

WHY AND HOW THE GREAT LEADERS OF THE 21ST
CENTURY WILL BE BUILT FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

BE A FORWARD THINKING LEADER OF THE FUTURE TODAY

BY BILL FOX

Insight for new leadership resides in everyone. By enhancing our ability to look and listen within and beyond, we access greater awareness and creative power to shape our world and be a force for good.

BE A FORWARD THINKING LEADER OF THE FUTURE TODAY

GREAT LEADERS AND COMPANIES IN THE 21ST
CENTURY WILL BE BUILT FROM THE INSIDE OUT

BILL FOX



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WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Space Beyond Boundaries will help you discover the space beyond your boundaries by reprogramming and unbounding your subconscious.

— John Ryskowski, Organizational Change Leader

It's clear you've given much thought to the prompts and ideas you've assembled and the insightful illustrations to match those thoughts. The catchphrase of creating and exploring the 'space beyond boundaries' encapsulates your overall intention brilliantly. There is so much value in these prompts, especially for developing reflective thought practices to help us make and lead more purposeful, positive change in the world.

— Michelle Bondesio, Growth Sessions Founder, Coach

I am indebted to you for sharing your crystallized thoughts and the process behind them – it is brilliantly useful, relevant, and even urgent. While folks like me continue to be appalled by the wastage of the human spirit, especially in the working world, you have figured out a way to originate knowledge, inspiring answers, and action to address this. Kudos!

— Sharath Jarugumilli, Analytics, Product Management, and Solutions Architecture Leader

I find the visualization of actual jobs, tasks, ways of organizing, and the kind of human leadership we seek critical in building the intuition necessary. Paying attention, pausing, probing, paraphrasing, and putting new ideas forward are some of the critical behaviors that will carry us forward into the kind of tender experiences we want to hold and become a part of in the future of work. A heartfelt congratulations to Bill on carrying the flag forward.

— Sesil Pir, I/O Psychologist, HR Executive, Leadership, and Transformation Expert

In our collective conscience lies the solution. It is in consciousness and conscience that the essential change must occur.

DEE HOCK, FOUNDER AND CEO EMERITUS, VISA

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INTRODUCTION

Be a Forward
Thinking Leader of
the Future — Today

“Great leaders and companies
in the 21st century will be built
from the inside out.”

HOW AND WHY THE GREAT LEADERS OF THE 21ST
CENTURY WILL BE BUILT FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

BE A FORWARD
THINKING LEADER
OF THE FUTURE
TODAY

BY BILL FOX

“Insight for new leadership resides not in the ‘ether’ but
is accessible to everyone. By enhancing our ability to look
and listen within, we shape our world from the inside out
to create a better world.”

Be a Leader of the Future — Today

Have you grown weary of the hundreds or even thousands of articles published on top traits, behaviors, and tasks for effective leadership?

INTRODUCTION

Leadership gets a lot of attention these days, but so many are saying the same thing at some level, and not much changes.

There's a lot of focus on leadership traits, behaviors, and things for leaders to do, but one critical piece has been missing:

In today's world, effective leadership has more to do with who you are being and making ourselves a better person as opposed to what you are doing.

The first necessary step in changing our state of being and making ourselves a better person begins by learning how to lead ourselves. And we do that by starting the journey inside.

In *Be a Forward Thinking Leader of the Future — Today*, I explain why and how to take this journey.

Building new structures for effective leadership

Five actions are needed to build new structures for effective leadership in the 21st century:

1. Recognize the Real Problem

We've become very good at learning new things, but how do we unlearn? We've been unknowingly programmed by over 400 years of Industrial Age thinking and practices.

2. Look, Listen Within

Today's always-on and fast-paced world drowns out our inner voice. How do we turn off the noise, so we begin to listen and access our own greater wisdom?

3. Create a Better Self

We are highly skilled at being more productive and getting things done, but what about our integrity, character, ethics, and state of being?

4. See the Boundaries

INTRODUCTION

Our perception of the world changes when we become more aware of our boundaries. We become less limited by our previous understanding.

5. End the Dysfunction

Humanity faces enormous challenges that threaten life as we know it today. Our current level of consciousness allows these issues to persist.

I hope this book will challenge your thinking on leadership and inspire you to explore leading from the inside out.

Care to let me know what you think? Please email me at bill@billfox.co if you have any comments or questions.

