STILL MOVING

HOW TO LEAD MINDFUL CHANGE

Deborah Rowland

'A powerful exposition on the need to look within ourselves to find the leadership required for our fast changing and dislocated world.'

Paul Polman, *CEO, Unilever*

WILEY Blackwell

Praise for *Still Moving: How to Lead Mindful Change*

Still Moving is groundbreaking in this time of increasing complexity and ongoing disruption. Rowland's work in the field is 10 years ahead of the industry and she speaks into our deepest need right now. This book is an essential companion for CEOs and anyone leading large, complex change and those who advise them. Let the book speak to you, consume the wisdom, and put that wisdom into practice. You, your family, customers, employees, business and the planet will all be the benefactors.

Bill Adams, *CEO, The Leadership Circle and Full Circle Group, co-author of Mastering Leadership and The Whole Systems Approach*

It is now commonplace to talk about the constancy of change in the business world as a backdrop for the latest best approach to its leadership. This book sets its ambitions far higher: the increasingly intractable and bewildering dilemmas we all see and face, not only in business, but related to issues such as migration, climate change, inequality and terrorism.

Rowland meets this burning need for a profoundly different and more effective leadership with real insight into what this needs to look like – no magic formulas but deep exploration of our own role as leaders. These insights need to be heard and adopted in all walks of life.

Ruth Cairnie, *Non-executive Director, Rolls-Royce Holdings, Associated British Foods and Keller Group*

Deborah Rowland has written a truly groundbreaking book. Based on sound research, she shows for the first time that success in leading large-scale change depends not only on what a leader does but, crucially, on how they are – on their inner states and capacities.

How strange that it has taken so long for us to wake up to the fact that the inner states and capacities of leaders really matter. And how wonderful that Deborah has so convincingly been able to open our eyes to that deep truth.

Michael Chaskalson, *Professor of Practice, Ashridge Business School*

More traditional ways of managing change in this fast, disruptive and increasingly uncertain world are no longer enough. Transformational change requires purposeful leadership with a deep awareness of self and the needs of others.

Still Moving provides the perfect blend of a rigorous analytical study coupled with powerful real-life stories of successful transformation. If you are about to lead change, this is a must have companion.

Steven Cooper, *CEO, Personal Banking and Executive Director, Barclays Bank plc*

I read this book because I have long admired Deborah's innate gift to look well past the obvious and to illuminate the parts of leadership and change simply not visible to most of us. With *Still Moving*, she provides a series of insights into one of the great ironies of leadership in this decade: the most effective way to lead through the dynamic, distracting minefields of chaos we face in our lives is to nurture the inner space that enables us to lead from a place of profound mindfulness. *Still Moving* provides the proof of concept, the motivation and the instruction to begin a leader's most important journey.

Kevin Cox, *Chief Human Resources Officer, American Express Company*

A powerful exposition on the need to first look within ourselves to find the leadership skills required for our fast changing and dislocated world, *Still Moving* is a welcome and much-needed contribution on how to lead for positive social change in an era when leaders need to be in a continual state of adaptation.

Within this world Rowland convincingly shows us why a thoughtful, mindful and purpose-driven approach to leading change is the one most likely to endure.

Paul Polman, *CEO, Unilever*

Still Moving is a compelling and practical guide to the leadership of change. By sharing her self-reflection and brave journey into her past, Deborah inspires us all to become more conscious and embracing of our own life narratives – a key underpinning of her framework to help us become more effective leaders and agents of change in our organisations and in society today.

Ann Sarnoff, *President, BBC Worldwide North America*

An inspiring, practical and provocative take on the power of mindful leadership to reshape our world

Otto Scharmer, *Senior Lecturer, MIT and co-founder of the Presencing Institute*

Still Moving is an inspiring, practical and well-researched treatise on how to navigate change in this fast-moving world. It is a wake up call to more mindful leadership, and Rowland's writing style took my own mind on a heartfelt and enriching journey. For all leaders of any change, this book could be your most valuable guide.

Mimi Tang, *Founder and CEO, Wing's Share (and former President, Kering Asia Pacific)*

In *Still Moving* Deborah Rowland comprehensively describes how fundamental change can only be achieved when leaders combine their own capacity for mindfulness with business transformation. What's more, she pulled this off in my company, where she successfully guided us through a large, complex transformation – she has been in the field, and felt it and shaped it. I can think of no one with greater passion, wisdom and authority on the subject – and who, at the same time, exposes her own vulnerability and learning.

