THE INNER EDGE

The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership

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Foreword by Howard J. Morgan

PRAEGER
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The Inner Edge:
What Is Personal Leadership?

Most true happiness comes from one's inner life.

—*William L. Shirer*

LEAH

Leah Zellner, the president of a national resort group, dashed into her office, throwing off her coat.

"I'm sorry I'm late!" she gasped. "It's been a crazy day!"

For the next five minutes, she raced through a litany of concerns: leading her company as its first female president, finalizing a merger, launching a new global strategy, moving into a new office, speaking at a client conference, throwing her daughter's wedding, and expecting her first grandson.

"You certainly are busy!" I commented.

"You have no idea," she wheezed. "Meetings, calls, invitations, a trip to New York . . ."

I watched Leah rush about her office. Here was a woman who seemed to have everything she wanted: a glamorous, high-paying job; exciting travel; and a happy, growing family. But today everything that made up her charmed life seemed to be getting in the way.

I wondered, *Is this what our busy lives have come to? That our momentous life events have become items to check off a list?*

Leah flopped into the chair beside me. "You know, it used to be that it was Ready, Aim, Fire. Then it became Ready, Fire, Aim. Now it's just FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

Leah's life as a leader mirrors many I've seen in my years as an executive coach. Every day, I see talented, accomplished leaders struggling because they're too stressed, too stretched, or too tired of sacrificing. As a result, many businesses are losing their leaders, and many leaders are losing themselves. It's become a stubborn predicament: how to achieve success without sacrificing your quality of life.

There's another way to be successful as a leader in today's world that is more thoughtful. More strategic. More reflective. You can learn to lead in a way that preserves your talent while enhancing your quality of life. You can succeed without the sacrifice. Leading well and living well, both at the same time. In the pages of this book, you will discover a new way to be a better leader . . . and lead a better life.

But be aware that this book isn't about leading your organization or leading your team. It's about leading yourself.

WHO ARE YOU AS A LEADER?

Everyone is a leader in some way. Throughout this book, I will be referring to leaders, and I do *not* just mean presidents and CEOs. I mean you.

- *A business or corporate leader.* Corporate leaders often hold leadership positions in their organizations: president, vice president, director, manager, or supervisor. You may even own the company. But you can also serve as a leader in your company even without the fancy title by the way you act and interact.
- *A professional leader.* You can be a leader in your profession whether you are a consultant, an entrepreneur, or an independent professional like an attorney, speaker, or physician.
- *A community leader.* You may have a leadership role in public service, as a nonprofit board member, in your church, with the Girl or Boy Scouts, or in your neighborhood.
- *A family leader.* As a mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, grandparent, or cousin, you may take an active part in creating your family environment.
- *An inspirational leader.* You may be a leader among your friends, family, and fans by the way you conduct yourself—as reflected by your character, your choices, and your demeanor.

A thought leader. You could be leading change with original ideas and new ways of thinking.

An action leader. Maybe you're the one with the energy to make things happen and the charisma to get others to do the same.

The leader of your own life. No matter who you are or what you do, you get to take the lead in your life. No one else will do that for you. No one else *can.* You may or may not have a fancy suit, a nameplate on the door, and an assistant just outside. But every single one of us is leading a life, which may be the most exciting kind of leadership of all.

In what ways are *you* a leader?

LIVING AND LEADING ON THE EDGE

Every leader has an inner and an outer edge. Your *inner edge* is the you behind the scenes: your thoughts and motivations, your aspirations, your plans, your decisions, your strengths and weaknesses, your values, and your way of becoming a success. Your *outer edge* is the you that you show the world: your words, your actions, and your interactions with the people around you. Your inner and outer edges are intimately related. The way you feel influences the way you act. Your actions affect your results. Your results determine the way you experience life. In order to be effective as a leader and in your life, you need to spend time on both your outer and inner edge.

Most leaders, like Leah, often concentrate on their outer edge. They focus on the company vision, mission, results, customers, and clients. All of that is appropriate and productive, and you will continue to do this work as a leader. But leaders must also learn to think about their inner edge.

- Who are you as a leader?
- Who do you want to be?
- What do you want to achieve, why, and how?

Questions like these are the inner work of a leader, and they shape your ability to lead and live well.