— Bill

BILL FOX, FOUNDER, LEADERONE

P. S. I would like to acknowledge the input, feedback, and support of colleagues John Ryskowski and Wolfgang Fiebig, who contributed to the content of this book.

THE REAL PROBLEM



We've become very good at learning new things, but how do we unlearn? We've been unknowingly programmed by over 400 years of Industrial Age thinking and practices.

The real problem

AMID SO MANY CHALLENGES TODAY, we must rethink what it means to live and work together in the 21st century. Turbulent times and ever-increasing complexity and challenges are the new normal. How can we thrive in this new reality?

We need to recognize the real problem. The real problem isn't our tumultuous world, rapid change, global war, or pandemic.

The real problem is that we're accustomed to living and working based on Industrial Age thinking and practices.

Our parents, schools, and society have unknowingly programmed us and the media on how to think, live and work in a world that no longer exists. Today's ever-changing world requires us to enter into a quest to transform ourselves and learn new ways of living and working together.

When everything changes so quickly, things like command-and-control leadership, managing change, best practices, working harder, or even working smarter and other Industrial Age practices are no longer enough. Worse, they keep us stuck in the past.

Today's world calls on us to step into our leadership — whether or not we are formally in a leadership position. The human of the 21st century is a leader — someone who can lead themselves (and others) in every interaction with another human being.

It's time to consider how Industrial Age rules and thinking limit us and start living in today's reality.

Individuals must be able to lead themselves and others, regardless of position, location, or circumstances. If you are a human, you are a leader.

LOOK LISTEN WITHIN



Today's always-on and fast-paced world drowns out our inner voice. How do we turn off the noise, so we begin to listen and access our own greater wisdom?

An inside-out journey

WHEN I LEFT my corporate job in 2009, intending to discover better ways of introducing change to improve organizations, I didn't realize what it would set in motion. In hindsight, I realized I had started on a path many call an "inner-leader journey."

One of the first things I did was interview leading experts and practitioners. I started every interview with this opening question: "What is your best improvement strategy that has worked really well for you or your clients?" Their surprising and unexpected answers were published in the book *5 Minutes to Process Improvement Success*.

Their responses were illuminating, but this initiative reinforced the power of asking questions. Asking questions activates powerful forces that attract the right conditions, people, and events to lead you forward. Questions may be one of the most powerful forces we can set in motion.

In *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership* by Joseph Jaworski, we learn that people and organizations can pass through a journey of inner transformation that enables them to shape the future instead of simply responding to events and circumstances.

In effect, leaders can learn how to create the conditions for "predictable miracles" or synchronicity. Furthermore, anyone can choose to be a leader through new capacities brought forward when we begin the inner journey.

The key to creating the conditions for predictable miracles is the ability to perceive reality as it is, but most of us are not very good at this. Rather, we relate to internal remembrances of our history evoked by whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

When we open ourselves up to begin an inner transformation, we see things as they truly are. We allow something new to show up when we see what is true. We begin to think and act in new ways and interact differently with others.

The result: change happens naturally as a consequence and flows through us to our outer experience.

We begin the inner-leader journey by exploring new ways to look within ourselves. Six key themes were foundational to my growth as an inner leader and journey to higher consciousness:

- **Forward thinking.** Forward-thinking involves thinking, planning, and actions that consider the future and the present. In today's fast-changing world, the future is already here. We must look beyond traditional ways of living and working based on Industrial Age thinking and practices.
- **Conscious/self-leadership.** Traditional forms of leadership are grounded in command and control and in doing what good leaders do. Insight for leadership resides not only in the "other" but is accessible to everyone through newly honed sensibilities of looking and listening within.
- **Inner awareness and intuition.** By enhancing our ability to look and listen within, we access greater awareness and creative power to shape our world and be a force for good. If you don't know what awareness is and how to use it, then awareness is random. When directed, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.
- **Inner-leader journey.** The inner-leader journey is a personal journey where there is no path. It's impossible to write about the inner leader's journey without mentioning your own story. By sharing my journey, I hope to inspire more people to travel the path I believe we all must travel in the 21st century.
- **Questions, listening, and dialogue.** We can learn how to ask new questions that harness our more powerful intuition, helping us discover surprising new answers. In dialogue, we move beyond discussion and championing our point of view to listening more deeply for breakthrough vision and action.

