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More Praise for
The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader

With the passing of Peter F. Drucker, the consummate thought leader, we all need to read Jan Phillips' book and adopt as our own her challenge to free ourselves from illusions and create a better life and business.

KEN SHELTON, CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Executive Excellence Publishing

In a world of inevitable chaos and complexity, The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader *helps show that social consciousness and corporate performance can be simultaneously managed. Paradoxes of profit and people, growth and continuity, learning and heritage, collaboration and competition may be sources of tension that thoughtful leaders face and manage. The principles in the book can be used by leaders at all levels to generate new insights into old problems.*

DAVE ULRICH, PH.D.
Professor, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan

Jan Phillips' wonderful writing style together with powerful content in The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader *has made me take a hard look at business as usual in America. She debunks the myth that profit-making and social consciousness are poles apart. Brava, Jan, for asking the right questions!*

STANLEY WESTRIECH
Capital One Financial, Board of Directors; Partner, Westfield Realty

What sets apart The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader *is the deep reservoir of hope that underlies the powerful ideas and message. Referencing leaders in many fields, Jan Phillips shows how creativity and original thinking can help heal our businesses and planet.*

FREDERIC LUSKIN, PH.D.
Director, Stanford Forgiveness Projects; Author of *Forgive for Good*

At last, a book that unites the web of commerce with the web of life and provokes the unsettling questions that all true leaders need. What more could a leader want than to know how to leave a legacy of creative contribution!

EILEEN MCDARGH, CSP, CPAE
President, McDargh Communications and The Resiliency Group

The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader *is a must read for anyone wanting to expand their thinking about work and life. Jan Phillips' practical insights will help you re-examine the assumptions by which you think and enhance your sense of life purpose.*

RICHARD CHANG, CEO, RICHARD CHANG ASSOCIATES, INC.
Author of *The Passion Plan* and *The Passion Plan at Work*

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page II

Jan Phillips has truly captured the essence of being a thought leader. By zooming in on prominent aspects of today's business world, Phillips accurately and efficiently demonstrates the NEED for innovative thought and leadership. Her flowing and easy-to-understand writing style appropriately inspires readers to embrace the fact that they too can become a successful thought leader. The Art of Original Thinking–The Making of a Thought Leader *articulately maps out the steps necessary to seize one's ideas and transform them into desired knowledge. I recommend this book to motivate the inventive thinker in all of us.*

KEN LIZOTTE, CMC
Chief Imaginative Officer, Emerson Consulting Group, Inc.

Captivating stories, compelling examples and creative content. You will absolutely learn something new and original from reading this enjoyable book.

DR. TONY ALESSANDRA
Author of *Charisma* and *The Platinum Rule*

Several thousand books on leadership have been written in recent years; this is one of the best. Jan Phillips describes the courage, actions and behaviors of creative thought leaders who get exceptional results by building trust and relationships combined with clarity of vision, purpose and core values to inspire people who see their work as something far beyond themselves. The uniqueness of the book is that it effectively addresses the dimension of successfully meshing corporate profit and goals with those of our global environmental and resource issues.

RICHARD A. MCNEECE, LEADERSHIP CONSULTANT
Former Chairman and CEO, First National Bancorp

Jan Phillips is the ORIGINAL original thinker. Her powerful book will stir your gray matter, shift your paradigms, and allow you to experience a new way of thinking. Everything you do, see and contemplate will be changed as a result of reading this inspiring and thought-provoking work. Read it as if your life and the life of our planet depended on it.

JENNI PRISK, CEO, PRISK COMMUNICATION
Founder and President of Voices of Women

I love the spirit of this book. It is greatly needed at this time in human history. The challenges we face are daunting and discouraging, but Jan Phillips gives us a high energy, uplifting vision of how we can all see beyond the false dualities such as sustainability and profit, and makes us believe that each of us can make our unique contribution to the "original thinking" required to turn that vision into reality. Not only does she inspire, but she gives us a practicum through her own thought leadership!

JIM ZULL, PH.D.
Author of *The Art of Changing the Brain*

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page III

I was struck by three things. First, she knows what she's talking about. By integrating the works of giants like Peter Drucker, Peter Senge and Paul Hawken she makes a strong case for leadership based on individual, original thinking that inspires the community to follow her lead. The humble, generous, self-offering leader leads by deed.