The Möbius Strip

Parker Palmer, author of *A Hidden Wholeness* and *Let Your Life Speak,* illustrates the relationship between our inner and outer selves using a geometric shape called the Möbius strip (see Figure 1). The Möbius strip is a seamless circle twisted so that as you trace your finger around the loop, the inner side becomes the outer side, and outer turns to inner.

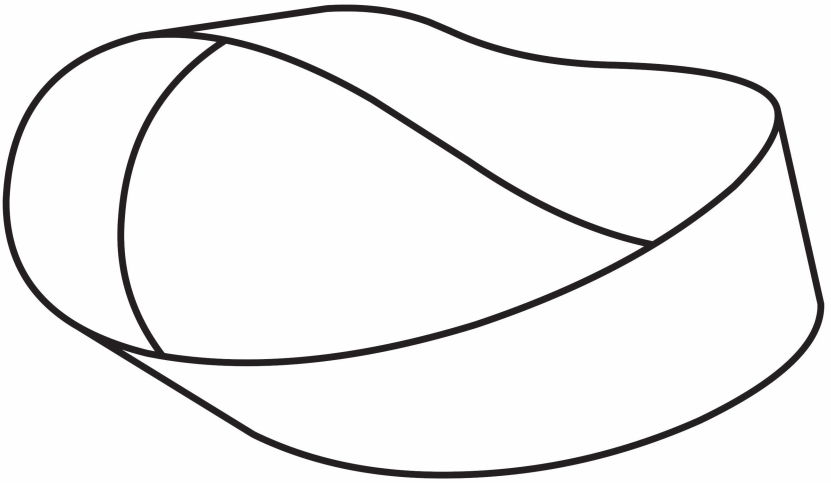

FIGURE 1 A Möbius strip

Palmer writes,

> The mechanics of the Möbius strip are mysterious, but its message is clear: whatever is inside us continually flows outward to help form, or deform, the world—and whatever is outside us continually flows inward to help form, or deform, our lives. The Möbius strip is like life itself: here, ultimately, there is only one reality.[1]

Your thoughts and feelings (your inner edge) influence your effectiveness as a leader, and your actions and interactions (your outer edge) in turn shape your life. As you start to integrate your life and leadership, your inner edge becomes your outer edge and your outer edge becomes your inner, just as on a Möbius strip. Distinct parts and priorities start to disappear as life becomes one harmonious whole.

In the same way that your inner and outer edges are intimately related, so are your life and your leadership. The way you lead helps shape your life. The life you live will help you lead. Become a better leader, and lead a better life.

If you don't pay attention to both outer and inner aspects of leadership, you may suffer a fate common to many leaders: you'll lose your edge.

LOSING YOUR EDGE

> In a few hundred years, when the history of our time is written . . . the most important event historians will see is not technology, nor the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition. For the

> first time—literally—substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it.
>
> —*Peter Drucker, "Managing Knowledge Means Managing Oneself," Leader to Leader*

We live in a time of extraordinary choice and change. It requires every one of us to take responsibility for our own lives. You may want to achieve—even overachieve—and you've got the talent, drive, and chutzpah to do it. But it's not always easy. In my work coaching, speaking, and teaching across the country, leaders tell me what it is like to lead in the 21st century. This is what they say.

Our customers are impatient. Our competitors are going fast. And so we just have to have this incredible sense of urgency to beat our competitors and to overachieve on their expectations.
—Charlene T. Begley, President and CEO Enterprise Solutions, GE

We Are Overwhelmed. Assuming the responsibilities of leadership creates a struggle between professional ambitions and quality of life. Just juggling your workload fills every day. Add in children, home ownership, personal finances, and the rest of your life, and you can feel like you're ready to collapse. But there seems to be little option in a society that equates working hard with being good. You still get the gold star for staying late, and busyness has become a badge of honor. In recent years, organizations have made a nod to this issue in the form of flex time, telecommuting, and other creative options for doing business. Unfortunately, many of these ideas come with a stigma. Colleagues frown on counterparts who work less or leave early. It's difficult to retain a decent quality of life when the weakest member of the team is perceived to be the one who gets home in time for dinner.