Peter Terium, *CEO, RWE (now innogy)*

Rowland's book *Still Moving* is an exciting breakthrough in thinking on leading change and is an invaluable guide for anyone leading major change in business, or in society, today. She uniquely has recognised that the massive scope and rapid speed of today's changes require new approaches, and that leaders must focus on *how* change is led not just on *what* change needs to be implemented. And with change a constant part of today's business landscape, Rowland convincingly sets out the four key inner capacities needed to enhance a leader's effectiveness in such a fast-paced world.

Mike White, *former Chairman and CEO, DirecTV*

Still Moving

How to Lead Mindful Change

Deborah Rowland

WILEY Blackwell

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To Mum and Dad

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Foreword

There are many books that have been described as 'waiting to be written'. *Still Moving* was not so much waiting to be written, as *needing* to be written.

Over the past 20 years and more, so much has been written on the question of effective leadership. And so much has been invested by large organisations in leadership development. It is a puzzle that organisations, and indeed societies, still suffer from major failures in leadership. It is incredible that leaders in one of the world's most successful car companies thought it acceptable to 'cheat' both the regulatory authorities, and more significantly, its customers – a move that is already costing the company many billions of dollars. It is equally extraordinary that a bank which had partnered with one of the world's leading business schools in developing its leaders could make a major acquisition that triggered its collapse and bail out by its national government.

Readers of *Still Moving* may be aware of many other instances of such failures of leadership (either from direct personal experience, or from the media), both large and small. It cannot be argued, therefore, that these are individual and isolated cases.

I have spent much of the past 20 years trying to address this puzzle. The potential benefit not only to business organisations, but to societies and the world, from the array of leadership insights is vast. Some of the puzzle is explained by misdirected leadership development. We have expended too much effort in trying to develop leaders simply to inspire and engage their people. In saying this, I am not suggesting that this is not vital. But it is not enough. Most organisations create or destroy value through the major strategic decisions they make. The process, culture and behaviours through which such decisions are taken, and the engagement – or otherwise – of the external environment is at least of equal importance. Yet leadership competency frameworks and engagement processes rarely embrace this.

It is also true that too much of the delivery mechanism for leadership development programmes has been 'offline'. The intellectual capacity to understand what leadership works in a classroom, or decision-making conducted in an outdoor team event, is not the same as making it work under the relentless day-to-day pressure that comes with leading organisations in today's massively complex and changing environment.

There have, of course, been significant benefits from this investment in leadership. But, the reality is that most organisations have not seen the expected return. The above reasons only provide a small part of the answer.

In *Still Moving*, Deborah Rowland provides compelling insights and practical responses to this leadership puzzle that many others and I have encountered.

In her original research along with Malcolm Higgs – *Sustaining Change: Leadership that Works* (2008, Wiley) – Deborah set out a cogent and coherent framework for leading complex change. Moreover, this framework was validated by empirical research.

Still Moving, again based on thorough and robust research, not only validates the original proposition, but takes it to another level, revealing not only the external practices but also the inner state needed to lead change well.

In recent years, much has been written on the subject of 'mindfulness' and what is described as 'mindful leadership'. Deborah Rowland argues that, while mindfulness is an essential *starting point* for the inner state of effective and successful leadership, it is only part of the process of leading change. The breakthrough element is the combination of mindfulness with the *systemic capacity* that makes up the leader's inner state. In this context, systemic capacity means much more than 'Systems Thinking'. It embraces not only the personal ability to tune into the feelings and emotions of others, but also the wisdom to understand and appreciate that patterns of events are somehow 'meant to happen', and give the leader true insight into what actually needs to, and is waiting to, change.

The explicit connection between the inner capacities and external exhibited practices forms the basis of a new way of understanding leadership. The research demonstrates the vital importance of the inner state as the foundation of what leaders actually practise on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, this applies across the range of tasks undertaken by leaders. As well as inspiring followership among colleagues, the idea of combining an inner state with external practice applies across engagement with the external environment and stakeholders, setting strategic direction and strategic decision-making, building the organisation's capacity to execute and delivering ongoing performance.

