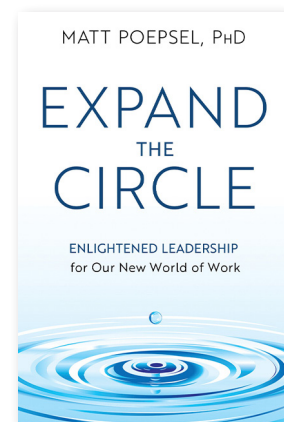


Expand the Circle

Enlightened Leadership for Our New World of Work

by **Matt Poepsel**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The way we work and what we expect from our work is not the same as it was a few decades (or centuries) ago. So, why does the way we lead continue to remain the same?

The book, *Expand the Circle: Enlightened Leadership for Our New World of Work* gives us a kaleidoscopic view of what modern leadership looks like. It gently peels the layers of the “Expand the Circle” framework. Throughout our voyage across the book, we learn how to lead ourselves, others, our teams, our organizations, and finally, the world.

Author Matt Poepsel ushers us into the next era of leadership by helping us learn the enlightened leadership principles, aspire to bring them to our organizations, and make the necessary effort to move beyond our self-imposed limitations. He familiarizes us with a comprehensive set of hard-hitting truths and actionable tools to help us take on the enlightened leadership approach.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- About the Expand Your Circle Framework.
- How to overcome your self-imposed limitations.
- How to cultivate an enlightened leadership approach.
- How to Assess, Aspire, and Act your way toward enlightened leadership.

Introduction

Many workers today find they can adequately meet their basic and even mid-level needs through virtually any employer. Beyond that, the work they do fails to satisfy them and kills their productivity, engagement, performance, and intent to stay.

This view of the work and the worker implies that an inherent disconnect exists in the modern workplace. What's missing is something that can help workers meet their existential needs while performing meaningful and necessary work in organizations. Fortunately, enlightened leadership can make that critical connection. It is a leadership approach characterized by opening oneself to new beliefs and practices inspired by ancient wisdom and grounded in modern science.

In the chapters that follow, we'll see the benefits that stem from the techniques I've incorporated into my Expand the Circle enlightened leadership framework. This framework includes five progressive layers: Lead Yourself, Lead Others, Lead Your Team, Lead Your Organization, and Lead the World.

Part 1: The Map

Chapter 1: Lead Yourself

As a leader, before you effectively lead others, you must learn to lead yourself. This involves investing in personal reflection and self-mastery to deepen your leadership capacity. Leading yourself is about building the pillars of awareness, acceptance, confidence, authenticity, and transcendence.

An enlightened leader is a self-aware leader. Examine your personal values, guiding beliefs, strengths, limitations, and motivation to lead. Make checking in with yourself a regular habit. Shift from avoiding negative experiences to appreciating them. Remember, no leader is perfect. Rather than hide away your perceived flaws, accept that they're an essential part of you. Learn from your setbacks and your shortcomings.

The road to confidence starts from the expectation that you will succeed. Build on that foundation by appreciating the value you create as a leader. Remember that self-confidence and self-esteem precede competence. Be fully authentic. Strive to exhibit the values, attitudes, and behaviors that align with your most authentic self. Understand that transcendence is about thinking bigger. Your willingness to transcend self-absorption and self-limiting boundaries will unlock your next leadership level.

Chapter 2: Lead Others

When we Expand the Circle beyond ourselves alone, we arrive at our relationships with Others. This step requires mastering the art of empathy, altruism, trust, fairness, and connectedness. Move beyond your self-interest by concerning yourself deeply with others' experiences, objectives, strengths, limitations, and circumstances. Put their welfare and success on par with your own.

Exercise your empathy muscles by pausing to consider what those around you may be feeling. Push past any reservations and take steps to improve the well-being and circumstances of others. You may not directly experience a corresponding benefit in the short term, but leadership is about the long game. Remember, trust increases speed and reduces effort. Extend trust early and willingly by making yourself trustworthy and investing in building and maintaining trust in your relationships with others.

Enlightened leadership is also about equanimity and exchange. Seek equity in your relationships with others, not by pretending that you have no biases but rather by being aware of them and offsetting them to your best ability. Increase your awareness and appreciation regarding how we're all intrinsically connected in ways we don't always consider. Finally, tap into our unique human bond to boost the flow of positive intent and action between us.

