



**FEARLESS**

# **LEADERSHIP**

**HOW TO OVERCOME  
BEHAVIORAL BLIND SPOTS  
AND TRANSFORM  
YOUR ORGANIZATION**

The Exclusive  
Breakthrough Leadership  
Process Used by  
Leading Companies  
and Organizations

**LORETTA MALANDRO, Ph.D.**

## ***An excerpt from Dr. Loretta Malandro's new book FEARLESS LEADERSHIP***

Do you want to move your company in a new direction? *Fearless Leadership* provides you with the tools to successfully drive change, overcome obstacles, and engage and align people to achieve your business objectives.

Leadership guru Dr. Loretta Malandro has developed a groundbreaking behavior-based methodology that is used around the globe to create top-performing leaders and high performance organizations. It is based on a simple but profound concept: In order to change your organization, you must be willing to alter your behavior and help others choose to change their behavior. This means demanding 100% accountability™ from your people—and yourself.

In today's ultracompetitive business environment, a new leadership approach is needed. *Fearless Leadership* takes you step-by-step through the process of raising behavioral standards that directly impact the bottom line. You will learn the secrets behind:

- **CONFRONTING THE BLIND SPOTS THAT SABOTAGE SUCCESS**
- **OVERCOMING THE SUCCESS-STRANGLING "NEED TO BE RIGHT"**
- **ELIMINATING SILO MENTALITY AND BUILDING COMMITTED PARTNERSHIPS**
- **ENDING COMPLIANCE AND GAINING FULL SUPPORT AND ALIGNMENT**
- **TALKING STRAIGHT AND CONFRONTING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS HEAD ON**
- **BUILDING A CULTURE OF 100% ACCOUNTABILITY**

Too many people in leadership positions attempt to enact change through systemic means, such as restructuring or altering processes. The secret to real and lasting change lies in changing behavior—how people work together. Change the level of ownership and performance of people and you will transform your organization.



Leaders who are able to act courageously when faced with uncertainty or fear, take bold stands, and engage with people in very real ways are those who generate great and long-lasting results. *Fearless Leadership* show you how.

**Dr. Loretta Malandro** is president and CEO of Malandro Communication Inc., a firm with 30 years' experience working with clients worldwide across diverse industries. The company is known for rapidly transforming organizational effectiveness and business results through high performance leaders, teams, and cultures.



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## **Praise for *Fearless Leadership***

by Loretta Malandro, Ph.D.

“This is not another theoretical business book. It is a book about fearless leadership in action—the spirit, resiliency, quick alignment, and the ability of teams to generate possibilities and results despite tough economic conditions. The process Loretta describes in this book works—if you have the courage to lead in a new way.”

Jim Gowans,  
President and CEO,  
De Beers Canada

“The most difficult leadership challenge is changing behaviors. For companies to be different, leaders must lead differently. Loretta is the best at helping make these concepts real and actionable.”

David M. Thomas,  
former Chairman and CEO, IMS Health,  
and former Senior VP, IBM

“Successful leaders take a hard stand about paying for performance, and do not fall into the trap of paying for effort. Loretta tells leaders exactly how to accomplish this by creating an environment where people take personal accountability, collaborate, and hold each other accountable for consistent exceptional results.”

Raj Gupta,  
Chairman and CEO,  
Rohm and Haas Company

“Once again Dr. Malandro hits the bull’s-eye. This book articulates a powerful strategy for leaders who aspire to be more than ordinary by building a high performance culture that produces consistent extraordinary results. I know it works. With her help, I have been there and have reveled in the success.”

Frank Patalano,  
former Chief Operating Officer,  
Zurich North America

“Loretta’s book is a powerful road map for anyone committed to being a transformational leader. It provides clear, actionable steps that drive organizational growth and long-term success.”

Raj Rawal,  
Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer,  
Burger King Corporation

“*Fearless Leadership* is an exciting and valuable book that will profoundly influence global leaders at a time when a new approach is urgently needed. This book is a compelling call to action that every leader must read.”

John J. Ryan,  
President and CEO,  
Rabo AgriFinance

“This groundbreaking book is the first to clearly identify the behavioral barriers to change that every leader faces and provides a powerful solution that every leader can apply. Based on the business results we have achieved, I can tell you unequivocally that the process Loretta describes in this book works.”

J. LaMont Keen,  
President and CEO,  
Idaho Power

“Loretta knows how to build a management team that will give any company a clear competitive advantage. She has described it all in this new book. A book that is sure to make it to the ‘must read’ list of business books in 2009 and beyond.”

Frank Proto,  
Chairman of the Board,  
Agrium Inc.

“This insightful book clearly identifies how behavior sabotages personal and organizational success, and what to do about it. The powerful solution provided by Malandro—100% Accountability—is exactly what every company needs, especially today.”

Greg Stewart, P.Ag.,  
President and CEO,  
Farm Credit Canada

“At a time of unprecedented challenges to complicated academic and research institutions and when complacency from past successes collides with the harshness of today’s environment, new leadership solutions are required. This thought provoking book provides leaders with new perspectives and skills that can be of immediate impact.”

Michael A. Friedman, MD,  
President and CEO,  
City of Hope

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# Introduction

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I was having a cup of coffee with a CEO of a global company when he said, “I’m a big fan of leadership books. I love learning all the latest concepts like synergism, emotional intelligence, team learning, and dialogue. But I have absolutely no idea how to apply them.” This wasn’t the first time I had heard this comment. Several months prior, I was speaking to a group of executives from the energy industry. The CEO of a major utility company came up after my presentation and said, “I like your explanation of how to build a high performance organization in such a no-nonsense manner. I know what I want, but I don’t know how to get there. Would you help me?”

It took one more encounter for the message to hit home. I was working with a senior leader who had at least a half dozen leadership books on his desk. He said, “According to these books, I need to develop my attunement, orchestrate a massive cascade, harmonize individual energies, and be a pathfinder. All I want is an aligned team. How the heck do I do this?”

The message snapped into place: CEOs, executives, and leaders wanted to know how to take intellectual abstraction and turn it into practical action that could be integrated into the fabric of their organizations.

Although every organization is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all approach, it was clear to me that leaders needed a comprehensive road map for how to engage and align people to work together effectively to achieve enterprise objectives. These leaders viewed transforming their organization as an urgent priority. They wanted a method that would accomplish this transformation during their tenure in office, not a long, arduous, intergenerational process.

Our organization, Malandro Communication, had developed and perfected a methodology that was now in its maturity stage (approaching 30 years) and had successfully helped hundreds of organizations worldwide

across all industries get to where they wanted to go, fast. From years of experience, we had gathered irrefutable data and case examples of how organizational change is unsustainable without behavioral change. The knowledge and expertise in this book were developed from working with thousands of executives and leaders in diverse industries—from Fortune 500 to midsize companies in Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe, South Africa, South America, and the United States.

When executives and leaders call on us, they are either frustrated with the slow pace of change or completely unhinged by the fact that change isn't happening at all. They tell us that they have tried everything but still have unaligned leaders, disengaged employees, silos, and unhealthy competition. These leaders are unwilling to settle for less; they know exactly what they want: the shortest and most effective route to mobilize people to deliver unprecedented business results.

