

CHAPTER 1

stuck in the old story

Who Is Required to Inspire?

We *all* need to be inspired and to inspire others. We are called to inspire in almost every aspect and stage of our lives—it is an essential ingredient of every part of the human experience. Inspiration builds relationships, forms friendships, changes thinking and philosophies, gives birth to new ideas, and shapes lives and hearts. As children, we inspire—at school, in sports, in our pastimes, and in our friendships. As we grow and become parents, we are invited to assume new responsibilities, and we are called on to inspire at home, in our places of worship, in our corporations, in our communities, and in our countries. Inspiration changes the world.

Let's start with my definition of leadership that will guide us throughout this book:

Leadership is a serving relationship with others that inspires their growth and makes the world a better place.

This definition excludes such leaders as Hitler, Stalin, Attila the Hun, Mussolini, Machiavelli, and Genghis Khan—they did not make the world a better place, an essential characteristic of a Higher Ground Leader.

So often, leadership is rehearsed. We read books by former corporate leaders. We learn “techniques” and “the tricks of the trade”: how to dress, how to make a speech, how to command attention. Through all this, the soul waits patiently while the personality indulges itself. This is why leadership often gets such bad press: It is practiced as a function instead of as the result of noble, powerful, and passionately held values. The truth is, nothing happens without the presence of inspiring leadership. But because the soul waits patiently, it often remains

Never undertake anything for which you wouldn't have the courage to ask the blessing of Heaven.

G. C. Lichtenberg

unheard—suspended. Meanwhile, the personality engages in “doing.” Eventually, the personality becomes aware of the soul and chooses—or is sometimes forced—to listen to it. This is when we change from “acting” to “being”—perhaps the most important change in our lives.

This is the difference between old story leadership and New Story Leadership—the difference between working from the personality alone on the one hand, and aligning the personality *and* the soul on the other—the *difference between doing and being*, the difference between being unconscious and becoming *conscious*. It is the difference between *talking* about

Higher Ground Leadership and *being* a Higher Ground Leader.

Table 1.1 on page 3 compares the essential differences between old story and New Story thinking.

To engage the soul, we must ask questions that go beyond the personality or the ego, such as, “What are we communicating when we are not using words?” and we

You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions.

Naguib Mahfouz

must be rigorous when we ask ourselves if we are pleased with the answers. Asking subtle, soul-centered questions like these is a sign that the soul has been stirred, that we are becoming conscious and ready to inspire others from a place of inner wisdom, authenticity, and integrity, rather than from a rehearsed, rote-learned, or copied approach to leadership and inspiring others that lacks substance and roots.

Inspiration is not a formula or a model—it must come from a natural and deep place. NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw describes former President Richard Nixon’s unsuccessful attempts to inspire an employee during a presidential motorcade, when one of the motorcycle escorts crashed and broke his leg. The injured man was lying 10 yards from Nixon and someone said, “The guy has worked three years for you—comfort him. So Richard Nixon walked over and looked at the injured man and said, ‘Do you enjoy your job?’”¹

Inspiration comes from inside, from a deep place we call *authenticity*. It is a way of *being*.

How might we touch the world if we engaged the soul, becoming *fully conscious leaders*, totally awake and aware of our Destiny, Cause, and Calling—our sacred purpose for being in *this* universe at *this* time?

