

A close-up, artistic photograph of a bronze Buddha face. The focus is on the nose and the upper part of the face. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the metal and the serene expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

A MYSTIC IN CORPORATE AMERICA

Igniting the Soul of Leaders

Robert Rabbin

BOOK BUZZ

“Rich with his own experience and straightforward talk, Robert Rabbin pulls no punches as he addresses the core qualities for being a responsible person in today’s highly complex, fast-moving world. It’s refreshing to read such a clear prescription for returning to our essence as human beings. After all, our world will only change after we change ourselves. This book is an absolute must for anyone who claims to want change to happen.”

Anita Roddick, founder and co-chair of The Body Shop International

“Robert’s book is raw, original, organic, clear, unashamed, deeply spiritual and direct. It’s the breakthrough book we’ve been waiting for.”

Martin Rutte, co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*

“Robert’s writing is powerful and liberating, but not in any ordinary way. He writes straight from his soul. It’s so obvious that he has no need for the intermediary of his mind that I describe him as a poet. His stuff comes from a place that’s so deep inside — that’s so connected to the primordial energy that creates and sustains us all — that the words themselves are almost superfluous. It’s feeling, passion, and direct knowing that come through his work, no matter what the subject. Go read *A Mystic in Corporate America*. I dare you not to feel like you’ve been punched in the gut and kissed on the lips all at the same time.”

Reverend Tami Coyne, co-author of *The Spiritual Chicks Question Everything*

Most books make me fall asleep at night, but *A Mystic in Corporate America* became my stimulant. It was like a match on an already lit pilot light, it ignited something even deeper inside of me. Immediately I would stop and relate what Robert said to my life, and the reflections

inspired me to action. It's made me re-define who I am as a business owner and what it is I truly want to convey out in the world. The internal reflection time was the practical part of all of this. His words ignited introspection and the reflection suggestions helped me make it practical to my life. Twelve years ago, after just one consulting session with Robert, I started my business and am now living my dream. His words in this book continue to have that same power of inspiration that lead me to authenticity. I highly recommend this to everyone, because it challenges us all to question ourselves. When we do this we all make the world a better place to live.”

Kimberly Kassner-Earley, founder of EmpowerMind, author of *You're a Genius*

“All the best books on leadership are but trickles from the wellspring of truth to which Rabbin leads us. What is it we want in our business leaders? The experience of a realm far larger than just business and awareness of reality far beyond what we think reality is. Rabbin inspires and guides leaders to help us all reclaim our souls.”

Perry Pascarella, former editor of *Industry Week*

“Hallelujah! Joy, joy, joy. At last someone has had the courage to take a revolutionary stance in favor of spiritual liberation. No longer can spirituality be confined to the ashram, the forest, or the house of prayer. Robert Rabbin is passionate and eloquent in his declaration that, from this moment forth, only mystics—true mystics—can be viewed as qualified leaders and decision-makers. Any lesser standard is simply too foolhardy and reckless. I wholeheartedly support and endorse his enthusiasm. His is the voice of wisdom. Robert Rabbin is calling for a liberation of the human soul. My greatest wish is that his call will be heard and heeded in the boardrooms and offices of every corporation. The time has come to shake off the chains of materialism and unconscious habit that have held us the prisoners of our own minds.”

Jeffrey Mishlove, Ph.D., author of *The PK Man* and *The Roots of Consciousness*, and host of the national public television series “Thinking Allowed”

“I fell in love with this book, written from heart to heart. I wish it will be read not only by manager/leaders in the narrow sense but by all leaders: mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers...”

Rolf Osterberg, former chairman, Swedish Newspapers Association, former president and CEO of Svensk Filmindustri, author of *Corporate Renaissance*

“I have long thought that many intellectual leaders of today are modern prophets of a high-tech age. Robert Rabbin’s book shows that he is one of those prophets, guiding us inward to that vast spiritual source where the river of all life first appears.”

William E. Halal, professor of management, George Washington University and author of *The Infinite Resource*

“All the best books on leadership are but trickles from the wellspring of truth to which Rabbin leads us. What is it we want in our business leaders? The experience of a realm far larger than just business and awareness of reality far beyond what we think reality is. Rabbin inspires and guides leaders to help us all reclaim our souls.”

Perry Pascarella, former editor of *Industry Week*

“This is an interesting, remarkable and visionary book. Rabbin is fierce, frank, intuitive, convinced, and always entertaining. This is not following a path; this is blazing a trail.”

Shirley Bell, book reviewer, *Noumenon Journal*

“He is a revolutionary thinker and writer. He is also the soul of compassion and belief. I love this book!”

Peggy Joyce, the “joy” coach

"A Mystic in Corporate America is almost a spiritual student handbook from a Divine source of education. When Rabbin writes about leaders and their attributes, I discovered I had a sincere desire to be that kind of Leader ... to speak my truths, to express my opinions, and to embrace my inner power. He speaks of the *silence* where all wisdom is born, and my spirit resonated with that thought. It took me back to a moment in Sedona, where I sat atop Bell Rock in absolute awe of being "one" with all creation. Little white bird feathers appeared at my side from seemingly nowhere. I had gooseflesh from being in the presence of what I knew as "God." And in that silence I could only say, "Let me be your vessel. In the center of all-that-is, fill me."

