

PROLOGUE

Walking the Rocky Road

FROM SANDER

There are 250 books on leadership written every year. It's a pretty popular topic. I've read a lot of them, particularly by those CEOs who have made it big and whom I personally admire, such as Jack Welch and Larry Bossidy. As a former CEO of a large multinational company, I've learned much from them.

I also read books by educators such as Warren Bennis, Peter Drucker, and Noel Tichy. Their writings, in the main, are directed to the Old Guys like myself, or better put, Old Guys writing to Old Guys.

The challenge I've always faced with relating the wisdom of these well-known leadership practitioners to my twenty- and thirty-something MBA students is that their lessons really don't apply to my students' present situations. That's what made me decide to write a book for both twenty- and thirtysomethings and forty- to sixty-

some things on achieving a leader's role and how contemporary leaders deal with the issues of leading.

This is a book about hard work and sacrifice. After reading about the great leaders discussed here, you may very well choose not to move ahead with your vision of running the company or the union or becoming editor-in-chief or getting to the top of your organization. But if hard work and sacrifice fit your personality and lifestyle, you'll be considerably better prepared than your competitors to anticipate and survive, and get satisfaction from leading.

I wrote this book to expose the insights, the demeanor, the personality, and the character traits of people who are admired by their people as leaders. I view them not simply through my senior corporate CEO eyes, but through the eyes of my inquisitive MBA students as well. You will also hear from my son Jonathon at the end of each chapter. Jonathon is a thirty-six-year-old entrepreneur and student of Zen who teaches me more about a new way of doing business in these polarizing times than any case study ever could.

As you read on, you'll quickly see that there's no "one size fits all" leadership. However, you will also quickly pick up that all of our leader-heroes have, in some fashion, inculcated a certain ethic into their psyche and gut. What they work on and practice every day is what you need to practice and work on every day, too. Yes, it's hard work. Is it worth all this energy, focus, sweat, and sacrifice to reach the top? Only you can be the judge of that. I do hope that after reading this book, you give it a shot.

Every generation and personality leads in its own way; and my premise is that to progress together, we have to lead with each other in mind. At best, we can only approximate what makes leaders perform brilliantly under pressure by studying the *practices* they incorporate into their leadership zeitgeist. Let's start with a short profile of Jonathon and me. Typical of the older and younger generations at work, we have a lot of differences, yet we need to find a way to blend, if we are going to get the work done.

PROFILE:
Older Leader/Younger Leader

	Sander A. Flaum (SAF)	Jonathon A. Flaum (JAF)
Political Affiliation	Republican	Independent
Religious Affiliation	Jewish	Zen Buddhist
Residence	New York City	Asheville, North Carolina
Most Influential Book	<i>Jack, Straight from the Gut</i> by Jack Welch	<i>Walden</i> by H.D. Thoreau
Clothes	Ralph Lauren	Gap
Ideal Vacation	Golf in Scottsdale	Backcountry roam in Yellowstone N.P.
Age	65	35
Formative Experience	U.S. Army	Traveling solo around USA on Greyhound bus
Advanced Degrees	M.B.A. – Marketing	M.A.- Philosophy of Religion, M.F.A. – Theatre
Leadership Heroes	Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, Colin Powell	Shunryu Suzuki, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi
First section gone for in <i>Sunday Times</i>	Business	Arts and Leisure
Vehicle	Audi	Subaru
Number of suits in closet	22	3
Favorite Drink	Absolut and Tonic	Pint of Guinness
Thing to do when not driving the car	Prepare for next meeting	Nap
Years it took to be CEO	20	1
Favorite dog	Boxer	Boxer
Number of states resided	3	8
Favorite Breakfast	Bagel/creamcheese with Pickled lox on the side	Bagel/creamcheese with Pickled lox on the side
Fear of flying	No	Yes
Title	CEO, Flaum Partners, Former Chairman, and CEO Euro RSCG Becker	CEO, WriteMind Communications

In putting this book together, I saw that my son, my students, and my young employees looked like me in their business suits, but underneath, they were very different individuals. More and more, I saw evidence that generations and personality types working together under one roof were unbelievably different in their thinking about business, the paradigms of leadership, and life in general. How could the older generation invite the younger generation to lead if they didn't speak the same language?