TABLE 1.1
The old story and the New Story Compared

	Old Story Leaders Believe	New Story Leaders Believe
Leadership	<p>Warriors make the best leaders. Our values are shaped and defined by our religious and political leaders.</p> <p>Rational thinking and focused logic are the hallmarks of great leadership.</p>	<p>Servant-leadership is overhauling the entire notion of leadership.</p> <p>Organizations have become the greatest force for positive social change on Earth.</p> <p>Empathy and being connected to our feelings and the feelings of others are the key to inspiring others.</p>
Values	<p>Our values are determined by what we can legitimately get away with.</p>	<p>Values systems must always enhance the well-being of others and the planet.</p>
The End of Competition	<p>We compete in a fear-based, “dog-eat-dog” world, in which only the fittest survive.</p>	<p>The end of competition is at hand. We are an interdependent whole.</p>
The Cause	<p>People and organizations become great when guided by superior mission, vision, and values statements.</p>	<p>A great Cause is a magnet for passion.</p>
The New Customer	<p>The purpose of an organization is to create profit by identifying customers and meeting their needs.</p> <p>The “Brand” is built by investing in marketing, advertising, and positioning.</p>	<p>The purpose of an organization is to create profit by inspiring people who inspire others and build great organizations.</p> <p>The “Brand” is built from the inside out—how we relate to others and the planet becomes our “Voice.”</p>
Harmony	<p>Personal and work life is separate.</p> <p>Personal and work life must be in balance.</p>	<p>The lines between work and personal life are disappearing. Our lives are becoming whole, seamless, and integrated.</p>
The Calling	<p>The best career is one that will provide the greatest financial prospects.</p>	<p>By practicing our true Calling, not a career, and guiding others to do the same, we ensure that we do not die with our music still inside us.</p>

(continued)

TABLE 1.1 (Continued)

	Old Story Leaders Believe	New Story Leaders Believe
Soulspace	Work environments should be secular and efficient.	Our well-being depends on the quality of the physical environment in which we undertake our work—Soulspace.
Technology	The purpose of technology is to automate the mundane.	The purpose of technology is to connect the souls of the planet together.
Learning	The most important fringe benefits are health insurance and retirement plans.	The most important fringe benefits are life-long learning and wisdom, which guarantee health insurance and secure retirement.
Inspiration	Motivation drives high performance.	Motivation is based on fear. Inspiration is based on love. Therefore, the human heart thrives on inspiration.

Before looking at how we become inspired and inspire others, let us review the major changes in context that are requiring us to re-frame our thinking, what has brought us to our current views and practices on this subject, and the fundamental shifts in our thinking that are required if we are to become transformed and able to transform others.

The Powerful Energies of Change

Seismic changes are reshaping the social landscape, making the role of leading and inspiring more complex than ever before.

The first change is the growth in public awareness, self-responsibility, and accountability. Patients know more about their own health today than their physicians did two decades ago; they often know more than their specialist medical advisors. When *Fortune* magazine ran a cover article about prostate cancer, it was Andy Grove, then chairman of Intel Corp., not a cancer specialist, who made the cover. Inside were 11 pages describing Grove's illness, his research, his research techniques, and how he made his treatment decisions. For additional insights, reporters turned to other prostate cancer victims, including Norman Schwarzkopf and Michael Milken.

We live in an age where everyone is an expert on all popular subjects, and some are experts on the arcane. Because people have experienced the fallibility of professionals and the systems in which they practice, they have concluded that it is in their best self-interest to reclaim responsibility for their own lives through self-education and advocacy. They have found a cornucopia of data in journals, popular science, and medical reports, specialist associations, radio, television, movies and theater, nonmainstream advisors, and the Internet, where a wealth of instant information is available. Our access to education and information has never been greater, and this search for and acceptance of personal accountability is being repeated in every facet of our lives. As a result, we are all now mini-specialists in a wide range of areas, including healthcare, education, politics, religion, the environment, and work. This means that any leadership role, whether at home as parents, or at work as executives, is complicated by the fact that we are leading people who know more than ever before, and usually more than we do. Leading and inspiring an expert is different from leading a learner. The New Story Leader understands and has mastered this challenge.

The second major energy of change is the growth of “leadership fatigue”—we have become tired of the leader-as-motivator stereotype. In the workplace, there has been a dramatic growth in the understanding of the dynamics and practice of leadership. Wide access into boardrooms, corporate decision-making processes, and the inner workings of organizations has begun to describe leadership in plain language for nonleaders. Our entertainment media teaches leadership (the good and the bad) and demystifies it for audiences of every age, every day.

