

# THE GOSPEL OF LEADERSHIP

A Dialogue in the Pursuit of Truth

RYAN KRUPA

*This book is an odyssey into the truth of leadership's nature and essence. It is written in a contemplative style and uses dialogue to exercise a leader's will, intelligence, and spirit using dialogue, meditation, and contemplation.*

## **THE GOSPEL OF LEADERSHIP: A DIALOGUE IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH**

By Ryan Krupa

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RYAN KRUPA

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ISBN: 978-1-64719-355-3

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Krupa, Ryan

The Gospel of Leadership: A Dialogue in the Pursuit of Truth by Ryan Krupa

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021902187

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.

2021

Second Edition

Editor: Howard Gambrill Clark, PhD

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RYAN KRUPA is a Co-Founder of the MOSAIC INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. He is devoted to the pursuit of truth as a noble endeavor. His calling is to awaken leadership potential in aspiring leaders. He specializes in creating and teaching leadership development courses for US Special Operations units. He has studied and researched the domain of leadership development for twenty years. He has led development courses for eight years. Prior to MOSAIC, he served as an Officer in the US Marine Corps, a strategic account manager at the Center for Creative Leadership, and a consultant at Deloitte Consulting. He earned a Master of Science in Leadership from the University of San Diego, CA.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE CALL

A primordial fury forced me to call the mentor. I teach leaders how to practice justice and wisdom. The aim is to make them trustworthy in the cardinal acts of leading.

Why the fury?

I'm staring at a glacier of truth, and I can't see the route to the summit. I'm at an impasse.

Two decades of study and teaching, and it seems I've hit a mountain of opaque ice, an obstacle that cannot be surpassed. It speaks, "Turn back. To go further is not possible."

I don't turn back. I stay put and observe. I've been in similar situations in the past. Each day, I commit. I'd rather die here than turn back. I'm willing to die here, at this impasse. What am I not seeing? What needs to be developed? What skill is missing?

What is this glacier, this treacherous fortress barring further movement?

I steady myself as the interior thoughts begin their assault. All I've done is in vain. It's not possible to teach leadership. It's not possible to lead. Leadership is not possible. It's a made-up word and concept that does not exist in reality. Reality is strength. Reality is winning. Reality is suffering. Reality is harsh. Reality is nature. Reality is control. Reality is dominance. Might wins. Wealth wins. Goodness loses. Truth lost the war. Virtue lost the war. I am a casualty of the war of truth vs. falsehood.

I have failed. I chased a ghost. I chased an image. I chased an idea that is not found in reality. We've neutered the concept of leadership. We've turned it into a meaningless word. What is meaningless sells. What is truth does not sell.

Truth is like poetry. And most people hate poetry.<sup>1</sup>

We want to consume leadership. We don't want to become the essence of it.

What led me to this despondency? I've not trained one leader that I would happily and willingly follow. It is not a question of talent. It's a question of sacrifice. They won't sacrifice their egos. They won't sacrifice their desires. They won't surrender the need to win. They won't surrender the need to achieve. They won't focus on truth. They are moral cowards.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam McKay, *The Big Short*, screenplay, quote modified to remove profanity.

That is, except for the warriors. The warriors were not my concern. Everyone else was my concern. Especially the corporate and political and entertainment leaders.

The warriors I've worked with, yes, I'd follow.

Truth be told, I did not teach warriors leadership. I taught warriors how to unlock their tacit and intuitive knowledge to become better teachers and guides. You don't lead warriors. You follow them. Few are warriors. I'm lucky to have worked with these few. They exist, I've met them. Their existence saved me from insanity and madness. Why? They had to undergo rigorous training to wage war. They could comprehend that to lead, they also had to undergo rigorous training. To lead not only by their actions, but also by their wisdom (truth) and justice (goodness). They were willing to wrestle with the techniques that unlock potential.

The analogy of the sword of steel, the sword of truth, and the sword of wisdom illuminates their training. They knew steel; they were driving toward truth and wisdom. They were driven toward illumination. The first warrior who sought this work, when I asked what he thirsted for, said, "wisdom!"

What about the rest? The non-warriors, the majority of leaders?

The majority? They don't believe in something greater than themselves. I catch their arrogance and ignorance with one question: "What leads the leader?"

Blank stares. Then one responds: "I lead."

"You are in error," I answer.

I respond, "Truth leads the leader, full stop."

If you don't know how to seek the truth nor have had training to seek the truth, the seduction of power, wealth, and position cloaks you in darkness where everything is turned upside down but you think it is right side up—distortion, illusion, deception swirl around your mind and emotions. You don't even know it. You don't even know you live in the dark. You don't know you deceive yourself.

You deceive yourself because you don't wield your reason and intuition. You deceive yourself because you fear, rather than love, truth's sting of humility. You are a slave to feelings. You are a slave to emotions. You are a slave to desires. You are in bondage, and you think you are in freedom.

In bondage, you bend the light to your will instead of bending your will to the light.

I hunt for leadership in the souls and spirits of leaders. I hunt for the genius within. A wiser Daemon within. The God within.

Once I point this out to the majority of leaders, once I point out that they are in fact in prison and not free, what do you think they do? When the violence of truth strikes their souls, what do you think they do? They fail to embrace the pain, embrace the difficulty, and to use their will and mind to break their bonds. Instead, they cower, hide, and turn away from the sting of truth.

They turn back into the distortion. They turn back into oblivion. They hate the light of truth. They find comfort in the darkness. They can't take the inner rupture and the inner turbulence.

They won't transcend the ego. No, they run back into its grip.

Those non-leaders, the majority, refused to train in the true art of leadership. They refused to study—to become one with knowledge. They refused to read—to engage in intellectual weightlifting. They refused to meditate—to purify their souls. They refused to reflect—to become self-correcting. And why did they refuse? They could not endure the feedback that stings. They could not endure the nonstop inner demands of the virtuous life.

They crave and desire what I can and will not teach—expertise in the art of manipulation. Parlor tricks of the high-functioning trifecta of narcissism, sociopathy, and Machiavellianism, which predominate in multinational corporations as they kill the earth and kill the soul for one more dollar.

What do they desire? They want control. They want to live as tyrants. This is the secret in their hearts. And as long as they make money, we don't call them tyrants. As long as they achieve, we don't call them despots. Instead, we let them exercise control in their enterprises as tyrants. Why do we allow this? Because we are slaves to greater products and greater profits, not greater truths. When they don't produce what we want, we discard them as worthless.

The antiserum? It is incumbent on the leaders to exercise moral courage with authority and power. It is the burden of leadership to transmit moral strength, power, confidence, courage, and spirit to us, to uplift us and inspire us, until we can do the same. When the truth confronts these leaders, when I reflect it to them, they hate me for it. Truth is a bitter medicine. It is the medicine of and for the soul.

In willful ignorance, they refused to become pure. They refused to awaken what lives deep. They refused to develop discernment. They refused to exercise their intelligence. They refused the burden of a penetrating intellect—of seeing what they hide from, of seeing what they fear, of seeing what is true, and of seeing the true challenges and obstacles.

They hate what I do. They hate the pain of inner development. They hate the stinging truth. They hate that they are not pure enough and skilled enough to disclose the truth. And because they are not pure enough to disclose truth, they are not fit to lead. Truth will not be mocked.



On the scales of justice, I'm pure enough and skilled enough, just barely, to disclose the truth. And why is that? I'm devoted to seeking truth as a noble endeavor. I am a servant of truth. I am in pursuit of wisdom. I'm still light years away from the saints and their holiness or from the sages and their eternal wisdom. But I love truth's direction, wherever it may lead. And truth led me here, to this impasse.

True leadership training is not supernatural, yet the effect is supernatural—a more-than-human knowledge that can see the truth, the intelligible truth, the truth that cannot be seen with the eyes, only with the discerning mind.

Musashi, the great Samurai, laid down this principle with authority—

Develop a discerning eye in all matters. And understand what cannot be seen by the eye.<sup>2</sup>

The majority of leaders, if not wise, what are they? Fools, successful fools, all of them.

I want to quit. That's the ego leading. It's brought on its full assault. I wrestle it into submission. How? I adhere to the principle, independent of feelings, never to quit the calling and vocation. I live the calling and vocation. Why? Because I can't quit what I am and I can't quit the purpose of my existence.

These fools, these achievers, have been rewarded for their strengths, their skill, and for winning. But, they were never rewarded for the truth. They were never rewarded for their character.

True leadership training takes aim at a person's character, the moral and intellectual fiber of the soul. It's startling how, in their first training experience, egotists who think they are strong implode. They stare at a stinging truth—leadership training never plays to strengths. The training discloses weaknesses, deficiencies, flaws, biases, and blind spots—the imperfections.

This is why reflection and inquiry are two weapons, two techniques, to learn and to experience the truth-disclosing art. This art leads to practical judgment. At the core, that is what they seek. This is the true skill they seek—more than manipulation, more than calculation, more than cunning—they seek to become skilled in the art of practical judgment. Why? As leaders, they are required to make judgment calls. That's the beautiful burden of leading.

What we wait for is the first visceral experience of truth revealing itself, when it stings the ego and awakens the soul. No one can prepare for it. Truth unveiled must upset the emotions. Truth unveiled must rupture the ego. Why? To produce humility and objectivity.

This is a necessity for the teaching of leadership—the sting awakens. When this happens, most quit. They shut down; they don't go deeper.

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<sup>2</sup> Musashi, Miyamoto, *The Book of Five Rings*, W. S. Wilson translation.