Second, she is an engaging storyteller. She understands the power of an anecdote to reinforce her main points. She says it well: "If a story can move you from thought to action, then you know the power of a well-told tale."

Third, Ms. Phillips makes a persuasive case that the best leaders in the 21st century will be individuals from organizations that understand that it is in their grandchildren's best interest to maximize the triple bottom line. These thought leaders will inspire and motivate the human capital within their organizations to maximize economic profits while leaving no footprints in the sand.

In conclusion, Ms. Phillips thinks outside the parallelogram. I will recommend this book to my students.

DR. CURTIS L. DEBERG, FOUNDER OF SAGE
Professor of Business, California State University, Chico

Jan Phillips has done her homework in taking this giant step forward in reshaping our world view. Clear, concise–a true horizon of hope.

MARILYN J. MASON, PH.D., PRESIDENT, MASON & ASSOCIATES
Author of *Igniting the Spirit at Work: Daily Reflections*

Jan Phillips mentors leaders at all levels with her forthright advice, her deep personal experience and her ability to draw on a vast array of resources and references to educate her readers and amplify her points. The author makes a very unique contribution to what has already been placed on the vast list of leadership books. Thank you, Jan, for providing such a vivid picture of what the modern leader must do to impact others in their own organization and beyond its boundaries as well.

DR. BEVERLY KAYE, CEO/FOUNDER, CAREER SYSTEM INTERNATIONAL
Author of *Up is Not the Only way*; Coauthor of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*

I was immediately drawn into the stories, examples and cutting-edge research. Jan easily moves between age-old wisdom and provocative thinking. She shows that you can use original approaches to win on all fronts. A must-read for anyone interested in authentic leadership!

BONNIE ST. JOHN, MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS, THE LEADER'S EDGE
Author of *Succeeding Sane: Making Room for Joy in a Crazy World*

The Art of Original Thinking *is a timely and important book. It truly engaged me and sparked a shift in my thinking – how I view myself, my business and just how connected we all are in this global community we are creating.*

JACQUELINE TOWNSEND, CEO, Townsend, Inc.

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page IV

The Art of Original Thinking – The Making of a Thought Leader

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I extend my thanks to all of you in my circle of support who feed me light and lift me up in so many ways, and to every person, organization, and business mentioned in this book for transforming your insights into action that makes this world a safer, saner place.

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page VI

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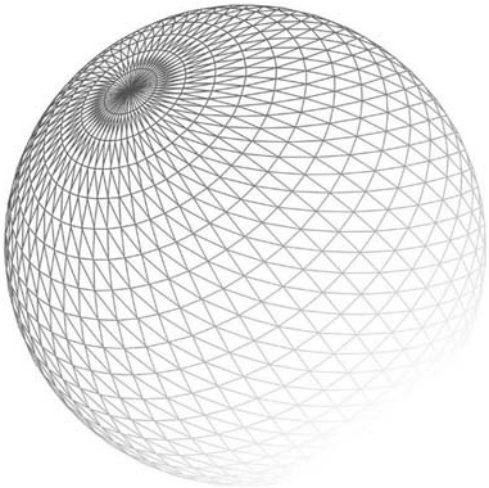
The Art of Original Thinking

The Making of a Thought Leader



Jan Phillips

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To Annie Bridget O'Flaherty,
for being the Muse that you are to me.

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page IX

The Art of Original Thinking

| The Making of a Thought Leader |

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements V
Introduction XI

Releasing the Past

ONE Freeing Ourselves from Illusion 3
TWO Myths: Dispelling the Old, Defining the New 13
THREE The Nature of Change 27
FOUR Questioning Our Assumptions 37
FIVE What the World Needs Now 49

Embracing the Present

SIX From Truth to Transformation: Starting with Ourselves 65
SEVEN Asking the Right Questions 71
EIGHT Between Chaos and Clarity: Dwelling in the Mystery 83
NINE The Creative Enterprise 93
TEN Prophets and Profits: Capitalizing on Wisdom 105