"Rabbin encourages us to tell our truths, changing the world from the inside out. And having completed the book, I actually believe that I can. *A Mystic in Corporate America: A Mandate for Mystics* by Robert Rabbin is an excellent read for businesspeople and a resource for leadership skills workshops. The provocative food-for-thought statements and "Personal Reflections" questions and at the end of each chapter enhance the personalization in applying what you have read into your life."

Rev. Dr. Sandra Gaskins, Spirit-Works book reviewer

A MYSTIC IN CORPORATE AMERICA

Igniting the Soul of Leaders

Robert Rabbin



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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>x</i>
1 <i>Transcendent Leadership</i>	1
2 <i>Leading From Within</i>	5
3 <i>Mandate For Mystics</i>	7
4 <i>The "S" Word: Soul</i>	11
5 <i>We Are All Mystics</i>	15
6 <i>Mystical Experience</i>	20
7 <i>Inner Guidance</i>	25
8 <i>The Real World</i>	30
9 <i>Dear Mr. Balsekar</i>	35
10 <i>The Source Of Skill</i>	40
11 <i>The New Species</i>	44
12 <i>White House Voodoo</i>	52
13 <i>Seek Truth</i>	55
14 <i>Epiphanies</i>	58
15 <i>Weird Failures</i>	62
16 <i>Shooting Galleries</i>	69
17 <i>The American Dream</i>	74
18 <i>Walking The Talk</i>	80
19 <i>All Things Are Sentient</i>	84
20 <i>Rock, Pond, Ripple</i>	89

21	<i>Don Quixote</i>	99
22	<i>Leadership Dojos & Zendos</i>	106
23	<i>Justifiable Homicide</i>	114
24	<i>Mentored By Carrots</i>	120
25	<i>Beyond Peace</i>	129
26	<i>How To Change The World</i>	133
27	<i>The Creative Power</i>	143
28	<i>Eating Eternity</i>	148
29	<i>A Spectacle Of Silence</i>	152
30	<i>Whirling Dervishes</i>	157
	<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	160
	<i>About The Author</i>	163

FOREWORD

When I was asked to write a foreword for Robert Rabbin's new book I felt profound gratitude. I am grateful for being associated with anything involving this man, a valued friend and an admired colleague. I am also glad to add emphasis to his words for he writes as he speaks, with truth and directness that can be matched by few other writers.

As an editor and publisher, I have worked closely with over three hundred writers, many of whom have written bestsellers. Yes I still find Robert's refreshing directness unique. He is unwilling to be tentative or compromise himself to be politically correct. He ignores the fluff and gets to the heart of true leadership, true essence, and true consciousness.

A word that could be used to describe his writing is "radical." Why radical? Because Robert's words call for extreme behavior and revolutionary thinking. But his writings sound so commonsensical, you say. What he says strikes a chord deep within you, you say. After all, who would debate the value of self-actualization? Who would argue against maximizing awareness and personal authenticity?

There is a big difference between liking the poetry and living the poem. Robert's words may feel good and make good sense but they also call one forward to action. They challenge one to go beyond philosophical agreement and to integrate mystical thinking in one's everyday life and job. He directly addresses the incongruence that lies at the heart of so much of the cynicism that reigns supreme these days in the industrialized world.

Robert's writing calls for engagement at the level of truth. This is why Robert's ideas may seem radical or extreme. He calls for a waking up — not just our minds but also our entire selves. He calls for an end to foolhardiness, the delusion and the insanity out of which we operate — to stop marginalizing the ideas verbalized by mystics through the ages. He calls for the legitimization of mystical understanding and actions that such understanding generates. It's time to stop tolerating leadership that originates from any less a place than an enlightened soul.

Recently, I received a review copy of a new book on leadership from a major publisher. This book will probably do quite well in the business marketplace. As I looked it over, I felt I was holding an antique, a collection of outmoded ideas which have been stated over and over again for the past dozen years or so.

Are the readers among the executive ranks so eager for ideas that they will consume re-packaged concepts? Why do so many authors and publishers conspire with their reading audiences in generating so much recycled garbage about leadership? Has the average business reader become like the mystery novel junkie who continues to buy the latest book by a favorite writer despite the fact that all plots are all basically the same?

We all know plenty about what kind of leadership is needed and the type of individual who is being called for by the challenges of these times. Dozens of books have been written about it, including a few of mine. Why then, do we continue to consume and digest text that discloses yet another technique, or the "ten ways to," or "how to see if you are ..." or all the rest of the rubbish that ambitious consultants and profit-focused publishers continue to promote to the business community?

These times call for a kind of leadership never before required. All the old clichés are useless. In fact, most of the present criteria for leadership are more than outdated — they are outright dangerous if humanity is going to successfully transition to a new planetary

consciousness. Now, what kind of leadership do we need?