This is not dry theory leavened with obscure academic research. Deborah brings it to life with a wealth of real leadership stories. Stories drawn from multiple sectors, profit and not for profit, national and transnational, provide a rich tapestry of real experience that allows the reader to readily relate the content to their own experience. Moreover, Deborah has brought her personal experience of leadership into every chapter, relating her own triumphs and struggles that must surely connect to every reader's reality. This is leading change as we know and experience it, explained and understood.

However, Deborah has brought more than her own extensive leadership experience to *Still Moving*. What is remarkable is the way in which she has used the peaks and the troughs, the joy and the anxiety of her own personal journey of experiencing change. It is this more than anything else that makes the book intensely readable, it brings her own inner state out into the open for us all to see – and to connect with what that has meant to her – and in so doing illuminates what it means and could mean for each of us.

Like all important books, *Still Moving* needs and deserves to be read 'mindfully'; to be read with curiosity rather than judgement; to be absorbed with an open heart and open mind. In this way, each one of us who reads this book will have the opportunity to adjust our own leadership, to the benefit of ourselves, those around us and society as a whole.

Roger Bellis
London, May 2016

Roger Bellis has over 25 years' direct experience of leading change on a national and transnational scale – as a FTSE 100 Human Resources Director, as a Director of Talent and Leadership in large, global organisations and as a consultant working with CEOs and their leadership teams.

Acknowledgements

This book stands on many people's shoulders. I first wish to thank its three closest companions and indispensable guides: Jackie Gittins, Roger Bellis and Ron Rowland. Jackie provided me with wise reflection and counsel throughout the writing process, each chapter's first draft would inevitably return to me from her with insight, encouragement, challenge and inspiration. Roger acted as a hugely supportive thinking partner as I embarked on each chapter and an ever-patient on-the-spot helpline for those inevitable moments when I became stuck. Like Jackie and Roger, my father Ron reviewed each chapter as it came off the press and notwithstanding the familial tie would give me just the right amount of gentle challenge when needed – and, of course, heaps of encouragement to his daughter.

The book also rests on the outputs of the research team, who gathered together to undertake my second large study into the nature of change and its leadership. I have already acknowledged Roger Bellis. In addition I particularly wish to thank Anjet van Linge, Professor Malcolm Higgs, Michael Chaskalson and Katie Jones. Anjet – aside from creating the beautiful painting for the book's front cover – provided much depth of critical insight and spirit-level wisdom into the *Still Moving* leadership construct as it emerged from the study. Without the objective research wizardry and clear-minded guidance of Malcolm this study would have lacked the empirical rigour I wished to bring to a subject that can be so confusing for practising leaders. As a lifelong mindfulness practitioner Michael's subject matter expertise, intellectual curiosity and kindly compassion brought both depth and spirit to our team. And without the indefatigable Katie Jones we would never have been able to organise and administer such a comprehensive research project in the first place. For assistance in the interviewing process I would also like to express gratitude to Helen Bellis, Barbara Mastoroudes, Anne Behringer and Nicole Brauckmann.

Of course, the research team needed its subjects. So I also wish to acknowledge the 65 leaders from around the world who so generously gave of their time to be interviewed for our study. Their open, honest and in-depth stories of change fuel this book, making *Still Moving* very much a 'book by leaders for leaders'.

One organisation in particular stands out for me as an inspiration for *Still Moving*. And that is RWE, the Germany-based energy producer, trader and supplier. In my role as change coach to them and their CEO, Peter Terium, over the past 3 years I have packed in enough leadership lessons about how to take a large system through big change to last the remainder of my lifetime. I am deeply grateful for the experience, and wish to thank all of their 360 most senior leaders whom I have had the privilege to intimately support and learn from. Critically, I could not have accomplished this assignment without the world class, tireless and loving support of a Faculty Team who came together to facilitate the leadership development programme I talk of in Chapter 9. I wish to single out Nicole Brauckmann for her courageous and dedicated partnership with me on the programme, but also acknowledge Roger Bellis, John Briffa, Paul Byrne, Sytske Casimir, Michael Chaskalson, Anke Geber, Judith Hemming, Anja Leao, Paul Pivcevic, Barbara Roscher, Peter Stoppelenburg, Anjet van Linge and Nicola Wreford-Howard. Petra Rutz too, for how she helped inspire the original programme concept, and Ruud Wilgenkamp and Arndt Brandenberg for their business sponsorship.