Our group identified and documented common blind spots of leaders and teams that derailed major initiatives, process and system changes, careers, and long-term organizational success. What became evident was the courage required of leaders to successfully transform their organizations. These fearless leaders confronted their blind spots, turned values into explicit behavioral standards, provided people with the tools to learn and apply new behaviors, and integrated them into how business was conducted on a daily basis. This is *fearless leadership*: taking a bold stand, acting decisively, and engaging with others in an extraordinary way.

This book is for leaders who are unwilling to tolerate anything less than aligned and highly engaged people. It is for leaders who want to take their team, group, or organization to the next level of performance. It is for leaders who are frustrated with complacency, the slow rate of change, and recurring breakdowns between people and groups.

This book will make a difference for you if any (or all) of the following is true:

- You want to develop your leadership effectiveness to engage and align people and mobilize them to action.
- You want to successfully navigate your company through large-scale change.

- You want to optimize organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and you know much more can be achieved.
- You are frustrated with the slow pace of organizational change and the lack of sustainability: nothing seems to stick.
- You have noticed that your level of enthusiasm and passion are not what they used to be, and this is unacceptable to you.
- You are frustrated by ineffective teamwork, unproductive meetings, lack of collaboration, and a negative work environment.
- You are concerned about the low level of employee engagement in spite of numerous attempts to raise it.
- You want to build a team, business, or organization that is best of breed.

Perhaps you have encountered a roadblock or hit an impasse in your personal leadership effectiveness. Nothing has changed in your commitment and you continue to put in long hours, but something is missing—something is holding you back. Your mind may be wandering to the land of “what if?” “What if I change my job, change my organization, change profession, change location, change career, change my boss, change companies?” You have been asking every “what if” question except one:

*What if you discover that behavioral blind spots are the barrier and change that first?*

That’s why I’ve written this book—to help you with that very question, *before* you change anything else. *Fearless Leadership* provides you with a proven methodology for expanding your capacity to achieve maximum effectiveness in any circumstance. This book is for leaders who have the inner strength and courage to demand the highest level of accountability and integrity from themselves and others. This is leadership in its truest sense.

I have spent my career surrounded by fearless leaders, and I cannot imagine a world without them. They have inspired and moved me. Over the years we have worked with courageous leaders to take on the most daunting challenges, and have triumphed. We have helped them expand their effectiveness and accelerate long-term organizational success with the methodology described in this book: 100% Accountability™. This methodology engages people to turn fundamental values into a uniform behavioral framework that raises the level of performance and results.

After receiving my Ph.D. in communication theory and research from Florida State University, I served as a professor at Florida State and Arizona State universities. In 1980, I started my company, and one of my early clients recommended me to an executive at IBM, where I was asked to develop and deliver leadership programs at their corporate headquarters in Armonk, New York. IBM leaders grew my company as they asked for more services worldwide. Word spread and my organization grew, which led to our working with leaders in many prestigious corporations and institutions.

In this book, I share the solutions we have discovered through working with thousands of leaders and executives. Part I focuses on identifying the behavioral barriers that prevent leadership and organizational transformation—blind spots—and what triggers them. Part II reveals how to master a methodology for transforming yourself and your organization, and unleashing the power of people to deliver exceptional results.

Throughout the book, I've included case examples based on our work with many different organizations—though of course, the companies and individuals have been given fictitious names. Some examples are composites to better illustrate a specific point. In addition to these real-life examples, which bring these problems and solutions to life, I've included questionnaires, guidelines, and tools to help you master an extraordinary way of engaging with others.

Finally, each chapter ends with a section on *leadership exploration* and *leadership action* because this book is not meant to be a theoretical, interesting-to-read, put-on-your-shelf book; it's intended to propel you, your team, and your organization into action.

My commitment to you is that our exploration together catapults you into a new era of leadership. It is my objective to provide you with a compelling call to be a fearless leader who plays big and expands the capacity of people and the organization to survive and succeed. Let's get started.

# Chapter 1

## What It Means to Be a Fearless Leader

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*The price of greatness is responsibility.*

—WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874–1965)

**W**e need fearless leaders. Not one, but many. In times of chaos and uncertainty, as well as in good times, we need leaders who take a bold stand, act decisively, and engage with others in an extraordinary way.

You have two choices in front of you. One path is comfortable, safe, and familiar; the goal is to improve something you are already doing or fine-tune your blueprint for success. People are content with your decision to make incremental changes because it only requires modest effort from them.

The second choice compels you to move in a new direction and create a new reality. Even though this new direction requires additional effort, people are inspired by your courage to take a bold stand and act decisively. They willingly give you their energy, enthusiasm, and emotional commitment. This second choice requires *fearless leadership*—the courage to risk what is safe and comfortable to achieve a much higher level of success.

You have the power to shape the future. This is not in question. But do you have the courage to take a bold stand and transform the capacity and capability of people and the organization to achieve much more?

Fearless leadership is not a concept; it is an action. It is defined by the choices you make, how you take accountability for results and people, and how you interact with others.

### **Fearless Leadership**

The courage to take a bold stand, act decisively, and engage with others in an extraordinary way.

It does not matter what you do or where you are in the organization. Title, position, status, and hierarchy do not characterize fearless leadership; it is defined by behavior, attitude, and results. You have the power to transform what you and others can create and achieve together. What you need is a powerful process for how people work together to make change happen fast and keep it going through good times and difficult challenges. This book provides you with a road map for transforming your leadership effectiveness, your team, and your organization.

In this chapter, we begin with the question, “What is holding us back?” which must be answered on two levels: what is holding *you* back, and what is holding your team or organization back?

Together we explore

- The promise and results of fearless leadership
- How changing behavior can change what an organization can achieve
- Why the organization doesn’t change until the leaders do
- How a clear vision is blocked by vague behavioral standards
- The critical difference between gaining commitment versus unleashing commitment
- How fearless leadership is defined by extraordinary behavior, attitude, and results

You have a choice about the future—how you engage with others, how you contribute to the organization, and how you shape and influence change. The choice in front of you now is, “Are you willing to face the enemy head on and confront anything that is in the way of your optimal effectiveness and the organization’s success?”

## **THE PROMISE AND RESULTS OF FEARLESS LEADERSHIP**

Your business success as a leader is measured by the speed at which you produce results and bring new realities into existence. Fearless leadership provides you with the methodology and tools to unite and mobilize people to work together effectively in a way that drives change throughout the organization.

The promise of fearless leadership is fast individual and organizational transformation. It takes only one person to start the process. You have the ability to influence change and dramatically increase engagement, alignment, and business results. As a fearless leader, you have

- The capacity to eliminate barriers that block your leadership effectiveness
- The courage to take a stand and act decisively with renewed confidence and passion
- The freedom to choose a new level of participation and engagement
- The methodology and tools to transform individuals, teams, and organizations

Fearless leadership provides you with a methodology for breaking the cycle of unproductive and automatic behavior, and it teaches you and others how to engage in an extraordinary way. The first part of the book is designed to help you understand and identify blind spots and talk about them in a constructive way so you can overcome them. The second part helps you drive business results by creating a powerful context for organizational change, taking a bold leadership stand, and building trust and aligned action.

Building a high performance organization and positive work environment does not need to be a slow and laborious process. In traditional change processes, people are often the unwilling recipients of imposed change, which muddles the reaction and produces ineffective results. However, with fearless leadership, people choose to engage emotionally as well as intellectually, which alters organizational capability. The result: your most disbelieving and cynical people become the champions of change.