Chapter 3: Lead Your Team

When we Expand the Circle beyond relationships, we reach the level of our Team. Enlightened leadership helps balance complex team dynamics while improving the team's performance, welfare, and commitment.

Recognize that a team can accomplish exponentially more than isolated individuals. Create conditions for team success by applying enlightened leadership principles at the collective level. Clarify your objective to create energy and momentum. Hone your ability to craft compelling stories and make a habit of sharing them with your team to keep them moving in the right direction.

Remember, humans are wired with a need to belong. Foster a tangible identity for your team and ensure that team members see the inherent benefits in group membership and the collective pursuit of the team objectives. Enhance collaboration and mutual sacrifice in pursuit of team objectives and the overall welfare of team members.

Psychological safety is a prerequisite to effective teamwork.

Create an environment where team members are unafraid of the repercussions of membership, offering a counterpoint, or highlighting risks and challenges. Difficult times can either pull your team apart or bring it together. Strengthen the bonds between team members through recognition, appreciation, and honesty to create an enduring connection.

Chapter 4: Lead Your Organization

When we Expand the Circle beyond a single team, we reach the level of the Organization.

But an organization is like a freight train. It takes a great deal of energy to get it started, and its momentum can make it difficult to maneuver. So always stay vigilant at the controls. Be intentional when defining and supporting your mission and purpose. Its magnetic qualities will keep you on track and propel you forward.

Always stick together and act as one. With culture, consistency and reinforcement are key. Communicate your culture broadly and take steps to ensure attitudes and behaviors constantly reflect it. You can only achieve a multiplier effect from aligned efforts. Be mindful of the competing goals and splintered interests that naturally crop up in complex situations.

Focus on the wellness of the workplace. By making employee wellness a priority, you care for those who make everything possible. Their health and happiness will show up in the workplace and beyond it.

Chapter 5: Lead the World

Just when we feel we can't Expand the Circle any further, we discover that we can pass beyond the boundaries of our organizations and out into the world. Make an impact on the world at large by extending your leadership beyond the traditional confines of your organization and let it repay you for your effort. Rather than attempt to leave work behind, consider what lessons, tools, and techniques may help you leverage your leadership. A little creativity will go a long way.

Remember, your community is full of people who work together to support one another. Bring enlightened leadership into your everyday interactions and exchanges. While it may seem as if we are separate from one another, we share a common bond of humanity. This is a time when it pays not to mind your own business.

We are also imposing an increasingly high toll on our planet. Shift the balance by making it a priority to create

and participate in sustainability programs and education. Finally, don't ignore the existential questions that shape our lives and our work. Go beyond. Push past the boundary and connect with your enlightened leadership potential.

Part 2: The Path

Chapter 6: Becoming An Enlightened Leader

The path toward becoming an enlightened leader comprises three steps: Assessment, Aspiration, and Action. The following pages will guide you through each of these steps toward enlightened leadership.

The Assessment guide will help you pinpoint areas where you'd most like to improve. Creating an Aspiration framework (or goal setting) will help you set realistic and achievable goals. Taking Action will help you make real progress and gain confidence in your capabilities.

Chapter 7: Assessment – Know Thyself

The self-assessment area presents Yes or No questions related to the topics found in each layer of the Expand the Circle framework. These layers include: Lead Yourself, Lead Others, Lead Your Team, Lead Your Organization, and Lead the World. By responding to these questions, you can raise your awareness of specific layers or elements where you would like to concentrate your focus and improvement efforts. Considering "today" as your baseline, you can return to this assessment later to compare how your responses may have evolved.

Chapter 8: Aspiration – The Will Before the Way

Becoming an enlightened leader is a transformative experience. A successful journey requires three key elements I refer to as know, how, can do, and want to. We're each presented with opportunities to practice an enlightened leadership approach nearly every moment, which means any of us can do it. The aspiration we declare signifies we want to improve and grow.

It will help you know how to Expand the Circle. You can do it based on your opportunity and ability to practice enlightened leadership every minute of every day. If you develop your want to by cultivating a sincere wish to liberate yourself and serve others, you will prepare yourself to follow through on your aspiration.

Chapter 9: Action – Steps Along the Path

Now that your preparation work is complete, you're ready

to take action.

The exercise for increasing your self-awareness involves identifying your most closely held personal values: Accountability, Courage, Creativity, Dedication, Discipline, Efficiency, Empathy, Enthusiasm, Humor, Persistence, Positivity, Resilience, Support, Transparency, Trustworthiness, and Vision.