If we are to successfully transition to a new planetary consciousness and successfully meet the challenges facing us as a species, we need to be more conscious. As Einstein stated years ago, we can't solve our problems thinking the same way we did when we created them.

New thinking doesn't mean thinking new thoughts. It means thinking differently. That may be difficult to grasp, but Robert makes it easier. Difficult or not, the human species is in the midst of entering a new era, and age of consciousness where reality as we have known it will no longer exist.

Leaders of the future are men and women who are keenly aware of the larger context of life. They are not merely focused on content or form — such as technique, procedure, methodology, shape, or application. These mostly fall into the physical or material plane of reality. These new leaders appreciate the value of the non-physical and non-material aspects of reality, heretofore unexplored by most business people. These folks recognize the value of context — source, intentionality, integrity, vision, and values.

These are the concerns that mystics talk and write about. Able to appreciate context, these leaders are sensitive beyond what they see and hear. They have a keen sense that allows them to discern beyond the physical senses. They can pick up on “texture of the space,” for instance knowing something or someone isn't right without any rational reason. In this way, they are irrational. They are deeply intuitive and can instantly pick up when the texture changes, the way a dog senses an earthquake before it occurs.

These leaders possess a strong knowing that goes beyond mental capacity; this knowing relies on their deep sense of interconnection with others, an appreciation for what philosopher Martin Buber called the “between.”

If it sounds crazy and off-the-edge you might look at your own attachment to the status quo and your own appetite for rehashed enlightenment from the latest leadership guru wanting to build a reputation by identifying the “five key qualities,” the way to lead, etc. We all have attachments to the way things are. They show up differently in each of us, but we all resist change. That’s what makes real transformation so difficult.

This book provides its reader with anything that could possibly be needed to change the world, making real transformation easier. It provides the means to enhance awareness, to jolt consciousness so you can begin living and working in a way that makes sense in a nonsensical world. Robert can’t make you do what you don’t want to. No book can. But his one does hand over the key, leaving you with the key in hand, knowing all you need to do is use it to open the way toward a whole new future.

John E. Renesch, global futurist, keynote speaker, author of *Getting to the Better Future*, former editor/publisher of *The New Leaders*

PREFACE

I was reminded recently how the mathematical genius John Nash, of *A Beautiful Mind* and Russell Crowe fame, used to spend his days running around madly in the court yards of Princeton University chasing pigeons with his soul on fire. What a beauty he is! And so were those before him. Plato, Plotinus, Leibnitz, Galileo, Edison, Emerson, Einstein, Fuller, de Chardin — “Here’s to the crazy ones.” So begins the Apple ad.

Nash was looking for something original to contribute to this world, to change the rules of the game, while others looked on and simply ridiculed him and went about doing things according to the rules and as they had always been done. He went on to win a Nobel Prize and inspired others to set fire to their own souls. They would rather have the whole world against them than deny the wisdom and simple truth of their soul’s messages. And this is Robert Rabbin’s message for us.

All great leaders are mystics at heart. All great corporate leaders are too. And so are you. Many of the great business ideas and innovations have been engineered by such people. From the founder of Visa, Dee Hock; to the guy that turned Apple around, Steve Jobs; to the founder of Scenario Planning for Royal Dutch Shell, Pierre Wack: *going inside to listen to the wisdom of your Soul is a closely guarded practice of some of the world’s top leaders.* Golf legend, Tiger Woods, knows this truth too. This isn't something they teach you at Harvard, Stanford, Wharton or L.S.E. Rhodes scholars missed out on that wisdom too. This, I have learned, is what Zen coaches like Robert are for.

Robert Rabbin has been a rooster to this truth for decades. Well before the Worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, Kevin Roberts first uttered the word "love" in the boardrooms of Procter & Gamble, Wall Mart and Pepsi Co. Well before L.O.H.A.S was an acronym for a multi-billion dollar global industry. Well before authenticity and transparency became something we, and our organizations, should all aspire to. Well before Adam Werbach announced that "environmentalism is dead" and called for a new "blue" movement of a billion consumers pushing for sustainability. Well before Philippe Starck's mea culpa and his declaration that he'd now like to serve the planet in a different way and the thing we need most is the "ability to love."

While most of us were content splashing around on the shores only ankle high in the ocean playing management games and believing only partial truths, Robert was venturing beyond the flags and thousandes of miles offshore, skinny dipping and exploring the depths, creating radical waves of his own. And he was inviting us to follow him into the big blue where great leaders, visionaries and sages must also go: "Come play out here" he yelled, with Hafiz by his side.

He was drowning himself in silence and truth, way out there and deep in here where this tsunami was forming. This Ox Herder was taking sound bites from the frontiers of consciousness and journeying back to the village to share with us a few simple truths. And like many an emissary with a message to share, he was ridiculed and sometimes even maimed. Because they had Rumi's poetry on the walls of the lobby, Robert thought it would be safer entering their boardrooms. But that Sufi was only for the façades. Whirling dervishes are not always welcomed in these places, but that doesn't mean they should leave.