In the past, almost everyone, from tin-pot dictators to schoolyard bullies, not to mention old story CEOs and religious and political leaders, learned the technology of “power-based leadership”—a fear-based leadership that seeks to manipulate, control, and dominate followers.

The Annual Global CEO Survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in conjunction with the World Economic Forum found 1,161 CEOs from 33 countries sharing a growing concern about how the public perceives corporations.² The golden glow of corporate leadership has recently been tarnished, and while it is in all our best interests to burnish the reputation and practice of corporate leadership, the reality is that, for a while at least, we are destined to lead an increasingly cynical group of followers.

As a result, the old story, power-driven leader now has to contend with skeptical and sometimes unresponsive followers, weary of leadership jargon and techniques. They have heard it all before—the “rah-rah” urgings, the slogans and T-shirts, the hype of conferences, and the internal public relations programs. This has made them a jaded audience for leaders—and they therefore fail to inspire.

The third significant change is the dramatic and universal search for greater meaning in our lives that is sweeping the world. Rushworth Kidder, commenting on the Pew Research cited later in this chapter, wrote that there is

a growing vortex of distrust in professional expertise. As gurus of various stripes encounter high-profile peril and moral mayhem—from medicine to academics, from auditing to the church, from athletics to investment advice—the public has still more reason to turn inward and rely less on others. But if we're thrown back on our own devices, what is there at the core to rely on? Americans have no long traditions of metaphysical discourse. The pragmatic individualism that settled the frontier left little room for an intense French introspection or a brooding Russian philosophizing. It's hard enough to get the average Yankee to comment on the meaning of things, never mind the meaningfulness of meaning.³

Your vision will
become clear when
you can look into
your heart. Who
looks outside,
dreams; who looks
inside, awakens.

Carl Gustav Jung

Yet, difficult and wrenching though we may be finding it, we are becoming both more introspective and philosophical. A growing number of people are embracing the notion that we are spiritual beings with spiritual needs, not just personalities with ego needs.

A word here about terminology: *Religion* is a system of beliefs and practices shared by a community of people—a doctrine. These beliefs and practices nurture and encourage a relationship with a particular deity, provide moral guidance, and give meaning of life. *Spirituality*, on the other hand, is the way we live out our deepest beliefs, values, and convictions in our daily life. It is the way we live out our search for peace and meaning. Some people call this “lived religion.” Religions are one way in which spirituality can be expressed. They are systems of beliefs and practices that have become recognizable as a particular tradition, but spirituality is not synonymous with religion, and spirituality can be expressed and developed in many ways apart from religion. And just as there are religious people who are not spiritual, there are also spiritual people who are not religious.

Here is the test to
find whether your
mission on Earth is
finished: If you're
alive, it isn't.

Richard Bach

Our everyday choices reveal glimpses of our spirituality by pointing toward what we value most in life and what ethical principles we follow. The old story of power-based leadership appealed to the personality. But people crave nourishment for their hearts and souls. They are yearning to be inspired

through relationships with people who are aware of and care for their spiritual needs. They want to connect from the heart.

The great excitement of our times is the growing number of people who are awakening from their deep sleep to the realization that they are experiencing an acute spiritual hunger, an inner sense of restlessness, and a desire for a greater sense of purpose in their lives. As a force that leads to radical change, no power in the universe is greater than a soul seeking to satisfy its spiritual hunger. The greatest idea in the study of community building and human relationships that will shape the future is the awareness that leaders must tune in to the wisdom and spirit of their followers.

The question is not whether we will die, but how we will live.

Joan Borysenko

Asking the Right Questions

Since so many people are asking if there is more to life, we need to ask ourselves if we are ready to consciously offer more—are we inspired and do we inspire others? To get at the essence of how we inspire ourselves and others, we must first be clear about who we are, why we are here, and what we plan to do in our short time on Earth. It is from this crucible of self-knowing that we fashion the gold of inspiring relationships.