- **Understanding how the mind works.** A new understanding of how the mind works from the inside out is based on the principles of mind, consciousness, and thought. With this new understanding, we realize our experiences and feelings are created by our thoughts, not our circumstances.

Developing our inner capacities in all six areas creates a new understanding, and elevated state of being that lifts us beyond where we find ourselves. We get in closer touch with our deeper wisdom and intelligence and allow it to lead us.

3

A BETTER SELF

EMPATHETIC
COMPASSIONATE
ALTRUISTIC
RESPECTFUL
OPEN-MINDED
TOLERANT
HONEST
RELIABLE
RESPONSIBLE
GENEROUS

We are highly skilled at being more productive and getting things done, but what about our integrity, character, ethics, and state of being?

Break from the past

THERE'S no shortage of advice on becoming a better and more effective leader today. Social media and the business press are filled with endless articles and new books on how to get more done and be a better leader.

When we look at leadership, today's prevailing wisdom is that leadership is all about focusing on others — inspiring, serving, and making better people of others. However, given the apparent lack of leadership today, it may be time for new questions and new thinking.

Rather than hanging onto old programming and answers from the past, we must enhance our ability to see what's real. We live in the past when we rely on past knowledge, best practices, and more activity in the face of relentless change and disruption.

For example, for much of my career in corporate America, I prided myself on being a person of action and getting things done. I updated my to-do list perpetually throughout the day. Countless meetings resulted in even more action items and lists. Nothing got missed.

But what if I paid a little less attention to generating yet another action plan and more attention to the ways forward that were opening up in front of me? I'd definitely see more new and better ways forward, as would anyone following this advice.

In early 2020, I began an exercise to identify what had changed due to my inside-out journey. How had I and my work changed? Figure 1 highlights the key areas of change over the past ten years. The 11 shifts on the right side of figure 1 more accurately describe how I now live and work today.

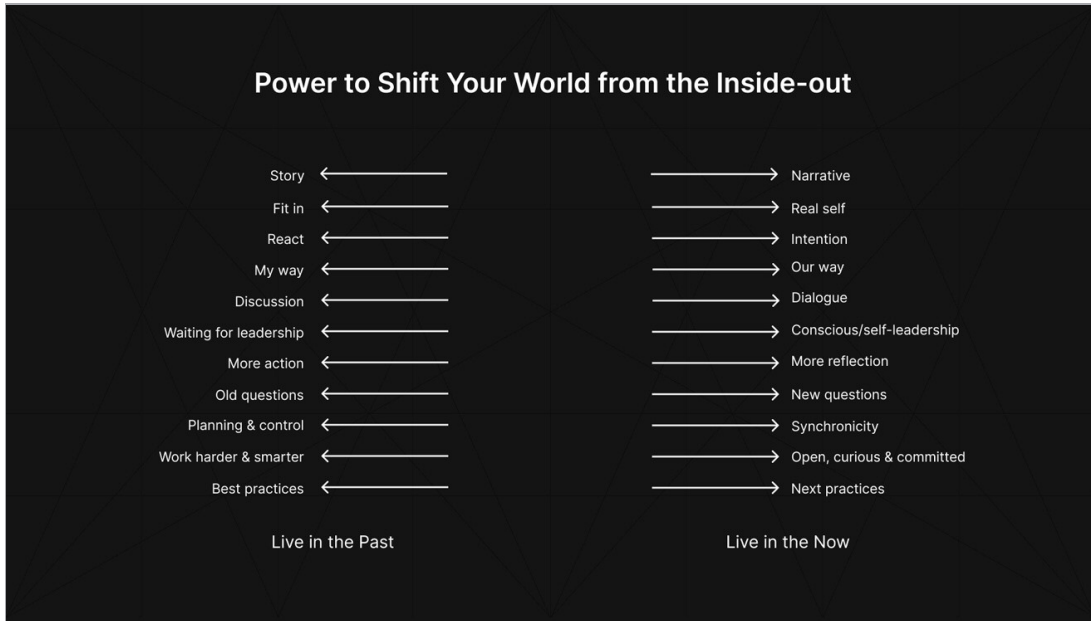


Figure 1

For example, when I started on this inner-leader journey, one of the first opportunities I had to show up as my “real self ” versus “fitting in” was in 2012 when I wrote an article for Cutter IT Journal (renamed Amplify).

