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Leadership and Self-Deception

Getting Out of the Box

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Since its original publication in 2000, *Leadership and Self-Deception* by The Arbinger Institute has become a word-of-mouth phenomenon. Its sales continue to increase year after year, and the book's popularity has gone global, with editions now available in more than 20 languages.

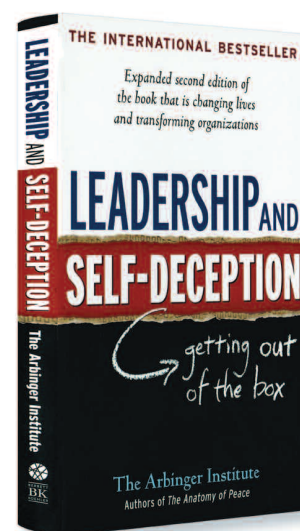
Through a story everyone can relate to about a man facing challenges on the job and in his family, the authors expose the fascinating ways that we can blind ourselves to our true motivations and unwittingly sabotage the effectiveness of our own efforts to achieve success and increase happiness.

This new edition has been revised throughout to make the story even more compelling. And drawing on the extensive correspondence the authors have received over the years, they demonstrate the many ways that “getting out of the box” can help readers improve their lives and workplaces. The principles can be applied to team building, conflict resolution, and personal growth and development, to name a few.

Read *Leadership and Self-Deception* and discover what millions already have learned — how to consistently tap into an innate ability that dramatically improves both your results and your relationships.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How each of us has the problem of not knowing we have a problem.
- How to help rehabilitate employees who will lose their jobs unless some serious changes are made.
- How to institute a new way of tracking problems in your company.
- How to move from merely dreaming about a culture of responsibility-taking and accountability to actually experiencing it.
- A model for solving every problem encountered by your organization.



by The Arbinger Institute

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: LEADERSHIP AND SELF-DECEPTION

by The Arbinger Institute

The authors: The Arbinger Institute helps organizations, families, individuals and communities worldwide to correct the trouble created by the little-known but pervasive problem of self-deception. Arbinger is led by founding partners James Ferrell, Duane Boyce, Paul Smith and Terry Warner. Headquartered in the United States, Arbinger now has operations around the world, including throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India, Oceania and Asia.

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Preface

For too long, the issue of self-deception has been the realm of deep-thinking philosophers, academics and scholars working on the central questions of the human sciences. The public remains generally unaware of the issue. That would be fine except that self-deception is so pervasive it touches every aspect of life. “Touches” is perhaps too gentle a word to describe its influence. Self-deception actually *determines* one’s experience in every aspect of life. The extent to which it does that — and in particular the extent to which it determines the nature of one’s influence on, and experience of, others — is the subject of this book.

More Stuck Than Ever

To give you an idea of what’s at stake, consider the following analogy. An infant is learning to crawl. She begins by pushing herself backward around the house. Backing herself around, she gets lodged beneath the furniture. There she thrashes about, crying and banging her little head against the sides and undersides of the pieces. She is stuck and hates it. So she does the only thing she can think of to get herself out — she pushes even harder, which only worsens her problem. She’s more stuck than ever.

If this infant could talk, she would blame the furniture for her troubles. After all, she is doing everything she can think of. The problem couldn’t be *hers*. But of course, the problem *is* hers, even though she can’t see it. While it’s true she’s doing everything she can think of, the problem is precisely that *she can’t see how she’s the problem*. Having the problem she has, nothing she can think of will be a solution.

Self-deception is like this. It blinds us to the true causes of problems, and once we’re blind, all the “solutions” we can think of will actually make matters worse. Whether at work or at home, self-deception obscures the truth about ourselves, corrupts our view of others and our circumstances, and inhibits our ability to make wise and helpful decisions. To the extent that we are self-deceived, both our happiness and our leadership are undermined at every turn, and not because of the furniture.

A Solution to a Central Problem

We have written the following story to educate people about a solution to this most central of problems. Our experience in teaching about self-deception and its solution is that people find this knowledge liberating. It sharpens vision, reduces feelings of conflict, enlivens the desire for teamwork, redoubles accountability, magnifies the capacity to achieve results, and deepens satisfaction and happiness. ●

PART I: SELF-DECEPTION AND THE ‘BOX’

Bud

My name is Tom Callum. It was a brilliant summer morning shortly before 9:00, and I was hurrying to the most important meeting of my new job at Zagrum Co. As I walked across the tree-lined grounds, I recalled the day two months earlier when I had first entered the secluded campus-style headquarters to interview for a senior management position. I had been watching the company for more than a decade from my perch at one of its competitors and had tired of finishing second.



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After eight interviews and three weeks spent doubting myself and waiting for news, I was hired to lead one of Zagrum's product lines.

Now, four weeks later, I was about to be introduced to a senior management ritual peculiar to Zagrum: a daylong one-on-one meeting with Executive Vice President Bud Jefferson. Bud was the right-hand man to Zagrum's President Kate Stenarude, and he was about to become my new boss.