We Are Discouraged. The realities of leadership can be discouraging. For many, the glamour is gone. Unscrupulous CEOs are paid as heroes but behave like villains, and the results are abysmal. In fiascos like the housing mortgage crisis and numerous Wall Street investment scandals, industry leaders have brought huge companies to disgrace and jeopardized the savings and livelihoods of thousands of people. Loyalty and good performance no longer buy the long-term security they once did. Layoffs, wage cuts, outsourcing, offshoring, automation, and reduced benefits are crippling our spirits. No matter how hard we work, no matter how fast we go, there always seems to be more, more, more to do. It's starting to feel like more is *never* enough.

We Are Disengaged. Engagement is the degree to which you feel committed to your job, and it is a critical aspect of performance. Yet in 2005, 72 percent of the U.S. working population described itself as disengaged from its work.[2] Does this sound familiar? You're bored in your meetings. You can't rally to stay late or come in early. You spend more time at the coffee stand than you should. Your work is mediocre, and you know it. Stripped of the opportunity to do what you do well, you don't really feel like doing it at all. Instead of a sense of meaning, sometimes we just feel unmoved.

We Are Needed. As leaders we don't always get what we need, but our businesses desperately need us. As baby boomers retire in droves and global business continues to grow, the need for new leaders grows, too. Those needs can't be met by just anyone. Experts are calling for leaders who are authentic, creative, innovative, resilient, self-initiating, and trusted.[3]

Most of the leaders we know are, or want to be, these kinds of leaders. But it's hard to be so thoughtful and present in such a frenzied climate. Nevertheless, we live in the information age, and business is driven by our knowledge. As leaders, we are needed to compete.

We Are Talented. The good news is that despite these challenges, it turns out we're really talented. Years of Gallup research have proven that we are at our best when we are most ourselves.[4] Unfortunately, we don't all capitalize on our strengths. Less than 20 percent of us believe we have the opportunity to be our best every day,[5] and only 17 percent of us play to our strengths most of the time.[6] Compare that to the reports of people on high-performance teams who say they rely on their strengths 75 percent of the time,[7] and it's clear there's a lot more potential to be tapped.

We Are Leaving. Crowded by the pressures of modern leadership, we can't seem to make it all work. We may want to lead with our strengths, but our jobs demand that we just go, go, go. We may want to be strategic, but every day we just need to get things done. At some point, it just becomes too much. That's why so many leaders are responding in a quiet, decisive way: They're taking their marbles and going home. Literally. The business world is facing a collective brain drain as educated, talented leaders opt out of the business world for more alluring alternatives, including full-time parenting, home-based businesses, and start-up companies. With low set-up costs and instant access to global markets, we no longer need corporate infrastructure to fulfill our ambitions. We can do it on our own. We live in a free agent nation.[8] Going out on our own is flexible, it's freeing, and it's fun.

But having the opportunity to leave one's job isn't always the win it might seem. Businesses lose highly talented leaders, and leaders lose their home in

the world of work. Many leaders don't feel like they have a choice: They either live with the stress and busyness, or they leave for another way of life whether they want to or not. For both you and your organization, your leaving is really a loss. You can end up living a "less-than" life.

Less-Than Lives

What does it look like to lead a less-than life? Perhaps you'll relate to some of these leaders:

- Ali, a systems administrator for a global network, works around the clock. With clients in California, India, and China, he works in three time zones. Business hours span 24 hours a day. It is not uncommon for Ali to sleep with his PDA under his pillow or answer his phone in the middle of the night.
- Dean just can't seem to get ahead. A software engineer in the Silicon Valley, he makes what would be considered an enviable salary in most parts of the world. But his bills—for his children's private school tuition and his trophy house, among other things—are even bigger than his income, and he has become one of the new "working-class millionaires" who are trapped by their success.[9] His life might seem luxurious, if only he could pay his bills.
- Molly is trying to hold her life together. After the birth of her son Alex, she hired a housekeeper, a cook, a gardener, and a nanny so that she could juggle her home life with her job as a corporate attorney. Now instead of feeling more relaxed, she spends her time chasing after her staff at home and at work. She runs back and forth between her home and office all day, trying to sneak a few moments with her baby before rushing off to reassure clients that she's still committed. One rueful moment, she looked into her son's face as she handed him to his nanny and thought, "I will regret this for the rest of my life."

Of course, not every leader is affected to this extreme. Yet the signs of losing one's edge show up in common, everyday ways. See if you've felt any of the following symptoms.