This book is not just about others' leadership. You will discover this book gets personal. I will share with you some key elements of my own leadership journey and how that has been influenced by early life experience. For inspiring me to have the courage to do this – in addition to helping with the editing process – I wish to thank the challenging minds and warm-hearted support of Stuart Crainer and Des Dearlove. They, together with the editorial team at Wiley, have made book writing a pleasurable process. Within this context I also wish to express my deep gratitude to the residents of the village of Portloe, in Cornwall, UK, where I wrote this book. They looked with curiosity and kindness on this strange new neighbour who had arrived from London to write in their midst. Their ongoing encouragement has meant a lot.

If I look back over my past decade of personal growth certain guides feature strongly. Be that Chris Robertson at Spiral Consulting, Judith Hemming at Moving Constellations or Susan Nordhaal, my therapist in Bath, they have all helped me drop into a deeper level of consciousness, a truly perspective altering level from which I now look on myself with more insight and kindness and the world around me with more respectful and systemic eyes. As a species it is natural for us to be well defended and unwilling to be vulnerable. But that doesn't help us learn and grow.

I thank all of my guides and colleagues, who have helped me to open my defences and endanger myself to growth. I hope this book can inspire you likewise.

Last, I wish to acknowledge the loving and supportive embrace of my adopted Rowland family. Their embrace healed my early fractured soul and generously supported me through life. This crib of good values is something I will be eternally grateful for. Mum and Dad, I'm glad you made the right choice.

Moved by Stillness

I sat on the edge of the balcony, my door open, tuning into the sea I saw before me. I sat and watched for a long time. What I saw changed every second and the more I tried to paint it all, the less I was able to. And I realised I did not want to capture the detail. I wanted to find a way to frame what I experienced. The broad bands of grey sky, the sea, the breakers, wet sand, dry sand. And when I painted only that, the stillness and the movement of all that sky, of all the water and the solid sand landed itself on paper.

Anjet van Linge, artist and painter of
Still Moving's front cover work, 'Texel'

1

Introduction

Stillness is what creates love,
Movement is what creates life,
To be still,
Yet still moving –
That is everything!

Do Hyun Choe, Japanese Master

My life began in change, the ultimate change, when I was handed over at 6 weeks old and adopted into the welcome and hugely loving embrace of the Rowland family. I had experienced an ending, with my biological mother, at the very start of life. An in-between time, floating without family, in a Lancashire mother-and-babies home. And then here was a new beginning with my adopted family. Born Wendy Juliet, I was renamed Deborah Anne. Since that cataclysmic time, no change has ever seemed insurmountable.

It meant that I learned to live life on a boundary. As an adopted child I grew up with detached curiosity, an outsider in my own life. Seeking to belong yet hard-wired not to trust, I cautiously put one foot into my new family, and, at the same time, carefully kept one foot out, just in case I had to leave – or be left – again. Perhaps I was always on the look out for a bond, for intimacy. However, it seemed I both tumbled into it and ran away from it almost at the same time. The edge, for me, felt the safest place.

Yet this detachment, this instinct to be *alongside* rather than *inside* gave me a helpful vantage point to observe and notice. I was intensely curious about people, in particular how they related to each other and formed systems. I could make good use of my fate.

My earliest companion – detached curiosity – set my life on its course. Holding Mum and Dad's hands as a wondrous wide-eyed 10-year-old, I was transfixed by the blockbuster Tutankhamun exhibition in London

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in 1972, the treasure trove of royal Egyptian artefacts unearthed by the archaeologist Howard Carter. And when in 1977 Desmond Morris published *Manwatching: A Field Guide to Human Behaviour*, I knew I had found my field.

And so I read archaeology and anthropology at university. From the Trobrianders of New Guinea to the Nuer of the Nile, their ethnographies provided many hours of absorbing reading and reflection in the university library. The anthropological discipline of acute unbiased observation enhanced my sensitivity to diversity and to context. All thought and action, however seemingly strange, make perfect sense when you can see the system within which they are situated. I also spent many hours on my hands and knees in deep Neolithic trenches, using a tiny trowel to gently scrape away and reveal history's previously unearthed layers. I felt both strengthened and humbled when I stood in that deep messy line of time.