A Man of Apparent Contradictions

Bud Jefferson was a youngish-looking 50-year-old combination of odd-fitting characteristics: a wealthy man who drove around in an economy car without hubcaps; a near-high school dropout who had graduated with law and business degrees, *summa cum laude*, from Harvard. Despite his apparent contradictions, and perhaps partly because of them, Bud was revered as something of an icon. He was universally admired in the company.

As I scaled the Central Building's hanging steel stairway up to the third floor, I reviewed my performance during my month at Zagrum: I was always among the earliest to arrive and latest to leave. I felt that I was focused and didn't let outside matters interfere with my objectives. Although my wife Laura often complained about it, I was making a point to outwork and outshine every co-worker who might compete for promotions in the coming years. I nodded to myself in satisfaction. I had nothing to be ashamed of. I was ready to meet Bud Jefferson.

A minute or two later, there was a brisk knock on the door and in walked Bud.

What No One Wants to Hear

"Tom," said Bud abruptly, "I've asked you to come today for one reason — an important reason."

"OK," I said evenly, trying to mask the anxiety I was feeling.

"You have a problem — a problem you're going to have to solve if you're going to make it at Zagrum."

Finally I managed to say, "A problem? What do you mean?"

"Do you really want to know?" asked Bud.

"I'm not sure. I guess I need to, from the sound of it."

"Yes," Bud agreed, "you do." ●

A Problem

"You have a problem," Bud continued. "The people at work know it, your spouse knows it, your mother-in-law knows it. I'll bet even your neighbors know it."

Despite the digs, he was smiling warmly. "The problem is that you don't know it."

How could I know I had a problem if I didn't even know what the problem was? "I'm afraid I don't know what you mean," I said, trying to exhibit calm.

"Think about these examples, for starters," he said. "Remember the time you had a chance to fill the car with gas before your wife took it, but then you decided she could fill it just as easily as you, so you took the car home empty?"

I thought about it for a moment. "I suppose I've done that, yes." *But so what?* I wondered.

"And," he continued, "have you ever kept some important information to yourself, even when you knew a colleague would really be helped by it?"

I had to admit that I had done that.

He paused for a moment. "What do you do when you're confronted with someone you believe is lazy or incompetent?"

I thought about it. "I suppose I get after some of them pretty hard. But some people don't respond well to that, so I try to get them going in other ways. Some I cajole, others I outsmart. But I've learned to keep my smile with most people. That seems to help. I think I do a pretty good job with people, actually."

Bud nodded, "I understand. But when we're finished, I think you'll feel differently."

Doing More Damage

The comment unsettled me. "What's wrong with treating people well?" I protested.

"But you're *not* treating them well. That's the problem. You're doing more damage than you know."

"Damage?" I repeated.

Attempting to keep my emotions under control, I said, "I'm afraid you're going to have to explain that to me." The words sounded too combative, even to my own ear, and my cheeks flushed all the more.

"I'll be happy to," he said calmly. "I can help you learn what your problem is — and what to do about it. That's why we're meeting." He paused, and then added, "I can help you because I have the same problem."

Bud rose from his chair and began pacing the length of the table. "To begin with, you need to know about a problem at the heart of the human sciences." ●

Self-Deception

"I was a young lawyer at the time," Bud began, "working long hours at one of the most prestigious firms

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in the country. One of the deals I worked on was a major financing project that involved about 30 banks worldwide. Our client was the lead lender on the deal.

“A week after I’d been assigned to the project, my wife Nancy and I found out she was pregnant. Our son David was born eight months later, on Dec. 16.

“But then came a phone call. It was Dec. 29. The lead partner on the deal was calling me. I was needed at an ‘all hands’ meeting in San Francisco.

“With a photo album under my arm, I tore myself away from them and turned through the doors of the terminal of what used to be called National Airport.

“I worked from 6 a.m. till after midnight every day. If you had asked me at the time what my objective was I would have told you that I was ‘drafting the best possible documents to protect our client and close the deal,’ or something to that effect. But you should know a couple of other things about my experience in San Francisco.

“All of the negotiations that were central to the documents I was working on were happening on the 25th floor. But I didn’t go up to 25 much.

“Now, let me ask you a question, Tom. Just from the little bit you know about my San Francisco experience, would you say that I was really committed to ‘drafting the best possible documents to protect our client and close the deal?’”

“No,” I said, shaking my head. “It sounds like you were preoccupied with something else. It doesn’t seem like you were engaged in the project at all.”

The Bigger Problem

“I was uncommitted, was disengaged, hadn’t caught the vision and was making things more difficult for others on the deal. That’s all true. And that’s a problem — a big problem. But there was a bigger problem — and it’s this problem that you and I need to talk about.”

He had my full attention.

“The bigger problem was that I couldn’t *see* that I had a problem.”