In that article, I questioned why so many companies continued to focus on Agile, Lean, CMMI, etc., with so few results to show for their efforts. Speaking out against what so many supported and advocated felt risky, and I didn't believe the article would be published.

To my surprise, not only was the article published, it resulted in many new opportunities to work on exciting engagements and speak at conferences.

The inner-leader journey will help you see reality more as it truly is and give you the insight, wisdom, and courage to share it with others.

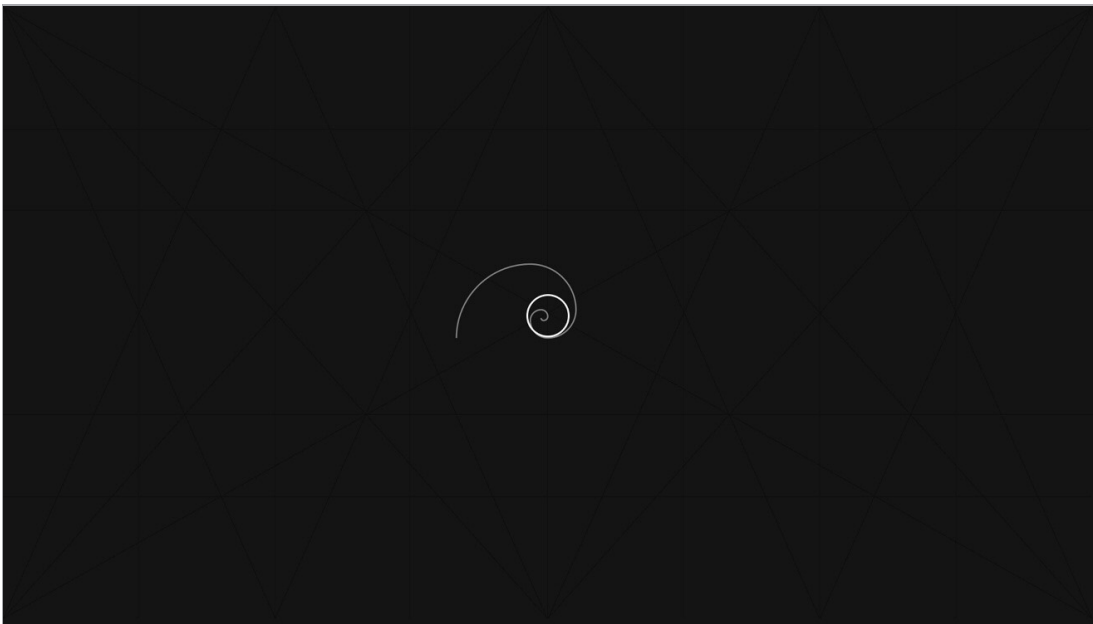
It is critical for everyone today to make this shift to thrive and achieve success in a turbulent world.

BILL FOX

We need to recognize this perspective and become leaders who can help the current changes become real for ourselves, our families, our organizations, and our governments.

4

SEE THE BOUNDARIES



Our perception of the world changes when we become more aware of our boundaries. We become less limited by our previous understanding.

Open up space

PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR MARSHALL MCLUHAN argued that when we become aware of our boundaries, they are no longer our boundaries.

In early 2020, triggered by world events due to the pandemic, I began as an exercise to review all the insights, people, and books that had influenced my inner journey.

This initiative resulted in creating Space Beyond Boundaries and publishing a collection of over 150 forward-thinking images that I feature in weekly blog posts. Today, the collection includes over 300 images and continues to grow.

The images are intended to make the invisible more visible and the immeasurable more tangible, making them more accessible, real, and actionable.

What is space beyond boundaries? Space Beyond Boundaries is where we discover possibilities outside the limitations and constraints we typically impose on ourselves.