Perhaps you have, at some time or other, wondered what your life was all about. For many people, the purpose of life is simply to be born, go to school, grow up, be happy, get a job, get married, buy a house, have children, retire, and then die. Millions of people do these things every day—all with varying levels of success. But *why* do we do these things? And what distinguishes any of us from the rest of the teeming millions shackled to the relentless assembly line of life? Could we *be* more than this? As the great skiing legend Warren Miller said, “Don’t take life seriously, because you can’t come out of it alive.”

Perhaps you may have wondered:

- Have I made the most of the life I have lived (and is there time to claim the one I haven’t?) as I turn the pages of my life’s calendar, observing the mystery of my biography?
- Is there more to my life than increasing market share, beating the competition, achieving the budget, meeting deadlines, dominating the marketplace, increasing shareholder wealth, adding shareholder value, and becoming the lowest-cost producer?

- How did I get to be doing the work I am doing, working for the company I work for, living with the person I live with, in the particular town I live in, being the person that I am, behaving the way I do?
- Why have I pursued the career that I have?
- Could my life be enriched with greater fulfillment and deeper meaning?
- Have I been living my life *too small*?
- What is my purpose on Earth?
- What will my legacy be?

Reflect for a moment on these questions. If you keep a personal journal, please use it to make some notes if you feel this might be helpful.

When we begin to ask the really important questions that matter in our personal universe, we connect—often for the very first time in our lives—with our true potential, because this creates the opportunity for us to achieve the fuller maturity that will enable us to grow. Until then, the surface questions about life offer no more than idle chatter for the mind that has yet to become fully conscious. Life is not just about acquiring things or achieving performance goals. In fact, it isn't about goals at all—it is about *being in the moment*. It is about evolving our full spiritual potential—becoming what we were always meant to be.

But before we can know the answers to those questions—the eternal questions about the meaning of life, we must first do some profound inner work—Soulwork. This requires us to go deep. It requires us to ask reflective, sometimes even disturbing, questions, and then decide whether or not we wish to listen to the answers. In 1903, Rainer Maria Rilke wrote in his *Letters to a Young Poet*:

... have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.⁴

During a university course taught by Albert Einstein, a student pointed out to the great teacher that the questions were the same as the previous semester. Einstein kindly but firmly replied, "That may be, but the *answers* are different this time."

The Legacy of the Higher Ground Leader

One of the questions posed earlier asks: What will your legacy be? Leadership can be the achievement of the mundane, or it can be the achievement and creation of a noble legacy. It can be the achievement of a material legacy—Wal-Mart, Starbucks, Microsoft, Amazon.com, IBM, and other great institutions, for instance, have changed forever the way the world works because of the vision of individuals who saw the greater picture. But it can be an even greater achievement than this—it can be the achievement of a spiritual legacy—the Internet, Disney, Medtronic, Centura Health, Mount Carmel Health System. It is not about whether one is better or worse than the other, but about the order of magnitude of the legacy being created.

Higher Ground Leaders are New Story Leaders whose personal lives and capacity to inspire others are guided by their Destiny, Cause, and Calling and who create a legacy built on the CASTLE Principles (described in Chapter 12) and therefore change the way the world works, make it a better place, and positively impact the way people do things, how they live their lives, and how they fulfill their dreams. In the end, therefore, it is about creating a noble legacy that people will admire for generations. It is about creating a legacy where the legacy builder and the associated family, community, or institution glows warmly in our minds and hearts, filling our thoughts with ideas that seem both larger-than-life and a confirmation of the magic of life.

Be daring, be different, be impractical, be anything that will assert integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the play-it-safers, the creatures of the commonplace, the slaves of the ordinary.