Organizations move rapidly from an ad hoc management approach to building a standard process and foundation for a world-class company.

People, strategy, and operations come together in a simple, fast, and effective manner as everyone applies a shared methodology for working together as committed partners.

It all sounds too good to be true. If fearless leadership is fast and easy to achieve, you may be thinking, then why isn't *everyone* using it? There is a caveat: to transform your organization, you must have the courage to examine your behavior and lead the way. If you want a recipe for how to fix others, this is it: fix yourself first, and others will respond to your commitment and follow suit.

### **THE NUMBER 1 LEADERSHIP QUESTION: “WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK?”**

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“Nothing is changing fast enough,” said a frustrated CEO. “We have good people, good values, and a strong strategy, but change around here is painfully slow or just doesn't happen.”

Frustrated with the slow pace of change, executives ask, “What is holding us back?” Employees, discouraged with countless ineffective change efforts, ask, “Why is this time any different?” People are not aligned, initiatives are derailed, and the organization does not transform.

The traditional formula for organizational success—good people, good values, and good strategy—is woefully inadequate to meet today's challenges. Although the traditional formula remains a necessary foundation for success, leaders who play a big-stakes game know they need to go beyond the formula. They understand that a complex and changing environment requires a new way of thinking and behaving. They anticipate challenges, continually envision what is needed, and ask the tough questions:

- “What is holding us back?”
- “What is preventing us from achieving a new level of performance?”
- “What is stopping our organization from moving faster, being more innovative, agile, and effective?”
- “What is stopping us from engaging our people to work more effectively together?”
- “What is blocking us from taking charge of our future and accomplishing what others believe is impossible?”

Here is the problem: How people behave and work together determines the success or failure of major change initiatives. Yet when leaders answer the question, “What is holding us back?” most focus exclusively on organizational change and fail to address the need for behavioral change.

The majority of leaders do not recognize the significant role that behavior plays in achieving the business results they want. The reality is that competent individuals do not spontaneously come together as a high performance team. A constructive and empowering work environment does not suddenly appear because the organization has been restructured. People do not routinely work effectively together because it is the right thing to do. Leaders do not align just because the organization has an aggressive strategy, clear vision, and strong values.

When people are emotionally disconnected from the organization and its leaders, they behave in counterproductive ways. They work in silos, fight for resources, and comply with directives but are uninspired.

Vision, mission, and values alone are insufficient for producing sustainable behavioral change. What most organizations are missing is a uniform process for people to align, collaborate, and work together across organizational boundaries. Without a standardized process, unproductive behavioral norms evolve by default. New rules of engagement are required to transform core values into an enduring behavioral framework that unites people to deliver exceptional results.

Although productive behavior is learned, unproductive behavior is automatic. People react instinctively to protect their interests, which results in unhealthy competition, defending turf, and divisiveness.

You already have a behavioral norm in your organization, but you may not be happy with the one you have. If you are experiencing recurring problems, a lackluster environment, low employee engagement, lack of leadership alignment, or ineffective and slow change, then the likelihood is high that the issue is behavioral. In the example below, Karl, the CEO of a global mining organization, failed to recognize a serious behavioral problem—the animosity between business units that was undermining the enterprise. Instead, he misdiagnosed the problem and fixated on organizational and structural change.

## **The Futile Endeavor of Trying to Manage People Issues with Business Solutions**

Karl was comfortable troubleshooting business problems but uncomfortable managing people issues. Instead of dealing with behavioral issues head on, he focused on structural and organizational changes.

**What Happened.** After two years of infighting and undermining between business units, Karl asked his senior group what the Board had asked him: “What are you going to do about this?” Karl and his team argued and blamed each other, and they finally decided that the problem between business units could be fixed by restructuring a major division and replacing two managing directors. Not once did they examine, “How is our *behavior* as the senior team contributing to this problem?”

**The Impact.** A costly restructuring effort missed the point entirely; the real issue was the lack of leadership alignment and partnership. Leaders throughout the organization were discouraged and resigned; they felt that their input was not heard, valued, or considered.

In the end, senior leaders focused on organizational change but neglected to alter their behavior and transform how leaders worked together. Twelve months later, employee engagement scores hit an all time low and identified the lack of trust in leadership as the primary reason for the pessimistic and negative work environment. Top talent left the company for brighter prospects while Karl and his team remained mired in the same behavioral issues between business units.

**Lesson Learned.** Business solutions do not solve behavioral issues. Lack of leadership alignment and the absence of collaboration can be resolved only by confronting the underlying behavioral issues that perpetuate the problem.

You cannot transform an organization without transforming leadership behavior. Lasting behavioral change does not occur with traditional organizational change efforts. But change how leaders behave and you alter what the organization can achieve.

## Behavior Drives Results

Business results are in direct proportion to how people work together. When leaders are not aligned and employees are not engaged, even the most brilliant business strategy will not succeed. How people behave and relate to the organization, coworkers, and leaders determines what is achieved. Unproductive behavior takes up your time, frustrates everyone in its path, and prevents the company from achieving its goals.

Nothing works when people are not working together.

You cannot change how people behave with mandates, slogans, or programs-of-the-month. No amount of cajoling, persuading, or threatening will alter what people do. People will continue to behave in the same way; they will just take it underground where you cannot see it. The grapevine is the strongest communication network in companies that do not have an open and safe environment.

A culture of accountability is the hallmark of world-class organizations. These companies place a significant emphasis on how to maximize the value and contributions of people. They are distinguished by their unrelenting drive to create an environment in which people can perform at their best. Take a look at the top 10 attributes of the world's most successful companies shown below. As you read the list, identify which features apply to your organization and which attributes you need to develop.

You may clearly see the need for engaging and aligning people, but you may be looking for change in all the wrong places. Misdiagnosing people issues leads to (1) costly and ineffective business solutions—process and system changes—that do not resolve the underlying issues, and (2) an inconsistent leadership approach that lacks standardization and uniformity about how people are expected to behave.

Let's return to the question, "What is holding leaders and organizations back?" Transformation begins when leaders *choose* to change their behavior. The frequently misunderstood barrier to change is *behavioral blind spots*—automatic and unproductive behavior that blocks leadership effectiveness, organizational change, and business results.

### The Top 10 Differences for the World's Most Admired Companies

1. **More effective at building clarity.** They are better at implementing strategy and simplifying complex organization structures.
2. **Have a stronger culture of accountability.** They excel at driving strategic accountability right down through the organization.
3. **Pay more attention to customers and growth.** They place greater focus on customer loyalty and long-term growth in performance measures.
4. **Are better at working across the organization and operating globally.** They place much more importance on leaders' working cross-organizationally, are more effective at it, and get more value from it.
5. **Have a stronger focus on innovation and resilience.** They are more effective at creating a culture of innovation and building resilience into the organization.
6. **Are better at climate management.** They more clearly understand the culture and more actively manage the climate of the organization.
7. **Have a stronger focus on people.** They are more effective at managing employee engagement and stronger commitment to internal development.
8. **Have a stronger focus on succession planning.** They apply a broader and more consistent approach to talent management.
9. **Have stronger leadership and focus on the top team.** Leaders are significantly better at self-management, empathy, teamwork, and collaboration.
10. **Are better at rewarding and giving recognition to attract and retain talent.** They have a stronger focus on total reward for and recognition of top performance.