Creating the Future

ELEVEN Local Brain, Global Mind 127
TWELVE Commerce with a Conscience 141
THIRTEEN The Triple Bottom Line 163
FOURTEEN Insight to Action 185
FIFTEEN You Are the Help 207

Appendix 211
Notes 212
Index 218

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page X

Masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Introduction

Calling this book *The Art of Original Thinking—The Making of a Thought Leader* is a way of acknowledging that originality is a practice that can be learned, or rather rediscovered, reclaimed, with a certain amount of attention and surrender. As with any creative endeavor, originality in thinking, in being, requires a heightened state of alertness, a bridging of the poles, a show of fearlessness and willingness to forfeit the known for the unknown, the learned for the experienced. It requires a trust deeper than the sea, for what it asks for is a letting go, an unmooring from the safe harbor of certainty for a journey into the mists of mystery and possibility.

The compass is not the mind, but the heart, and the journey takes us away from what was and toward what can be. The old adage "Leaders are born, not made" represents a style of thinking that's dualistic, argumentative, polarizing. It's an either/or, right or wrong proposition. Someone decides it's one way or the other and you have to choose. It's that kind of thinking we're leaving at the shore as we sail toward the possibility of unitive thinking: that leaders are born *and* made.

The premise of this book is that we are here to advance the evolution of thought, of human sensibility, of our own personal potential to be more than anyone ever said we could be. Its intention is to inspire thought leaders who are willing to be visible, vocal agents of evolutionary thinking for global good. Its reach is both deep and wide. It will guide you on a journey into your own thought patterns and processes, helping you free yourself from obstacles to original thinking. And once you begin to think from your genuine center, once you begin to experience your own pure, uncontaminated thoughts, you will feel rising up from within you a calling, a challenge

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page XII

to be of use, an idea that needs you in order to become real in the world. And it is this idea, your own original thought, that will guide you, empower you, enable you to take your place as a thought leader and catalyst for creative action.

Those who came before us did the best they could do, educating us to conform, to honor tradition, to study and sing and recite the appropriate creeds, anthems, and pledges. The instruction was never how to think, but what to think. Millions of us grew up believing everything we were told by people we trusted, abdicating our power to the proper authorities, and allowing our own creative powers to atrophy. Only now is it becoming clear to us what happened and what a distance we must travel to rediscover and reawaken our own originality.

This book is a road map for that journey. I am approaching it as an artist, hoping to create something that will envelop you in the experience of a new awakening, so that it is not just your mind that is fed, nourished, altered, but the entirety of you. I address you as an artist because I agree with Margaret Wheatley who says, "Start with the assumption that people, like all life, are creative and good at change." You are an artist at life and whatever you're making of it is the masterpiece you are working on. So I offer you the best of the poets and artists throughout history who have created words, images, stories to guide us, heal us, nudge us forward on this path of illuminating discovery: the discovery of our very own essence and the embodiment of our very own thoughts.

And I confess to this one desire: that as we each take this journey, we allow ourselves to become synthesizers of each others' thoughts, and in that wild jumble of imaginations, in that glorious dance of unity and wholeness, we become the thought leaders for a new kind of planetary citizenship. That as we unwind and unfold our own creative DNA, as we unearth our own wisdom, that very act will awaken us to our commonness and common needs. And from that place, with that awareness, we will step into our power to create businesses, organizations, and institutions that thrive because they serve the common good. The solutions to the crises of our time do not lie dormant in one individual. They live like seeds in every one of us. It is not a savior who will rescue us from the plight and perils we face, but a communion of saints who go by our names.

This book is an attempt to awaken in all of us the memory of our vocation, our purpose–that we are here to advance life, to transform every experience into an uttering that is unique, that has never been heard before, that is a clue to the others, a warning, a leading. To be an original thinker is to be a scout on new horizons, an adventurer into new domains, a perpetrator of inspiration, a leader of thought and heartfelt action.

As the philosopher Beatrice Bruteau once wrote: "We cannot wait for the world to turn, for times to change that we might change with them, for the revolution to come and carry us around in its new course. We *are* the future. We *are* the revolution."

This is the time, and we are the ones. Godspeed to us all.

