

Preface

In the Beginning

*“In everyone’s life at some time, our inner fire goes out.
It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being.
We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.”*

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

WHEN WE FIRST MET at a Business and Consciousness conference in Acapulco several years ago our inner fires were nearly out. There were a variety of reasons why our fires had been dampened to the point of extinction: taking those closest to us for granted, immersing ourselves in our work to such a degree that our passion had turned into obsession, losing sight of and failing to live our personal mission, vision, principles and values, and finding meaning almost solely as achieving, lonely, fragmented *human doings* while forgetting we had begun our lives many years before as innocent, truthful and whole *human beings*.

During our initial Acapulco encounter we experienced what it was like to share one’s whole self with another without fear of judgment, condemnation or rejection. We shared truths with each other that week that we had never shared with anyone else. It was not just an encounter with our public and private selves, but a sharing of our *essence* that few had ever seen. It was not just an encounter as a *conversation*, but was a deep experience of long forgotten *communion*.

Ours was a serendipitous and synchronistic meeting that was born in radical honesty, compassion, wisdom and mutual service that led us to realize what was to become our life’s work.

This book is rooted in 3,000 years of wisdom and mystic traditions and in 300 years of scientific research. We have spent the past 50 years of our

lives experiencing and the past three years deeply reflecting, researching and integrating our personal histories within the greater context of humankind's. Awakening and understanding these patterns has helped us to successfully navigate the transition from who we were as *personality* to who we are as our *Ideal*.

It is our hope that our experiences, understandings and insights will resonate with you and help you to navigate through your own times of transition and change.

Our life's work has evolved these past three years into a philosophy, a foundational model and a set of principles, processes and emerging practices that we call Integrative Life and Leadership™. We have developed workshops, seminars and retreats based on this philosophy. We have written, taught, coached and spoken to thousands of people sharing with them our integrative approach.

Most importantly, we first walked the path of integration ourselves, then with family and friends before introducing it to the marketplace. This unique process has moved us more and more from the inside out and not as we had relied on in the past from the outside in.

The journey of becoming an Integrative Leader™ is an emergent and *evolutionary* process that is guided by a convergent and *involutionary* process that awakened within us from three fundamental sources.

The first source involved deeply examining our life and leadership experiences with government, business, not-for-profit and academic institutions; our various roles as mother, father, daughter, son, brother, sister, spouse, family member or friends; and our evolving capacities as individual contributors, team players, managers, leaders, entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, founders, executive directors, presidents and CEOs of a variety of organizations. In the course of our self-examination, we looked for the common ground, common patterns, and common principles and processes that wove through and informed these diverse experiences.

Secondly, we observed some of the same patterns in the literature of various disciplines, including science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, management, leadership and adult education as well as our research of the world's wisdom and mystic traditions.

Thirdly, we found that our shared interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences were reflected in stories from individuals, organizations,

communities and cultures with whom we chose to work these past years. We discovered that our integrative approach helped many people and organizations build a foundation for success on many levels — personally, interpersonally, professionally and organizationally.

We believe these three foundations and resulting multiple perspectives yield insights that will help guide those who choose to step onto the path of becoming an Integrative Leader. It is a journey that will help move your awareness from complexity to simplicity, from analysis to synthesis, and from fragmentation to wholeness.

Many have said that the inner journey of life and leadership is a courageous and mysterious process. We have found this to be true and wish to share with you what we have learned to this point in our journey. Our intent is to be hopeful, helpful, inspiring and challenging to all who choose to apply these ideas in their own lives.

If in your reading you come across an idea that is difficult or a concept you cannot swallow or stomach at this time, we suggest you put the book down and leave it for a while until you feel ready to work with the transformative ideas this work contains.

However, for those who engage and resonate with the ideas within this work and who have the courage to accept the invitation and begin to walk the path of integration, we hope this book will serve to not only nurture you, but feed and sustain you — body, mind, heart and soul — and in some small way help rekindle your inner fire and spirit once again.

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