The beauty of this work is that it is volitional. It cannot be forced. Truth does not force.

Those who persevere get the fruits of freedom and humility. This humility opens the gates of inquiry and allows us to peek through at truth. The master swordsman calls this an act of lightning spontaneity. It's a response that cannot be premeditated, only intuited.

This is why the training is designed to awaken the light and to produce humility. Most don't come in with humility; they come in with arrogance and ignorance. This revelation stings—they think they possess humility. The sting reveals their hubris. Until humility becomes a virtue, truth will sting instead of shining light.

The aim is to live in the light.

The aim is to lead in the light.

Those who train with rigor transform into a state of freedom. This state is produced by humility. It's a startling revelation, this true humility, to know how insignificant one is, to know how little one matters, to know the only thing that matters is the mission, the purpose, the calling, and leaving tracks.

Simply stated, leadership development crushes the ego, and most achievers are rewarded for inflating and projecting the ego.

I think Aristotle<sup>3</sup> would caution me that—

No. Not fools. They sought goods that have some good, just not the highest good, truth, which is your aim. They sought pleasure. They sought wealth. They sought honor and fame. They sought achievement. They sought victory. They sought goods. You seek the highest good, truth. You seek the highest activity, contemplative wisdom.

Then I inquire—

Is leadership required to seek this highest good, called truth?

Then I inquire, again—

How should we define what is called leadership?

Then I inquire, once more—

What kind of leader am I seeking to be, and what kind of leadership am I seeking to transmit to others?

Two decades in this pursuit and I'm still asking these foundational questions. Why is this? Why can't I see the truth about leadership development?

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<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Sachs Translation.

I think Aristotle would offer an insight and then ask a question—

You are seeking the highest truth as living and revealed wisdom. Is this necessary for basic leadership development?

I respond—

So long as leaders exert authority and power over others, yes.

Now, I think Aristotle would caution me—

Only the sages, philosophers, warriors, mystics, and saints who devoted their lives to such training can achieve this aim. These devoted ones are able to become the light of truth because they have undergone the most rigorous of all training: the perfection of spirit in mind, body, soul, and art.

Now, I hear *The Bhagavad Gita*<sup>4</sup> echoing from the depths—

Unless the focus is on the warrior or guardian class of beings, what I've discovered is not meant for the majority of leaders.

For the warrior, yes: "Courage, vigor, steadfastness, resourcefulness, and also an unwillingness-to-flee in battle, generosity, and a regal disposition."

For the guardian, yes: "Calm, restraint, austerity, purity, patience, uprightness, real knowledge and worldly knowledge, piety (holiness)."

Now I am at a loss, I've already worked with the warriors, where do I go from here?

I think Saint John of the Cross would comment—

Best to head towards the summit-abiding place in solitude and compassion.<sup>5</sup>

Now, I have to smile. I live in solitude. I practice but have not perfected the virtue of compassion, in its two-fold meaning—

1. To suffer with.
2. To see the light within.

I see a leader's light. I willingly suffer with leaders. I work to eradicate the suffering (as arrogance and ignorance) and awaken the light and the truth.

*The Bhagavad Gita* echoes again from the depths, the aim of illumination—

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<sup>4</sup> *The Bhagavad Gita*, Feuerstein translation.

<sup>5</sup> Saint John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

The disunion of the union with suffering.<sup>6</sup>

Why the effort? Because leaders exert incredible physical and psychological power and authority over human beings. In this light, they are sources and causes of needless suffering.

Why the effort? As a seeker of wisdom, I too, am still eradicating my own ignorance and arrogance and suffering. Ignorance as not knowing and seeing the source of the light and truth. Arrogance as self-will. Suffering as turmoil and torment. The saints said it best, the only criteria are to become pure in heart, poor in spirit, and unconditionally loving—the virtues of detachment, humility and charity. That’s it. That’s the conditioning we seek to actualize. Simple to write about, difficult to live and to become.

The Angelic Doctor mentors—

There is no greater act of charity one can do to his neighbor than to lead him to the truth.<sup>7</sup>

You might be asking—why am I so driven to do this work? Why focus the effort on the corporate and political leaders? The answer—it’s a calling.

The purpose—to ensure the economic, intellectual, spiritual, and moral security for our citizens.

No, the true purpose—the welfare of all human beings.

So, the question becomes, who is best to do this—to lead us to security, prosperity, and harmony? The warriors? The guardians? The sages? The saints?

I answer, only these devoted ones.

Now I ask, where do we find these devoted ones?

How do we find them?

Why find them?

Why? Because we need human beings who are worthy of admiration. We need human beings who are worthy to lead us. Few are called to lead. Few are called to pursue truth. Those who are called we need to find. We need them to accept the burden of leadership.

I know they are out there. I’ve met them—those worthy of our trust, worthy of leadership. Those who we can trust with power and authority over our institutions and enterprises.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Bhagavad Gita*, Feuerstein translation.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*, Saint Thomas quoted.

Even with this knowledge, I'm in despondency. How did I even arrive here? What have I spent twenty years doing? Has it been in vain? Did my thirst lead me to mirages? Where is the well of truth? Where are the waters of truth? I'm dying of thirst.

In contemplation, I again look at this glacier of truth. No gear. No way forward. I don't see the route. The truth I seek is still veiled.

My mind is searching. What do I hate? Ah. There it is. I hate seeing egotists in command and authority manipulating others.

My mind is searching. What do I love? Ah. There it is. My freedom. Freedom of movement and freedom of being. I live in freedom. I am free.

My mind is searching. My freedom is not good enough. I care about you, my fellow human beings. I hate seeing you enslaved in the tyranny of the bureaucracy and in the tyranny of egotists and narcissists. I hate the toxicity of these tyrants poisoning the spirits and souls of all the world. It does not have to be this way. Any organization can be made noble by and through good leaders.

Dejected and in need of guidance, I called the mentor. The mentor I called is known as warrior, teacher, leader, guide, and guardian. He is a true sage.

I called. He listened. I shared with him what I shared with you. After a prolonged silence, he spoke. He began to share a dialogue that he had listened to, as a student, years before. From his perspective, what he heard could have been told three millennia before.

It began with a truth. Since the dawn of human history, roughly 70,000 BC, no evidence suggests human brains have evolved biologically. The implications—the human being and our human nature have not changed. The meaning—we are always experiencing the eternal return, each generation, each individual human being, from age to age, tasked with transcending the temporal and biological and entering the eternal and spiritual.

As he spoke, I listened. As I listened, I wrote down this story. The story is a dialogue between a warrior and a guardian. The story is a journey into the essence of light and the nature of truth. The story leads to the summit-abiding place, where the essence and nature of leadership reveals itself.

It is here, in this summit-abiding place, where my fury transformed into supreme joy.

Live in the light,

The Writer

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BEGINNING

Guardian: We are called to discover—

How to teach leadership.

How to educate leaders.

How to develop leaders.

We discover “the how” by uncovering leadership’s foundational structure. And its foundational structure is found in the essence and nature of the human being.

To uncover leadership’s foundation, we must hunt in our own souls. We must hunt with prejudice. We must hunt like we’re the last souls on the planet dying of hunger tearing across the plains, jungles, and mountains.

The terrain, though, is more treacherous than the longest desert and deepest ravine. The terrain is the soul.

What is a soul? What is it to be conscious? The physical and theoretical sciences, fine arts, humanities, and social sciences fall short; it cannot be described aptly.

Neurobiology and the study of artificial intelligence continue to raise more questions than answers. And rightly so. Artificial intelligence does not require consciousness, self-awareness, or a soul. And yet, it is produced by consciousness, self-awareness, and soul. This artificial intelligence is produced by a living intelligence. An intelligence whose nature it is to ask questions.

Warrior: What do you see?

Guardian: I can point to the signs that lead us to journey into the soul. The sign pointing to the path that must be followed says: the soul is the essence of our deepest interior nature; it is what lives deepest within us. The truth is, we live a composite conditioned life—yes, living and breathing and moving—but what moves us is something deeper, more mysterious and more powerful than any of our physical senses.

This is why we must hunt into the depths and heights of the interior ascent. But we must not fall into the temptation to observe other hunters.

Warrior: Why?

Guardian: Spectators starve to death in the passive state of observing. No, we must engage in the dynamic cycle of being and becoming. We must produce the awakening.

As Plato observed, behavior can hide our true nature. Behavior can hide and conceal the soul. A bad person acts saintly. We call him good. A good person acts criminally. We call him bad.<sup>1</sup>

To hunt deeper and deeper into the soul requires us to simultaneously transcend the perishable self, that which is mortal, that which dies with the body, the matter, that the soul gives form to. As we descend into the gorges of the soul, we must ascend beyond transcendence.

Warrior: Why?

Guardian: To reach beyond the edge of our composite-conditioned-existence.

To discover truth—and by truth we mean to reach the inner central ‘nerve’ laid bare—to discover essence and nature. And with this discovery, when we find it, we will understand how to ‘lead’ out of the depths of the soul; we’ll receive leadership’s nature and essence and power.

So first, we must know our innermost nature and essence. We must know ourselves. We must know the formal cause, the material cause, the efficient cause and the final cause.<sup>2</sup> We must find and feel the inner nerve. We must lay it bare, the soul, lay it out, in all its ugliness and beauty and hurt and pain. And only then can we begin to know what goodness is, what truth is, what beauty is. This goodness, this truth, once discovered and awakened, may then allow us to lead truthfully and objectively. And only then will we have earned the trust to guide others to discover the truth, the truth that guides us in the cardinal acts of leading. This truth is the light of wisdom.