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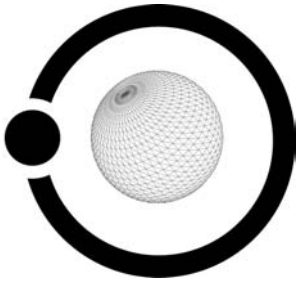

Releasing the Past

Freeing Ourselves from Illusion

Myths: Dispelling the Old, Defining the New

The Nature of Change

Questioning Our Assumptions

What the World Needs Now

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aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 3

| CHAPTER ONE |

Freeing Ourselves from Illusion

People, like all forms of life, only change when something so disturbs them that they are forced to let go of their present beliefs. Nothing changes until we interpret things differently. Change occurs only when we let go of our certainty.

DEE HOCK

As leaders we must help people move into a relationship with uncertainty and chaos.

MARGARET WHEATLEY

Illusions are false beliefs. They are notions and ideas that we have inherited from our culture, our families, and almost every institution with which we've been associated. Illusions take up residence in our minds because we receive them, for the most part, when we are young, impressionable, trusting, and open to the ideas being handed down to us. They are part of our social conditioning, but they do not serve us. Illusions are, in fact, the only cause of our unhappiness.

To be thought leaders in any arena, we need to be free and original thinkers, capable of focusing on how we are thinking as well as what we are thinking. The Indian philosopher Sri Aurobindo said, "In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture." This means we have to step outside of ourselves, put some distance between ourselves and our thoughts, so we can assess their heritage and test them for authenticity. Because the consciousness of a leader has a tremendous impact on the consciousness of the organization, every leader must do the deep and personal work of clarifying his or her own thoughts, so that when we speak, every word has a ring of clarity, every statement has a purpose and air of authenticity.

This requires a looking inward that both grounds and balances our outward actions. When we look within and mine our own experience for feelings that not only mesh with our message, but are actually the source

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 4

of the message, then the delivery itself carries an integrity of authorship that is convincing, compassionate, and compelling. When we manage to rid ourselves of inherited voices and speak from the heart, our very speaking is a force that can change minds, lives, and the direction of any community to which we belong.

Freeing ourselves from illusion may seem like an esoteric concept that has nothing to do with leadership, but that's because one of the biggest illusions we suffer from is the notion that what goes on inside us has little to do with who we are on the outside. We've become so good at compartmentalizing our lives that we think our corporate selves are distinct from our private selves, that who we are on the golf course has nothing to do with who we are at home, or that the persona we project in the board room ought to be different from the persona we project in the family room.

My best friend in high school became a chief executive for a multinational company in Australia and when I went to visit her she talked about how sad it was that she couldn't be friends with any of her employees. She felt so isolated. I'd started a few businesses in the States and said to her that they had been successful *because* I'd made friends with every employee, and her response was that in big business you just couldn't do that. "You can't be personal with people you supervise." That, to me, was an example of an illusion, an inherited notion, a handed-down tradition. She honored it like it was a holy corporate commandment, and perhaps it was, but organizations are living things, like evolving organisms. They only thrive when they adapt to their changing environments.

Anthony De Mello, a Jesuit priest, psychotherapist, and retreat director, taught that all our negative emotions are caused by illusions that we allow to obstruct our thinking. If we're sad or angry, it's because there is some underlying illusion preempting our natural state of joy. He says: "When the eye is unobstructed, the result is seeing; when the ear is unobstructed, the result is hearing; when the palate is unobstructed, the result is tasting. When the mind is unobstructed, the result is wisdom and happiness. Drop your attachments and you will be free. Understand your illusions and they will drop."

It is awareness, not effort, that dissolves the illusions. When we experience an upset, if we look to see what underlying belief or attachment is behind it, we can begin to see what illusions have us in their grip. If I make the mistake of thinking someone else is responsible for my happiness, I'll discover this when I back up and begin to explore my negative

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 5

feelings about their behavior. Why am I upset? Because he didn't do so-and-so. Why should he have done so-and-so? Because it would have made me happy, and he's responsible for my happiness. That is my illusion.