Frustration. It can be enormously stressful to want success and quality of life and somehow not be able to attain it. It becomes a daily values clash between the life you're living and the life you want.

Confusion. When life gets busy, you can lose your focus. You end up doing whatever's most pressing, because you can't see past it to what matters more.

Frenzy. With so much to think about, you can start to feel buried in your to-do list. The demands are steady, the e-mails keep coming, and you have a thousand places to be. You fly through things as fast as you can just to stay afloat.

Sacrifice. When you separate success from quality of life, you face a dilemma. You end up making decisions you don't want to make: to work or stay home, to take a promotion or preserve your sanity, to follow your heart or stick to the security of a so-so job.

Dissatisfaction. When you aren't able to pinpoint your contribution and live a life of meaning, your achievements can feel hollow. You might feel discontented, bored, isolated, unmotivated, stagnant, or burned-out. You might even start to wonder what it's all for.

Mediocrity. When you become disconnected from the grander vision of your life and leadership, you end up tinkering in the minutiae instead of increasing your value. Forget about high expectations. You're just shooting for "good enough" and "done."

To some degree, everyone experiences these signals now and then, sometimes without much concern. But for leaders who ignore the warning signs, the effects can be grave. Failed marriages, estranged children, heart attacks, midlife crises, and career abandonment aren't uncommon for the most accomplished leaders, who've let go of their personal lives to hang on to their careers.

But it's not just a personal problem. No business can survive for long on the backs of tired, stressed-out leaders, because the leaders themselves can't last. Talk about a loss: employee depletion, disengagement, and attrition cost the business world dearly. As Gallup researchers Rath and Clifton report,

> This rampant negativity is not only disheartening, it's *expensive:* It costs the U.S. economy between $250 and $300 billion every year in lost productivity alone. When you add workplace injury, illness, turnover, absences, and fraud, the cost could surpass $1 trillion per year, or nearly 10% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These costs are not specific to the United States; they exist to varying degrees in every country, industry, and organization we have studied.[10]

Even though businesses go to incredible lengths to figure out how to attract and retain talent, those efforts are wasted when they fail to nurture the talent they've got.

In a society characterized by independence and self-reliance, it makes sense that we would sacrifice a bit of ourselves for our work. If you work hard, you'll get ahead. It's the American Dream. But somehow over the course of

several generations that ethic has been distorted. Now, we know that if you work *too* hard you may or may not get ahead, but one thing is sure: You'll still be working.

It's time to upgrade that way of thinking. You don't just need to work hard. It serves no one for you to be at work at all hours, eking out shoddy deliverables through squinty eyes, powered by fast food and triple lattes. Getting ahead has less to do with time and effort than it does thoughtful, reflective consideration—the kind of inner work that allows you to choose who and how you want to be. You get to work in a way that supports your life.

We need a remedy for leaders who lose their edge. Only when leaders are able to sustain their motivation and talent in a way that works for their organizations and for themselves will they truly succeed. We need a new way of leading—one that leads to a new way of life.

You are far too talented to lose your edge. You can choose the quality of your life *and* improve your effectiveness both at the same time, benefiting both yourself and your business at once. Then you won't lose your edge. You'll gain an edge because you will truly be at your best. In order to lead for a lifetime, you'll need to spend some time on your inner edge. You'll need to take personal leadership.

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

> All around us, a few exceptional individuals and teams are accomplishing the seemingly impossible. . . They're hitting higher-than-expected targets and making it look easy, doing it with more ingenuity and fewer resources, more speed and less stress, more trust and less time—while still managing to have rich and full lives.
>
> —*Robert Cooper, Get Out of Your Own Way*

Personal leadership is your commitment to take the lead in your own life. You take the opportunity to design, create, and achieve your ideal ways of living and leading. In a positive, unselfish way, personal leadership means putting yourself first. Literally speaking, personal means "about you"; leadership means "coming first." A definition:

> Personal leadership is the self-confident ability to crystallize your thinking and establish an exact direction for your own life, to commit yourself to moving in that direction, and then to take determined action to acquire, accomplish, or become whatever you identify as the ultimate goal in your life.[11]

When you practice personal leadership, you lead from the inside out. The process involves asking yourself, "How do I need to be and act and think in order

to be my best?"—a kind of self-driven style well-suited to dedicated leaders like you who will carry business into the future. In order to do that, you must periodically turn away from the concerns of the day—the people, the problems, and the pressure—to explore and discover your inner edge.