This truth, this inner central nerve—detached from ego and desire—allows us to lead. Yes, we have ego. Yes, we have desire. But we need not let this weakness sour the soil of the soul.

The core technique of detachment will serve as our best weapon on this hunting expedition. In this way, when we look within, we can turn from the ego and not get ensnared by this ‘king of mirages.’ This ‘king of deception’ always waits in the shadows to disorient us and sting us; its goal is to collapse and paralyze us.

On this journey, there is an enemy—an enemy more dangerous than a thermonuclear intercontinental missile. This enemy is the ego. The ego is the source of desire. It lives within us and is wrapped around truth—our inner nerve—like a cancer that may ebb and flow but will never leave on its own. We render it powerless with detachment, discernment, and dialogue.

We need to be on guard to save ourselves from deception. We need to be on guard to keep ourselves from chasing mirages instead of truth.

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Republic*, Joe Sachs translation.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Joe Sachs translation.

We need to temper the primordial desire in order to quench our thirst for knowledge. Let us be thirsty and see what happens when that thirst is denied.

This is why you, my blessed friend, have been called as a fellow explorer. You will see me erring, not quick enough to catch my own mistakes. You'll help me correct those errors, those miscalculations giving birth within the soul. You will save me from falling into crevasses, or when I do, you'll provide the gear to bring me back onto stable ground.

On this hunt, when we make a discovery we need the courage (the fire of our irrational nature) and the wisdom (the light of our rational nature) to let it change, to let it transform our instinctual behavior. We need the mettle and the might to let the principles and structures brand themselves into our being—the structure and principles that let us see and contend with truth.

We need to document these discoveries to create a domain of knowledge that can be taught and transmitted to others. We are not looking for the 'who' or the 'why. Instead, we are looking for the 'what' and the 'how.' What is it 'To Lead?'

What we are looking for is beyond opinion and fashion. It existed well before the light came in and will exist long after the light dies out. We are not looking for buzzwords. We are not looking to sell. We are not looking to gain stuff or new angles. We are seeking to know and understand. We are on the hunt. As the hunter requires weapons, our journey requires structures and lenses that make it possible 'To Lead' and then 'To Develop Leaders.'

In our quest, we seek to disclose the timeless and eternal structures that not even natural laws and gravity can affect. We are not looking to make something. There is no product or app. We are looking for what awakens the potential of the human being to lead. This exploring of ours is not a creative act; it is an act of discovery by a hunter on the hunt for his life. We are on guard against all miracle elixirs and YouTube charlatans. What we seek will be discovered when something within our nature awakens and is unleashed—something that will explode once we see and understand the core nerve of truth and goodness—a source of potent energy made to be released and realized. The potency of our nature.

In preparation, we need also to recognize where and when we have erred in the past.

In our arrogance, we thought we could, poof, create it, imagine it, and in doing so, we missed the mark. All the digital revolutions, technology, and ephemeral disruptive business modes will never produce or inspire good and just and wise leaders.

We have been greatly misled. We have allowed incompetent men and women to exercise unbelievable control in wealth, business, finance and government over our lives. We build nuclear-propelled, unmanned spaceships to probe the deepest reaches of the universe, and yet we cannot govern ourselves on our planet with the human qualities of beauty, freedom, and justice.



Why is this? The human being must grow. The human being must fulfill its purpose. Right now, we neither value nor nurture each human being's purpose. In our weakness, as Pieper<sup>3</sup> warned, we have led ourselves into the slave society of work. Work may be for the common need but beauty and truth and freedom are for the common good.

I call on you to focus on the good of man, not just the needs of man.

Emerson<sup>4</sup> reminds us that the secret of genius is to suffer no fiction.

You understand why I've called upon you. You are the only living being I've met who has the intellectual courage and depth of experience to help me discover the truth about leadership and how to develop leaders. And to do this, we must transcend fiction.

We have already demonstrated dedication in our lives to this pursuit. We have already sacrificed all else to this aim.

And yet this truth stings us—we have not discovered how to transmit this knowledge. Instead, we use sheer force of will and force of action to get others to follow us.

We know this is unsustainable. We know the knowledge and understanding dies with us. You can lead. I can lead. But, can we teach leadership? Can we develop leaders? Do we even have the right structures and signs and symbols to do so?

Warrior: As I listen, I wonder why we have neither taught leadership nor teach leadership in the same way as masters of other arts do—such as war, music, literature, architecture, and neurobiology.

Guardian: Because we are not masters and we have not met masters.

Warrior: Then, are we still students?

Guardian: Yes, we are students. But, we are also practitioners. Your concern, as is mine, is that this concept of leadership is still new, as an art, it's still in its infancy. Days past, the terms used were king, commander and governor. Why, now, is leadership revealing itself? I surmise, because democracy has taken root on the planet, a new way of being and relating is revealing itself. This has been a recent blink of an eye since the first Homo sapiens left East Africa to explore the world. This new way of being has been coined 'leadership,' but it draws heavily from war, business, and governance. The challenge now is that a person must not only master an activity, but also master the connecting and inspiring of free human beings, who at any moment can turn to a different organization with their time and energy.

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<sup>3</sup> Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Representative Men."

Warrior: Okay. If leadership has been deemed a critical ability, why do we keep trying to teach leadership as a secondary activity instead of the primary activity?

Guardian: Good question. I cannot give the answer. Instead, let us hunt. Let the way of the warrior come into view. Let us look at the development process. First, there is basic training. Second, there is a pre-deployment training cycle of 18 months. Third, the warrior deploys to combat zones for 6 months. Fourth, upon return, the cycle begins again. Essentially their lives center around a two-year cycle: warriors train for 18 months, deploy for 6 months, and then repeat. This method of preparation leads to intuitive and embedded knowledge and the hard-earned instinct needed for warfighting. They train specifically for war.

Let the way of the musician come into view. The musician trains with a music master and can receive instruction for decades. The hope is that, after a decade of deliberate practice, the musician masters the techniques and mechanics to become a virtuoso performer. Skill and ability is monitored, measured, and assessed. Heart and inspiration are judged. Few reach the pinnacle of the solo seat in an orchestra.

Let the way of the artist come into view. The artist trains with a painting master, and then trains for a decade to develop mastery. Few reach the pinnacle of being master painters.

Warrior: How about the Martial Arts?

Guardian: The same goes with the martial arts. A revealing method is how the Shaolin monks dedicate their entire lives to the mastery of Kung Fu and Buddhism. They structure every hour of every day to this end.

And yet, with the way of the leader, this process of mastery is not applied!

If we are honest, leading is dreadfully more difficult than mastering one skill. Instead of making leadership development central, we treat it as a bolt-on activity. We treat it as a skill that can be learned on the job. Most jobs don't require leadership until there are strategic consequences. Most jobs require command and management. Why? There is not enough freedom to lead at the lower levels; this lack of freedom kills insights, initiative and adaptability.<sup>5</sup> You are told what to do, you are told the targets. You are not free to determine your own methods, targets, and skills. And how do you get ahead? By being a master of one thing and the tasks associated with that one thing. Then you're promoted. And once promoted, you learn, you are incompetent at leading, unless perhaps you micromanage those people that do that one thing that you once did. And you get promoted for this incompetence.

What I'm seeing is that we have made good human beings into conformists, and conformists cannot lead! Conformists do as they are told, and they serve what is the known, the status quo.

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<sup>5</sup> Frans Osinga, *Science, Strategy, and War: The Strategic Theory of John Boyd*.

The known, the status quo, leads to destruction and death. The unknown, the potential to be realized, leads to freedom and vitality.

Instead of developing leaders, we buckle leadership training haphazardly to tactical and technical expertise, operational and managerial expertise, and command and strategic expertise.

How do we know we do this haphazardly? When we see this (the disease of today's leadership), when great experts fail to lead other experts.

We see this too often—great tacticians failing in operational leadership.

We see this too often—great operators failing in strategic leadership.

And the worst failure of all—great strategic minds who failed in command.

Warrior: You see correctly. What do you suggest as a remedy? What is the antivenom?

Guardian: Before we offer a remedy. We need to ask what are we seeing and what aren't we seeing? You taught me this—to always ask: "what aren't we looking at?"

I can only offer what I'm seeing right now.

Warrior: Go on, tell me what you're seeing.

Guardian: It seems the building blocks of current leadership development do not lead to leadership at all, but are really organizational building blocks, focused on the structure and systems of the organization, not the nature and faculties of the human being.

What we have is horizontal development but no vertical development—the character and intellectual nature of the leader.

What I mean is, unlike in the martial and musical arts, most leadership thought is taken in the context of the enterprise: How to lead an organization or an enterprise.

What these thinkers have failed to understand, and I'm reminded of Musashi<sup>6</sup>, the great Samurai swordsman, is that whether engaged in a duel or in a war, whether with one person or with thousands of combatants, the principles remain the same. And it's here that I think we've failed in our thinking—we've created blind leaders, leaders who can only see what is tangible but cannot see what they cannot imagine (the intangible). And that intangibility leads to insights. And because these leaders do not know how to generate insights, they are blind to the truths revealing themselves.

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<sup>6</sup> Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*.

We keep looking at structure, systems, processes and skills that make the enterprises flourish. But, we have failed to develop the human principles that each human being in the enterprise must know and practice.

Pieper<sup>7</sup> would say, by allegiance to the conformity of values demanded by organizations, we have created skilled automatons instead of mature, virtuous, and freethinking human beings.