Were we continually missing the point the other was trying to make? Jon and I got by that way for a long time, and we were father and son. I started thinking about Jon and some of the things he had challenged me on over the years—things I thought were just coming out of his philosophical weirdness that had no relevance to business. That was until Jon entered business and I realized corporations would be foolhardy not to want to attract talented people who could think, write, communicate, and lead like he did. Yet many of these selfsame institutions didn't have a clue about how to successfully approach and develop their Fortune 500 younger people.

I wasn't being touchy-feely by probing these questions, I was thinking about my business. There are new paradigms infusing our workplace, and older and younger leaders needed to be familiar with both sides of the coin or risk the big money, the big breakthroughs, getting left on the table.

Old Paradigm

Increase revenue every quarter.
Few women are qualified for top jobs.
Competition builds successful teams.
Top-down management is best.
Respect seniority.

New Paradigm

Tithe 10 percent of profits to charity.
Women are capable CEOs.
Collaboration builds successful teams.
Build consensus first; though the buck still stops at the top.
Encourage innovation from *all* levels.

Dress for success.

Fit in.

Show company loyalty.

Dress appropriately for comfort.

Be diverse.

Move on if recognition and growth opportunities are absent.

I saw Jon and me as a metaphor for the problem. Jon’s uncanny and natural leadership skills, eclectic interests, fearlessness, integrity, and ability to adapt were marks of what was great about his generation. My workaholic work ethic, “fight for a yes” stubbornness, creativity, stability, self-discipline, and toughness were the mark of mine. One generation and orientation needed the other, just like father and son need each other. Without a solid bond between the two, both are incomplete.

My goal was not to go off on an unbounded lecture from one generation to the other. It’s too commonplace that a professor (or CEO) is up there rambling on, thinking everybody “gets it” as they feign interest, while actually what’s going on is that they’re waiting for the next class or the next paycheck. I wanted to make sure that wouldn’t happen—and I trusted my son would help me, question me, and keep me honest.

OUR WALK, OUR TALK, AND THE WRITING PROCESS

Like the old Native American proverb, we would walk a mile in the other’s moccasins. I would walk fifty miles with Jon on his favorite trails, with him leading, and he would walk fifty miles with me in the places of my choosing. I didn’t own a pair of hiking shoes when we started and Jon didn’t own golf shoes. We agreed to finish the hundred miles no matter what.

It's Jonathon's role in the book to share his perspective on my narrative from his personal vantage point and in light of his generation's perspective. Each chapter to follow will be my narrative on a particular leadership practice followed by Jonathon's "younger leader" perspective on it.

To write this book, I took the interviews and lectures of a remarkable group of Fordham Leadership Forum guest speakers and some other exemplary leaders I admire and I studied them with Jon. Jon also came to New York City to attend some of the lectures, contacted many of the Forum leaders for in-depth follow-up interviews, and talked with leaders outside the Forum. In our 100-mile trek, we went to New Orleans so we could eat great food and hear great music while working on leadership. We spent time together walking in Manhattan so that we could be around the high energy of so many of the great leaders we had studied. We went to upstate New York where we could hike in a place we used to go when we were younger. We went out to Bridgehampton, New York, so we could golf together and walk on the beach and talk leadership. We spent a bit of time in Columbus, Ohio (you'll find out why). And finally, we went to Asheville, North Carolina, so we could hike through the Blue Ridge Mountains and continue to let the leadership dialogue unfold.