I was in India during the monsoon season, living for awhile in a community founded by a man who'd lived many years with Mahatma Gandhi. One morning I woke up to discover this was the day we were going to begin the construction of a barn. Women, men, and children were forming a line from the creek bed to the site of the building, about a quarter of a mile away. Teenage girls were assembling at the site where there was a pile of huge rocks. As I took my place in the line, I asked Nayan Bala, the woman next to me, what in the world was going on. "We're transporting the mortar materials from the creek," she said, as the first tin bowl came my way. "Here, pass this on." The bowl contained a little water, some gravel and small pebbles. I passed it to the woman next to me, and as soon as I turned around, there was another bowl coming at me. I handed that one over and another one came. And another, and another.

It was 98 degrees and the humidity was hovering at about 90 percent. After passing bowls for an hour, I thought I might like to change places with the girls up at the site. "What are they doing with the rocks?" I asked. "They carry them on their head and deliver them to the men once the mortar is in place," said Nayan Bala, passing me another bowl. I decided to stay in line. But the heat was unbearable, and I was getting irritable. There has to be another way, I thought, as I scanned the horizon looking for some way out of this predicament.

I saw several oxen lazing around further down the creek, a tractor off in the distance, and a flat bed trailer up near the rock pile. "This is ridiculous!" I said to Nayan Bala, whose face was as drenched with sweat as mine. "Why don't we hook up those oxen to some carts, and get that tractor hitched to the flat bed. There's no reason why all these people have to be killing themselves passing these little bowls. Let's mechanize this process. Don't you know time is money?"

As much as I'd prided myself on not being an "ugly American," there it was, right out in the open. Even as those last few words tumbled out of my sorry mouth, I knew I had crossed some boundary, created some new cultural divide with the power of my own words. I wanted to shrink into non-existence. But Nayan Bala was a mountain of kindness. She put the bowl down that was coming my way, wiped her hands on her sari, and placed them on my shoulders. "Maybe you haven't been in India long enough to understand something important about us. Every

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 6

person is in line here because they want to be. In ten years, or twenty years, when this barn is built, they will bring their children here, their grandchildren here, and they will tell them the story of how they helped build this barn. They are proud to be doing this, and they will be proud every time they tell the story. Do you think we should deny them this?"

That was the moment for me when, as Dee Hock, founder and CEO Emeritus of Visa, says, I was "forced to let go of my present belief." Time wasn't money for these people—nor for me, actually. That concept was an illusion I had carried with me like an extra bag on my journey. It was an illusion that led to stress and anger. It didn't serve me. It wasn't mine, really. It was an inherited thought, not an original one. I was simply thinking something I was taught to think. It was the American way, but not the right way—not for this time and place.

Nayan Bala's graciousness allowed me to look at my thoughts and to see that they weren't mine at all. But it took an upset like that to set me apart from my own thinking. According to philosopher and integral theorist Ken Wilber, when we're looking at our thoughts, we're not using them to look at the world, so there's a moment of freedom there, a moment to be open to a new awareness. Is this thought really mine? Am I the author of it? Has it passed the test of my own experience? The poet Kabir writes, "If you haven't experienced it, it's not true." We can only speak powerfully from our own experience.

To be a thought leader, an original thinker, we have to move and think and speak from our own personal knowing. Our power comes from our ability to transform what we have felt into what we know. It's an alchemy of sorts, where we acquire the skill of transforming the lead of our experience into the gold of our wisdom. Each of us knows what no one else knows because no one else has lived our lives, seen what we've seen, felt what we've felt. The great Persian poet Rumi writes, "The throbbing vein will take you further than any thinking." This is a great clue.

Who are the speakers who have really inspired you? Who are the ones who have changed your thinking, altered the course of your own life? Are they not the ones who speak and write from the heart? Are they not the ones who stand before you, not with notes and memorized speeches, but with the courage to be simply who they are, to share their visions, their struggles, their fears? This is the stuff of leadership—this transparency, this risking, this willingness to say it's a new frontier here, and not one of us has a map, but with what we know together, we can surely make it.