To practice personal leadership, you apply the principles of leadership that make businesses a success . . . to yourself. For example, leading in business involves having a compelling vision, developing strategies, and inspiring people to use their talents to meet a goal for improved business results. Leading yourself means applying these same principles of leadership to your role as a leader and your life. You, too, need a compelling vision and a strategy for reaching it. You need a team supporting you. You need results, as well as a sense of contribution and purpose. The difference is that personal leadership doesn't just make for better business, it makes for better leadership. It makes for a better you.

As a leader, you must learn to lead yourself to stay effective. When you practice personal leadership, you use every ounce of your potential with inspiration instead of perspiration, synergy instead of sacrifice, and wisdom instead of work. Personal leadership is so important, in fact, that renowned management expert Peter Drucker once called it "the only leadership that's going to matter in the 21st century."[12]

Characteristics of Personal Leadership

Personal leadership is distinguished by its focus on the individual and an appreciation for who you are. Here are some defining characteristics:

Respectful. Personal leadership respects the extraordinary value of each human being. It does not, as so many models do, tell you to be like someone else.

Reflective. Personal leadership means thinking about what you're doing, in a spirit of wholeheartedness, openness, and responsibility.[13]

Renewing. A 2000 report from McKinsey and the Society for Organizational Development reported that "the most important tool for leading 21st century change is the leader's *self*."[14] Unlike a take-no-prisoners approach to leadership, personal leadership offers an element of renewal—a way for leaders to slow down and advance in a powerful yet sustainable way. When you are overworked, overtaxed, and overtired, you burn out. When you are rested, rewarded, and renewed, you excel.

Rewarding. No matter what you do for a living, your work can be rewarding. Personal leadership offers you the chance to create true prosperity—the kind of happiness that comes not just from financial gain but also from the richness of life.

Raising the Bar. A focus on slowing down and thinking about oneself might seem at odds with traditional business goals of speed, profitability, and results. On the contrary, there is no correlation between success and hours worked.[15] There is, however, a strong correlation between your ability to produce and the joy you take in your work.[16] Those who practice personal leadership don't just meet expectations; they exceed them.

When you invest in your own growth and potential, you and your organization reap the rewards (see Figure 2).

Benefits for You

Personal leadership gives you a host of ways to do more, faster, and better.

You Are More Efficient and Productive. You learn to do things the way they come naturally so you can be productive without being so busy. You learn to use your mind well. You manage your focus instead of your time, and your energy instead of your effort. The result? You achieve more with less. You experience quality work and quality time at once.

You Feel Motivated and Inspired. Practicing personal leadership means you not only know what you do well, you know why you're doing it in the first place.

Living with Life	to	Leading a Life
Frustration	→	Peace of mind
Confusion	→	Clarity
Overwhelm	→	Balance
Stress	→	Choice
Sacrifice	→	Sustainability
Dissatisfaction	→	Fulfillment
Ineffectiveness	→	Focus/Productivity

FIGURE 2 From living with life to leading a life

Work isn't just work anymore. It's your chance to contribute your talents to people and ideas in which you believe.

You Experience a Life of Joy and Fulfillment. One important aspect of personal leadership is the ability to connect, not separate, the different parts of your life. You can still be committed to your work, but your commitment supports your personal life. You can still devote yourself to your personal interests, but your devotion is integrated with your work. You don't have to trade one for the other, and so you move from *distress* to *de-stress*.

Reconnecting with your sense of self does more than enliven your work. It makes life more rewarding. You see through the well-documented myth that money alone can buy happiness. Don't worry—you don't have to give up the gains of success. You just get to experience the rewards of joy and fulfillment as well.

You Get Your Life Back. When you learn to lead yourself, you find more free time, choice, and control. Practicing personal leadership, you learn that you can have it all without doing it all. You learn to put first things first and to let things happen instead of making them happen. Then at last you can achieve your ambitions while still saving something for yourself.

You Get Better Results. It may seem that personal leadership has an awful lot to do with *you*. Indeed it does. But your success as a leader also produces better results for the business. As you focus on your inner edge, you become more effective on your outer edge. As you improve yourself, you improve your team, your organization, your company, and your results.