*Source:* Adapted from a presentation by David Sissons, Vice President of Hay Group, Toronto, Canada, June 5, 2008.

## **THE LEADERSHIP IMPASSE: BLIND TO BLIND SPOTS**

Blind spots include an entire array of ineffective and damaging behaviors such as conspiring against others, exhibiting an “I know” attitude, blaming people and circumstances, or treating commitments casually. In Chapter 2, we explore the 10 most common blind spots that derail leaders. For now, it is important to understand that both individuals and teams have blind spots that limit their effectiveness. Before you become hopeful that your company has escaped this malady, let me assure you that everyone has blind spots, even you. No one is immune, from CEOs to staff; blind spots abound in organizations of all sizes, geographic locations, and industries.

### **Behavioral Blind Spots**

Unproductive behavior that undermines business results and working relationships.

Behavioral blind spots are similar to the blind spots we encounter when driving a vehicle. When driving, there are areas of the road that you cannot see while looking forward or through either rearview or side mirrors. Without other aids or adjustments of mirrors, blind spots can cause a serious accident. Most of us have experienced a time when we narrowly missed an alarming accident. As you begin to pull into a lane, you hear the blast of a horn from an angry driver just in time to avert a collision. Your heartbeat jumps, adrenalin pumps, and you quickly pull back into your lane. If you have had this experience, you will recognize the similarities between vehicular blind spots and behavioral blind spots:

1. They both have potential for causing serious damage.
2. They occur spontaneously and automatically.
3. There is no intention to hurt or injure another.

However, there is one significant difference between vehicular blind spots and behavioral blind spots: most people do not know that behavioral blind spots exist. Leaders who are blind to their blind spots have no way of avoiding repetitive breakdowns or having a negative impact on others. Self-awareness is essential in fearless leadership; without understanding how they impact others, leaders cannot alter their effectiveness and ability to influence others.

The challenge with blind spots is that you can readily see them in others, but you cannot see them in yourself. When you are blind to blind spots, you are left with poor choices such as working around people, tolerating ineffectiveness, and putting up with recurring problems.

The fastest way to cause morale to plummet is to deny that blind spots exist or ignore them and hope they go away. Either way, people become resigned when leaders do not take accountability for their impact on others. Then the inevitable happens: people give up believing that real change can take place.

When leaders are blind to their blind spots, they unintentionally create havoc in the organization, as revealed in the story below.

### **One Leader's Unrewarding Search for "New Dogs"**

Aileen, the CEO of an international insurance company, saw the need for transformational change but she constantly focused on the deficiencies of others and ignored her role in leading change.

**What Happened.** Disgusted with the lack of leadership alignment, she threatened her senior team: *"If something doesn't change around here, I'm going to get new dogs to pull the sled."* Aileen's warning did not change behavior in a positive direction.

Exasperated, she fired her COO, reassigned an executive to another department, and brought in replacements. But even with "new dogs," the same problems remained. After the honeymoon period, leaders were still not aligned and execution continued to suffer.

**The Impact.** Aileen's new dog solution failed because there was still an *old dog* leading the pack: her. Her unwillingness to examine her impact as a leader was crippling to the group. Three other executives left the company, and Aileen struggled with a team that was not aligned but merely tolerated her leadership. Employees, disgruntled with mixed messages, divided into camps and backed the leader of their choice. The company lost major contracts, experienced a high turnover, and was unable to retain top talent. The senior group went from bad to worse, and in the end, the Board asked Aileen to resign.

**Lesson Learned.** Transformation starts with the leaders; if the leaders focus on changing others, they will fail. The fastest way to produce broad-based change is for leaders to alter their behavior, demonstrate accountability, and model what they expect from others.

When you cannot see a problem or do not believe there is a problem, nothing can be addressed. You will continue to do what you have always done, and when your behavior is unproductive, others will compensate by working around or avoiding you.

When leaders are unwilling to acknowledge and address their blind spots, the new dog solution of changing others becomes the easiest and most obvious thing to do. Here is the problem with this approach: people become resigned when leaders are unwilling to take accountability for their blind spots. When the leaders are rigid and inflexible, people adopt the belief that nothing can change.

Because team members have no way to communicate or address the leaders' blind spots in a safe environment, they do not speak up. The result: people shrink the game, reduce their focus to their area of responsibility, and performance suffers. They let leaders fend for themselves, and they emotionally withdraw from the team.

Before bringing in new dogs, leaders should stop and address the blind spots that keep their teams from performing at their optimal levels. If leaders ignore that step, even their most highly effective teams with talented people can become resigned, resulting in unproductive, automatic behavior.

One of the powerful tools you will learn in the chapters that follow is to identify how your behavior impacts your coworkers and team. By recognizing and overcoming your blind spots, you will learn how to increase your ability to unite and inspire others. When teams authentically confront their blind spots—individually and collectively—they openly discuss and resolve difficult issues, and resignation disappears. A cohesive, enthusiastic, and committed team emerges.

**Change how people behave and you change what the organization can achieve.**

Blind spots are automatic, mechanical, and unconscious behaviors. They occur spontaneously and habitually, and they get worse in times of stress and anxiety. Unless you understand the hold that the automatic behavior has on you and others, you cannot alter it. Fearless leadership brings a clear distinction between automatic behavior and extraordinary behavior, which is covered in Chapter 5, “Changing Your Direction and Taking a Bold Stand.”

To better grasp automatic behavior, it is important to understand that there is a positive intention behind most unproductive behavior. People, as a rule, do not intend to hurt, damage, or undermine others.

The question I have for you is, are you willing to examine your blind spots? We begin this process in earnest in Chapter 2. Keep in mind that (1) everyone has blind spots, and (2) blind spots are not bad, wrong, or malicious. They are automatic behaviors that each person experiences but no one talks about.

### **You Get What You Tolerate**

What happens when companies ignore unproductive behavior? Our group worked with the CEO of a major business consulting company, who was experiencing challenges with his senior team. It became evident that there was one person in the group who was a lightning rod—we’ll call him Doug. The rest of the group felt that the CEO let Doug get away with everything. Doug was condescending and made sarcastic comments such as “What’s on your alleged mind?” He was personal in his insults. But because he was one of the top producers in the company, the CEO tolerated his behavior, and Doug was not held accountable for his impact. This sent a message to the organization that behavioral standards were applied inconsistently and arbitrarily.

It is not uncommon to see people spar with each other in meetings and nobody does anything to stop it. Even though it prolongs the meeting and makes the group unproductive, team members do not even acknowledge the problem. They simply allow the behavior and tension to continue. They are resigned and believe: “There’s nothing we can do, and we are not accountable for how people behave.”

### **The Unspoken Organizational Norm**

Unproductive behavior is banned in principle but tolerated in practice.

In every organization, you can find a lack of teamwork, ineffective working relationships, and leaders who are not aligned. In a business-as-usual environment, low behavioral standards are tolerated, and people avoid unpleasant or uncomfortable conversations.

When was the last time you had a difficult conversation with an individual or put an issue on the table that made everyone uncomfortable? The more important question is, “What important conversations have you been postponing or unwilling to have?”