When Robert first announced to the world that he was called to teach mysticism to the leaders of corporate

America, he was quickly told by a colleague to pack his life onto a shopping trolley and walk with it to the nearest park to join all the other crazy bums. But Robert managed to survive somehow to tell this tale and a few others too. And it is a tale that kisses us on the lips and punches us in the guts all at the same time. It is a tale your cells will immediately recognize. There is no need for cognition here. Listen to or read his words and your soul will surely remember what it has known since before the universe was formed.

To be sure, this isn't your ordinary type of leadership book, manual or mandate that seeks to foster the usual kind of leadership. Perhaps it would be useful if I made a key distinction here between two different types of leadership development: *horizontal* and *vertical*.

Horizontal leadership development focuses on the kind of learning and growth that expands current thinking, knowledge, skills and competencies. It focuses on developing one's current mindset or consciousness rather than transforming it. Many of us are consumers of such programs, as they take up 99% of H.R budgets. Yet this type of leadership can only go so far and often remains impotent in the face of the many of the challenges we face. Here, ideas, creativity and innovations are reduced to the dominant center of gravity of our culture and collective awareness.

Robert leads us in another direction, to that of *vertical* development, where he urges us to explore the altitude of possibilities, its depths and heights. This is where we can begin to expand our worldview to allow greater understanding, wisdom and effectiveness to reveal itself. To make quantum leaps in your leadership, Robert says, you need to commit to transforming your consciousness: on *re-perceiving* how you see reality and the world and transforming how you make meaning and sense of the problems and challenges you are faced with. This leadership enables us to shift gears and move beyond doing things as they have always

been done to redesigning, reinventing, and innovating, but from a very different address.

All the great changes that we need to make in the world today require such a *vertical* shift in leadership which has, since the beginning of time, set fire to souls and aroused their infinite capacities to build arcs not for animals, but for love. How do we fill the world with contemporary sages and kick ass saints, who are as adept at surrendering themselves to this place of authenticity as they are at innovating initiatives of breathtaking power? This book begins to provide some answers to that question.

While both *horizontal* and *vertical* approaches are necessary in the development of the whole leader, the latter is outside the purview of most conventional leaders, managers, organizations and communities today. And it is this blind spot that Robert encourages us to explore. While you can have maps, models and toolkits to guide you through the depths and heights of this terrain, Robert is quick to remind us to use them, but not to be used by them. He reminds us that there are no guarantees when you begin this adventure, when you embrace this journey authentically. For there is a little doorway at the bottom of the U (to use the model developed by Peter Senge, Joseph Jaworski and Otto Scharmer) that is like a rabbit hole to a whole new world. If you slip through that doorway, the nature of your being is changed, the nature of your speaking is changed, the nature of your seeing is changed and your reasons for living and leading are changed too. Whirling and whirling and whirling, you may just find yourself tossing your near complete manuscript into the fire, transforming an entire industry or field, spearheading a new social movement or creating new Olympic records.

And to those leaders who still want to do things as they have always been done, let us stand on their shoulders and say "thank you." "Transcend and include" cries out Ken Wilber from somewhere in Boulder, Colorado. And

then let us jump from sub-orbital heights, from Sir Richard Branson's new spacecraft with its Philippe Starck designed interiors, one by one. And let's see our world again, but through a whole new lens. Let us shift gears and plug ourselves into something bigger, something that embraces the entire Kosmos. For, as Robert reminds us, there is a certain type of leadership which is dead from the neck down. A new one is being birthed in every moment through us. He lives to share this story.

It is time to truly listen to Dante's Beatrice, the wisdom of your own soul, to create something original that serves this planet, so that we may inspire others to do the same, again and again. Our soul's appetite is too great to ignore. It's homesick for some "good ol' home cookin". A feast awaits. And it's time to dig in. A galaxy of Michelin stars for the Chef.

Laurent S. Labourmène, authority on leadership & social innovation; advisor, mentor & coach to individuals, institutions and communities worldwide; speaker, writer & award winning entrepreneur

INTRODUCTION

I recently heard film director Sydney Pollack tell the story of how he struggled to find the spine of the movie *Tootsie*, which he directed. He said it was crucial to know any movie's spine—its essence—which is to ask and answer several core questions: What is this movie really about? What is its meaning? What is the story it wants to tell? What is the impact it wants to have? Once the movie's spine is clearly articulated, Mr. Pollack said, you can move forward with a certain sense of assurance, relating all the elements of the movie to that central spine, the core purpose of the movie.

This book has a spine too. In fact, it has two spines. The first spine, the one which took possession of me in the beginning and which taught me about the second spine as I wrote, cannot be clearly articulated. I cannot say what it is. I don't mean it's a secret or that I don't want to tell you. It literally cannot be said. No one—not poet, artist, saint, sage, shaman, mystic, philosopher—has ever been able to speak about the first spine of this book, an experience which defies description and explanation. If you were holding a gun to my head, forcing me to say something, I would say the first spine of this book is *silence*, though even that flawless word only orbits the truth. Silence, wonder, awe, union, grace—we can only stutter approximations of those moments in which we become possessed by something that is greater than ourselves, and at the same time our most authentic self. We have all had encounters with this mysterious, yet stupendously real, dimension of living in which we recognize universal truths about ourselves, reality, and the meaning and purpose of life.

