, leaders have begun to question their abilities, the direction their life has taken, and their hopes for future impact. We label this as the problem of *drift*.

All of us will experience drift at some point in our lives; the authors of this book have experienced drift multiple times during their careers as leaders. As leaders or aspiring leaders, we cannot be clear about every step to take at every moment in time. The problem occurs if we stay adrift too long. Long-term drift is risky because we will make decisions by default rather than conscious choice. Being a leader requires personal enthusiasm, vision, and constant energy. If we lack these characteristics, we cause problems for ourselves and for people with whom we work.

# Leadership as a Conscious Choice

We wrote this book to encourage you to make conscious choices about why, when, how, and where you lead. In our experience, the ability to be clear about these choices helps you achieve greater personal success as a leader and as a person. *Discovering the Leader in You* is about helping you gain personal insight into how leadership fits in your life, the unique qualities you bring to leadership, and the impact you want to have on the world as a leader.

The book reflects our belief that many people can benefit from a conscious, systematic approach to understanding how their leadership vision, values, skills, and motivations match up with their organizational and personal realities. Our hope is to help individuals move out of states of drift and into confident action, whether they are facing a concrete leadership career decision or simply examining their reaction to an organizational change.

## Our Intended Audience

We believe that leadership happens at all levels in organizations, families, and communities. There are many opportunities to lead regardless of whether you hold a formal leadership position. Therefore, this revised edition of *Discovering the Leader in You* is intended to help the new employee fresh out of college, the senior executive hoping to clarify the right next step, or the volunteer working at a grassroots organization. As you will see in this book, even the most senior leaders are on a journey of clarifying who they are as leaders and discovering how to improve their effectiveness. The most effective leaders come to understand that the leadership journey is an ongoing,

dynamic process without a clear beginning, middle, and end.

We hope that this book addresses the quest that many leaders have to walk a path of leadership filled with purpose and meaningful impact. We also hope it will be attractive to coaches, counselors, curriculum developers, human resource executives, and university professors, all of whom work with individuals to help them lead happier and more successful lives.

Finally, we hope this book reaches people who have not been seriously considering leadership opportunities. We believe strongly that the problems we face in the world today are largely a result of poor leadership and that the solutions to these problems will be the result of strong leadership. Leaders must not always be selected from the socioeconomic elite; there's too much leadership work to be done, and it's too important to leave to a narrow cross section of the world's population.

## **The Discovering Leadership Framework**

This book is designed around a systematic framework that connects who you are as a leader (your vision, values, and profile) to the realities of your organizational context and the realities of your personal life. By examining the demands and expectations on you as a leader and person, you can better match your talents to the opportunities surrounding you.

The framework is based on five key topics:

- 1. *Current organizational realities.*** The organizational context differs by individual. It can be as broad as the social, economic, and global trends affecting leadership today. It might be more specific to your industry, your

organization, or your leadership role. The goal is to understand the broader circumstances that influence your current leadership situation, as well as the demands and expectations of leaders.

**2. *Leadership vision.*** What is the role that leadership plays in your life? We believe that being purposeful about what you want in life is important to being purposeful about what you want as a leader. A leadership vision helps you out of drift. Without an articulate leadership vision, you will have a difficult time evaluating the leadership choices in front of you.

**3. *Leadership values.*** Values are the standards or principles that guide your beliefs, decisions, and actions. Understanding your values and leveraging them as a foundational cornerstone of your leadership choices is a critical contributor to effective leadership. Examining your motivations and values may give you more insight into why you feel adrift.

**4. *Leadership profile.*** Your leadership profile is your personal leadership tool kit and what you draw from to lead. It can include many things, such as competencies, styles, and experiences. Through careful analysis of your profile, you can assess what you see as your strengths and developmental needs. Your leadership profile further defines who you are as a leader and what you bring to leadership roles.

**5. *Current personal realities.*** You have a personal life that has an impact on your work life and a work life that has an impact on your personal life. Often we tend to compartmentalize these two areas of our lives when we would benefit by thinking in a more integrated and holistic way. At the end of the day, you are one person, whether you are at work, on vacation, or at home. How you integrate all aspects of your life with your

responsibilities as a leader is one of the most challenging tasks you will face.

We devote a chapter to each topic of the framework. Our final chapter then guides you through a process for synthesizing data and identifying themes and patterns across the sections of the framework. This synthesis provides a valuable picture for who you are as a leader and the circumstances in which you lead best. The final step is to describe the direction you wish to go as a leader and set goals that will help you get there.

## **Acknowledgments**

All authors stand on the shoulders of those who worked the terrain before them. We acknowledge the many shoulders we have stood on to gain strength, a vision for the future, and a strong foundation to withstand the challenges that we have faced as leaders. To our colleagues at CCL, thank you for helping us along the path of our own leadership journeys.

We received wonderful support and guidance from our colleague in the CCL publications group, Peter Scisco, who gave us ideas, kept us on track, and reviewed each and every sentence we wrote. Our developmental editor extraordinaire in San Francisco, Alan Venable, took our words and sharpened their focus. Felecia Corbett in the CCL library painstakingly researched references (always with a smile on her face), and Pauline Vail at CCL helped with a number of technical aspects of putting together this book. Thanks to each of you. We also want to recognize and thank Marcia Horowitz, who was an instrumental and valuable contributor to the first edition. Without her, we wouldn't be working on this revised edition.

Most important, we thank our families who supported our disappearance for hours on end, including nights, weekends,

and vacations, so that we could write this book. We couldn't have completed this book without the daily tangible and emotional support of our spouses: Craig, Judith, and Mary. We dedicate this book to our children, Thomas Chappelow, Andrew Chappelow, Ben Chappelow, Rebecca Altman, Emily Altman, David Lee, Mark Lee, and Andrea Lee and her children, Becky and Orin Carlson-Lee. We know that the journey of discovering your own leadership paths will make the world a better place.

*December 2010*

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# ***Chapter One***

## ***Where Does Leadership Fit in Your Life?***

As counselors and trainers of executives and as advocates for improving the human condition through leadership development, we've noticed in recent years that increasingly more clients seem less sure about their path of leadership. Despite having had high levels of achievement and an unwavering dedication to work and career, they admit, when pressed, that something just doesn't feel right. They're uncertain about whether they're spending their best years doing what they really want to do and whether, at the end of the day, the leadership path they have chosen will ultimately be fulfilling.

This concerns us because we believe that the need for effective leadership has grown. We need strong leaders not only at the top of formal organizations (corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies, for example) but also at all levels in organizations and in our communities and families. Each of us has multiple opportunities to lead every day if we choose to do so. Our hope is that in reading this book, you will find clarity about the role of leadership in your life so that you can lead more effectively in whatever situation you face.

Leadership is a hot topic, as shown by the flood of journals, books, Web sites, blogs, and training programs that now discuss what it is and how it's best practiced. Search the Web using the word *leadership*, and you will generate well over 100,000 hits. Search university offerings, and you