We spent six months talking leadership, dissecting differences, exploring nuances, and growing closer. Truth is that this dialogue and appreciation between older and younger is bogus if you can't do it at home. And Jonathon and I couldn't for a long time. I had a personal impetus to write this book as much as a professional one. Confession: For all our process maps, pie charts, quarterly reports, and mission statements, we business folk are still primarily ruled and lead by emotion. My efforts to "get human" with my son taught me firsthand that there are different ways to judge success for all people and that bringing those ways to the table makes us

better people. And being a business person, always in search of hidden values, I discovered an incredible residual benefit to this openness—seeking to understand also makes us much better business people.

We walked a lot. On the surface, it comes off as some extracurricular fun, but in reality, the walk changed my life. People should walk together; managers should walk with their direct reports, women with men, the twenty-five-year-old technological whiz with the fifty-two-year-old CFO. Walking together, we learn the gifts that the other possesses and, in turn, take the time to rediscover our own gifts. It worked for us. We hope it works for you.

A NOTE TO YOU IN YOUR TWENTIES AND THIRTIES: MY MENTORS

You are a generation that deeply desires to do things your own way. You are the inheritors of dubious “corporate greatness” and have come out of college (or skipped it) with a much different view of leadership than your parents had. You have your own style, philosophies, favorite TV shows, books, music, restaurants, games, hobbies, and venues. You don’t have many contemporary leaders to emulate though. You see the Achilles heels of leaders, as much if not more so than you do the mythological heroism they became famous for. You have a keen sense of awareness and realism about the world. You do not trust quickly. Are not easily won over and are painfully aware that leaders have feet of clay just as you do. It makes you an egalitarian group, a fair one, and an honest one.

But you need leaders too, and if you have picked up this book, very likely you are interested in leading yourself. But what do Jack Welch’s or Larry Bossidy’s books have to say to you? You feel skep-

tical of these corporate giants who grew up in a completely different generation and speak to that generation in their books. At the same time, you want to wade into the fray and make a difference and become a leader in your own right. How do you do it? Do you throw out the baby with the bathwater and simply make all new rules and find a new way to lead that is entirely your own? That was certainly my thought at twenty-two, but by the time I was thirty, that seemed all too arrogant and shortsighted.

Older leaders definitely have a great deal to teach you; but you have a great deal to teach them, too. Imagine if we can learn from each other, be open to hearing the other, and find a new synthesized paradigm for leadership? It would be awesome, and maybe even better than that, it would be inviting and inclusive—creating a space we can all live and work within together. I wrote this book with the encouragement of many folks to illustrate that this kind of dialogue could be mutually beneficial: my business and educational colleagues; my boomer, Gen X, and Gen Y employees; my MBA students; and many wonderful and talented leaders, some known but many unsung. The subject matter we will be debating and discussing is not “salute the general, keep your mouth shut, business as usual.” New generations bring new life, new abilities, and new insights to the table. The door is open, and I want you very much to come in and get comfortable.

The leadership practices we will unpack in the book are meant not to rein you in; rather, they’re presented here to help you air out your ideas and become the kind of leader *you* want to be.

When I talked to Jonathon about this idea, he brought up an eighth-century Zen master, Rinzai, who said, “The greatest truth is to be found outside the written dogma.” I don’t know much about Rinzai, but I agree with him. Set something in stone and it becomes petrified. These practices have to be alive, exhilarating, and vibrant. They have to have the ability to shift and rotate to accommodate

the unpredictable demands of the never-been-seen-before present moment of your life. They are not admonitions, rules, or commandments brought down from the mount or corporate headquarters—they must be understood embraced and lived by you and you alone.

Jon:

Rinzai was known as Lin Chi in China and was the founder of the Sudden Enlightenment school of Ch'an Buddhism, which became known as Zen in Japan. Rinzai was famous for ardently urging his students to focus on their experience and not to substitute academic learning or study of scriptures for the truth of enlightenment, which he said can only be received through personal struggle and firsthand knowledge.