Possessed by silence during the writing of this book, I watched the second spine take shape and form as though watching a movie unfold before me. The second spine of this book is about awareness, reality, and a true life—an authentic life of passion, pulse, and power; the kind of life which we enjoy during feasts of silence, the life of our greatest longing, the life of freedom and joy and courage, the life that thrills us and others with its sheer power, clarity, and majesty. It is about that life which is bestowed upon us by the very hand of God as we are lifted and transported to Olympian mountain peaks, there to dance and sing our secret songs of life and love.

We have all danced on mountain peaks. Whether we know and remember or not, whether for the merest of moments or for eternities, we have all danced on mountain peaks. And when we dance on mountain peaks in our pristine primordial glory of being, we dance with the first spine of this book: silence.

Perhaps we cannot stay forever in the rarefied atmosphere of those peaks. Perhaps we must come down to live again in the valleys and plains of more common days and nights. But we must not leave the silent spine and soul of our mountaintop dancing. We must take these with us to the ground below and to our lives in the more mortal world of day-to-day responsibilities. As we descend, we are likely to forget. We must not.

Rene Daumal wrote in *Mount Analogue*, “You cannot stay on the summit forever; you have to come down again. So why bother in the first place? Just this: what is above knows what is below, but what is below does not know what is above. One climbs, one sees. One descends, one sees no longer but one has seen. There is an art to conducting oneself in the lower regions by the memory of what one saw higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know.”

This book is about living that mountaintop knowing in the midst of our flat and often forgetful world. Within this knowing, within this heightened beauty,

meaning, and significance, our soul ignites with recognition, our flailing minds stop and tilt—and in that tilt of our usual mind the spectacular order and intelligence of reality emerges. Awakening to reality is to step out of self, time, and place where we are met by eternity, and tutored. Then we can return home to family and friends and practice the lessons learned in the primordial silence. There is one last thing I want to mention, a kind of disclaimer. I am not interested in appealing to anyone's rational mind, to inform or persuade, to explain or define. Explanations will not take us far enough, and definitions are insufficient tools for the work before us. I hear the poet Kabir shout in my left ear, "Those who hope to be reasonable about it fail. The arrogance of reason has separated us from that love."

One does not come to insight and wisdom through reason, which can only persuade or convince, not intoxicate. Our reasoning cannot reach silence nor touch the soul, it can only grease the gears and pulleys of the mind.

The soul needs another lubricant; the soul needs to feed—no, to feast—on inspiration. Gorging on inspiration, the soul explodes in love. To know what must be known about ourselves, we must catapult from all that is reasonable so as to know that inspiration is practical, Self-knowledge is relevant, love is essential.

I hope this book will take us away from the safe shores of reason and convention. I am after bigger fish than intellectual comprehension, agreement or disagreement. I want to push out into a reckless sea and risk comfort for the sake of that which is beyond the mind and intellect. I seek to evoke your wild heart of ecstatic love, for it is this heart and its knowing that we need to embrace. Let us take note that Jelaluddin Rumi, the 13th century Persian mystic, is the best-selling poet in America. He is frequently quoted by speakers, authors, consultants, and teachers as representing a rare and penetrating wisdom. If we are going to let him speak for us, should we not honor his words with our actions? Should we not take to the floor, as he would,

and begin our slow and meticulous dance towards the center of ecstatic love?

The clock hands have struck the crucial hour. It is morning now, and time to wake up, time for all of us to get dressed and go to work touching this world with the transcendent flame of our fully lit souls. Let us each be responsible for this. Let us each be a leader in a radical social rebellion of torching the world where we work with our blazing souls.

This is the mystics' mandate: lead the world into peace with your fully lit soul.

1

TRANSCENDENT LEADERSHIP

The vocabulary of spiritual awakening and transformation has entered the mainstream of society and has penetrated the hearts and minds of a growing number of avant-garde leaders. Corporate America is flirting with innovative paradigms that emphasise moral and ethical values, and social and environmental responsibility. Visionary leaders are designing organizations with principles and values born of spiritual awakening. Words like spirit, soul, enlightenment, and sacred are as apt to be spoken in traditional bunkers of conservative capitalism as they are in spiritual communities and subcultures.

As leaders seek to cure social ills, as executives seek to energize and humanize the workplace, as individuals seek to live out their deepest values, new dialogues are taking place about the nature and purpose and function of leadership. I would like to enter that dialogue with a radical agenda, a revolutionary notion just barely visible on the screen of public discourse. The premise of this agenda is the assertion that the transcendent, mystical experience of unitive consciousness is prerequisite for effective leadership. Transcendent awareness is the yeast that leavens all other leadership skills, abilities, and agendas.

The external world is a direct expression of our internal world of thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. In order to transform society, we must first transform ourselves. We must each first investigate our own hearts and minds; we must each discover how we create and

project the very things we want to change in the world.