The irony, these skilled automatons think they are mature, free and virtuous!

I'm cautious to speak this way, but, because we are friends and *this is a sacred dialogue*, I must speak freely.

Warrior: Speak freely and truthfully.

Guardian: Does it not concern you and do you not wonder how it's possible that we create powerful systems and machines and yet it seems the human being is getting weaker in body, thought, and feeling?

I say weaker because of the obesity epidemic that has exploded. I say weaker because the number of prescriptions written for bodily and psychological weaknesses has exploded. It seems the human being, the good of the human being, the flourishing state of the human being, has been compromised. Is this not so?

Warrior: I won't say so publicly, but, because we are friends, yes, it seems the human being is getting weaker in mind and body. And that weakness is dangerous and yet at the same time easy to control. So, if you are asking me why things are as they are, I'd say that the controllers want weak people because weak wills lack the strength to resist and without resistance they obey. And if it's only about profiting off calculated combinations of white sugar, corn syrup, salt, and processed carbohydrates, then perhaps that is even worse.

Guardian: This is why I am hunting for this myself. And once I discover truth, then I'll find only the types of inner-natures that are capable of developing this way. I know this is not for everyone, but the war is against those few who exercise so much authority in the main—those few, that are, in my estimation, intellectually arrogant and morally corrupt.

To compete, to battle these few, we need to understand the structure of an organization's operational environment.

There seem to be two categories, organization and activity, with a total of six abilities that leaders must gain command of to compete.

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<sup>7</sup> Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*.

Category I: Organization level

1. Tactical/Technical
2. Operational
3. Strategic

Category II: Activity level

1. Command
2. Management
3. Leadership

If we are honest, does this not look like too much for one leader to master? Why not just cut our losses, quit this endeavor, and be owners and investors? Why not just play the game?

Warrior: I played that game. I went to Harvard Business School and Goldman Sachs after going to war. I lasted only a few years. Silky, vile and villainous snakes, everywhere, who I physically and intellectually wanted to crush. But, man, did they know how to play the game—control by wealth drove them. They think wealth is hard power. But in reality, it is not power. It holds on by a string.

Guardian: Yes. It can be taken away. Anything that can be taken away, is not true power. Economic strength, not wealth, is power, the power to produce goods and services.

Warrior: Then, what are the sources of power?

Guardian: I see seven sources of power in society—

1. Military
2. Political
3. Economic
4. Technological
5. Social
6. Religious
7. Intellectual

From these sources, I see three primary levers of power—

1. Control by organized power.
2. Control by military power.
3. Control by economic power.

These are the three levers leaders use to win “obedience and consent.” Most notably, one lever of power is missing.

Warrior: What do you see?

Guardian: There is one more lever of power, and this comes from the intellectual source of power—

1. To lead, not control, by influence, appreciation, and persuasion, led by truth's guidance.

Warrior: And that is why I am here. I want to learn how to teach leaders to fight with their minds so as not to control but to awaken and be guided by light and truth.

Guardian: That is why I fight this war too. In this age, we are in a cosmic conflict with our fellow Homo sapiens. The hope is to discover how to prepare leaders—to stand their ground in truth and lead. The hope is to teach leaders how to fight with the counterweights to manipulation, wooing, seduction, and coercion.

The counterweights are influence, inspiration, harmony and initiative.

To begin, do we agree that our search is narrowed to the intellectual source of power and the lever of influence? To prepare for this non-martial combat?

Warrior: Yes.

Guardian: Do you have the patience?

Warrior: Yes.

Guardian: Then, let the aim, the final cause, lead us, the efficient cause, to the source, the formal cause.

To orient us, for mastery, it takes up to ten years or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to learn how to play one instrument.

Warrior: Yes. Ericsson's research suggests this is true.<sup>8</sup>

Guardian: Now, look again at the abilities a leader must gain command of to compete. Is it less or more demanding than learning one instrument or one skill?

Warrior: They are not less. They are more demanding.

Guardian: Then at maximum, we would need 60,000 hours of training, practice and experience required to master leadership in the activities of tactics, operations, strategy, management, command, and leadership.

Is this realistic?

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<sup>8</sup> K. Anders Ericsson and Jaqui Smith, *Toward A General Theory of Expertise*.

Warrior: Not in the way we currently structure professional development in our institutions.

Guardian: Indeed. And we have not even mentioned where these leadership abilities are needed— Politics, War, Business, Finance, Commerce, Economics, Education and Technology. Let's add another 10,000 hours to master one of these domains.

Warrior: By this estimate, it looks like 70,000 hours of deliberate practice and experience is needed to lead at the highest levels.

Guardian: What does this reveal?

Warrior: Complete ignorance of the controlling class—the Generals, the CEOs, the Politicians, the Administrators, the Chancellors, and the Provosts. They act like they know how to lead when they have no idea. They were trained in domain skill, not leadership skill. They were trained to manage the knowledge, the organization, the status quo. They are highly prized automatons.

Guardian: Forgive them. Pity them. They do not know their own ignorance. They rule by wealth, they rule by power, they rule by force. But they do not lead.

Warrior: And you and I, do we know our ignorance?

Guardian: Yes. Which is how we even know that we must hunt for truth.

Warrior: Why?

Guardian: To eradicate our ignorance. To ascend into truth's knowing.

Saint Thomas mentors us here—

Knowledge is the offspring of truth.<sup>9</sup>

Warrior: Then, can we claim that anyone who is currently speaking about leadership development is in error, and does not understand what they are saying and seeing?

Guardian: Yes.

Warrior: Then, all those New York Times best sellers are wrong?

Guardian: Yes.

Warrior: All of them?

Guardian: Yes.

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<sup>9</sup> Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*. Saint Thomas Quoted.

Warrior: But surely some of those books at the airport and required readings at Stanford, Sloan, Harvard, and Wharton have something of value to add.

Guardian: No.

Warrior: All those TED talks?

Guardian: No.

Warrior: All those conferences, libraries, and treatises by fortune 500 leaders?

Guardian: No.

Warrior: What is the better way?

Guardian: What are you seeing?

Warrior: Don't answer my question with a question.

Guardian: I cannot and will not tell you. You and I are on the hunt of our lives. You and I, both of us, must find our core nerve, our essence, our truth.

Warrior: Then, maybe there's a better way to think about 'leadership' instead of 'enterprise leadership.' Maybe we need to step outside of current systems and domains?

Guardian: Yes, you are closing in on the nerve center.

Warrior: What principles lead us inward, to the core?

Guardian: Let us propose these tenets or guiding principles—

1. Leaders need to be independent of any hierarchy.
2. Leaders need to live outside any system.
3. Leadership needs to be independent of the enterprise.

Warrior: In one stroke, you slice the 'Gordian knot' keeping the truths of leadership development in the dark.

Guardian: I do hope so. Managers, not leaders, need to live inside the enterprise. That is why we call them Executives. Generals, not leaders, need to live in their Commands. That is why we call them Commanders. But leaders, the kind that I have in mind, they need to live outside of any organizational structure. They cannot be beholden to the temporal and functional and transactional demands that keep a system or enterprise efficient and effective.

Warrior: Do you mean they are a law unto themselves?



Guardian: No, I mean they are detached from the tyranny of the technocrats and the tyranny of bureaucracy. They need to be free to speak their mind with impunity. They need to be free from subjecting themselves to another human being who has control or influence over them. They need to be free from organizational or institutional achievement so that they can see and understand how to respond to reality's unfolding. Our leaders fear no achievement and they fear no loss. They only seek to disclose the truth and know how to respond.

Warrior: Are you even sure we should call what you're describing leadership?

Guardian: Do you have a better term for the concept I'm seeing?

Warrior: Not yet.

Guardian: What if what I call leaders are not leaders at all, but functional and skilled experts and workers?

What if the beginnings of leadership development must be independent of:

1. The enterprise (organization)
2. The function (command and management)
3. The level (tactical, operational, strategic)
4. The domain (finance, war, business, education)

What if the eternal truths of leadership have remained hidden because we've been looking at what is concrete, what is brick and mortar, and only what we can see and touch and feel and smell and hear?

Warrior: I am not seeing the path of the hunt. You're losing me.

Guardian: What if what we are looking for is independent of enterprise structures, processes, systems and skills?

What do you think has happened because we make human beings subordinate to organizational objectives and requirements at the expense of their human development?

Warrior: We create company men. We create conformists. We kill creativity. We kill freedom. We kill insights. We kill the iconoclasts.

Guardian: This terrifies me.

Warrior: Then, have we made professionals in organizations servants to the organization instead of servants to the truth?

Guardian: Yes. If we remove the word servant and replaced it with slave, have we made human beings slaves to the organization? Bondage to truth frees and empowers.

Warrior: That is a bit of a stretch. They choose where to give their energy and minds as labor and skill.

Guardian: I've asked this question of professionals—

If you were independently wealthy, would you still willingly give your energy and mind to achieve the organizational targets demanded of you?

Warrior: What do they say?

Guardian: 99 out of 100 say they would quit. What does that tell you?

Warrior: The coercive power of economic need reigns like a king. I'm reminded of the proverb, "he lived to be 100, he died when he was 30."

Guardian: That is why I love working with warriors, scholars, scientists, creators, and artists. They have to do their work. Their work is an extension of their being.

While I look for those who are called, my concern is with all beings.

Warrior: That is my concern too—all beings.

Guardian: Then what is the outcome of this current organizational way of being?