A NOTE TO MY CONTEMPORARIES

I'm a corporate lifer like a lot of you, and I've taught in graduate business schools for the past thirty-plus years. But I want to warn you: I didn't write this book to put out more of the traditional rhetoric that we have all heard in leadership workshops, conferences, boardrooms, and annual meetings a thousand times. I wrote this book because if we do not keep pace with the young leaders waiting to emerge, we will lose the best and the brightest. I don't want that to happen, and knowing what I do about other lifetime workaholics like me, neither do you.

Even when I asked my friend, retired senator and astronaut John Glenn, about leadership, he told me: “I have no more insight on leadership than anybody else. There are shelves full of books on leadership, book after book after book that is required reading of Marine officers, but still there has always been something about leadership that is inherently mysterious to me.”

DIALOGUES WITH REAL-WORLD LEADERS

To provide a useful anchor for younger women and men who choose to lead and a reference point for older executives, I’ve tried to ground this book in the “the horse’s mouth” experience that came out of the widely respected Fordham Leadership Forum of the Fordham University Graduate School of Business, where I am founder and chair.

All quotes not otherwise attributed come from these lectures, follow-up interviews, and firsthand interviews with additional leaders that Jonathon and I came in contact with. Because the book is based on real conversations between actual students and respected corporate, governmental, academic, and nonprofit leaders, I hope it will serve to push back at the traditional “I did it this way; you do it, too” words of wisdom put out by the usual group of leadership suspects.

We talked to folks like Thomas Von Essen, New York City fire commissioner during 9/11; Bill Toppeta, president of MetLife International; Faith Popcorn, futurist and marketing consultant to the Fortune 500; Nancy Lublin, founder of the venerable not-for-profit Dress for Success; Father Joseph O’Hare, former president of Fordham University; Reverend Joseph M. McShane, current Fordham president; Frances Hesselbein, chair of the Leader to Leader

Institute, (formerly The Peter Drucker Foundation); Howard Safir, former New York City police commissioner; Jeff Rich, CEO of Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. (ACS); Senator John Glenn; and many other great leaders.

In most MBA management courses, professors assign case studies and students present analyses. The fact is that with a case study, you have all the data neatly packaged according to the Harvard Business School formula and the analysis becomes pretty staid. I did that for a long time, but I got to the point where I needed to do something different.

In real life, you have to gather whatever data is available and then use your instincts and intuitions, whatever you have in your bag. Those kinds of resources don't show up in textbooks or in stock analysts' reports; they're in the heads and guts of people who act as leaders for a living. I believed that if my students could actually see this process firsthand and were free to enter into a dialogue with a leader, it would be more than instructional; it would be real-life learning in action—the inspired kind that prompts you to think of new ideas, to try new things, even to change your life.

NINE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Leaders invited to the Fordham Leadership Forum tell us how things really get accomplished, with no sugar coating. We are entrusted with their innermost reflections, views, practices, and most important, their mistakes. From the speakers, the coursework, the student feedback, my son's queries, and my own lifelong experience as a student/practitioner of leadership, nine key leadership practices emerged. For ease of memory and because business school students love shorthand, I used the letter "P" to describe them.

The Nine Ps of Leadership

1. People
2. Purpose
3. Passion
4. Performance
5. Persistence
6. Perspective
7. Paranoia
8. Principles
9. Practice

The last one is the one that stops you . . . how do leaders practice “practice”? Jonathon would describe this as a Zen koan: a question in which there is no specific rational and objective answer, a question posed where you must discover the answer for yourself within the specific context of your own life. If this sounds a bit loosey-goosey to you Stephen Covey “7 Habits” types, don’t worry . . . it did to me, too. But that’s what this process is all about, being open to looking at old things in a new way and the reverse.

The chapters that follow take each leadership practice and examine it from my perspective and experience, followed by a response from Jonathon, according to his perspective.