Because people are uncomfortable discussing behavior, they avoid the real issues and allow problems to fester. Most people do not know how to talk about behavior and blind spots in a positive manner, so they don’t. Their belief is they have less chance of damaging the relationship by *not* talking about sensitive issues. When leaders do not deal with behavior in a consistent and effective manner, a new organizational norm emerges; unproductive behavior is banned in principle but tolerated in practice.

Without knowing it, you may be endorsing a behavioral standard that is undermining your leadership effectiveness and eating away at organizational performance. Leaders become so accustomed to unproductive behavior that they silently endorse it. When the real issues are not addressed and leaders are unwilling to confront their blind spots, people slow down or halt the progress of initiatives and change efforts.

Let’s begin by examining the organizational norm that exists by default on your team or in your company. Answering the questions in Exhibit 1-1 will help you examine the behaviors you are tolerating in yourself and others.

Putting up with inconsistent and low standards of behavior impedes your effectiveness and thwarts organizational change. If you are tolerating something, chances are you are either unaware that you have accepted subpar behavior, or you are resigned that you cannot influence the change that is needed in your organization.

<p><b>Directions:</b> Using the scale below, complete the following assessment individually and with your team.</p> <p><b>Scale:</b></p> <p>1—Have not observed      2—Rarely      3—Some of the time          4—Frequently      5—Consistently</p>		
Behaviors	Your Assessment	Team Assessment
1. Do you feel there are unresolved issues and problems that surface again and again?		
2. Are there unresolved conflicts between individuals on your team?		
3. Are there unresolved conflicts between your team and other groups in the organization?		
4. Is the work environment disempowering (unconstructive, uninspiring, pessimistic, or negative)?		
5. Do you align in meetings but conspire against others outside of meetings?		
6. Do you tolerate unproductive behavior in meetings?		
7. Does your organization ignore unproductive behavior or address it inconsistently?		
8. Do you talk behind each other's back instead of talking directly to each other?		
9. Do you trust the senior leaders?		
10. Do you trust the team leader and/or other immediate leaders?		
11. Do you trust the team members, and do they trust you?		
12. Do you hold others accountable for delivering on commitments?		
13. Do you blame, point the finger at, or complain about others or circumstances?		
14. Do you protect and defend your area (silo) to the exclusion of doing what is best for the enterprise as a whole?		
15. Do you have an unspoken truce with others to not hold each other accountable (that is, not to call each other out)?		

**EXHIBIT 1-1:** *Identifying Unproductive Behavior*

## THE ORGANIZATION DOESN'T CHANGE UNTIL THE LEADERS DO

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There is a sequence that must be followed in order to transform an organization. It is straightforward: leaders must go first. Leadership transformation is the precursor for organizational change. Leaders must take accountability for their blind spots, demonstrate how to work in committed partnerships, and build an environment where people are passionately focused on the enterprise mission.

**Leadership transformation is the precursor to organizational transformation.**

As we discussed earlier, changing the organization does not guarantee a change in behavior. Changing behavior, however, decisively alters the organization. All eyes are on leaders, and when they change their behavior, everyone notices as they did in the case of Andre, the senior vice president of a business unit in a global information services company. After a powerful session with his senior team, Andre delivered the following webcast to his employees:

*“A year ago I felt very concerned about our ability to effectively execute our strategic objectives. I had decided that there were not enough people ‘in the game’—people who were fully committed and ready to do what it takes to produce our business outcomes. I felt as if I were the only one who was engaged, and I felt alone.*

*“I felt our senior team meetings did not lead us to productive action. We debated, argued, and defended our points of view. Several weeks ago, we participated in a leadership session with our consulting partners, and I discovered, much to my surprise, that I was not in the game. Instead, I was in the stands judging and evaluating others rather than partnering and supporting. My attention was on what others needed to do or change. What I learned was that leadership starts with me—what I need to do and change.*

*“What we need is to be an organization that works in partnership to capitalize on the diverse talents and contributions of our people.*

*What I need is to take accountability for my leadership. I learned several lessons that I want to share with you:*

**Lesson 1.** *Nothing is ever accomplished alone; it is only accomplished through partnership.*

**Lesson 2.** *All action occurs in the game. The only thing that happens in the stands is that you get to be right about your point of view.*

**Lesson 3.** *I am not perfect and I need coaching.*

*“I have a lot to learn, and I am up for the challenge. I need your partnership and support. Will you join me in learning how to work together as committed partners?”*

Andre’s webcast is a demonstration of courage. The moment he took accountability for his blind spots, others enthusiastically came on board. The response he received from his message was overwhelming. People asked, “How can I get involved?” “How can I learn these new skills?” and “What can I do to help the leaders and the organization transform?”

You cannot alter the direction of your organization without fearless leadership. People are counting on you. They need you to take the first step and demonstrate your unshakable resolve to transform yourself and the organization. Even the most skeptical are receptive to a courageous leader who takes a stand, acts decisively, and engages with others in an extraordinary way.

There are two factors that are instrumental to understanding transformation: (1) the importance of clear and explicit behavioral standards and (2) the distinction between gaining commitment versus unleashing commitment.

## **Clear Business Vision Blocked by Vague Behavioral Standards**

Interestingly, most leaders provide clear and explicit *business* expectations but fail to provide the same when it comes to *behavior*.

I have two questions for you:

1. Do you clearly articulate explicit *behavioral* expectations?

2. Do you provide individuals and teams with the resources and tools to learn, standardize, and integrate new behaviors?

I am not referring to a list of competencies, strengths, or values. I am referring to a precise and clear list of behaviors that individuals and teams can learn. Most organizations do not have uniform, consistent, and standard behaviors, and they do not provide people with a means to learn new skills. When stress and uncertainty are high, people need a stable set of rules that define how they engage. Shared behaviors unite and inspire people. They allow everyone to be powerful and resourceful in addressing and resolving issues and in advancing the business agenda. In this dynamic culture, people are committed to the success of each other and do not allow unproductive behaviors to undermine business results.

The following are common, but inaccurate, assumptions that leaders make:

**“Our company values describe our behavioral expectations.”**

*Wrong.* Company values provide important guiding concepts and principles; however, they do *not* delineate behavior. People need *shared behavioral standards* to translate your company’s values into action that can be applied in day-to-day business interactions—*and you need to lead the way by telling them explicitly what those standards are.*

**“Good behavior only requires common sense.”** *Wrong.*

Interacting effectively with others, especially where cultural differences are involved, is a learned behavior. And you, as a fearless leader, need to teach that behavior by your actions. For example, people need to see how you and senior leaders recover from mistakes, so they know they can do the same. They need you to model the behavior you expect of them.

**“Telling people I expect them to work together is enough.”**

*Wrong.* Top-down messages about teamwork and collaboration do not, by themselves, change behavior. People need explicit behavioral expectations—what each company calls good or acceptable behavior. They need to learn, experience, and practice the new behaviors and make them part of the fabric of the organization.

**“According to internal surveys, my team already has trust and alignment.”** *Wrong.* Without third-party confidential surveys, *do not trust the data.* Regardless of how effective you are as a leader, people tell you only what you want to hear. They will not risk their job, career, or good standing with you and others to give you candid and honest feedback—especially when the feedback is on how *you* need to improve your leadership. People need a safe environment and process for talking about blind spots and other tough issues. They need you to foster an open and constructive environment.