Choose your top ten values from the list. Narrow your values to the top five, top three, and so on. Finally, choose your single most closely held personal value, the one you would most like to amplify in your leadership.

The exercise for boosting your capacity for acceptance involves identifying self-judgment triggers. It involves asking the Who, What, and When questions. Who made you discount your own achievements by accomplishing something? What characteristic of thought or behavior do you dislike about yourself? When did you experience a failure that caused you to discount your self-worth? After determining these triggers, focus on accepting the totality of yourself, including your less desirable characteristics.

The exercise of confidence involves assessing forces that erode your confidence and determining how you can remedy them in your leadership. It is all about gaining clarity about what it means to live a life that is in harmony with our true selves and involves answering the Person, Project, and Purpose questions:

- “Who is a person in your life who you thoroughly wish to be successful?”
- “What is a project or initiative that you would like to see be successful?”
- “What is a movement or a change in the world that you would like to see be successful?”

After uncovering the first layer of the Expand the Circle framework, it's time to progress through the other layers until you finally become an enlightened leader.

Part 3: The Lamp

Chapter 10: Lighting A Lamp for Other Leaders

Enlightened leadership can transform your approach, but you don't have to stop there. Engage other leaders and invite them to step onto the path as well. Take time to fully immerse yourself in the framework and exercises.

Be prepared to connect the dots for decision-makers. Use your organization's current challenges and opportunities to highlight the framework's business benefits and corresponding elements. Consider beginning with a small-scale pilot program; your executive leadership team may be an ideal place to get things moving. Always think big. Even after you've built sufficient momentum, simply keep going.

Chapter 11: Tips for Executives

As an executive, you have three significant advantages: your voice is heard the loudest, you're the chief decision-maker when it comes to time, money, effort, and attention, and finally, you establish the priorities for your organization.

Your aspiring leaders look to you to set an example. So, use your elevated position to bring enlightened leadership into your organization. Remember, business issues are an indication that a better leadership approach is needed. Give your level-down leaders the resources and support they need to rise to the challenge. Tap into your position to create better operating efficiencies, more flexibility, and an attractive landing spot for high performers. Provide mechanisms where leaders can learn and apply new skills without fear of failure. Remember, when it comes to people, fast is slow, and slow is fast. Although changing longstanding patterns of thinking and doing is difficult, always be patient and celebrate continuous improvement.

Chapter 12: Tips for Team Leaders

As a team leader, your leadership as well as that of your team members is required for collective success. Take advantage of your proximity to your team members. Give them constant feedback and support and offer autonomy to increase your team's enthusiasm and follow-through. Look for team-oriented improvements that will allow everyone to work together in each area of development. When you've been inspired by something that helps you raise your game, consider sharing it with your team. Remember, professional growth takes time. So be sure to reinforce development exercises and topics until they become automatic.

Chapter 13: Tips for HR Leaders

As a Human Resources leader, you play a critical role in helping your organization and leaders at every level perform at their collective best. Do everything you can to create a people-first perspective. Executives are paying significantly more attention to people issues that affect the business. Take advantage of the shift by being strategic and opportunistic in your approach. Ask thoughtful questions

about the business and look for those areas where an enlightened leadership approach could pay dividends. Rather than fixate on the here and now, imagine how the organization will need to operate differently in the future.

Conclusion: The Formula

The final formula for increasing our capacity as enlightened leaders is:

Enlightened Leadership Capacity = (Mindfulness + Compassion + Wisdom)/Self-Interest

Our new world of work asks leaders to be more selfless than ever before. While minimizing our self-interest is far from easy, we must strive to do exactly that if we're to embrace an enlightened leadership approach. Minimizing our self-interest helps us heighten our mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom.

Pause for a moment to ponder what's possible and what's next. Your very next interaction can reflect an enlightened leadership approach if you're willing to seize the opportunity. You now have everything you need to send out wave after beneficial wave as you Expand the Circle.



Matt Poepsel is a writer and speaker focused on leadership, organizational performance, and personal growth. He holds a PhD in Psychology, an MBA, and a Certificate of Management Excellence from Harvard Business School. He's built a reputation of crafting stories and techniques that are as engaging as they are informative. Over the past two decades, Matt has motivated and inspired leaders at every level to boost their performance and positivity. He draws on his experiences as a software executive and consultant, a US Marine, an IRONMAN triathlete, and a student of Buddhist philosophy.

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