As compelling as the experience was, I put down my trowel and continued my personal line out of those trenches. And I did so because a single memory from just one anthropology lecture had already awakened my purpose. A purpose that has guided the intervening 30 years I have spent in business – and that still guides me today. Indeed, it is the reason why I write this book.

The memory came from a grainy black and white film shown in that fateful lecture. Shot at the turn of the last century, it falteringly documented how a group of British Christian missionaries entered a native tribe in Africa with the aim of 'civilising' its seemingly primitive culture. This was the *change goal*. As a result of inter-village warfare, this native culture was thought to be on the verge of extinction. What caught my attention, beyond the misguided arrogance of the change goal, was the *change approach*.

The missionaries decided to introduce the villagers to the game of cricket. Believing they would channel their aggression into this edifying game, the missionaries looked on aghast as the African warriors picked up the cricket stumps as javelins, and the cricket balls as missiles. Far from reducing the inter-village warfare, the change approach amplified it. On entering a strange landscape the missionaries had sought new results by importing old routines. Big mistake.

Worryingly those lessons of over a century ago still need heeding today. There remain plenty of well-intended missionaries with antique approaches to change. History repeats.

But the lessons from the missionaries pointed me to my (professional) fate. I have spent 30 years exploring what it truly takes to lead change in new and uncertain environments, where past solutions no longer work and in fact become a dangerous liability.

I believe I have found some of the answers, and offer them to you in *Still Moving.*

Leading Change Starts Inside Yourself

Here's my primary insight – start by becoming *still* and examining the source of your thinking and action.

The missionaries leapt into their habitual routines without first questioning the deeper beliefs shaping them. Unaware of these biased lenses they could not clearly see the system they were seeking to change. Blind to their own impulses and ignorant of context, all they could do was reactively shape – and not resourcefully respond – to the escalating fray.

Now, I can hear you thinking, 'I would never have done anything like that!' Really?

We all grow up in our stories, our personal histories. Like my adoption story, the narratives of our lives lay down deep deposits in the layers of our being – deposits of emotional instinct, felt security or insecurity, self-identity, adaptive coping behaviour. And we take those deposits and we import those routines into our adult life: our relationships and our leadership. They are the source of our repeating patterns and impulses in the present – particularly in stressful and challenging situations. In these circumstances we naturally get anxious, and can resort to primitive self-limiting patterns of thinking and acting that lead to the very opposite of the results we are trying to create.

The dual capacity to be aware of, and able to regulate our response to, experience guides the entire quality of our thinking, action and results. What's more, my new research has shown that this ability to tune into and regulate the self, within an evolving system, is the number one inner skill in being able to lead change well. If senior leaders stay stuck in habitual response, so do their organisations.

Once you are able to come off autopilot and hold your default impulses lightly, you are freed of their attachment and can intentionally and less habitually respond. You see what shows up in experience with systemic perception not just personal projection. Easy to say, much harder to do!

I am grateful for how my instinctive preference to be on the observational edge of human systems has enabled me to have a rewarding career in the field of leadership and change. Yet, even today when guiding leadership groups, and the two seats on either side of me remain empty, I can easily tip into my default story: 'Here we go again, I am left alone, abandoned!' Rather than hold the systemic insight: 'My distance from others has given me the necessary detachment for leadership'.

It's a wafer-thin line between impulsive, anxious reaction, and mindful, perceptive response, especially when the world feels threatening and disruptive.

Aha, the 'M word' has made its first appearance. Let's go there now.

The Mindfulness Explosion

In my first book with Malcolm Higgs, *Sustaining Change: Leadership That Works* (2008), we set out the four leadership practices, or exhibited behaviours, that our research showed in combination were highly correlated with successful change outcomes.

These were: *Attractor* – creating an emotional pull in your organisation towards shared purpose; *Edge and Tension* – naming reality and amplifying disturbance in order to innovate; *Container* – channelling anxiety and uncertainty into productive energy by being calm, confident and affirming; and *Transforming Space* – taking actions that create deep change in the here-and-now experience.