If any of the above assumptions apply to your organization, then this book will help you. Establishing clear behavioral expectations is only the first step in providing a framework for organizational effectiveness. You will learn specific behaviors with precise guidelines and skills. These transformational behaviors achieve two objectives: (1) accelerate the accomplishment of business objectives, and (2) produce immediate business results.

### **Gaining Commitment or Unleashing Commitment**

Most organizations do not lack committed people; what they have are highly frustrated committed people. My guess is you have exactly this: people who want your organization to succeed and want to take pride in their accomplishments.

A complaint is nothing more than a frustrated commitment. When people are resigned and discouraged, they complain, blame, and engage in unhealthy competition. This unproductive behavior does not mean they lack commitment. In fact, the opposite is true. People exert their energy only when they care. When they do not care, they simply withdraw, emotionally and/or physically.

Most organizations do not lack committed people; what they have are highly *frustrated* committed people.

If you are serious about organizational transformation, you must answer a fundamental question: “Do you want to gain commitment from people, or unleash the commitment they already have?” If your answer is to gain commitment, you are starting with the assumption that it does not exist.

Your focus will be on what is missing, what you do not have, and what is defective, inadequate, or insufficient. Therefore, your solutions will also focus on “fixing” people, systems, and processes.

When your purpose is to unleash the commitment of people, you bring compassion and heartfelt understanding. You seek to understand how people have become resigned, and you gain an appreciation for the depth of their caring and commitment. You grasp that people truly want to give you the best they have but they do not know how to do this.

The automatic response to people when they are resigned is “You shouldn’t feel this way” or “You need to get over this.” But when you understand that resignation is a frustrated commitment, you can appreciate and care for people in a new way. When others know that you understand their disappointment and struggle, they give you their emotional commitment. With this, you can create a powerful and inspiring platform to help people renew their confidence and enthusiasm.

Unleashing the commitment of people sets the framework for transformation. Leaders who have the view that people are inadequate, insufficient, or not committed commonly display emotions of disappointment, anger, and frustration. It is hard for anyone to be inspired by these emotions, including the leaders.

If you start with the belief that you already have committed people, you will avoid the common pitfall of acting as if something is missing. When you unleash the commitment of people, you have everything you need. The power of your change effort comes from believing in people and helping them feel reenergized, emotionally connected, and passionate about shaping the future.

To build a positive platform for change, your focus must shift from fixing people to empowering them. To do that, people need to know you believe in them. The only way to convey your belief in them is to communicate with them authentically. They will view anything less than that as dishonest or false, and you will lose credibility and trust.

You are ready to pursue fearless leadership if you believe

- People have an inner need to do their best.
- People want to have a purpose, not just a job.
- People want to be fully engaged.

- People give their effort and enthusiasm when they are inspired.
- People produce extraordinary results when they work together as a winning team.

## **FEARLESS LEADERSHIP IS DEFINED BY BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDE, AND RESULTS**

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Leaders are often categorized as being results oriented or people oriented. Fearless leaders excel at both. They have the ability to connect with people and mobilize them to action that delivers exceptional business results.

The extraordinary way in which fearless leaders work together is what allows aligned, cohesive, and seamless teams to emerge. A high performance team requires fearless leaders. These teams are distinguished from business-as-usual groups by their behavior, attitude, and results.

Let's work with an accurate description of teams versus groups. Business-as-usual groups are not really teams at all; they are "bands of individuals" because they lack the solidarity, camaraderie, and cohesion of high performance teams. In traditional groups, members deny they have blind spots and cover up their mistakes in an effort to look good and be right. Group members lack trust and respect for one another and are often divisive and adversarial. Many business-as-usual groups appear polite and affable, but this is a pretense that masks unresolved bitterness between individuals. One client described her "polite group" as follows: "No one drives the debate or pushes issues forcefully enough, and we don't give each other the real, hard feedback. I'm exhausted at the end of each long meeting."

**What cannot be addressed, cannot be resolved.**

Unresolved issues sap everyone's energy.

Business-as-usual groups are indirect, underhanded, and conspire against each other and the organization. Although this may sound harsh, it is an accurate description of how traditional groups behave. This is not malicious behavior; it is automatic behavior.

Often people are unaware of their impact on others. And even those people who are aware often lack the skill set to address unproductive behavior in a productive way.

A pivotal difference between high performance teams and business-as-usual groups is that high performance teams identify, confront, and overcome blind spots. By having a method for talking about blind spots and building committed partnerships, these teams quickly resolve issues and keep the team performing at an optimal level.

Here is what characterizes high performance teams:

- Team members openly coach each other on blind spots and quickly correct unproductive behavior and resolve issues.
- Each member takes personal accountability for his or her impact on others.
- Team members collaborate with all other members to achieve strategic business objectives.
- Each member checks his or her ego at the door and sets aside personal agendas to achieve a greater mission—that of enterprise success.
- Each member commits to the success of all others and eliminates blame and silos.
- Team members hold each other accountable for high standards of behavior.

Do you take a stand and act decisively even when it is uncomfortable? If not, I want you to know that you can learn how to achieve this and increase your leadership effectiveness. Taking a stand requires you to go against the common advice of “blend in, don’t stand out, and let others put themselves on the line.”

Fearless leaders have the courage to take a stand even when there is no agreement or support from others. One stand you must take in leading others is to define uniform behavioral standards and teach people how to work together in committed partnerships. You will learn more about this in detail in Chapter 5.

Fearless leaders instill passion by building committed partnerships with employees, customers, communities, and other key stakeholders. The attitude of the entire organization shifts as a positive and constructive environment is created. People make the personal choice to be fearless leaders not because they have to but because they want to. They are exhilarated when they discover they have the power to influence and shape the future.

Victim and entitlement mentality is replaced by ownership, and people speak up and take accountability for enterprise results. There is an endless buzz of greatness that motivates people to do more than they believed was possible. It takes only one leader to confront resignation and transform others.

In a business-as-usual environment, you will hear, “I’m burdened, I’m pressured, I have too much to do and not enough time,” and “If others would get their act together, I could do my job.” This attitude adds a heaviness and weight to the organization and stifles leaders who are committed to aggressive goals. In a business-as-usual culture, complacency prevails, and everything is dragged down by a pessimistic view of circumstances and people.

Fearless leaders produce exceptional results by interrupting the cycle of automatic and unproductive behavior. They end suspicion, turf wars, and victim mentality and do not allow leaders to work in isolation. They build an organization where performance, innovation, productivity, and employee engagement soar. Lewis, a CEO of a financial organization, recognized the need for organizational change even though the company reported solid earnings.

### **When a Leader Is Not Willing to Settle for “Good Enough”**

The company had good business results in spite of leaders and employees engaging in counterproductive behavior. Lewis saw opportunities for growth and was not content to allow people to be complacent. Over several years, the company brought in four different consulting groups to address the lack of leadership alignment and low employee engagement. But his leaders continued to “chew up the consulting groups and spit them out,” as Lewis described it.

**What Happened.** We became Lewis’s fifth consulting group. We worked with Lewis and his senior team in a leadership session during which he confronted his blind spots and inspired others to do the same. Addressing years of unresolved issues lifted a considerable weight off the team. By the end of the session, they were committed to each other and fully aligned.

**The Impact.** Word spread quickly about the senior team's new behavior, and people tested the senior leaders to make sure it would last. They found that leaders who were former adversaries now worked well together.