Benefits for Business

In a time when leaders are gasping for breath, personal leadership breathes in new life. Businesses that honor the development and well-being of their leaders experience the following:

- higher customer satisfaction
- lower turnover
- higher productivity
- increased creativity
- integrity
- resilience
- speed
- quality
- innovation[17]

Study after study show the importance of high-performance leadership in business. Engagement alone, just one result of personal leadership, accounts

for an 18 percent advantage in earnings-per-share for organizations over their competitors.[18] A study of the top 20 companies for leadership development showed that companies that emphasize leadership development gain higher profitability long-term.[19] The bottom line: Personal leadership is smart business.

It is good for business for business to be good to you. But you've also got to be good to yourself. When you feel your best, you can give your best to your company, your clients, and your team. That's not just a win. It's a triumph.

THE 10 PRACTICES

In the chapters of this book, you are going to learn 10 practices of personal leadership you can use to lead well and live well. We call these *practices* because you practice them the way one might practice yoga or sports or medicine. You engage in each practice over and over again, each time getting a little better until eventually, you've mastered the skill.

1. *Get Clarity*. Connect clearly and instantly to your long- and short-term visions of success.
2. *Find Focus*. Focus your attention on top priorities even when the world around you is pulling you away.
3. *Take Action*. Stop spinning your wheels and start driving with direction—easily, swiftly, and in less time.
4. *Tap into Your Brilliance*. Identify what's exceptional about you, both positive and negative, and use your uniqueness to your advantage.
5. *Feel Fulfillment*. Discover what drives you—your values, meaning, and purpose.
6. *Maximize Your Time*. Think differently about time and learn to do more with less.
7. *Build Your Team*. Develop your own private team of supporters—not just fans, but advocates who will help you succeed.
8. *Keep Learning*. Keep adapting and improving in this world of unending change.
9. *See Possibility*. Take advantage of the hidden opportunities all around you—the ones most people miss.
10. *All . . . All at Once*. Align and integrate your life so you can enjoy and excel in every moment of being a leader and leading your life.

The 10 practices are not like a ladder; you do not have to do step one to get to step two. But nor are they a collection, a basket of separate, distinct concepts and ideas. They are more like stones in a river. Depending on where you are, you may only need one stepping stone, helpfully placed, to make the

jump from where you are to where you want to be. On another day, you might need two or three. And if you want to go through a very systematic process of growth and change to truly maximize your potential, you can step on stones one, two, three, four, five, and so on for a straight, secure path to a whole new place.

Throughout the book, you will find everything you need to master personal leadership:

- insights
- questions
- exercises
- worksheets
- resources

Every chapter ends with a section titled "Your *Inner Edge* Coaching Assignment" that can be used to advance your practice of personal leadership and help you refine your inner edge.

You will also find examples of leaders who are practicing personal leadership. Their stories come from leaders I have coached, interviewed, and worked with over the years. These leaders aren't famous. You've never heard of them, and you probably never will again. They are composite illustrations of everyday leaders doing extraordinary things—just like you. Although names and details have been changed in consideration of their privacy, these descriptions reflect the experiences of real leaders.

As your coach, I'm here to help. You can even call. Just go to the website, www.theinneredge.com, and you'll find all the support you need to help you be as successful with the practices as you intend to be with your life.

STARTING YOUR PRACTICE

> There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's yourself.
>
> —*Aldous Huxley*

Most business books try to help leaders by changing who they are. Not here. This one shows you how to become more of who you are. In this book, you will do that by practicing personal leadership. Not just reading about it, but actually thinking, writing, reflecting, and taking action using the principles of leadership that can help you be a better leader, and lead a better life.

You got where you are today by being good at what you do. My guess is that you are energetic, committed, and sharp. You apply yourself. You get involved. You set high goals and challenge yourself to exceed them.

But sustaining that level of excellence over long periods of time can be tough. You need to be able to maintain your excellence without becoming jaded or worn-out.

And that's a challenge. You have more to do than ever before. There's more pressure to perform, and higher expectations to meet. You feel like you are going as fast as you can, and you feel pressure to go even faster. Running, running, running through every day, you feel as though you need to catch your breath—if you could only find a smarter way, if you could only find some shortcut to get you where you need to go, maybe you'd be. . . .What? More successful? Happier? Less stressed?

