# *Introduction*

> A leader is best when people barely know he exists; when his work
> is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves. Lao Tzu

Leadership sometimes appears magical. Some leaders are able to harness enormous complexity and turn chaos into order with seemingly little effort. They can compel the homeless and the marginalized to take ownership of an initiative to improve their own lives, becoming trainers and leaders in combating poverty and developing a construction industry for the poor. Using simple rules, bottom-up development, and horizontal communication, they can turn a small group effort into a multibillion-dollar international company, with no top-down management whatsoever. They allow employees to relax in hammocks during working hours, and still their firm has skyrocketing market results. They believe the ultimate goal isn't money, but rather making people happy about their lives, and yet they still build leading companies in their field that remain profitable despite market ups and downs. Such leaders enable interactions in a seemingly chaotic way, yielding bottom-up dynamics and empowering individuals and groups. They may act atypically, appearing to others as "unreasonable people" (Elkington & Hartigan, 2008) or as Malcolm Gladwell's (2011) "outliers," as they find new ways to innovate and spearhead novel solutions.

Their leadership makes a large impact through small investments and, viewed traditionally, appears to make "something out of nothing." However, from the complexity perspective, this type of leadership isn't "magical" at all. To understand it, we must grasp the ways in which it uses small impulses to trigger big changes and creates a participatory environment that supports human development, engagement, creativity, and the emergence of added value.

This book examines the leadership that enables and empowers others to coparticipate, cocreate, and feel the joy of creativity. It does so in four ways: (1) through advancing the concepts of leadership in general and specifically the concept of Empowering Leadership; (2) by analyzing the nuts

1

and bolts of complexity, as well as the mechanisms of social influence and creativity involved in facilitating leadership; (3) by presenting an illustrated portfolio of diverse examples and case studies; and, finally, (4) by establishing practical guidelines for development, e.g., how to enhance creativity or analyze future scenarios in a complex and unpredictable environment. (Yes, "future scenarios" in an "unpredictable world" sounds like an oxymoron, but in these pages you will see ways to circumvent this paradox.) On the one hand, this book is academic, and on the other, well suited for practical use. It tackles practical "how-to" questions and examines the conceptual backbone and underlying mechanisms of the method.

And if we're spying the future through a keyhole, this book's arrival couldn't be more timely. Not only is the phenomenon of leadership becoming a hot topic,[1] there is also a growing interest in the leadership of the future. How will leadership look in 2020 or 2030? How should we prepare to face the future challenges? Senior executives around the globe, when asked about major future trends, mentioned the rise of complex challenges and the innovation revolution.[2] Others indicate the importance of giving individuals greater control over their professional environment, in order to help them feel more empowered.[3] Yet another survey confirmed that the core quality of the future leader is to be able to communicate with empathy to create optimism, clarity, and certainty in uncertain times.[4] It will be shown here that most of those intuitions about the future are indeed justified.

As we dive in, an important caveat is that this book doesn't promote one kind of leadership over another. The goal is to demonstrate a certain approach, namely, Empowering Leadership, knowing that a diverse palette of different styles of successful management exists to suit different situations. For example, at one time there was a heated discussion around the management at Wal-Mart (top-down, low salaries, etc.).[5] The response was that yes, but through that Wal-Mart introduces jobs to places where there is high unemployment, and that their products are sold at lower prices than in other supermarkets, enabling poor people to purchase more than they could otherwise.

[1] As indicated by 510 million Google returns (May 2016); also see: McNamara (2010).

[2] Criswell & Martin (2007).

[3] According to 2020 Vision: Future Trends in Leadership & Management, Institute of Leadership & Management: www.i-l-m.com/~/media/ILM%20Website/Documents/research-reports/future-trends/ilm-research-reports-future-trends%20pdf.ashx; retrieved February 24, 2017.

[4] PCW (2008). How Leadership Must Change to Meet the Future. PriceWaterHouseCoopers: www.pwc.com/us/en/people-management/assets/future-leadership-change.pdf.

[5] See: www.nybooks.com/articles/2005/04/28/working-for-wal-mart-an-exchange/.

The title *Empowering Leadership of Tomorrow* suggests a forward-looking stance and springs from conclusions reached in previous studies, in which we analyzed social entrepreneurship. The insight then was that Social Entrepreneurs are introducing a form of Empowering Leadership (Praszkier & Nowak, 2012). Following those studies I identified the Empowering approach in other fields, especially in business (Praszkier, 2015). The idea for this book was conceived when I realized that Empowering Leadership isn't merely relevant to "running businesses" or "pursuing social missions." It also engenders a certain creed that informs the way we interact with people, approach problems, build trust and cooperation, rear children, care for the disabled, etc.

The book's structure merges theory with practice and is based on a blend of literature analysis, academic studies, and practical experience. Much of the latter is derived from my experience with Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, an international association of leading public entrepreneurs and innovators.[6] As a second-opinion reviewer, I had in-depth conversations with more than one hundred innovators from around the world – candidates for the Ashoka Fellowship. Moreover, I interviewed several business executives to understand better the bottom-up leadership model introduced in their companies. These conversations were a cardinal experience, immensely enriching my knowledge drawn from articles, books, and Web sites.

And, yes, I wear two hats: As an academician and researcher, I study change dynamics (those attributes that make change durable and irreversible), and as a practitioner, I'm involved in supporting social and business innovators in the field. I thoroughly enjoy these face-to-face meetings and draw inspiration from these gifted individuals. A third hat I wear is that of author: I've written and cowritten several articles, books, and book chapters.

The primary goal of this book is to introduce the phenomenon of Empowering Leadership (EL), incorporating the premise of complexity theory. Another aim relates to the way leadership in general is defined; each section's introduction will include a review of definitions of leadership in general, related to the particular section's content.

