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## Leaders and the Power of Personal Transformation

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.



A recent NPR story<sup>1</sup> led with this attention-getting headline:

“America, we have a problem. People aren’t feeling engaged with their work.”

In my experience as a consultant and executive coach, that’s *exactly* the way leaders are feeling. Even at the very top of the organization leaders are struggling in way they never used to.

Some of them are exhausted. The changes and challenges of the last few years have taken a lot out of them, and they’re feeling the heavy weight of leadership.

Some of them aren’t so much exhausted as overwhelmed. They may have energy and enthusiasm for their work, but there always seems to be *so much*. So much to do, so much to decide, so much to deliver.

On top of it all, as leaders of their businesses and organizations, they are also responsible for engaging *everyone else* around them and restoring *them* to full capacity. It’s a lot.

If any of these experiences are resonating with you, I have one clear message for you.

You’re not alone.

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You're also not alone if you don't want to stay in this place.

High-achieving leaders, aspiring executives, and talented contributors *want* to be at their best! They want to feel strong, clear, and empowered to lead the way to positive outcomes, big impacts, and exciting results. They want to be champions and role models for the people around them, so *everyone* can do their best work.

If you're a leader who wants to elevate and lift yourself up to a higher level of leadership – whether you're leading your organization, leading your team, or leading yourself - this is your moment. You can move out of the suffering and striving and into fulfillment, motivation, inspiration, energy, excitement, and achievement. This is your chance to embrace a new phase – where you are living and leading at your best. It's time for your personal transformation.

## **From Personal Leadership to Personal Transformation**

For the last 25 years, I have spent my professional life devoted to the work of *personal leadership*. Personal leadership is the ability to achieve what you want to achieve and lead the life you want to live. It's a reflective, strategic approach to leadership – one that helps you achieve your vision for both your personal and professional life. The results have been inspiring, as leaders embracing personal leadership report promotions, recognition, results, greater happiness and quality of life, and their organizations supporting personal leadership have become magnets for attracting and retaining top talent and becoming best places to work. Now we've discovered that as powerful as personal leadership is – (you actually *do* achieve your vision!) – it also has its limits.

Because what happens if you lose your way? What if you can't see your vision anymore, or your vision has changed? The kinds of upheavals leaders and their organizations have experienced have been nothing less than seismic. Everything from dramatically changing business models to whole new ways to work and live have changed the landscape. On a personal level, that can be disorienting for leaders, who now need to find their way in an environment that doesn't feel familiar.

Fortunately, you *can* find your way out of the swirl, get clarity again, and feel the exuberance of a life of meaning, accomplishment, and success. *And* you can do it in a way that works *for you* – that's congruent with the way you want to experience your leadership and life.

We get there by doing something counterintuitive but critical: by taking a time out of the fray to become reflective. Leaders who want to lead in these new times need to step away from the busyness of running their companies, stop putting out fires, and take time to focus on themselves.

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Then they can ask themselves the big questions:

- What do I need now to live and lead at my best?
- What is the best expression of myself, my talents and my values?
- What kind of experience do I want to create for others, and what kind of experience do I want to create for myself?

When leaders take this approach, they begin the very important work of transforming themselves. That transformation is the path to feeling restored and engaged. Personal transformation is the way leaders can lead themselves back to where they most like to be: making an impact, getting results, and advancing into the highest levels of leadership.



[Joelle K. Jay, Ph. D.](#), is a Director with the [Leadership Research Institute](#) and an executive coach specializing in leadership development. She strategizes with business leaders to enhance their performance and maximize business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Adobe. She is the author of [The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership](#) and [The New Advantage: How Women in Leadership can Create Win/Wins for Their Companies and Themselves](#). To connect with Joelle, go to [www.JoelleKJay.com](http://www.JoelleKJay.com) or email [Info@JoelleKJay.com](mailto:Info@JoelleKJay.com).

<sup>1</sup> “America, we have a problem. People aren’t feeling engaged with their work.” National Public Radio, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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