FROM JONATHON

When we started thinking about writing this book featuring Dad’s generation’s point of view in contrast to mine, I made him a pro-

Jon:

There are no rational answers to certain questions. Certain questions demand “body and mind” answers—that is, the student does not “know” the answer, but rather becomes it.

posal. I thought we should literally walk the walk as well as talk the talk, since walking already had a history with us, serving to open up new possibilities. I suggested we walk 100 miles together talking about the Ps of leadership and the people we believed best exemplified them. Dad was not a hiker. (His last big one was a twenty-miler in ninety-degree heat, with full pack, in the army.) He likes to tour and golf at nice resorts and to have his bed turned down. But he agreed anyway. I thought it would be a great way for us to track down the bottom of the thing.

What intrigued me most about doing this book with my father was his willingness to openly question what he was putting out there to young people. Anytime someone acts all-knowing, I'm skeptical. I think self-analysis is a welcome trait for a leader to possess. Still, there are those leaders who think they need to present themselves as all-knowing so we in turn will follow them. And unfortunately, we often have, even if it was right over a moral or actual cliff. That's why for me, understanding leadership is extremely important, first because we all are affected by our leaders and second, because we need to have the sound judgment to choose them wisely.

Personally, I have always been drawn first to the poet, artist, philosopher, and radical individualist who is vexed by the meaning and direction of his own life and committed to finding what is right

and true, whether or not anybody follows him on the chosen path. So, as I share my perspective on my father's thoughts on leadership, my style will be markedly different. In addition to the leaders we interviewed, I will refer to poetry, philosophers, Zen stories, and religious leaders. For me, such references contain within them perennial issues central to leadership. By invoking such things we can, I hope, help to bring more perspective to the younger contemporary issues of leadership. This approach may feel discursive at times, but in the end, my father and I are trying to get at the central tenets of leadership each in our own way.

The reality, though, especially where leadership is concerned, is that there is always more than one narrative. There is not now, nor was there ever, a monologue about leadership, despite the utterings of the Napoleons and Caesars of the world. I speak for myself and, at times, I will try to speak for some in my generation. Not because I have some special authority, but because I am the appointed alternative representative and because I have interviewed and read numerous workplace generational experts—and because as Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, “I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else I knew as well.”

Henry David Thoreau is a role model for me. *Walden* is a story I don't want to copy (Thoreau warned against that) but something I do try to emulate. Not just the communion with nature, but the individualism of “walking to the beat of my own drum.” *Walden* is not a book only for the woods. I see it as a book for governments and business and for evaluating the busyness of our everyday personal lives. It is a text that bids us to slow down and take note of the “why” of our labor as much as contemplate the how and the what. Thoreau wrote of building a cabin and raising beans. Many of us instead spend our days writing white papers; preparing marketing strategies, spreadsheets, or legal briefs; building websites; or creating software. Thoreau would never ask us to quit our jobs and

take up his. He asks us instead to pay attention to our work and bring deliberate care to it. Thoreau asks us to search out meaning in the mundane. He knows how difficult it is to stay in the moment and not race to the outcome. But when we practice just this, be we executives or farmers or accountants or software developers, we meet on the field of human life. And it is this human field that Thoreau was aiming to cultivate when *Walden* was first published 150 years ago.

I wanted to write this leadership book with my father so that the two of us could meet on the field of human life and encourage others to do the same. My own life in business came to fruition by happenstance; it was nothing I planned. I saw my father's world of business as wholly other. For my master's thesis in philosophy of religion, I worked on the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, a rather enigmatic and hermetic German poet of the early twentieth century. I focused on one particular cycle of his poems, the *Duino Elegies*. Composed over a ten-year period, the elegies dramatize Rilke's mystical conversation with an angel that first called out to him on the cliffs of the castle at Duino. I analyzed the cycle from a philosophical perspective, treating Rilke as religious mystic and the poems as his manifested tale of mystical experience. A part of the thesis was published in an anthology on Rilke when I was twenty-six. I've written stage plays, screenplays, a documentary, and a novel since, receiving my MFA in playwriting from the University of Southern California. I love the theater and have been recognized for my work, but never in a way that allowed me to pay the bills.