Sir Cecil Beaton

Why It's So Difficult to Change

There is a growing sense of anxious anticipation at home and at work, of impending change—the shadow of apprehension, disenchantment, and betrayal conflicts with the light of hope, opportunity, and new beginnings. These are confusing times. They are exciting times. The old story leader, the fierce and brave warrior who takes no prisoners, is ideologically bankrupt, but we are in that awkward place of leaving the old and moving to the new—the transition to the New Story Leader who loves others and tells the truth. We know we need to change, we hear the

exhortations, but we are experiencing extreme difficulty doing it. Even when presented with a seemingly endless array of logical arguments and data that should convince us to change, we still don't. There are four reasons why this happens:

1. *Paradigms*: Ever since the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962, the notion of the paradigm has been a popular concept.⁵ Academics graduate within the framework of a specific discipline, complete with rules, assumptions, beliefs, and strictly prescribed ways to make decisions. This becomes our operating paradigm—a box—and if we step out of the box, we will not graduate. Once what our teachers deem to be

Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen.

Albert Einstein

the operating paradigm has been internalized in our minds, all other paradigms appear as wrong, flawed, or silly. Thus equipped, our new paradigm becomes our intellectual operating software, and we become convinced that ours is the *only* right, sensible, and objective way of doing things. Our paradigm is the very water in which we swim, and to be asked to leave this warm and comfortable environment is not only unthinkable, but perhaps even dangerous. We do not ask questions from inside the box—the box *is* the answer.

If they are not of our paradigm, the rest of the world is

wrong. Our habits thus become ingrained, and our ability to be original or inquiring dies. Many theorists believe that the essentials of personality formation are completed by the age of six, and if this is so, our personal paradigms may be fixed much earlier in our lives than we are prepared to accept. When we act like six-year-olds, this may be the level of personal development at which some of us have maxed out!

2. *Ego and intellectual arrogance*: Thus, equipped with the sureness of our paradigm, we prepare ourselves to rigorously defend the certainty that we are right. For example, from within the box of the leader-as-warrior paradigm, we feel especially threatened by concepts like the soul or love or truth. This is because warrior-leaders regard themselves as the Darwinian survivors of the organizational evolutionary struggle—if we are on top of the corporate food chain, this argument goes, then who is anyone else (and by inference, lesser) to challenge this? A certain intellectual smugness results, and like-minded thinkers close ranks to support each other. Thus, to question the wisdom of the warrior-leader paradigm is to risk seeming “odd” or out-of-step with mainstream thinking, and to do so carries political risks that threaten the ego.

3. *The copyfrog effect*: We remain part of the silent, and therefore invisible, majority, knowing deep inside that we are living a lie, but afraid to step out and say so. An old, but false, urban legend helps to illustrate what can happen to us if we fail to be courageous by challenging the status quo, or the perceived attitudes and opinions of others. According to the legend, if you drop a frog into a pot of hot water, it will quickly jump out, but if you drop the frog in a pot of cold water and gradually increase the temperature, the frog will not react and will eventually cook to death. You might expect that the frog would say, “Hey! Something is wrong here, let’s check this out—in fact, let’s check out of this pot!” But the frog is either too embarrassed to say anything or doesn’t

notice the changing environment until it’s too late. Like the frog, we are often too busy and too distracted to analyze situations objectively and thoroughly, or to pay attention to the changing ideas and conditions around us with open minds. Our failure to do so results, at best, in missed opportunities, and at worst, in our demise. Thus, we remain on the trailing edge rather than the leading edge of innovation, effectiveness, performance, and relationships. Another metaphorical animal is the copycat: someone who copies the words or behavior of another. Join these two critters together and we have a *copyfrog*—someone who is afraid to speak up for fear of ridicule or feeling alone, or appearing not to be a team player, even though many others may feel the same way, and are also afraid to speak out. The result is that we copy the perceived (but not the real) beliefs of others—we copy others who are copying us. The *copyfrog effect* causes us to perpetuate, and inadvertently endorse, the existing paradigm because, though it is being questioned silently by everyone else, it outwardly appears to us as though we are the only ones doing so—what Leslie Perlow has called the “vicious spiral of silence.”⁶ With this misunderstanding, a paradox occurs: We march in lock-step, supporting an obsolete or unpopular paradigm with which we don’t agree. This is how unpopular wars begin.