Warrior: We have made professionals and workers into submissive and obedient servants instead of freethinking leaders who pursue truth and then act accordingly.

Guardian: What do you think has happened to the character of these professionals after a decade or more of sacrificing their reason and what they know is right because of organizational or political pressures?

Warrior: The spirit and might of their souls has been crushed. Their character has been weakened and corrupted.

Instead of practicing courage by taking a stand, they buckled and imploded when faced with the artificial and fabricated pressures of organizational demands. They end up highly skilled cowards.

Guardian: Are we seeing this correctly? Are they, these conformists, worthy of becoming leaders?

Warrior: It is terrifying. I've been fighting and killing evil men for a long time—a sheep dog against the wolf to protect the innocent—but I never thought how dangerous executives could be until this moment. They don't kill people like the 'wolves' of this world; they are soul killers. That is a cosmic crime.

Guardian: Corporate wolves. Slave labor masters. Cowardly souls escaping the burdens of freedom, refusing the burden of wielding courageous axes—the axes of freedom.

A leader is no slave master nor is a leader a slave. A leader is self-governing and self-sufficient. A leader is no servant. Servants work for other men, not for themselves. Does this sting? Am I hitting a raw nerve? Are you drunk with the grey sobriety of the cold empty essence? Do we have the courage to look at this?

It's terrifying that the theory of servant leadership gets praised. It's an ill-conceived concept. Instead look to the powers of Christ's words and deeds.

Warrior: The analogy does not hold. This is beginning to sound sacrosanct, offensive, and odd given so many do not believe in Christ.

Guardian: For a Christian: Christ is Lord, Christ Sacrifices, Christ Frees, Christ Forgives, but Christ is no servant; he is the Eternal King.

Instead of servant leadership, it should be called Christ-like leadership—godlike leadership.

Warrior: Fine. But no Christian should be arrogant enough to think he can be godlike.

Guardian: The saints prove otherwise by the darkness of faith. They take part in the divine nature, with light and truth, a godlike quality of seeing, knowing, and loving.

Warrior: You are losing me.

Guardian: What are you seeing?

Warrior: I see cowardly conformists managing the enterprises by power and authority, by command and control, not by leadership and influence and appreciation.<sup>10</sup> The dignity of each soul has not been recognized and valued.

In this light, Josef Pieper mentors—

His dignity is ignored; I concentrate on his weakness and on those areas that may appeal to him—all in order to manipulate him, to use him for *my* purposes.<sup>11</sup>

Guardian: And these blessed conformists, because of their political finesse, because of their cunning, because of their savviness, because of their bag of tricks, because of their reading of behavior, because of the ability to coerce and manipulate, they reach the top of their enterprises. And then, when they do, what do we call them?

Warrior: We call them leaders.

Guardian: Are they? Are they leaders? Are they free? Are they worthy of admiration?

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<sup>10</sup> Frans Osinga, *Science, Strategy, and War—The Strategic Theory of John Boyd*.

<sup>11</sup> Josef Pieper, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power*.

Warrior: It all depends on how you define the concepts of leader and leadership.

By the common definition, “to be in charge,” then, yes, they are leaders. I think where you are going is that you look at the soul of the human being and then make the judgment call, independent of achievements and honors.

Guardian: Ah ha! Rousseau may be of help here. He wrote his educational treatise with democratic societies in mind.

That fearless and lucid writer on education, and at the same time a deeply flawed father, wrote, in his treatise *Emile, or On Education* the most powerful point in but a fistful of words.

Rousseau said the purpose of education is to awaken a freethinking human being to be independent of the wills, emotions, and judgments of others. He wrote—

I make his well-being independent of either the will or the judgments of others.<sup>12</sup>

I cannot call conformists leaders. They are not independent but dependent. This dependence strips them of true power. Corporate leaders give people what they want. They cater to the wills and judgments of others and then become wealthy and successful. I cannot call this kind of character a leader. They are demagogues. They create and sell “consumerism and eroticism, greed and lust.”<sup>13</sup> And we reward them for it by buying their goods and buying the stocks.

Warrior: It seems we are surrounded by the opposite of what Rousseau aimed at in educating freethinking human beings. What we have are conformists. What we have are human beings who conform their own will and judgments to the will and judgments of others.

But why? To be liked and to be accepted and to fit in?

Guardian: This tendency, in previous times, may have been called for when *exile* was a common practice.

Warrior: But now what do we do? We make our well-being dependent upon the wills and judgments of others.

Guardian: Is that not bondage instead of freedom? Can we call this the trifecta of emotional-intellectual-spiritual slavery?

Warrior: Why do you keep using the word slavery? It stings. It’s a crime against humanity. It implies bondage. It reminds me of the horrors of history that haunt our society. And rightfully

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<sup>12</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, Bloom translation.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*.

so. Can we not drop the term slavery? Let's use another word. This is offensive, out of place, and hyperbolic.

Guardian: Stop. We can be free externally under laws and government and still be slaves—living in cognitive bondage—internally in our relationships to other beings and to reality.

Warrior: Then we hunt for the truth of what lives hidden in ourselves. And we will expose a similar truth in the citizenry. And I'm telling you right now, this hurts. This is a pain, an ache that I can't drown with booze and pills.

Guardian: For consolation, I can't help but think of Aquinas' perspective—

There is no greater act of charity one can do to his neighbor than to lead him to the truth.<sup>14</sup>

Warrior: And that is the aim, once we discover the truth, to lead others to it.

Guardian: That is the keystone principle—

To lead others to see and know the truth.

I add another principle—

To live and lead in the light.

For twenty years this has been my leadership 'battle cry.'

This is our endeavor—

To endure as we guide leaders to seek the truth, to disclose the truth, and to wield courage to act upon the truth they know.

To steady ourselves, can we lay down these principles, and leap from them, as we hunt for leadership's truths?

Warrior: To what end?

Guardian: To lead leaders to know light and truth.

Warrior: I'd caution on the use of the word truth.

Guardian: I exercise no such caution on our hunt. We are hunting now, not just to live, but to awaken the light and truth in our souls. What is life if we have no soul? What is leading, if we don't lead souls?

Basil King's "Conquest of Fear" is echoing from the depths—

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Kreeft, *Socratic Logic*. Saint Thomas quoted.

Go at it boldly, and you'll find unexpected forces closing round you and coming to your aid.<sup>15</sup>

Warrior: Then, let's roll, in boldness and strength and courage.

Guardian: If our aim is to lead others to light and truth, then the groundwork must first be to condition their character to be independent of the wills and judgments of others. This conditioning is critical—They must be able to take a stand against the tyranny of opinions, the tyranny of fears and the tyranny of judgments.

Warrior: This means, we need to teach leaders the freedom and burden of speaking one's mind. What you are driving at is the union of intellectual and moral virtues that direct the cardinal acts of leading. What do you call this union and act?

Guardian: Fortitude. To speak one's mind with discerning fearlessness.

To achieve this, we must teach leaders to be detached from the organization and from careerism.

Warrior: This is our first obstacle.

Guardian: What do you see?

Warrior: Instead of detachment and discernment, I see careerists. These careerists are organizational survivalists. And these survivalists are in nature and essence conformists. Let us call them "survivalist-conformist-careerists." These SCCs, known as CEOs and SESs<sup>16</sup>, are rewarded for behaving this way—the conformist artist, aka, the confidence artist. In essence they are con artists. They rely on deception instead of truth. They manipulate instead of lead. They create false wants disguised as needs. They are obsessed with promotion. They are obsessed with income. They are obsessed with wealth. They worry about losing. They worry about failure. They worry about losing wealth. Their worries are primal. This makes them dangerous. They don't seek truth. They don't seek to know truth and act accordingly.

Guardian: Our way of being—to lead others to light and truth—triggers an emotional storm that wreaks havoc, confusion and devastation on the con artists' fragile and imagined reality. Their hallucinations and their shared narratives are shattered and disintegrated by our methods. It seems that a psychological death occurs. And yet this death, this loss of identity, awakens them to their true essence and nature—to a true source of power and freedom that they must now learn to strengthen and take command of.

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<sup>15</sup> Basil King, *Conquest of Fear*.

<sup>16</sup> The Senior Executive Service (SES) is a position classification in the civil service of the United States federal government, somewhat analogous to general officer or flag officer ranks in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Warrior: I see why you don't hunt within enterprises.

Guardian: Once the fiction is cleared out, once they are able to see their essence, we need to anchor them on the path of virtue, excellence, and wisdom. We need to demonstrate a way that leads to high ideals and high mindedness—yet exposing their nerve laid bare to the brutal essence of reality.

Warrior: This means we need to make ourselves and others strong enough to bear the wills and judgments of others, every day. You mean, we need to live these principles, not just know them. It's a way of being we aim for. And we hit our aim by converting principles into practice.

Guardian: Yes.

Warrior: Do we not see the opposite tendencies today? Organizations and managers using their wills and judgments to control others, to make them obedient, and to make them submit to forces outside of their own nature?

Guardian: Yes. That is why I do not want to train leaders at their organizations. I need nature's sacred ground.

Warrior: We need nature's freedom and beauty to inspire their souls. Nature as a helper?

Guardian: Yes. I must ask it again. Before we go any further. Do you agree that the first principle of leadership development is to make yet-to-be leaders independent of the will and judgments of others? With the aim to make their well-being, their sense of self, their self-esteem, strong and powerful by building moral and psychological strength?

Warrior: Yes. First, we build strong foundations. We do not bypass self-esteem and moral courage. No, we make them a priority. We lead development with this priority. Learning skill is easy. Developing character is difficult.