A PHILOSOPHER AND PLAYWRIGHT BECOMES A BUSINESSMAN

Knowing this about me, you would think I'd much rather sit down with a good work of fiction or a book on philosophy than pick up

a book on business. So how did I end up starting my own business as a corporate speechwriter, speaker trainer, and ghostwriter, as well as an editorial consultant?

My story, I have come to find out, is far from atypical. In my travels and interviews (and through general curiosity), I have come to know many people like me in business—creative writers, former academics, artists, actors, teachers, all who fell into business by necessity and happenstance. My father also started out as a writer, but he always knew that he wanted to be a business person. His experience is not the only way people find themselves in business or even come to lead in business. What I’ve come to see is that business needs creativity as much as the theater does, maybe more at times because its impact is felt so profoundly in our everyday lives. I have been welcomed in today’s business climate—a world that now very much wants “accidents” like me.

Jon:

I was tickled when the February 2004 issue of Harvard Business Review called the MFA the new MBA. As HBR noted, “[A master of fine] arts degree is now perhaps the hottest credential in the world of business. Corporate recruiters have begun visiting the top art grad schools. The supply of people with basic MBA skills is expanding and therefore driving down their value. Meanwhile, the demand for artistic aptitude is surging.” (From “Breakthrough Ideas for 2004: The HBR List,” by Daniel H. Pink.)

New leadership styles—cultivating individuality, dissent, innovation, meritocracy, and unconventional thinking—have never

been more important in order for American business to keep hold of its competitive edge. Because of this fact, the productive leadership modalities in business are often different from what they were just ten years ago.

To nourish the indispensable creativity of these new knowledge workers and keep them at their jobs, leaders are going to have to treat them more like craftsmen and artists than like traditional managers; businesses may even consider creating something more akin to a studio environment for them to work in. Management guru Peter Drucker says you have to treat the knowledge workers of today the way you treat volunteers. They are changing the way leadership is practiced.

Drucker also says, “Bribery doesn’t work anymore,” and he points out that in this culture of knowledge-based workers, where growth and challenge are as important, if not more important, than money, you have to go to lengths to treat people as though they are voluntarily gaining career satisfaction (i.e., doing their job strictly by choice) by being intellectually and emotionally engaged. That is, treat them as visiting dignitaries not wage slaves.

My personal story, and how I “accidentally,” thanks to my father, found myself in business, is a tale about me finding out just how much creativity and pragmatism ultimately need each other. The resulting amalgam of those two values touching hands is the source of my (and lots of others) entrepreneurship.

Years ago, the idea of becoming an entrepreneur was nowhere on my radar, but that changed quickly after my son came into the world. My father came down for a visit when my son was just a few months old. I was a social worker (exploring my values) and adjunct university instructor (exploring my creativity) living and working in Asheville, North Carolina. I had never thought about money as a motivator before. I never thought about it because I grew up with my needs met. When I became a father that all changed. I suddenly

felt the weight and responsibility my father must have felt but never spoke of—the weight of wanting to provide for your family and how that just automatically comes first. Unless you’re a parent, I don’t think you can understand that the way I did when I saw my son born.

My son had a terrible case of colic in the beginning, and walking was the only thing that calmed him. So during this visit, I took my dad for a walk on the trails of the arboretum not far from my house. My son was in a baby carrier on my chest and before long he fell asleep there. It was autumn, my favorite time in the mountains, and the yellow, red, and purple blended overhead and around so that after a while we were swimming in color.