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 7

ONE Freeing Ourselves from Illusion

In an interview in *Worthwhile* magazine, Jeff Dunn, former COO of Coca-Cola North America offers a clarifying image of this kind of transparency when he describes why he named his new business, Grassy Lake Partners, after a lake. "When you look at it from a certain angle, it reflects like a mirror. But then when you're on it, you can see all the way to the bottom." To Dunn, this is a symbol for how he wants to be as a leader: reflective enough to help others see their gifts and beliefs, and clear enough to allow others to see his own. There's a certain openness to this mode, a level of vulnerability that signifies confidence, an inner strength, a willingness to be seen "all the way to the bottom."

People these days are longing for that kind of openness. We really want depth. It's the root of relationship from which stems all human possibilities. And yet our society perpetuates the illusion that this kind of intimacy is unsafe, unwise, unprofessional. So we skim across the surface of our workdays like water spiders, never revealing the most essential information about who we are, what we feel, and what truths we hold. That is the greatest gift we could offer, for we all find ourselves and our meaning in each other's stories.

Margaret Wheatley, one of the most innovative thinkers of our time, writes in *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time:*

> It is crucial to keep organizational purpose and values in the spotlight. The values come to life not through speeches and plaques, but as we hear the stories of other employees who embody those values…It is essential that the organization sponsor processes that bring people together so that they can learn of one another's perspectives and challenges. Processes such as conversation and storytelling help us connect at a depth not available through charts and PowerPoint presentations.[1]

Whether in the workplace or our personal lives, deep dialogue is a practice that can be learned and cultivated. It is essential to original thinking because it is a tool for helping us discover what we value and why. As soon as you speak of your values, your visions, your fears, my mind begins a search to discover its own beliefs in the matter. We are hardwired to compare and contrast, to scan for differences and similarities, to take in and synthesize and evolve ourselves forward. According to Dr. Richard Moss in *The I That Is We*, we define ourselves through problems, which are statements of contrast, not absolutes. And in order

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 8

to arrive at these statements of contrast, we need to hear each other's stories. They are the grist for our mills. Your deep telling feeds my deep knowing. Or as the enigmatic nineteenth century French poet Paul Valéry expressed it: "Nothing is more 'original,' nothing more 'oneself,' than to feed on others. But one has to digest them. A lion is made of assimilated sheep." The truths we cling to are based on the stories we've been told, and they are altered and enlivened by the stories we continue to hear. We take something in, we digest it, we decide what to keep and what to let go of. Sometimes we change our thinking. Sometimes we don't.

Original thinkers delight in this process. They are not frightened by opposing ideas; they welcome them as an opportunity to clarify and redefine their own meanings, which is the very activity that keeps them fully charged, awakened, illumined. This is the practice that allows one to dismantle the shackles of conditioned thinking. It's why diversity works. Being in the presence of others whose experiences are vastly different from ours causes us to see ourselves and our beliefs in a new light.

If we want our world to be different, our first act needs to be reclaiming time to think.
MARGARET WHEATLEY

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The measure of leadership is not the quality of the head, but the tone of the body.
MAX DE PREE

Give every task as much time as it needs to be completed.
ALGONQUIN ELDER

When Ray Anderson, founder and former CEO of Interface, Inc., a carpeting manufacturing company, read Paul Hawken's book, *The Ecology of Commerce*, Anderson's deeply held ideas about business, profitability, and corporate responsibility were seriously challenged. When a group of designers asked what his company was doing to protect the environment, he was stymied. But he remained open. He did not dismiss them, put them in a box called "tree-huggers," and go on about his business. He inquired within. He allowed for an interplay of ideas. He synthesized what he knew from his personal experience with the new information presented to him and an old illusion—that he had to choose between the environment and profits—dropped away.

Because of his openness, his willingness

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 9

to adapt and incorporate the new, he experienced an epiphany of consciousness which he writes about in his book *Mid-Course Correction*. Questioning himself and his values in a new light sparked an insight, the discovery that "when you find two opposites, you don't try to choose between them but to find a third place that reconciles them. In business, that third place is doing well by doing good." Believing that "unless somebody leads, no one will," Anderson committed to his business being 100 percent sustainable, having zero environmental impact by the year 2020. With manufacturing locations on four continents and offices in more than one hundred countries, this announcement caused quite a stir and met with a great deal of skepticism, but eventually everyone came on board and the company has reduced total greenhouse gas emissions by 54 percent since 1994. Today, they dominate the carpeting industry worldwide, with 19 percent sales growth in 2004, including 29 percent in the non-corporate office segments. In Asia-Pacific, profitability is growing at a record pace, with 2004 sales up about 50 percent, according to their 2004 annual report.