The power of transcendent awareness will, in and of itself, transform our lives, our institutions and organizations, and society at large. This direct experience of our spiritual center—of our inherent spiritual consciousness, free from distortions and conditioning—will show us how to live and work in a sacred and meaningful way.

Much will be asked of leaders in the coming years. They will be expected to help us redress an array of social problems, to help us cure illness and end epidemics, feed the hungry, end brutality and war, stop the displacement of indigenous tribes, reverse the pollution and degradation of the environment, curtail corruption and greed, safely dispose of industrial and nuclear waste, educate children without crushing their free and spiritual minds. These problems are solvable by us—all of us, together, each contributing in a unique way—if we sincerely want to and if we will use the preeminent power of our inherent transcendent awareness.

I believe that awareness is more useful and practical than intellectual strategies and models and principles and answers and prescriptions: I believe that our own dormant powers of pure awareness can reveal instantly what we must do and how we must do it. To explore our consciousness and expand our awareness of reality is to climb high enough to see the whole landscape of cause and effect. We have betrayed ourselves by turning from the light of transcendent awareness. We have become entranced by the visible world and have forgotten its invisible, immaterial origins within consciousness. We have fallen in love with the arguments of our mind and forgotten the profound counsel of our soul. We have become belligerent towards nature and our carelessness is starting to pile up like stinking garbage. We are willing to do almost anything for money, and we are silent witnesses to the desecration of entire populations. I know this is not the whole story, but it is a part of the story that is important

to consider in light of our capacity for mystical knowledge.

We need to discover our own inner capacity for mystical knowledge to bring balance and sanity to an otherwise fractured life. In this alliance with reality, each of us will be able to apply unprecedented invention and wisdom to those diseases of our lives; we will become gift and grace bestowing behemoths; we will restore the lost paradise for ourselves, to each other, and the entire living Earth, and future generations will revere us for our great effort and work.

This book is my contribution to the public discourse about who we are and where we are going and how we are going to get there. I believe in the power of the awakened soul and its clear, undivided awareness. I believe that we are all linked to the mystical source of creation, and waking up to that is not as difficult as it may seem. I believe that we'll be fine if we simply drive our tent poles deep into the earth of that essential ground and stay put. After that, let whatever comes, come. Let whatever is to happen, happen. We'll be ready.

Once we are standing knee deep in the radiant earth of our soul, I trust, absolutely and beyond any doubt, in our collective spirit and ingenuity to create new values; and from those new values, new priorities and commitments; and from those, new systems and structures and institutions. I know that we can transform fear into freedom, hatred into love, violence into peace, poverty into abundance, pollution into purity, and separation into connection.

We have only this one thing to do, only this one thing: show the face of who we truly are, that we and others may see the brilliance of that true face and know its redemptive love and wisdom. If we want to know how to do this, how to find and show the brilliant face of our inner truth, the answer is this: want to. We must simply want this more than anything else. That is all. Put nothing else in front of this one desire, and your face will burst like a thousand suns upon this newly-happy Earth.

It is my hope that something in this book—a word, a phrase, a story—will cause your world to stop, your mind to tilt, and your soul to ignite in silence. I believe that the soul, fully aroused and on fire, irreversibly awake, is the greatest power in the world. If we can hear our soul's silence as loudly as the silence of the high desert at night, then we will know exactly how to bring ourselves and the world of our making into accord with reality, and we will do it with wisdom and love.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Please write down your initial reactions to this first chapter. Don't censor your thoughts. Let your thoughts flow easily and effortlessly onto the page. Keep writing until your hand slows. Read what you have written. Will you now consider putting all those thoughts and reactions to the side and out of your mind? Will you consider reading the rest of the book with an open mind, free of the beliefs that your first exercise has revealed?

2

LEADING FROM WITHIN

In the Dalai Lama's acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize a few years ago, he said, "Because we all share this small planet Earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. That is not just a dream, but a necessity."

This is an important scouting report from the frontier of consciousness. It is so simple, and yet so critical. "To live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature" is the first job of leadership, its top priority and goal.

Wherever we are, we must begin now to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. We've got to honestly evaluate our motives and our actions to see if they are in accord with harmony and peace with each other and with nature. Are we, or are we not, truly and deeply committed to harmony and peace with each other and with nature? If we are not, then we must change. If we are, then let's get on with it. This is a firm line in the sand. It is a nonnegotiable requirement of leadership. There is no middle ground, no political gamesmanship, no public relations spinning double talk that can compromise this.

If we are to establish a new planetary order, we must first establish an equivalent order within ourselves, which can then serve as the foundation for a new order of purpose, values, and ethics in our world. If we are to transform ourselves, and thus the world, we must discover some basic truths about who we are. We must begin to question our ideas and beliefs, not just defend

them even as we attack others'. Obviously we must do this, because our old ideas and beliefs have not led us to live in peace and harmony with each other, and certainly not with nature.