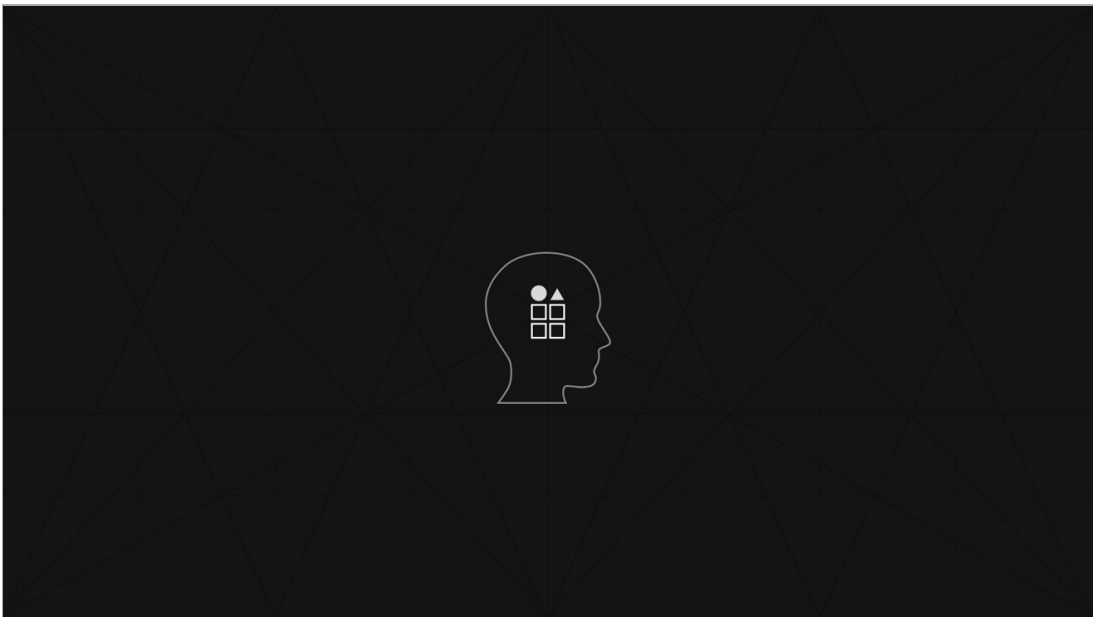
It's an open space where we explore new ideas, perspectives, and opportunities not constrained by traditional thinking, limiting beliefs, and self-imposed limitations.

In this space, we break free from the boundaries that hold us back and find new ways of thinking and being.

It's a space where we can tap into our creativity, intuition, and inner wisdom to explore new ways of solving problems, creating value, and making a difference in the world.

5

END THE DYSFUNCTION



Humanity faces enormous challenges that threaten life as we know it today. Our current level of consciousness allows these issues to persist.

Stop recreating dysfunction

THE LEADERSHIP DYSFUNCTIONS I observed when I started my career 40 years ago still exist today. These dysfunctions persist despite a leadership industry measured in billions of dollars annually, an army of consultants and coaches, and countless leadership articles and books.

My leadership journey began early in my professional career when I worked for a high-technology manufacturing company. The company had high expectations for a new business planning system they were implementing when the people running the project were suddenly no longer with the company.

I was tapped on the shoulder to get the project back on track and enthusiastically accepted the challenge. The company first sent me off to be educated by one of the world's leading experts on implementing enterprise change.

I learned that companies failed to implement enterprise systems because they had a leadership problem. You couldn't just invest in a system, turn it over to the employees, and expect it to happen. The leaders had to be more intimately involved.

Well, that turned out to be the case. We made a few minor adjustments, and six months later, we successfully implemented the new system.

This company had some of the best executive leaders I have ever worked with. The fact that they were so open to making changes was a testament and credit to their leadership.

Over the next 30 years, I was involved in dozens of more enterprise change projects as both an employee and a consultant. And the story was always the same. There was a leadership problem.

Then finally in 2009, I successfully turned around another enterprise change initiative when suddenly we had a different kind of leadership problem. Corporate headquarters replaced the leader-

ship team and no longer wanted anything to do with the previous leadership team's priorities.

That's when I quit and started on my quest to find better ways to improve our organizations.

I can't help but notice all the attention and money invested in leadership over my career. Yet, we still see the same leadership problem — over and over.

We still have a leadership problem because more leadership training and coaching aren't the answer. We need to become less of a human robot running on autopilot and overcome over 300 years of Industrial Age thinking and programming.

To meet today's challenges, we must become the leader we were born to be. It's time to allow the collective voice, wisdom, and energy of everyone to emerge for the benefit of all.

Insight for new leadership resides not in the "other" but is accessible to everyone. By enhancing our ability to look and listen within, we shape our world from the inside out to create a better world.

We can shift ourselves and our world in ways that work better for everyone.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bill Fox

I believe the great leaders and companies in the 21st century will be built from the inside out. My work will help you discover new pathways, make better decisions, and be a leader of a better tomorrow — today!

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