I didn’t say a word about my worries for the first mile or so of the walk; I was just glad to be out there. I finally spit it out when I couldn’t take it anymore: “What about business?” I said to Dad. “I don’t want to push Tami to go back to work. Being an adjunct and social worker isn’t giving me the time or money to be the father and husband I want to be. . . .” I cut myself off there and told Dad that the bird circling above us was a red-tailed hawk. (I didn’t tell him that in Native American mythology the hawk symbolizes a messenger.) Hearing the words come out of my mouth felt too strange to linger on them.

After the air settled back a bit, we talked about options and the idea of me using my skills as a playwright. Dad knew (though I had no idea) there was a whole field of work to write speeches for business leaders and then to coach them on how to address their audience. On the spot, he helped me come up with a plan of action. It is what Dad does best.

And there it was. When we got back to the trailhead, I took my eyes off the near-perfect leaves and looked at Dad. It was like meeting him for the first time, father to father, and without a word, I understood things about him that I never could have before.

Soon after that walk, I moved near New Orleans temporarily, to be close to my in-laws and get some physical support for my young family so I could focus without worry on turning my talent into a viable business. I set up an office in my in-laws' study and, with high-speed Internet access, a borrowed fax machine, and a cell phone, hatched my company, WriteMind Communications. Before long, after a lot of persistence and a bit of luck (those two seem to go together), I was able to return to Asheville with my family and grow my business there. In time, I was able to take my playwriting and directing instincts, coupled with my approach to Zen practice, and turn them into a unique speechwriting and speaker training consultancy that Fortune 500 CEOs were glad to have access to.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON CREATIVITY AND LEADERSHIP

I credit that day with my dad in the woods, walking and talking business, as a turning point. He helped me to see an opportunity to use my skills and I took it, and I'm grateful I did, because it has allowed me not only to put my creativity and values into practice on a daily basis, but also gives me the time and peace of mind to be the father and husband I want to be. With Dad's encouragement, I came to see how indispensable creativity is to business, and business is to creativity. When I entered the business world, it opened up a whole new line of communication between my dad and me. We were now able to talk business and examine the issues we were coming up against and see where we could help each other. I wanted to be a part of this book, so we could show others of differ-

ing ages, views, and predilections just how interdependent we all really are.

Additionally, I wanted to do this book because walking was an integral part of the work. I took my cue on this from Thoreau and his simple treatise called *Walking*. Ralph Waldo Emerson said of Thoreau, “The length of his walking made the length of his writing. If shut up in the house, he did not write at all.” Thoreau walked at least four hours a day, sometimes more. He felt it essential to remove himself from “worldly engagements” for a part of the day if he was to get any quality thinking and writing done. This has always been true for me. Your mind is freer to roam and think without the ceiling of the office pressing down. There’s something about looking up at sky overhead that reminds you that the only limits you impose are your own.

There was something also about being able to chew over these Ps of leadership on a 100-mile journey and reflect on the words of leaders from various disciplines. The more I read about leadership and observe its practice (or lack thereof in various business, academic, and nonprofit environments), the more I come to realize that leadership is the closest thing we have in our economy to applied philosophy. Leadership asks the why questions about work, not just the how and the what. And as I examined each of the leadership practices, I put the why question to each one of them. Most of us know what it means to perform well at work; we also know what it means to persist at work. The question for leadership, though, is why do we do these things?

For a long time many in business believed the simple, transactional idea that we do it for money. But study after study proves that wrong. People work for money only at a very basic level of meeting their needs. Going deeper, researchers have found that people work in order to feel a sense of usefulness, purpose, and identity. And when they cannot feel these things, their performance

degrades and they are generally unhappy on the job. At that point, the job is reduced to “a paycheck.” Leadership is the practice that, when done with diligence and sincerity, can help to build meaningful contexts for others in which to work. The nine leadership Ps are both descriptive and prescriptive, though bear in mind they are less like a cave to explore and more like a tunnel to go through and emerge from. The light to search out on the other side is your own.