4. *The conflicting values of society*: We all claim that to love one another and to tell the truth is the right way to live our lives, and many of us claim that this is how we actually do live our lives. All of the great religions and faith-based philosophies direct us to do so, and the majority of us claim to follow

We would rather
be ruined than
changed;

We would rather
die in our dread

Than climb the
cross of the moment
And let our illusions
die.

W. H. Auden

a religion or an ancient wisdom and its attendant beliefs. But these spiritual values hardly have a voice in “the real world” of our political, social, and economic practice. While our spiritual values encourage us to be generous, truthful, loving, compassionate, and caring, our quest for the “American Dream” or “personal success” may be more guided by the pursuit of wealth, reputation, or power. Thus, we find our personal values in direct competition with the values of society. While we profess to believe that we should be kind to our competitors and generous to our political opponents, the very terms *competitor* and *opponent* make these empty aspirations. Thus, we are condemned to living inauthentic lives—at home and at work. We know what to do, but we have lost our voice and our courage.

Projection

Being trapped in the box of a paradigm explains one of the reasons why we find it so hard to change. Our tendency to “project” is another reason. We need courage to begin our journey, and courage to get past the mistaken belief that if we lay down our swords and armor, setting aside violence and aggression as leaders, that others “won’t get it” or “aren’t ready to hear the New Story language.” The copy-frog effect is very often the result of our projection.

We are all role models for others, and for this reason we have a responsibility to inspire others by showing them how we practice our courage and by modeling the behavior we want to see in others by speaking our truth. We often disguise our words because we believe that people are not ready to hear the language of the spirit. But Higher Ground Leaders model courage by using the language that comes from their hearts, regardless of how it may initially be judged by others. In time, followers catch up with the vision expressed in a great Destiny or Cause, but none of this can happen without the courageous-hearted leader. The greatest Higher Ground Leaders of all time were unequivocal. Buddha did not disguise his language in order to avoid offending his audiences by using camouflage words like “caring” and “helpful,” when he really meant compassionate, loving, and graceful. This is a test of our personal courage—if we can’t even bring ourselves to say the words, how can we teach the ideas? If we fudge the language, we are probably less enlightened, less authentic, than those we seek to inspire and teach. We are supposed to set the example, and we can do this best by raising the bar. It is to us that others are looking for guidance and for the new frontier. It is ours to establish.

When we see behavior in others that fails to inspire us, it is often the result of our own projection. The term *projection* describes our feelings and thoughts

when we project onto others certain hidden, denied, or “shadow” actions or characteristics of our own personality. When we project, we attribute certain personal traits or feelings to someone else to protect our own ego from accepting the reality that we own the very same traits or feelings—that they reside and flourish in our own shadow. It is especially likely to occur when we lack insight into our own impulses and traits. For example, if we feel inadequate in some way, we may inadvertently project those feelings onto others and therefore cause them to feel inadequate. All this wells up from our shadow and is sometimes seen by others as our less-inspiring self. We may not even be aware of it, but it is how others may see us, and therefore, for them, *it is who we are*. The behavior we dislike or find uninspiring in others is very often the behavior that exists in our shadow and which we project onto others, and this becomes their experience of us. If we are having trouble getting along with others, we may project this behavior onto them, and this may cause others to have difficulty in getting along with us. We project too when, based on our own experience of life, we attribute behaviors to others because it is exactly how we would behave in the same circumstances, and we assume that others are like us and would therefore do the same. How else could we see the world but through the lenses of our own lived experience? But because this behavior is generated from our shadow, we are very often unaware of it. When our shadow is directing and prompting our feelings and our dialogue, our egos can become tripped, and this can cause us to savage the emotions of others. When we let this happen, we can initiate emotional damage to those we love, those who are our best friends, and those who are the most important sources of inspiration in our lives. Projecting onto others, then, is one of the main causes of our inability to change. It is also one of the main reasons we lack inspiration in our lives. Yet, knowing this, we also know that the opposite can be true as well, because understanding what resides in our shadow can yield enormous learning and personal growth.