Moreover, there are several conceptual tracks sustained and explored throughout the book. For example, it seems crucial to understand the mechanisms of *social influence* used by leaders (intentionally or not). Therefore, the classical approach to social influence is introduced in Chapter 3, and the concept is expanded upon in Chapter 4 to include the dynamic approach.
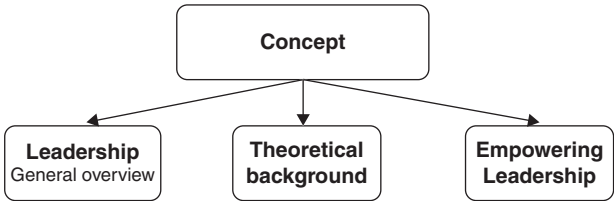
---

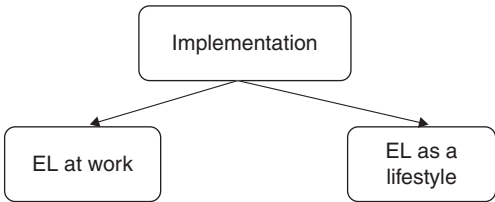[6] www.ashoka.org.

Figure 1.  The concept.



Figure 2.  The implementation.

In the same vein, the concept of *charisma* arises in Chapter 2 and is continued in Chapter 4. *Creativity*, which is pivotal for this kind of leadership, comes along in Chapters 7 and 10, and is elaborated upon in Chapter 14. And *chaos* and *complexity*, both central to this analysis, are introduced in Chapter 5 and continued throughout the book. This structure reveals the unfolding logic of the phenomenon of Empowering Leadership and calls out its foundational psychological and sociological mechanisms.

The book is divided into three parts: **Concept** presents the theory of leadership, the social influence mechanisms, nuts, and bolts of creativity and the new kind of Empowering Leadership (see Figure 1).

**Implementation** includes multiple case studies from the business and social arenas and presents EL as a personal creed or lifestyle(see Figure 2).

**Future** outlines possible ways of predicting and planning in the complex universe, where matters are basically unpredictable; it also sketches some ideas for EL education (see Figure 3).

Taking a closer look at the structure, Section 1 concludes with an analysis of the mechanisms of social and psychological influence – a vehicle enabling leaders to attract and affect others (Chapter 3). These mechanisms are illustrated with examples of Social Entrepreneurs' very specific kind of influence. We look at individuals who demonstrate the kind of leadership
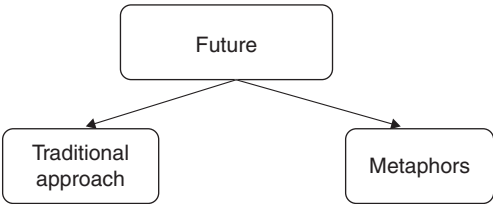
Figure 3. The future.

where passion for the mission leads to an immense, durable, and systemic social impact with low investment that empowers people, communities, and societies, thereby making them independent of their leader.

Section 2 advances us to the beginning of the twenty-first century and an analysis of leadership through the lens of complexity theory. We also see how complexity theory applies to the "magic" of getting "something out of nothing," with case studies of some large social movements that affected the world (e.g., the Gandhi, Civil Rights, and Polish Underground Solidarity movements). As creativity is pivotal for EL, Chapter 7 presents an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of creativity, demonstrating its neuroscience and social and psychological determinants. The section concludes with an analysis of the horizontal and transversal communication that underlies the "chaos-into-order" processes.

Both Sections 1 and 2 pave the way for introducing, in Section 3, the concept of Empowering Leadership (EL), i.e., enabling bottom-up, participative processes – a kind of leadership that, by fostering horizontal communication, facilitates the process of emergence (economic and/or social), and at the same time, empowers participants, often to the level of partnership. In this section we also look at several case studies of successful businesses in which the employees, traditionally perceived as subordinates, are called and act as "associates" or "partners."

Harnessing chaos into order requires some specific preconditions presented in Chapter 10. Section 3 concludes with a review of diverse case studies of successful implementations of empowering leadership in business and in the social sector.

At this point new questions arise: Is EL merely a way of running business? Or, may it also be a creed or lifestyle? Are there some specific personality traits supporting EL? In Section 4 we suggest that, yes, there is a specific lifestyle and there are some personality characteristics associated with EL, and that they also manifest outside the work environment.

The claim that EL requires specific personality traits is examined in Chapter 13. Prior to reviewing the real-life implications of EL, we delve into the mechanisms and techniques enhancing creativity, as creativity seems to be an important driver for the empowering approach (Chapter 14). We look at how to augment creativity; what boosts serendipity, i.e., the casual, unplanned tendency to generate novel ideas; whether creativity makes one happy; and, if it does, then what are the mechanisms responsible for this?

Section 4 concludes with a review of real-life situations in which EL may manifest itself, including child rearing, education, counseling and coaching, and caring for people with special needs and for the aging (Chapter 15).

Section 5 deals with anticipating possible future scenarios. The question is how, in the world of complexity and unpredictability, can one predict the future? The traditional approach (e.g., through computer simulations) is presented in Chapter 16. Some nontraditional techniques are introduced in Chapter 17, enabling exploration of the future through simulations that are easy for readers at various levels of education and experience to adopt. Simulations (e.g., Live Action Role-Playing (LARP) Games, metaphors, dancing, and imagining) are delineated as gateways for understanding possible future scenarios.

Finally, the Précis draws all the strings together and introduces an Empowering Leadership model, highlighting the inevitably Empowering spirit.