At that time we also drew attention to what we surmised were two critical *inner conditions* behind these practices: self-awareness and ego-less intention.[1]

Yet in that round of research we did not empirically test the relationship between this inner state and a leader's successful practice. It remained a hypothesis. We focused on what leaders *did*, the four practices above. And this was largely because we had not found a single coherent framework that could describe this inner state.

In the decade since we wrote *Sustaining Change* there has been an explosion of interest in so-called 'mindfulness'.[2,3] While newly arrived on the public scene mindfulness has in fact been in existence for almost 2,500 years. Originally derived from ancient Buddhist contemplative tradition, and more recently adopted into western settings through the fields of medicine, social psychology, education and general work place productivity, the practice of mindfulness – classically trained via meditation – has now found its way into leadership.

Mindfulness is, in essence, the cultivation of a deeper awareness of the self, others and the world through focused, non-judgemental and intentional attention on the present moment.[4] This is a radical shift in how we show up in our lives, where research shows that our attention is only on the present moment for half of the time.[5] Our uncontained minds naturally wander. The promise of mindfulness is that by bringing our attention intentionally and non-judgementally to what we are experiencing, in the present moment, we will be more able to regulate our

emotional and cognitive response to experience leading to calmer and more resourceful lives.

You can imagine how this capacity to approach all of experience – and in particular difficulty – with greater equilibrium could be important in leading change. I define change as the disturbance of repeating patterns – a task that by definition is fraught with difficulty. Patterns are stable constructs that are hard to break – especially human mindset and behaviour. As a living species our brains are hard-wired for survival and that tends to mean repeating the coping patterns of the past. Disturbing these patterns is not only difficult to do, it comes at a price for those disturbing them, as it requires breaking previous commitments and loyalties. Ouch.

It's hardly surprising then that in the past 2 years alone circa 50 books purporting to associate mindfulness with leadership success have been launched onto the virtual Amazon bookshelf. But while tested in clinical settings and personality disciplines, mindfulness has not yet been empirically proven to relate to management or success in top leadership. Studies to date have been limited to examining personal benefits to the leader; for example, stress reduction, enhanced task performance and general well-being.[6,7,8] They have not looked into broader organisational outcomes. There is a paucity of research into the relationship between mindfulness, leader effectiveness and successful change outcomes.[9,10,11]

I wanted to change that, and address what I saw as the somewhat *mindless* take up of mindfulness, fast in danger of becoming a fad rather than a deeply understood discipline.

Does Mindfulness Matter?

As I got more acquainted with the field of mindfulness, I sensed that it could hold a key to unlocking the meaning of the inner state we wrote of in *Sustaining Change*. Just after publishing that book, and partly inspired by the wishful thought that I could put my own research into action, I had left consulting and returned to the corporate world. In the two executive roles that followed, both of which entailed leading major restructurings, I certainly learned about what *not* to do as well as what *to* do when leading change. But more than that, I came to a stark and vital realisation that proved a further ignition point for this book.

My realisation was that change does indeed start on the inside. I had always claimed that 'change starts with self', however I had not quite comprehended that this did *not* mean having to change yourself. It meant accessing your highest and most conscious self.

What do I mean by that? In my corporate roles it became very clear that I had to be in the right place personally before I could skilfully lead or do anything. *Being* at ease with all of experience felt as important as what I *did* in experience. And for that ease to be with me it required that I cultivated a point of inner spaciousness, or stillness. From this place, and only this place, could I gain the courage, resilience and wisdom to tackle the most stressful and complex of changes.

I was starting to see why those four leadership practices we set out in *Sustaining Change* were theoretically sound yet dastardly hard to practise. I had had to do it to get it.

With my personal experience in the corporate world and the burgeoning field of mindfulness entering into leadership, I wanted to investigate more fully the relationship between a leader's ability to mindfully regulate their inner state and their ability to lead change. The workings of destiny continued in that I was then offered the chance to act as change coach to the Executive Board of a large European energy company going through a major transition. The CEO, my client, wished mindfulness to be the cornerstone new skill for his leaders. This experience was the final tap on the shoulder that I needed to return to the drawing board of research.

And here, in summary, is what my research team and I found.

After the forensic examination of evidence coming from coding 88 different stories of leading change, we can say, *yes*, mindfulness does make a difference to a leader's ability to lead big change. Staying calm, connected and resourceful in challenging conditions was a hallmark of the most successful change leaders. And yet we found that mindfulness, while the starting point, is not the only component to a leader's inner state.