Lewis and his senior leadership team chose to transform the entire company starting with their leadership body of 200. Leaders and employees learned the same behaviors and methodology for working together in high performance teams and transformed the organization. The turnaround: profits increased tenfold, and the portfolio grew from \$4.5 billion to over \$15 billion. Product innovation soared with 60 percent of the business coming from new products. The company was publicly recognized as one of the top 10 employers in Canada, and employee engagement scores, measured by an outside third party, climbed from 69 percent to 85 percent.

**Lesson Learned.** It takes only one leader to start the process and build a high performance organization. Lewis did not wait for things to happen; he made things happen. His courage to transform the leadership body, then the organization, inspired everyone to learn and grow. The company transformed from “good enough” to becoming a world-class organization in which people today continue to produce unprecedented business results.

Fearless leaders like Lewis create a powerful context for change and unleash people's courage. They create an environment in which people take 100% accountability for business results and their impact on others. In this uncommon atmosphere, people work together as committed partners and stand for the success of each other. They coach each other on blind spots, turn automatic behavior into extraordinary behavior, and rapidly resolve challenges.

## **IT ONLY TAKES ONE PERSON TO CHANGE**

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You do not need to wait for others to change or hope that the organization will wake up and transform. You have the power to influence change, and fearless leadership provides you with the methodology.

But before you sign up for fearless leadership, you need to know that it is not for everyone; it is only for people who want to play big. It is for leaders who want to accomplish extraordinary results, achieve high aspirations, and who are willing to take accountability and act instead of sitting on the sidelines. It is a choice to be greater, live by your highest ideals, and take charge of the future.

When individuals and teams choose to alter how they work with one another, change is fast and permanent, and excitement is contagious. People experience profound personal breakthroughs and reach a higher level of personal effectiveness, fulfillment, and accomplishment. This makes fearless leadership self-replenishing and invigorating. Soon others are asking, “How can I get involved?” This is change at its best. It emerges from people who are on fire at all levels in your organization and want to lead the organization to greatness.

### **The Decision to Be a Fearless Leader Is Yours and Yours Alone**

Fearless leadership is not another change initiative that can be mandated by an organization and top leaders. You do not need approval, agreement, or permission from anyone. This is your decision; you are in charge. This is something you can influence. Regardless of where you are in your organization, you can powerfully lead and shape the future. Here is the caveat: fearless leadership works *only* if you are willing to apply this methodology to yourself first before asking others to embrace it.

You may be a senior leader or an individual contributor; it does not matter. Change starts wherever you are. I often hear people say, “If senior leaders are not willing to do this, then it won’t work.” Certainly, it is more powerful and expedient when senior leaders embrace any change and lead the way for others. However, countless organizations have been highly successful by leading transformational change from the middle of the organization, such as a business or staff unit, and driving it upward. All ways work. With fearless leadership you can start anywhere and go everywhere, so do not limit your creativity and thinking. Think big and generate ideas for how you can apply fearless leadership in your company.

As you take on fearless leadership, resignation will attempt to creep in at every step of the way. It may appear as a thought in your head such as

“Sounds good, but none of this will work in my company.” When you notice yourself becoming resigned, stop and pay attention but do not give in to it. Remember that resignation is an automatic behavior, and as with every automatic behavior, you have a choice. Either you can allow your resignation to dictate what you can achieve, or you can choose to empower your commitment to make change happen.

To clear up any confusion, let me emphatically state: fearless leadership can work in any company. It can work wherever there is a fearless leader who has the courage to start the process and take a bold stand.

## **How to Use This Book**

This book is designed to personally guide you through the obstacles, challenges, and breakthroughs needed to become a fearless leader. I have written it as though you and I are sitting together talking about what is possible for you and what limits you. I have designed this book to be used by individuals and teams to learn how to work together at a new level of effectiveness.

For teams, I recommend you read this book together. Begin by identifying a breakthrough you want to achieve as a group. It may be as straightforward as building trust and committed partnerships. Focus your team breakthrough on a specific business objective so you have a way to measure your progress and effectiveness. For example, identify a priority project or breakdown you want to address. Then identify how trust and committed partnerships will alter your success and the milestones that will demonstrate you are achieving exactly what you want. I also recommend you read the chapters sequentially.

Each chapter builds a step-by-step framework for understanding the methodology of transformation. As building-block chapters, each expands and integrates concepts from the prior one. At the end of each chapter, there are two sections: leadership exploration and leadership actions.

In the leadership exploration section, there are provocative questions to stimulate and push your thinking. Here I am asking you to examine what is occurring with you, your team, and your company in the same way a scientist would use a microscope to see what is not obvious. Do not use these questions as an opportunity to judge yourself, others, or the organi-

zation. Judging and criticizing are not useful; all they do is make you right and everyone else wrong. Our desired outcome is not to discover who is right; it is to discover how you can be more effective.

In the leadership action section, I ask you to implement the new high performance skills and tools you will be learning. By taking specific actions, you will have real-time experiences and success that will inspire you to do more. In working with a team, assign these actions as homework, and debrief the results you achieve (and roadblocks you encounter) at your next meeting. The power of fearless leadership is to apply these skills in the moment, especially when the team is uncomfortable discussing sensitive issues.

### **Your Personal Invitation to Be Extraordinary**

Are you prepared to go the distance and play full out? Are you ready to take the lid off what is possible for you and others, even if you are experiencing feelings of doubt, skepticism, or resignation? If you are, I am inviting you to participate in an extraordinary game—a game in which you have choice, power, and freedom. The price of admission is your willingness and courage to explore

- Who you are as a leader (your stand and commitment)
- How you impact others
- Your effectiveness in rapidly moving people into aligned action
- Your ability to inspire and connect people to a grand vision and mission

To participate in fearless leadership you must throw yourself in the game. You cannot sit in the stands and watch others play. I am asking for your emotional and intellectual commitment. You must be an active participant who is willing to suspend assumptions and beliefs that limit you. You must be willing to change your direction and try a new way to achieve an extraordinary level of leadership effectiveness.

My invitation to you is to produce a breakthrough in who you are as a leader. I am defining a *breakthrough* as a sudden discovery that hits you in a moment and jostles your mind, shaking up an old order in order to allow room for a new one. This “ah-ha” moment gives you a panoramic

perspective you did not have before. I want you to have one ah-ha after another that dramatically expands your ability, choice, and freedom to create new realities. I must warn you, I have no tolerance for breakthroughs that lead only to insight: insight is intellectually stimulating, but what I want from you are breakthroughs that lead to decisive action.

### **Breakthrough**

A sudden discovery that dramatically expands what can be achieved.

Each step of the way, I am going to ask you to make a series of choices. Each choice you elect to make progressively expands your power and freedom to transform. Bring your skepticism, doubt, and disbelief along with your frustration, disappointment, and discouragement. I want it all. Together, we will examine how resignation forms, how to break its grip, and how blind spots and automatic behaviors keep you stuck in an unfulfilling and unrewarding cycle.

Bring your enthusiasm, passion, and commitment. Decide now that anything is possible. Bring your courage to explore uncharted territory, and set aside your need to have all the answers. Trust that you will discover the answers each step of the way.