We have to travel into the deep interior of our inner consciousness and explore its riches for transformative insights. I think we must go here, into the silence, to find out how we can create a new order. In this silence we will discover the designs needed to realize peace and harmony. In this silence we encounter our unity, and in unity we experience peace. This awareness is universal, it is timeless, it is supremely significant. Within this crucible of silence, transcendent leaders are forged.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Imagine that you are the Dalai Lama's speech writer. Imagine that he has asked you to write a four-minute talk, using his words at the beginning of this chapter as the main point he wants to get across. Please write this talk, and then actually give it to a small group of family, friends, or colleagues.

3

MANDATE FOR MYSTICS

I want to completely redefine the word leader to imply a person's attainments in the realm of consciousness so that from now on, direct experience with reality is prerequisite for leadership. Leader and mystic should be synonymous. A mystic is a person who has direct and immediate experience of reality. A mystic's knowledge is not based on religious ideologies, creeds, or beliefs; it comes spontaneously as one merges into life itself.

Though spirituality and mysticism are gaining some acceptance in our culture, our society as a whole is still suspect of spirituality, and tends to marginalize mystics as a fringe element of society. We have forgotten that every religion was founded by a mystic, and that the heart of the world's spiritual traditions is the mystical experience. While we may allow the words of long-dead mystics to console and uplift our spirits and broken souls, we are not yet inclined to allow their radical views to mold the ways and means of our commerce and social conduct. We seem to believe that their visions and words are not practical enough to guide and sustain us in our mundane pursuits.

If real life mystics happen to enter today's marketplace, we don't allow their views to inform and shape our decision making in the "real" world of business and government and education; we certainly wouldn't trust a mystic in the role of a general or admiral, or as CEO of Bank of America. Mystics just cannot produce results in the material world; they don't

understand how the world works. It's best if mystics stay in the ghettos of spirituality, where we can visit if and when we want. This is the common wisdom, which is not wisdom at all, but pure foolishness.

Part of this misperception about the competency of mystics is due to the nature of the mystic's path. As mystics are weaned by meditation and silence from their addiction to materialism, they naturally lose interest in the physical, visible world in order to more fully explore and appreciate the truer and more encompassing immaterial, invisible world, the world of spirit. This is analogous to a medical intern forsaking, for a time, all life except for the life within the confines of a hospital. It is analogous to anyone who wants to achieve greatness and proficiency in an art or science. There is a time when they must devote themselves single-mindedly and exclusively to their chosen field. I'm sure that Baryshnikov, when he was young, didn't just take a couple of dance lessons.

Mystics intern in reality and study consciousness and awareness. Until they reach a level of maturity, they may not retain a strong relationship to the material world, mistakenly called the "real" world. However, when mystics achieve a certain level of maturity, of proficiency in their art, they may be returned by silence to this physical world with a clarity of vision and a dexterity of action whose purpose is to awaken, inspire, teach, and lead others to their own deep truth. Some of these mystics are beginning to be seen and heard outside the ghettos of spiritual communities.

The prevailing conventional view that mysticism is disconnected from the real world is dead wrong. It is an unfortunate hallucination. The mystic path reveals reality. The premise of this book is that unless and until people embark on a mystical path of knowledge, they are delusional, and represent a real and present danger to themselves and to others. The central truth of this book is that if we are not actively and vigorously exploring and expanding our awareness, then we are not qualified for leadership of any kind. At this time, with so much on the line, we simply must have leaders who

can end madness by the sheer power of their clarity of cause and effect, their empathy towards reality, and their resoluteness to live and work as servants of life itself.

I am proposing that from now on, we—as a people, as a culture—allow and accept only mystics, mature mystics, mystics who hold in one hand the invisible world and in the other hand the visible, to have decision making authority in our society. These leaders will be an entirely new species of leader, who will serve us by serving the creative power of the universe, the mystic oneness from which all life comes. Their role, their job definition, is to know this power, to align with this power, to be taken and finally merge with this power. These leaders, these mature and maturing mystics, do not live in ashrams and convents, in monasteries and on mountaintops. They live here, where you live; they work right here where you work. They stand squarely on asphalt and astroturf; in bowling alleys and shopping malls and airports and boardrooms, with cell phones and pagers. These leaders drive in the carpool lanes every morning at 6:00 a.m. in Chevrolets and BMWs and 4x4s. But they are driving in an ocean of clarity, setting everything in order by serving reality.

Our society is reality challenged, and this handicap has created problems, sadness, and suffering. We are *koyaanisqatsi*, a Hopi word which means crazy life, life in turmoil, life disintegrating, life out of balance, a state of life that calls for another way of living. Our society is *koyaanisqatsi*. You know it and I know it.

We can correct the imbalance through a radical shift in our consciousness. We do not lack money or know how, time or resources. We lack only awareness, and even this we do not lack, but only forget to use. We'll have to get to work and refurbish our awareness with paint, furniture, and light fixtures made of reality, throwing out everything that is made of egoistic delusions. I am suggesting that we need to see the world as our painting, and that we begin to paint with a mystic's eye, with a lover's brush, and a palette of

colors shocking to the conventional mind. We need a revolution of consciousness.