Guardian: I agree. Our leaders must achieve independence from the assaults of the wills and judgments of others. And yet, simultaneously, we must be on guard against the vice of this independence—arrogance and ignorance.

To be on guard, we cross-examine leaders to reveal interior inconsistencies and incongruities. By this feedback method, we teach leaders to strengthen their character.

Warrior: Instead of this method, what are you seeing, in the realm of leadership training and development?

Guardian: At the core, we do not teach leaders to connect soul to soul nor mind to mind. We teach them to manipulate emotions instead of transcending them. We teach tricks to become likeable. We teach tricks to exhibit behaviors that are rewarded. This always seemed false, artificial and fake to me. I don't want to conform myself to some unnatural pattern. I want to

exercise my interior nature, the soul, and condition it into an excellent state of being. I want to become virtuous, in my innermost nature, where I violently and forcibly take command of my desires and feelings, and transform them by the powers of spirit. Only growing the spirit achieves the core of our art. Behaviors make us closer to brutes than angels. By developing the faculties of spirit, the powers of the will and intelligence, we don't conform to an external pattern. No, we awaken our innermost potencies to become the essence of beauty and truth and goodness. Do you see the difference?

Warrior: Ah. We create hollow beings instead of hallowed beings.

Guardian: Good God, yes. Empty shells with soiled and atrophied interior natures. Instead of becoming virtuous, we obey external values. This kind of obeying strips the soul of her powers.

Warrior: Then, what have we discovered? Have we, as a society, forgotten dignity, virtue, excellence and wisdom? Do we, as a society, only value achievement, wealth, honor and glory?

Guardian: It seems to be so. Let us look, again, at the enterprise functions. I'm uneasy with this framework. I'm tempted to leave it behind. It's a closed system. Being in this system keeps us in bondage. We need to be outside of any man-made systems. We need to enter nature's freedom.

Warrior: What are you seeing that others don't see?

Guardian: We need to discover a true leadership development framework.

Warrior: Why?

Guardian: This is what I see—

We take a human being and drop him into these organizational requirements, and in doing so, we lead him into a cell of imprisonment. The cell, the box, the cube, the office, the building, the walls by nature restrict and conform us. We go from an open system, the individual responding to the demands of reality, to a closed system, a cog in a machine, reduced to the way of the automaton.<sup>17</sup> We lose the freedom to think, will, and act to the best of our ability. When we drop ourselves into the bureaucratic functions of the enterprise, we lose our freedom.

By doing this, we are not detached but attached; we are not free, but in bondage; we narrow our vision instead of widening it; instead of being nature, we put our souls into man-made prefabricated constricted containers. These containers dim and weaken—instead of awakening and strengthening and testing—our powers.

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<sup>17</sup> O.E.D. definition for 'automaton': A living being whose actions are purely involuntary or mechanical; a person behaving without active intelligence or mechanically in a set pattern or routine.



Warrior: Are you saying the modern way is, essentially, the man in a cage?

Guardian: Yes. At least, that is how I felt in an office. I felt caged.

Warrior: Then, is it true to say, you ‘felt’ this, because you experienced the office as a caged cell?

Guardian: Yes. I had to break free.

Warrior: And now, being free, your vision has awakened?

Guardian: Yes. And this sight is painful. Yet, I do not know a better way.

Warrior: That is why we are hunting?

Guardian: Yes. Most of us are not called to lead. Most of us do not have the inner nature to undergo the rigors of true development.

Warrior: Just as most are not called to be warriors. People ‘think’ they want to be warriors until the training begins. Once the training begins, most willingly quit.

Guardian: Yes. That is how I am seeing our art. I want it to be hard. I want it to be challenging. I want it to weed out the posers and wannabees. That is why I can’t stand current training models. It’s fast food for the mind. And it’s profitable! It’s a billion-dollar racket of charlatans.

That said, maybe I am in error. Maybe enterprise functions are necessary for non-leaders. Maybe this is a good thing.

Warrior: As an analogy, in athletics not everyone has what it takes to become a professional athlete or an Olympian. Yet, we have organizations filled with helpers to support their training and performance.

Guardian: Yes. And yet, even in professional athletic organizations, don’t we see non-professional authorities controlling professionals?

Warrior: You mean the ownership class?

Guardian: Yes. A just society would be led by owner-operators, not owner-controllers. I aim to strike at the weakness of the bureaucrats, the lobbyists and the technocrats, who wield power in our pluralistic and lobbyist economy, yet possess no true excellence.<sup>18</sup> We have fools controlling the wise instead of the wise guiding the fools.

Warrior: I don’t follow.

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<sup>18</sup> Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope*.

Guardian: We have ‘managers’, who want to ‘appear’ and ‘look’ and ‘seem’ to be leaders, without ‘being’ leaders. These managers ride on the backs of the experts, innovators and creators.

Warrior: I sense resentment from personal experience. I never experienced that kind of injustice. I felt free as a warrior even though I had to interact with the bureaucracy that supported the mission.

Guardian: It is true, I hated corporate and bureaucratic life. I felt this way of living as complete spiritual oppression. Yes, my basic necessities were cared for; no, my spiritual necessities not only were not cared for, but were trampled on. I felt weak, confused, in a state of darkness. Had I known what I am, I would have resigned within a week, instead of spending a decade in a voluntary spiritual and metaphysical purgatory.

The kind of leader I admire, I could not find in professional organizations. I found great managers and good souls who were pivotal mentors, but, I never wanted to be like them. I never wanted to lead ‘inside’ an organization. I needed to find a natural and creative wilderness. I needed freedom to develop, untethered from administrative activities. I resonated with creators, with warriors, with artists, with musicians, with statesmen, with sages, and with saints. They had to become something. They had to awaken the daemon. The daemon speaks to all of us. It leads to the awakening. The daemon led me to the perspective that leadership development needed to be seen in the same light as the development of warriors and sages. This search led me to techniques that combined the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. It is here that I discovered a different pathway to training. It is here that I discovered the ‘battle skills’ of leading.

Warrior: I’m not clear. Why did you experience freedom in sports and oppression in organizations?

Guardian: The organization is too controlling, too mechanical, too administrative, too focused on the organization at the expense of individual. I felt the organization should be there to free the human being to pursue more freedom in virtue and excellence, not less.

In athletics, you trained and competed. Your performance and your growth mattered. The means and ends of athletics are the same.

Warrior: Ah. Okay. What you are saying, in athletics, you had to train and master skills and then compete and demonstrate and display those skills. Most importantly, you loved the activities of competitive sports and of leading warriors. Compared to these experiences, you hated the activities that led to bureaucratic and management achievements.

Guardian: Close. Let me be clear then. I don’t mind management functions if I love the mission. In the Marines, one had to exercise leadership by integrating the functions of tactics, operations, strategy, and management.

Warrior: Then, why did the way of management not resonate with you?

Guardian: Why not? The entrepreneurs are free. The builders are free. The creators are free. I love the creators. I love small businesses. I love small government agencies. I hate massive organizational structures. To me, they seem to be leviathans, crushing the freedom of citizens into a life of total work instead of freedom. These organizations are totalitarian structures cloaked as free and necessary enterprises.

Warrior: Then, what is your aim? What kind of leader are you aiming to produce?

Guardian: Striking at the Gordian knot, if these enterprises, these leviathans and totalitarian structures, were led by worthy men and women, we would be spared from the rigors of this expedition.

What I am striking at is not the structure. No. What I am striking at is the viciousness that takes place in the modern organization. They are places where souls are fearful to speak their mind, places where souls encounter incompetent, insecure, and unstable managers. Now we must ask, why would souls put up with these injustices? Why?

Warrior: Economic pressure and fears.

Guardian: Rightfully so. My aim is not to change the systems or structures, but to change the spirit and souls of those leading these enterprises. My aim is to see more noble and wise leaders leading all citizens, in any and all work, be it bureaucratic or not. In truth, my aim is all souls.

Warrior: Your hope is to see managers who possess the qualities, presence, and command of a statesman?

Guardian: Yes, that is the hope. What if nothing needs to change, except the moral and intellectual virtues of our leaders? What if it is as simple as teaching managers how to pursue truth? And, what if the real test for the manager is the fortitude to act on the truth thus discovered? What then? Would this not change the entire fiber and fabric of the living bond between human beings in each and every profession?

Warrior: Good God, you are idealistic. You're striking at the failures of our educators, not our managers. Our educators have failed to educate and produce strong and powerful citizens.

You aim to strike the power of spirit, to equip leaders to lead by following the truth. You seek to develop leaders to be educators who know how to awaken light and truth in people.

Guardian: Yes.

Warrior: This is not realistic. You are asking too much of an average person.

Guardian: Why? Let me frame it this way. You are a warrior and you trained for combat. What if the needs of the military made you a submariner, and you hated being on a submarine?

Warrior: I'd hate it. I'd have to leave. I'd have to find a different environment. A different way of being. A different way of working.

Guardian: Exactly. And yet, some leaders loved being submariners.

Warrior: True.

Guardian: Then, a true and realistic aim is to teach professionals, who will one day be leaders, to go in the direction that they deem most important.

Warrior: Yes, that is realistic. That is justice. You seek true justice. You seek to remind people that the virtue of justice includes doing one thing well and doing what one is naturally fit to do well.

Guardian: Yes. For me, basic business life is no way of life at all. But, for many it's a beautiful life and way of being that provides economic security for their families. My aim is different from the aim of economic security.