In an interview with Narelle Hooper for *BOSS* magazine, published by the *Australian Financial Review,* Rob Coombs, President and CEO of Interface Asia-Pacific, said that another benefit came along with the sustainability effort—the engagement and motivation of its staff rose considerably. As they turned more to nature to learn some lessons, their ability to retain and attract staff increased. According to Coombs, the sixty-two-year-old chief engineer at their Picton plant in New Zealand gained a new lease on life and the plant is performing better than ever. "It's a philosophy that seems to have resonance with people—the idea that it is important how you make money, not just how much of it you make," said Coombs.

To make Interface the leader in industrial ecology, Ray Anderson and his colleagues let go of old notions, dropped

The more consciousness you have, the more potential you have to create.
DEEPAK CHOPRA

Things which matter most should never be at the mercy of things which matter least.
GOETHE

There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come.
VICTOR HUGO

We are breaking mind patterns that have dominated human life for eons.
ECKHART TOLLE

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 10

their illusions about profitability and sustainability being at odds with each other, and took brave steps into the unknown to finally discover that it is possible to do well by doing good.

To do this, they had to engage in original thinking. There were no manuals to read on the subject. They had to turn inward to their own creative sources. They met in diverse teams, took field trips into the natural world in search of new solutions, they shared their insights and their feelings, they built global partnerships to create a shared understanding of sustainability, they engaged key players in the global environmental effort to help them prioritize challenges, and they created networks of connectivity to keep themselves informed and inspired. And all the while they're recording it, posting their milestones on their website, and encouraging other corporations to follow their lead. Many have, and many more will, because this is the nature of conscious evolution.

Thought leaders inspire leadership. They ignite imaginations, explode old myths, and illumine paths to the future that others may follow. One of the oldest voices embedded in our cultural consciousness is the voice that says, "If s/he can, I can." Our confidence is buoyed by the fact that someone else did it before us. No matter how dangerous or outrageous or innovative, if someone did it, we know it's possible, and that endeavor becomes a challenge, then, for others to meet or surpass. By going first, thought leaders provide the basis for change. They abandon outmoded traditions with the same alacrity as one dispenses with a pair of old hiking boots or an outdated pair of spike heels.

We let go of the old to discover the new, as we let go of illusions to discover the real. The way to awareness is the way of subtraction, of letting go, one by one, of our fears, our doubts, our prejudices, our judgments, our inherited notions of how it should be, who deserves what, who is to blame. What's happening in the world is a result of our collective input. The morning headlines are the news that we are making as a whole human family, by what we do and what we fail to do. Each one of us is a co-creator of the very culture we are immersed in, and if we want to see change, we can make change by changing ourselves, our thinking, and our destructive habits.

Blame is not useful. Polarization is not useful. Bitterness and negativity are not useful. What's useful in these perilous times is deep thought and dialogue. What's useful is a willingness to speak from our hearts, to say out loud what we hunger for, what we're willing to live for, and what it is we can no longer abide. We are attendants at the wake of the old way,

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 11

and each of us—through our actions, our thoughts, our work and relationships—is midwifing a new world into existence. This is our destiny, our meaning, our purpose, and when we come to our days with this awareness, when we fully wake up to this tremendous privilege, when we sense the oak in the acorn of our beings, then we will have the energy to move mountains and shift the tides.

It is an illusion that we are powerless. It is an illusion that someone else is responsible. It is an illusion that we cannot transcend these dualities and differences that are making a mockery of democracy. We are the people. This is our world. And every movement that ever led to any change in this ever-evolving civilization grew like a seed from one person's imagination. And what did that person have—a deeply-rooted sense of what's right; a commitment to truth-telling, to heart-sharing, to bridge-building; an ability to inspire, to breathe life into the hearts and minds of others. No matter how brilliant our attempts to inform, it is our ability to inspire that will turn the tides.