We found that a leader's ability to be mindful needs to be supplemented by a deep capacity to perceive the world through a systemic lens. And it was this deeper interpretative capacity that proved the biggest differentiator between high and low success in leading large complex change.

This systemic capacity, the *perceiving skill* of being able to look beneath visible experience and see its deeper governing structures, was a clear differentiator between leaders who could lead big change well, and those who could not. It led them to create movement – and not just busy action.

It makes sense. When you rise to a senior leadership position, such a role requires you to understand and influence a large complex interconnected system that seems to have its own life and intentionality (if only we could simply pull a lever at the top of an organisation to change it!). In times of major change, systemic capacities enable leaders to sustainably and more effortlessly move this wider and deeper field.

Still Moving – a Call to Leadership

We found that when mindfulness and systemic skills were combined, this inner capacity led to highly successful change outcomes. To be mindful and systemic at the same time requires you to stop and find an inner place of stillness. Just as the Hindu concept of *Madhya* describes that still point of pure present-moment awareness, like the momentary pause between your in breath and your out breath, so does a leader need to find that place of deep consciousness from which they can clearly perceive and respond to experience. This inner still capacity is a quality of *being*.

Successful change leadership is also about moving the world around you, and for this task the four external leadership practices combine. With a nuance here or there, our new research re-validated the vital role that Attractor, Edge and Tension, Container and Transforming Space leadership play in leading change well. This external moving capacity is a quality of *doing*.

This combination of being and doing – at the same time – is the concept behind Still Moving. Our research found that this combination of skills explained 52% of the reason why leaders can lead big change well. Put another way, if you can't practice Still Moving leadership, you reduce your chances of successfully leading change by half.

To be still, yet still moving, that is (almost) everything.

Who is This Book For?

Still Moving is a book for leaders wishing to approach the challenges of changing their institutions, or society at large, in a more skilful and humane way. This is not a book for leaders wishing only to increase shareholder value. But it will appeal to leaders who desire to bring about big change in ways that increase productivity *and* achieve those desired outcomes in ways that leave the world in a stronger place.

The concept of Still Moving has, of course, a double meaning. It not only encompasses putting two skill sets together to describe a certain way to move a system. The concept also means the ability to achieve ongoing, longer lasting and more sustainable change that replenishes the world and our leadership more than it takes away. Still is an adverb as well as an adjective.

The book is also aimed at leadership coaches and change consultants who wish to create a deeper capacity for leading change in the systems of their clients – be they individuals, top teams, whole organisations or multistakeholder societal groups. To cultivate both being and doing requires a certain kind of development experience, one that is grounded

in lived moments rather than taught models. (If this were followed through it would call into question the vast bulk of the €45bn spent on leadership development and training every year.[12] That might also help the world a little.)

If you already feel this book speaks to you then I welcome you on its journey. To help you *mindfully* navigate that journey, here's an overview of what to expect.

Chapter 2: Is Change Changing?

In this chapter I set out what I see as the bigger picture context within which today's leadership is exercised – the major societal trends that both challenge and disrupt how today's businesses and institutions are run. This presents an adaptive change challenge requiring an adaptive leadership response such as greater agility, shorter planning cycles, working more collaboratively across multistakeholder groups, and upturning conventional hierarchies and control systems. At its core, it requires that we operate from a new mode of perception about the world and our place in it.

Chapter 3: Still Moving – The Inner and Outer Skills

In this chapter I describe in more detail our research and the Still Moving framework. I reiterate the four external leadership practices set out in *Sustaining Change*, including how I have now refined these through the lessons of experience. And I will introduce you to the four inner mindfulness and systemic capacities, which we found to be essential antecedents and enhancers of these practices. A story of business transformation illustrates these throughout.

Chapter 4: It All Starts in Mindfulness

In more detail I set out in this chapter the two inner mindfulness capacities that we found to be most associated with success in leading big change: *Staying Present*, the ability to pay close attention to the present moment without getting caught up in it; and *Curious and Intentional Responding*, consciously choosing how to be with what you have noticed is present. I draw from the research and my experience to illustrate these capacities and share an in-depth case study of how they can be used to lead big change well.