In nature and essence, the way of the leader is similar to the way of the warrior. You fight martial wars. I fight intellectual, emotional and spiritual wars. The way of a leader, as I see it, is not needed to manage organizations. Administrators are needed to manage organizations.

Warrior: Wait. I'm confused. What are you seeking?

Guardian: I am seeking potential leaders, who can lead independent of any skill-based function. I'll take a lawyer who wants to train. I'll take an administrative assistant who wants to train. I'll take a construction worker who wants to train. What I am seeking is to distinguish the power of the soul from the power of organizational authority.

Warrior: You seek human beings, independent of any professional skill and ability?

Guardian: Yes. I'd rather be incompetent professionally and awakened spiritually.

Warrior: And yet, you've never let yourself be professionally incompetent.

Guardian: I aim at excellence in anything I'm entrusted to do, even if I hate the work.

To be clear. I am in search of those called to awaken their potential. I am in search of those called to fight not economic wars, not political wars, not martial wars, but, spiritual, intellectual and emotional wars. I seek a return to the democratic virtue of liberty. I fear this liberty is being destroyed by the modern way of working.

Warrior: You seek leaders, at all levels, at any place in society, not just at the senior and strategic level?

Guardian: Yes. That is what I'm seeking.

Warrior: You are seeking to know the types that can awaken leaders as warriors who fight non-martial wars?

Guardian: We are getting closer.

Warrior: I'm concerned. What is it about business life that you hated?

Guardian: I hated routine superficial and administrative work. I hated a professional routine where it was demanded by my managers that I show up, 5 days a week, 8–12 hours a day. And during that time, I was told what was important and what to do, all the while being caged in an office. To top it off, as a dog bone, I'd get 4 weeks of vacation. And I don't see how a leader would lead that way of life or accept that way of life. All this human potential wasted.

I'm not interested in working 'in' an artificial man-made system, as a cog in a machine, as a means to the end. Where my spirit, as the means, is a servant to the end, to produce 'things and products.' I hate that way of life. And if we are honest, most do. Most submit out of economic necessity. And I understand this, for parents. The vocation of parenting demands economic security.

Warrior: You remind me of a noble savage.

Guardian: So I've been told.

What we call business leadership is the way of the administrator. That is not dynamic. That is not magnetic. That is not geared to training and developing for some great test or challenge.

That is why I want to explore the true art, so we can be honest about our aims. To be clear, I have no contempt for people who live this way and use it as a means, an economic means, to provide for their living. This is fine. However, I cannot call people who live this way leaders. They are functional managers providing for the common needs and wants.

Warrior: What about entrepreneurs?

Guardian: They are like creators until the organization enters a level of maturity and becomes a bureaucracy. For a leader, the action is 'the way' and 'the means' and 'the end.' That should be our elementary test.

Warrior: What are you aiming at?

Guardian: I'm terrified to admit this. **I seek mastery of a sacred art, the art of leading souls.**

Warrior: Ah ha. You said it. You see leadership development as a sacred art, the art of leading souls. **You see this art as the mystical calling to lead souls.**

Why do you call it leadership development instead of spiritual development?

Guardian: Because of the term “lead,” which means to guide and direct and to cross thresholds. What are we leading when we say we are leading the human being? We are leading what lives in their inner nature. I do view this as a sacred art. I do think that true leadership is the leading of souls by souls, independent of theology and religion. And instead of this, we have leaders, leading, no, manipulating the irrational desires of human beings instead of their souls. This must change for truth to be awakened.

What I see now is not leadership. I see managers using human beings and their energy as human capital in the form of a skill. They manage skills; they do not lead souls. Nor could they, because they do not even know their own soul. They are in total lack of true knowledge, self-knowledge, which is the keystone to awakening light and truth.

I’m a bit nervous to speak my mind freely. But, because it’s just you and I trust you, I’ll do my best to speak with courage and freedom in a spontaneous and emergent way.

Leadership is about leading souls. Any other attribute is not leadership. That is why it remains so hidden from view. When I say soul, I do not mean it solely in a theological sense. But I do mean metaphysics—the study of being.<sup>19</sup>

Our current leaders, who are non-leaders, do not know being. If you do not know being, you cannot lead a being. If you do not know yourself, you cannot lead another self. Aristotle<sup>20</sup> equated existence, that which is alive, with being. If there is no being there is no existence. If there is no existence, there is no being. Do you see?

Warrior: In those terms, yes, I do see what you mean as the aim of leading—to lead beings.

Guardian: When I use the term soul or the term spirit, I mean the inner nature of the human being.

Warrior: What is the inner nature of the human being?

Guardian: The inner nature comprises 1) will, 2) intelligence, and 3) spiritedness—expressed as feelings, thoughts, perceptions, wants, needs, desires, pains, pleasures, joys, sorrows—all aimed at meaning, purpose and calling, more than just survival and care of the body. I mean the urge to transcend the physical and the temporal. Most human beings sacrifice their soul to provide for the body instead of sacrificing the body for the soul. That is why we see grotesque cowardice in our citizens. The survivalist-conformist-careerists feed off of this cowardice.

Warrior: Harsh judgments.

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul*, Sachs Translation.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs Translation.

Guardian: Which is why I exercise silence and solitude now. Long ago, I initially hoped once everyone heard this is possible—to lead the spirits of men and women—every manager would seek this training. This hope led to my greatest miscalculation—

I soon realized my aim terrified leaders instead of liberating them.

I loved the demands placed on the soul by taking a hard look within. I learned to love to take a hard look within. I wanted to be with leaders as they learned this ability. I did not realize that the practice of self-knowledge would terrify them. Why? I did not realize how weak their interior natures were. They had lived by exercising external sources of power instead of inner sources of power. They valued power sources like wealth, authority, and achievement. They lacked the power sources of justice, sacrifice, compassion, and wisdom. They hated knowing how weak they actually were, and how insignificant they actually were, and how only two things matter: doing important work and making oneself trustworthy.

Once, in a heated conversation, a company leader asked, “what are we actually doing, I don’t get it.”

I said, “We are crushing egos and awakening souls.” He got up and left.

Warrior: Wow. The weakness of those with authority is terrifying.

Guardian: My mentor warned, as a way to always be on guard, “the strength of weakness is dangerous within the individual.”

Warrior: In this light then, do you have an example that is not as threatening as “crushing the ego and awakening the soul?” I say this because in war, a key principle is using the indirect approach as a strategy and tactic. It seems your lessons of experience, in the form of failures to resonate with leaders, were from using the direct approach instead of the indirect approach.

Guardian: My good man. This is where I’ve failed the most. I did not realize that in seeking truth, first as self-knowledge, it’s best not to take a head shot at the ego, but to take an indirect line to the soul. This is another principle—

We aim to educate leaders in methods to guide them to see the truth for themselves.

I am reminded of the difference between the torch bearer and the candle holder. I’ve learned to be a candle holder in the darkness. I’ve learned to exercise patience and resist the temptation to tell leaders what they don’t see but need to see. This is easy to state and difficult to practice. There is no accelerating human development. It is a constant grind.

When it comes to seeing truth and light, chess is the best metaphor for what we are aiming at in the development methods. To begin, I think we have it all wrong, this study of leadership

and the preparing of leaders. I'll use chess to highlight this statement. I don't know if it will resonate, but this is what I'm seeing.

Warrior: Go on, I'm following.

Guardian: Let's look at the game of chess. Imagine you are a leader being prepared in the game of chess, and this is your progression.

For four years, you train as a Pawn and you are directed to move as a Pawn. This is your skill.

Then you are promoted to a Knight. You train for four years as a Knight and you are directed to move as a knight. This is your skill. Then you are promoted to a Rook. You train for four years as a Rook and are directed to move as a Rook. This is your skill. This process continues, until you are promoted to King. Even then, in the game of chess, the King is directed to move as a King.

Then, after 24 years of skill-based knowledge, you are taken off the board, to lead as a chess player. Now you enter into the strategic and tactical and abstract waters. Now you face other chess masters. Up until now, after 24 years, all you know is being on the board, seeing the environment from a skill-based perspective. You've only learned skills and individual moves but not strategy. You never organized and moved the players in concerted attacks and defenses.

Now, you need to learn to play the game. Playing the game lives in a different dimension. It is a different reality. No longer are you on the board, sticking to your position, sticking to your swim lane, as the saying goes.

Now, you are removed from the board. Your view is now total, whole and complete. Now, you live in an abstract dimension of patterns, potentials, strategies and counter strategies, where every move changes the dynamics at play.

Now, you have to lead. Now you have to think deeply. Now you are the decision maker. Now you must create the strategies, orchestrate the movements, and set the pieces in motion as a coherent whole with the aim of winning.

Now, after 24 years of thinking you see truth, you know you are in the dark. You literally can't see what is going on, even though you see what's on the board. How do you make sense of it? How do you learn strategies? Who teaches you? Where do you get feedback? How do you learn this strategic art? You don't have 10 years to train; it's real time and you are battling.

Then true fear grips you. You become paralyzed. Then you get angry. You reflect—I could have been playing the game of chess for the last 24 years!

Now, it's like starting a new profession. Your previous experiences do not matter.

Now, the memories of your superiors assault your mind—



You need to pay your dues.  
You need frontline experience.  
You need to be a good teammate.  
You need to meet the demands of the board.  
You can't be a strategist without experience in the trenches.

Now, the truth reveals itself—

You've been told a lie. You were controlled by inferior beings.