Transformation originates in people who see a better way or a fairer world, people who reveal themselves, disclose their dreams, and unfold their hopes in the presence of others. And this very unfolding, this revelation of raw, unharnessed desire, this deep longing to be a force for good in the world is what inspires others to feel their own longings, to remember their own purpose, and to act, perhaps for the first time, in accordance with their inner spirit.

Dee Hock writes in *Birth of the Chaordic Age:* "If your beliefs are based on the old model of top-down command and control, specialization, special privilege, and nothing but profit, your organization will, in time, turn toxic. It will become antithetical to the human spirit and destructive of the biosphere." What he advocates is a leadership rooted in purpose and principles, organizations that have, at their very heart, concerns that engage and enliven the human spirit, that call forth from the membership the essence of their fertile imaginations.

As we have evolved beyond the mechanics and rigidities of the industrial age in our buildings and businesses, so have the workers evolved into beings who seek more purposeful lives, workplaces that require and inspire relationships, collaborative processes that stimulate originality and culminate in a sense of meaningful community. People want to engage with others, to feel the thrill of creative combustion, the joy of originating new solutions, like spelunkers in a cave, illuminating the unknown with the floodlight of their diverse wisdom and experience.

Every thinking person on this planet feels in their heart the toll of

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 12

compassion and the weight of complicity. On some deep level, we are aware that our choices have an impact on others, that there is some ineffable connection between our lives and the lives of our sisters and brothers in Rwanda, Calcutta, Uzbekistan. We sense the inequities and a deep sorrow runs through our nervous system day and night. We are frozen in our silences, numbed by our distractions, waiting and yearning and praying for war to end, hunger to end, poverty to end. Many of us cry out silently in the night, but the time has come to be public with this pain, to speak of its relentlessness, its unbearableness, for it is only when we release it that we become free to address it, to embrace it, and, ultimately, to heal it.

As individuals, the greatest courage that is called for is the courage to be real. When we are real, it melts the frozen places in ourselves and others. It opens the passageways between our hearts and our minds, thaws the blockages that constrain our imagination, and carries us down to our wellsprings of wisdom. The solutions to our crises are already here. They exist in our relationships, in our stories, in our unfolding forgiveness, and it is through the expression of these things that we will one day live into the answers we seek at this time.

The leadership that is required at this moment in history is a leadership of generosity, of humility, of self-offering. To lead, we need not know the answers. We must only convene the circles, articulate the questions, frame the conversation, and direct attention to the issues that matter. It is the community that will rise up in response to our calling—joyful to be invited, heartened to be involved—and it is the community that will lead us past our illusions, beyond our fears, and into a reality brighter and bolder than all imaginings.

To be free to offer the gifts of your heart, to be free of what others might think, to be a truth-teller, a catalyst, a voice in the dark: these are the fruits of original thinking, and these are the signs of leaders of consequence.

aot_020606.qxd 2/6/06 12:39 PM Page 13

| CHAPTER TWO |

Myths: Dispelling the Old, Defining the New

To change our realities we have to change our myths.

RIANE EISLER

We cannot change our politics until we first change our perceptions.

BEATRICE BRUTEAU

Some of the greatest thinkers today are in agreement about the power of our consciousness to alter our circumstances. From biologists to business leaders, mystics to medical professionals, philosophers to philanthropists, individuals are speaking out about the role of our thoughts in the unfolding of our realities. Simultaneously, the world of quantum physics is seeding our fertile mindscapes with findings that propel us beyond all known imaginings.

Quantum nonlocality, or nonseparability, is asking us to completely alter our ideas about objects. "We can no longer consider objects as independently existing entities. They are interconnected in ways not even conceivable in classical physics," writes theoretical astrophysicist Victor Mansfield in *Synchronicity, Science, and Soul-Making*. Quantum nonlocality teaches us that particles that were once together in an interaction continue to respond to each other no matter how many miles apart, and at a rate faster than the speed of light. Physicist Menas Kafatos writes: "Nature has shown us that our concept of reality, consisting of units that can be considered as separate from each other, is fundamentally wrong." Since we are composed of cells, molecules, atoms and sub-atomic particles, this makes *each of us* part of one indivisible whole, interconnected and interdependent.

This is hard to put our minds around since we have constructed a