The mystics' canvas is a transcendent one, painted in the time beyond timelessness, where truth can never be spoken but is as real as concrete, finch, firetruck, and sea urchins basking in the early morning tidepools. The mystics' art transcends the pettiness and misperceptions of doctrines and beliefs; the mystics' art depicts our world and other worlds, our bodies and interstellar space, boardrooms and lucid dreams, glaciers and insects. The mystics' artful eye is opened wide and beholds the love-pulse within all living creatures; the mystics paint this in sudden downpours of color and intuition, of insight and primal sounds. Mystics square-dance with supernovas on Friday nights. They live as the servants of life's love-pulse and so serve happily and humbly each living thing. Their only purpose is to know and serve reality, to ignite the spiritual passion and intensity of all whom they meet.

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Are you currently involved in activities or practices intended to expand your awareness of yourself and of the nature of reality? Do you feel that such activities should be kept separate from work? If so, why? If not, how do these activities influence your conduct in the workplace?

4

THE “S” WORD: SOUL

Whenever I use the word "soul" in talks to business audiences, someone invariably asks, "What do you mean by soul?" Even though I said earlier I wanted to evoke, not explain or define, this is an honest and sincere question, which deserves a respectful answer.

If we're going to use the word "soul" in the context of leadership and business, we'd better define it, we'd better understand it's meaning clearly. Otherwise, this single word—so often thought of as abstract, esoteric, and impractical—will probably create much confusion, doubt, and maybe even cynicism. Let me tell you what I mean by soul, and how I think it relates to our work lives in very practical and useful ways.

There are many definitions of soul, some more precise than others, according to various religious, spiritual, and metaphysical belief systems, varying from culture to culture. I use the words spirit and soul in the same way and to mean the vital principle or animating force within living beings.

I use the word soul as a poetic image that refers to a life of significant meaning born of deep inner exploration. The soul refers to a dimension of living which opens before us from time to time with such compelling force that we fall to our knees in silence and awe and gratitude. Soul refers to those gorgeous moments of self-transcendence, of love, of joy, of communion with the whole of existence in which our seeing becomes acute, and our knowing becomes wise.

When these disruptions to our conventional way of living occur, it's as though we see another dimension of life about which we were ignorant. The mask of appearances falls away, and we see something profound about life. We experience something that is timeless. It's beyond words, and the mind hardly grasps it. In these moments, the fortifications against the soul dissolve, and a new perspective appears.

Let's go into this a bit deeper and see what this soul perspective implies for us. From this perspective and in this remembrance, what do we know about the what I am calling the soul and its importance to our work lives?

The soul implies a real and living connection to others. Recognizing this connection with others means that we must treat others with respect, kindness, compassion, and dignity. Who would not like to be treated in this manner?

Soul implies beauty. This means that our actions must preserve the natural beauty of life in all its manifestations. Recognizing the natural beauty of life, we will not destroy, pollute, defile, or degrade anything. This is a sound principle to guide us in our business decisions, is it not?

Soul implies truth. This means we must speak the truth, we must be accountable for our actions, and we must be straightforward in our dealings with each other and with the communities of which we are a part. Recognizing this, we are bound to honesty and full disclosure of our actions. This would be a refreshing stance for business leaders to take, don't you think?

Soul implies balance and harmony. This means we must keep our priorities in order and give equal time to our own personal growth, to our families, to our communities—to those pursuits and activities that enrich our whole life. Recognizing the need for balance, we will not be compulsive or greedy, we will not sacrifice the integrity of this moment for a future promise. This will keep us sane, healthy, and energetic.

Soul implies universality. This means that we are all shareholders in certain basic values. What do we

all want? We all want to be appreciated, to be accepted, to make a positive contribution to others. We want to feel that our lives and our labors make a positive difference. We want to give, to serve, to be the reason for someone else's happiness and well-being. I would like to think that we all are servants of other people's happiness.

Soul implies inspiration, and deep passion. This means that we live and work from our hearts, from what we truly love. If we follow our hearts to work, we will not need to be motivated by some cheap management trick to give our best effort. Our heart will always ask us to give our best, for the sake of love and passion. We will not need to be bribed. Enthusiasm, cooperation, and commitment are the hallmarks of a heartfelt life. Is there anything we could not accomplish, together, working from and with our hearts?

Soul implies joy. This means that we work from joy, with joy, and towards joy. This is not a Pollyanna principle, because I think that everything we do in life is for the sake of joy. Let's be honest about it: no one likes to work in an environment of tedium, depression, and sadness. Let joy be our standard: if joy is present, we are doing things right, and doing things well. If not, we are doing things wrong, and we should stop and figure out how to get back on track.

Soul implies going beyond conventional boundaries. This means we should always feel free to risk new ideas, new approaches to old problems. This means we should develop our minds, bodies, and spirits so that they shine with creativity and innovation. Recognizing this, we welcome boldness, diversity, and initiative. We should be open to continuous learning and growth, not just in business strategies, but in living. I hope that we are all growing in self-awareness each day.

Soul implies clarity and awareness. This means that we speak and act consciously, and conscientiously. Being conscious means being aware of those impulses, motives, and intentions that drive us. Conscious awareness is the moment-to-moment clarity of motive