Eisenhower, one of the greatest souls of these United States, never led men in combat, yet he became one of our greatest commanders, presidents, and statesmen of history. Same with George Marshall.

Warrior: What can we learn from history?

Guardian: You realize that leading is not sports; it is not music; it is not martial arts; it is not success; it is not achievement; it is not expertise in one activity. It's something more demanding that takes total devotion and effort and had you to do it over, you'd have designed the training from your formative years onward. You realize most will never have the ability to play leadership, the way a chess player plays chess, without a revolution in the development of leaders.

You now laugh when leaders quote Bill Belichick: "Do your job". It's the wrong analogy.

A better analogy is a quarterback—a quarterback for 20 years. The quarterback as leader gets closer to the truth. The head coach can, in theory, get even closer. And the strategist, in theory, if awakened, can get closest. When we take a hard look at leadership it's a wholly different activity.

Why don't we train with the end in mind?

To lead, from the perspective I'm taking, you don't need to be on the board. It's more like math; you need to study the elements, the patterns, the structures, and then you need practice.

Now, I did not have this perspective until I stepped off the board, when I left organizational life and created a think-tank to study this problem—

What does it take to develop leaders?

Stepping off the board opened up my thinking. I don't have the answer now, but I do know, and this infuriates me, I wanted a different kind of training in my formative years and in my professional years. Now, I had to start all over again. The anger ignited the awakening.

Warrior: Buddha smiles now—through suffering we awaken.

Guardian: Now, awakened, I hope, with your help, to discover the best methods of leadership development. Only in suffering and reflection did I realize what I wanted most in my formative years—

I wanted to be taught to play the true game and the true art. The art of leading souls.

I did not want to be on the board. I did not want to be shackled to a skill that I did not need.

Only in suffering and reflection did I learn why I experienced life as a disoriented, fragmented, and veiled reality instead of an ordered and united and illuminated reality—

My inner being, the soul, had not been educated, developed, ordered and made free!

Only by the blessing of athletics did I have an experience of this illumination and freedom. I experienced in athletics a sense of flow and timelessness and union.

Warrior: Please explain.

Guardian: When I played sports, I knew the game and the training and what needed to be done.

There is a beautiful cycle of development. This cycle consisted of training, competing, measuring, and recovering. It seemed beautiful to me as a kid. The beauty and the competitiveness inspired me. As a kid, I experienced beauty in the athletic arts. I loved living that way: deliberate practice, skill, measurement, competition, growth, repeat. Then, when I entered the workforce and started to work *in* an organization, I thought—

This is not pursuing excellence.

This is not a beautiful existence.

This is not a beautiful use of my energy and spirit.

This is not meaningful work.

Viscerally—

I felt in bondage—I had become the means instead of the end.

I felt lost.

I felt, this is not *living*.

I felt called to lead.

I felt called to find some noble purpose.

I felt called to find some lifelong quest.

I felt called to what?

Then, the calling echoed from the depths—

Prepare to develop leaders.

And it's been calling ever since. The calling transformed into a lifelong purpose—

Develop leaders to lead souls.

After 20 years of studying the depths of this calling, now it's time to lead out of the depths of my understanding. I think leadership needs to be figured out and modeled like the game of chess by a chess player, so we can train from our youth onward.

Warrior: That's quite a challenge. It's not realistic.

Guardian: Plato did not think this quest unrealistic. There's an insightful passage that captures the same end we are after—an end that I've not reached, but that I think possible and worthy of our best efforts.

Warrior: This eternal return is the divine comedy after all.

Guardian: I'm fine serving in disguise like Don Quixote as long as we reach the aim.

Look at what Plato states is the aim of his Guardians—

And when they are fifty years old, those who have preserved throughout and are in every way best at everything, both in deed and in knowledge, must at last be led to the end. And, lifting up the brilliant beams of their souls, they must be compelled to look toward that which provides light for everything. Once they see the good itself, they must be compelled, each in his turn, to use it as a pattern for ordering city, private men, and themselves for the rest of their lives. For the most part, each one spends his time in philosophy, but when his turn comes, he drudges in politics and rules for the city's sake, not as though he were doing a thing that is fine, but, one that is necessary. And thus always educating other like men and leaving them behind in their place as guardians of the city, they go off to the Isles of the Blessed and dwell...And ruling women too... Don't suppose that what I have said applies any more to men than to women, all those who are born among them with adequate natures.<sup>21</sup>

He uses the term “soul” and the term “guardian”. What happened? Why are leaders not trained this way? Have you been trained this way?

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<sup>21</sup> Plato, *Republic*, Allan Bloom Translation.

Warrior: No.

Guardian: Neither have I. This passage hit me deep in the soul. The crucial point is that the critical training that Plato speaks of, is from ages 35–50. My God, I thought, we are not training at all during those ages. Most are on cruise control thinking they’ve already arrived. I no longer wonder why our leaders are the babblers of nonsense. They are in the cave of ignorance and arrogance.

Warrior: By this measure, you and I would have been ejected because of our crudeness, vices and corruption.

Guardian: That’s what I thought too, until I meditated on the passage. Now, I don’t think so. I’ve read deeper into the text. Leadership is not after perfect beings, but beings who have been purified and illuminated to see the source of the good and the true. Awakened. Transcended.

In fact, it seems imperfect beings with wreckages and recoveries are the types of character who would endure this training. In fact, all human beings are imperfect beings, engaged in a living cycle of being and becoming, of awakening and actualizing potentials. This is the joy of being—awakening the deepest potencies.<sup>22</sup>

Warrior: I’m always on guard when I meet a leader without wreckage, one who has never fallen from grace. I look for those that have fallen and recovered. I’ve been in the darkness and I have wreckage. And I have recovered.

Guardian: Me too. We need the wreckage to awaken in the soul detachment and humility. Now, with this aim in mind, let’s create a new framework for leadership. As with chess, let’s keep ‘leadership’ outside of the grid and off the board. Let’s use the analogy of a football coach in the skybox calling plays. From the elevation he’s able to take a fuller perspective. This might be controversial because you’ve never heard of a coach who never played football. So, the analogy may fail, but with the game of chess it does not fail. The leader trusts the experts of levels and functions but provides strategic guidance.

Is this controversial? Will it work?

To further the controversy, the leader needs to be detached no less than in “the way of death” of the Hagakure. What did Yamamoto have in mind when he taught that only by being deathless, free of the body, could the warrior move with lightning speed...an ability that revealed itself after decades of training? Does not this principle hold for leaders?<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> O.E.D. definition of potency—A person or thing wielding or possessing power or influence. Potentiality, inherent capability or possibility.

<sup>23</sup> Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*. W.S. Wilson translation.

What I'm getting at, my blessed friend, is that we need to learn how to wield metaphysical swords of truth and light and wisdom.

We need to free Excalibur's sword of light and truth and use it to cut free leadership from its Gordian knot. Just as a chess master hovers over the board like some invisible spiritual being, so we must learn to hover over the domain for full perspective. Knowing full well that, just like the chess player, we will be tested and suffer the most. We will seek to establish a fellowship of leaders, a community of truth-seekers modeled after the knights of Excalibur. All equal. Let me be clear, I don't mean leadership by boards or commissions. I mean by merit.

As Taleb stated, all leaders must have soul in the game.<sup>24</sup> They must take risks and there must be something to lose. There is no security. There is no net. We are free climbers making the ascent. Taleb adds, never in the history of humanity have so few exercised so much power with so little accountability. We need to counter this bitter truth. It seems we've gone from empires by blood to empires by wealth, to empires by religion, to empires by corporations. If you can't quit your means of employment, you are not free. And we seek freedom.

This is how I envision the look of leadership. It's outside of the organization. Being outside, we must not be tempted to look at Management, Command, Organization, Strategy, Operations, and Tactics. They are secondary. We are after primacy. The primacy that lives within. The primacy of the soul. The inner nature of the leader.

Warrior: Wait, is your aim to create guardians, or I dare say, philosophers, lovers of wisdom, cloaked as leaders?

Guardian: No. My aim is truth. Not terms. Not Identities. Not one way. My aim is to free leadership to its highest aim and ideal. It's not something new. We are rediscovering, not inventing, because the need has returned.

My challenge is to share how I think and how I make sense of this domain. It's going to be jarring, fragmented, unclear, and hidden until we reach the summit and look back in understanding. But the work, the journey to the summit, is what will be most rewarding for leaders to study. They'll see how we wrestled with knowledge to make it known and to make it an extension of our being, so that we could see light and truth.

The reason I contacted you and why it's necessary for the two of us to make this ascent is that after leading hundreds of leadership development programs, I cannot point to one student who has become an awakened leader. I cannot point to one student who trained to become noble, wise, strong, and just. And it's not because they don't want it; it's because they don't know how to train. They say they need more guidance and yet I do not have the structure to train them. My hope is that what we document will serve as a baseline to further their development.

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<sup>24</sup> Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragility: Things That Gain From Disorder*.

Let me ask: can you point to anyone who leads this way?

Warrior: None. Not even ourselves.

Guardian: I know. We failed. This is why the weight of the cosmos is upon us to hunt it for ourselves, and maybe by becoming it we'll be able to teach it effectively.

Warrior: What made you so driven to seek out this truth?

Guardian: So that our sons and daughters will know who to follow, and so that if they themselves are called to lead, they'll know where to go for direction to find their inner selves. To awaken the nerve center. To transcend. To be prepared to lead.

Warrior: I have three boys. I'm driven to explore for that aim too.

Guardian: Then, onward we move.

# THE GOSPEL OF LEADERSHIP

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