There *is* another way. It's a way that has you still succeeding, still achieving, and still leading the way toward the results you want. But it does so in a way that comes easily and naturally. You save time, reach your goals, and enjoy yourself by taking an approach that is aligned with who you truly are. You reach higher than you ever knew you could and expand your results. You get a better return on your efforts, and you do it by investing in yourself.

Then, you find out what's *really* possible.

You will accelerate your achievements and exceed your own expectations. You will amaze yourself with the results. You will learn how to make the most of all you've been given and all that you've gained—to not just fulfill your potential but to blow past it, to not just learn but to be transformed, to not just grow but to be rewarded with the greatest possible return.

Personal leadership is not just a conceptual ideal. It is a practical strategy for continuously renewing yourself and your leadership so you can reach your greatest potential and make your biggest, most powerful, positive impact, all while enhancing your quality of life. You can be an effective leader who adds more value to the business, and yes, you can still be home in time for dinner.

YOUR *INNER EDGE*: A SELF-ASSESSMENT

To get started, take a few minutes now to answer a few questions for reflection using the worksheet "Preparing for Practice." At the end of this chapter, you will also find a self-assessment titled Your Inner Edge to test your skills in personal leadership. Take that survey, then use the rest of this book to improve your effectiveness in leading yourself.

Leadership is not just for corner offices anymore. You don't become a leader because someone else says you are. You become a leader because you embrace leadership for yourself. When you practice personal leadership, leader is not just a label; it is a way of life.

PREPARING FOR PRACTICE

Why are you reading this book? What are you hoping to gain?

What will happen if you achieve what you want?

What will happen if you don't?

At the back of the chapter you will find a survey to test your skills in personal leadership. Take that survey now. What does it tell you?

I learned to explore my own personal leadership and personal mastery. It was transformational to me. It transformed the way I felt about my work. I started to think more purposefully about what I was about, what I brought, why I did what I did and how it connected to my work. It really changed a lot about how I thought about leadership. It became more personal.
—Cheryl Scott, Senior Advisor, Global Health, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Key Points

- As a leader, you must learn to lead yourself to stay effective.
- Personal leadership means applying the principles of leadership to yourself for success at work and in life.
- The way you lead helps shape your life. The life you live will help you lead. Become a better leader, and lead a better life.
- Personal leadership is smart business. Even though businesses go to incredible lengths to figure out how to attract and retain talent, those efforts are wasted when they fail to nurture the talent they've got.
- Personal leadership offers you the chance to create true prosperity—the kind of happiness that comes not just from financial gain but also the richness of life.

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ARE YOU PRACTICING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP?

This survey will give you a sense of where you are just living your life and where you are actually leading it. Ask yourself to what extent you agree with each statement. Mark the corresponding number and give yourself an average score. Be sure to actually mark up your survey so you can revisit it later. A blank survey is available on the website, www.theinneredge.com, for you to download anytime. Check in again every six to eight weeks. Is your score improving?

Strongly Disagree **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

Clarity

1. I am clear on what I want and know how to get it—for the big things and the small.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. I practice a strategic, reflective approach to leadership.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Focus

3. I know where to focus my attention on a daily basis.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Action

4. I am able to maintain peak performance at all times.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. I maintain my sense of stability and equilibrium in times of change.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Brilliance

6. I have identified my talents, strengths, skills, and weaknesses.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. I know how to maximize and leverage my unique talents and abilities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fulfillment

8. I am delighted with my quality of life both on and off the job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. I feel very little stress in my life. I am not overwhelmed.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I make a meaningful contribution every day.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Time

11. I have plenty of time for people, activities, and events that are most important to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. I take regular action toward my most important goals—not just what's most pressing.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Team

13. I have a wide network of people who support me, and whom I support in return.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Learning

14. I am constantly learning and improving myself.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Possibility

15. I intuitively recognize and take opportunities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. I am often astounded by the way the opportunities I want and the solutions I need present themselves at just the right moment.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Alignment and Integration

17. I achieve a sense of renewal and restoration on a daily basis.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. I am proud of my ability to maintain my values and the essence of who I am, even when life gets hectic and/or as I get more and more responsibility.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Success with Quality of Life

19. I have achieved success as I define it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

20. I can say with confidence that every day I am at my very best.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10