Bring your unshakable resolve to stay the course and never quit, even when you encounter breakdowns and roadblocks. As you build committed partnerships, you discover strength in partners who will stand shoulder to shoulder with you to overcome any challenge.

You are not alone, and you do not need to tolerate anything. By the end of this book, you will have the tools to take charge and make change happen. If you bring your courage, I will provide the rest. We need fearless leaders to restore our organizations and people to high levels of accountability and integrity. We need fearless leaders who are willing to take a stand and do what's right for right's sake.

## **Transforming Together**

There are two truths I have learned about transformation: (1) you cannot seriously explore transformation without having it alter your behavior, and (2) you cannot do it alone.

You and I are taking this journey together. Although this is not my first book, it is by far the most emotionally and intellectually demanding. I am discovering that I cannot write about transformation without hearing the call to take accountability and transform my own behavior.

Without knowing it, you are already my partner in transformation. As we embark on this exploration together, I want you to know that I am taking this journey with you. Everything I ask you to do in this book, I am doing with you. Every time I ask you to confront something, I am confronting the same thing. I will ask of you only what I am personally willing to do. In fearless leadership, we must have the courage to lead the way for others.

What makes the difference for me, and I believe for you, are the committed partners who stand beside us. Transformation is not about being perfect or doing things perfectly. It is about the caring, compassion, and support we bring to each other when we stumble and the speed at which we recover. With committed partners, you can achieve a new and profound level of success.

## LEADERSHIP EXPLORATION

Answer the following questions for yourself, your team, and the organization. Examine what unspoken behavioral norm you have been tolerating in yourself and with others.

### *Your Team*

**What unspoken norm for behavior is tolerated?** For example, is it acceptable to not deliver commitments when promised, avoid uncomfortable conversations, be culturally insensitive, not take accountability for your impact on others, comply with decisions, gossip, blame individuals and groups, resist change initiatives, have unresolved issues between group members, defend turf, verbally attack others, or provide excuses and reasons for lack of business results?

**What unproductive behaviors do you silently endorse?** For example, do you accept excuses in place of results? Do you tolerate conflict between team members and conspiracies against others?

### *The Organization*

**What unspoken norm for behavior is tolerated?** For example, is it acceptable to blame senior leaders, the organization, and other groups; discredit individuals; undermine business objectives and initiatives; focus on individual areas of responsibility rather than taking accountability for enterprise perspective; take credit rather than give credit to others; align intellectually but withhold emotional commitment; conspire against other people or groups; or be polite and indirect and avoid the real issue?

**What unproductive behaviors do you silently endorse?**

For example, do you observe—but fail to take action—when you notice others’ conspiring against people or groups or individuals’ avoiding the real issues in meetings?

## **LEADERSHIP ACTION**

### **Identify How You Relate to the Organization and Others**

Are you resigned, hopeful, or fearless with (1) your team, (2) senior leaders, (3) the organization as a whole, (4) your ability to influence others, and (5) your ability to shape the future? Ask a colleague or your team to assess your behavior and compare responses. In fearless leadership, the perception of others is far more accurate than your own, especially when it comes to how you impact others and view yourself.

**If you are resigned**, you are working hard but without enthusiasm. Chances are you feel powerless to influence change and are shrinking the game and focusing only on your area of responsibility to the exclusion of the larger enterprise perspective.

**If you are hopeful**, you are watching and waiting for others to act first. You may be wishing that someone would step up and lead.

**If you are fearless**, you are taking a stand and taking action. However, you may not be getting the results you want. There is much more to learn in order to develop your effectiveness as a fearless leader.

Once you identify how you are relating to others and the organization (resigned, hopeful, or fearless), then examine how this shapes your actions and results. Honestly examine how your thinking and behavior prevent you from achieving the results you want. In fearless leadership, you must always examine your personal accountability instead of blaming others or the organization.

*Permanence, perseverance, and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: it is this that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak.*

—THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881)

# About the Author and Malandro Communication

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**A**s president and CEO of Malandro Communication since its inception in 1980, Loretta Malandro has built a leading business consulting firm that specializes in leadership and organizational transformation.

Delivering its proven technology—100% Accountability™—the Malandro organization works worldwide with CEOs, executives, and leaders to take their corporations to new levels of performance by skillfully aligning and mobilizing people to drive enterprise objectives. The 100% accountability methodology is a beginning-to-end process for achieving leadership alignment, building a culture of accountability, and producing lasting behavioral change to ensure sustainability.

A key differentiator of the Malandro group is the ability to combine a strong business and organizational perspective with expert intervention. The Malandro behavioral experts relentlessly uncover and permanently resolve the root cause of leadership and organizational ineffectiveness. Their services include executive consulting and coaching, breakthrough project consulting, high performance leadership sessions, high performance team sessions, and turnkey communication tools for rapidly diffusing cultural change throughout an organization.

Delivering consulting services globally and at its corporate headquarters in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, the Malandro organization develops and customizes the approach best suited to address the unique needs of each client. Providing full support for leadership and organizational transformation, Malandro certifies client candidates in the 100% accountability process to deliver the methodology throughout their organizations.

Selected clients include AngloGold Ashanti, CNA, De Beers, DuPont, Farm Credit Canada, Finning International, IBM, Idaho Power, Intel,

Nexen, Placer Dome Inc., Rabo AgriFinance, Rohm and Haas, Xerox, Vale Inco, and Zurich Financial Services.

Dr. Malandro is the author of the international book *Say It Right the First Time* and other landmark books, including *Courtroom Communication Strategies* and *Nonverbal Communication*. She is a former professor at Florida State and Arizona State universities. She received her Ph.D. in communication theory and research from Florida State University and her undergraduate degree from Kent State University. The recipient of many academic awards, Malandro was on the first international debate team cosponsored by the U.S. government and the National Speech Association, where she and teammates debated in the Russian language throughout the former Soviet Union.

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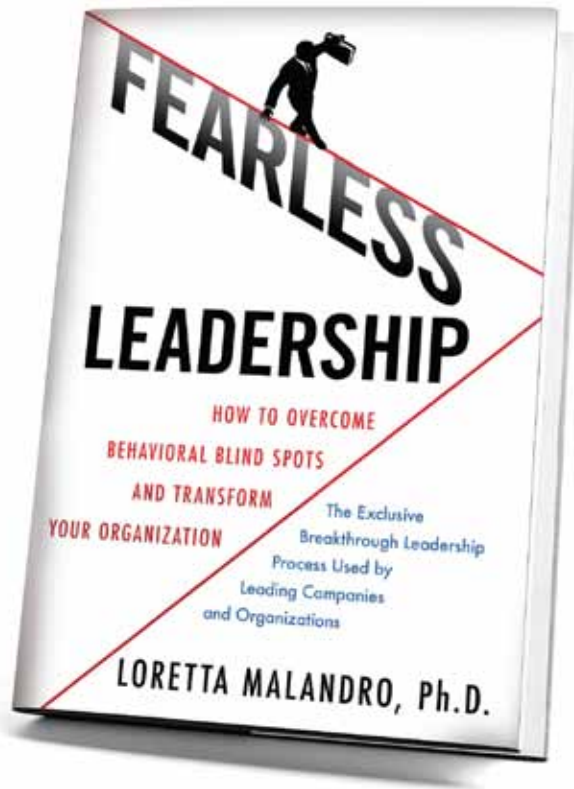
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