Psychologists frequently portray projection in a negative way. For example, it is said that people who have a latent tendency to disloyalty may not acknowledge this consciously, but it may show in their readiness to suspect others of potential disloyalty, or a potential adulterer may accuse his wife of infidelity. If

The sky does not misunderstand. The sky does not judge. The sky, very simply, is.

Richard Bach

I've had many problems in my life—most of which never happened.

Mark Twain

we are exceptionally frugal, greedy, or selfish, we may project our own lack of generosity onto others, because we assume they are the same as we are. Or we may believe that we are inadequate and therefore project onto others a similar lack of abundance and sufficiency.

What magic might unfold if we used the concept of projection as an ally—if our projections were positive? If uninspiring behavior in others is often the result of our projecting our own uninspiring behavior onto them, what greatness could we achieve by inviting inspiring behavior from others, by projecting our own *inspiring* behavior onto them? Projection does not always need to be negative—we have the power to live in the light instead of the shadow, by identifying our behavior, naming it, and making conscious decisions to change it, and therefore changing the behavior of others.

What we see
depends mainly on
what we look for.

Sir John Lubbock

The growing edge of our life is engaged with continual learning about our shadow, so that we can bring it into the light. Once it is in the light, it can be named, and once we can name it, we can change the behavior that arises from it. Changing our behavior based on our awareness of our own shadow, painful though this can be at times, is the first step toward becoming someone who always inspires others and to becoming someone who is open to change. Projection causes us to judge and be critical of others. By recognizing the dysfunctional nature of such behavior and then modifying our reactions accordingly, we reduce our propensity to judge or criticize, and we therefore become more inspiring people. People yearn to be loved this way—without judgment or criticism. The more we learn about our tendency to project our behavior onto others, the more we become aware of the need to tame it and integrate it, and the more we grow. And this we do by connecting soul-to-soul as often, or even more so, than ego-to-ego.

A loving person lives
in a loving world. A
hostile person lives
in a hostile world.
Everyone you meet
is your mirror.

Ken Keyes, Jr.

For many years, we have been living with an old story paradigm that has fooled us into believing that the workplace is an inappropriate setting for emotions, spiritual language, or beliefs that demonstrate a profound respect and caring for humans and that the marketplace is a dog-eat-dog world. Even this is a slur—and another example of projection—most dogs don't eat other dogs. Often, this is a classic case of projection: The things we say that others are not yet

ready for, are the things that *we* are not yet ready for. When we say that others are not ready for a leader who loves others and tells the truth, we may mean that *we are not yet ready* to love others and tell the truth. When we say that we must eat or be eaten in the competitive market, we may mean that we believe the world will devour us if we don't devour others first. Thus, by projecting this way, we may be creating the very outcomes we fear, and by doing so, we may think we are protecting our egos, when in reality, we are imprisoning our souls. When we do our inner work, we may discover that it is *we* who are not yet ready, not they. What we are looking for, we need to look with. The truth is that most of us have been intimidated by a cynical and secular society and an excess of political correctness that has forced us to hide our true feelings and needs. It is the most natural urge in the universe for the spirit within to yearn for retrieval, to reclaim the lost spiritual dimensions of our work and home lives. Indeed, it is the essential juice of life and to deny it is contrary to our very essence. What ails us is the result of this denial and suppression. The resulting flow of toxic energy in the workplace, for instance, alienates us even more from each other and from our work—and it saddens the soul and perpetuates the old story of leadership.

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

Carl Gustav Jung

Our challenge is that we have all succumbed to so many years of intimidation that we fear going first—the *copyfrog effect*. But deep in our hearts, we are all looking at each other and wondering, “Who will take the first step? Who will be the brave one? Who will lead? Who will say the words I want to say?” As soon as we see someone else displaying compassion, love, truthfulness, and grace, the floodgates open, everyone pours through the breach and embraces the leader for their courage and authenticity. This is the role of the Higher Ground Leader.