Bud paused for a moment, and then, leaning toward me, he said in a lower, even more earnest tone, “There is no solution to the problem of lack of commitment, for example, without a solution to the bigger problem — the problem that I can’t see that I’m not committed.”

I suddenly started to be uneasy and could feel my face again sag to expressionlessness. I had been caught up in Bud’s story and had forgotten that he was telling it to me for a reason. This story was for me. He must have been thinking that I had a bigger problem. Despite my efforts to stay coolly detached, my face and ears began to heat up.

“Tom, there’s a technical name for the insistent blindness I exhibited in San Francisco. Philosophers call it *self-deception*. At Zagrum, we have a less technical name for it — we call it ‘being in the box.’ In our way of talking, when we’re self-deceived, we’re ‘in the box.’ You’re going to learn a lot more about the box, but as a starting point, think of it this way: In one sense, I was ‘stuck’ in my experience in San Francisco. I was stuck because I had a problem I didn’t think I had — a problem I couldn’t see. I could see matters only from my own closed perspective and I was deeply resistant to any suggestion that the truth was otherwise. So I was in a box — cut off, closed up, blind. Does that make sense?”

I nodded.

“There’s nothing more common in organizations than self-deception,” he continued. “Remember how I mentioned that you needed to know something about a problem in the human sciences?”

“Yes.”

“This is it. Self-deception — being in the box — is the problem I was talking about. Of all the problems in organizations, self-deception is the most common and the most damaging.”

Bud paused, then continued, “At Zagrum, Tom, our top strategic initiative is to minimize individual and organizational self-deception.” ●

PART II: HOW WE GET // THE BOX

Kate

I had met Kate just once. She’d been the final of my eight interviewers during the hiring process. I liked her instantly, as I’d since found out was common to nearly everyone in the company. Her story was in some ways the story of Zagrum and, like Zagrum’s story, Kate’s was freely passed along to new employees. She had joined the company fresh out of college some 25 years earlier, with a degree in history. One of the first 20 employees at Zagrum, she started as an order-fulfillment clerk. In those days, it seemed that Zagrum’s future was in perpetual doubt. After five years, Kate, by then Zagrum’s director of sales, left the company for a better opportunity, only to change her mind after a last-ditch personal appeal by Lou Herbert, the company’s president at the time. Since that time, and until Lou’s retirement, Kate had been second in command at Zagrum. At Lou’s retirement, she was elevated to president and CEO.

“Hello, Tom,” she said, extending her hand to me. I

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was returning to the Central building after a lunch break and Kate joined me as we walked up the stairs. “It’s good to see you again. Is life treating you well?”

“Yeah, I can’t complain,” I said, trying to ignore for the moment my surprise at meeting her. “How about you?”

“Never a dull moment, I’m afraid,” she said with a chuckle.

“I can’t believe you remember who I am,” I said.

“What? Forget a fellow St. Louis Cardinals fan? Never. And besides, I’m coming to meet with you.”

“With *me*?” I said incredulously, pointing at myself. ●

Self-Betrayal

“Hey Kate,” Bud said warmly as we walked through the doors of the Eastview Room.

“Hi Bud,” she said. “Sorry, I ruined your surprise.”

“I didn’t intend your coming as a surprise, actually,” he said. “Let’s all sit down and get to it.”

Bud rubbed his chin. “Well, Tom,” he said, “we’re certainly going to get to how we get out of the box. But first we have to understand how we get in it.

“Now at first you’re going to think this is a silly story. It’s not even a workplace story. We’ll apply it to the workplace when we get a little more under our belts. Anyway, it’s just a simple little story — mundane even. But it illustrates well how we get in the box in the first place.

“One night a number of years ago, when David was just an infant, I was awakened by his wailing cries. He was probably 4 months old or so at the time. I remember glancing at the clock. It was around 1 o’clock in the morning. In the flash of that moment, I had an impression or a sense or a feeling — a thought of something I should do. It was this: ‘Get up and tend to David so that Nancy can sleep.’

“If you think about it, this sort of sense is very basic,” he continued. “We’re all people. And when we’re out of the box and seeing others as people, we have a very basic sense about others — namely that, like ourselves, they have hopes, needs, cares and fears. And on occasion, as a result of this sense, we have impressions of things to do for others — things we think might help them, things we can do for them, things we want to do for them. You know what I’m talking about?”

“Sure, that’s clear enough,” I said.

“This was such an occasion — I felt a desire to do something for Nancy. But you know what? I didn’t act on it. I just stayed in the bed, listening to David wail.”

I could relate. I’d waited out Laura and our son Todd plenty of times.

“You might say I ‘betrayed’ my sense of what I should do for Nancy,” he said. “That’s sort of a strong way to say it, but I just mean that in acting contrary to my sense of what was appropriate, I betrayed my own sense of how I should be toward another person. So we call such an act ‘self-betrayal.’

“Now, in this moment, as I’m just lying there listening to our wailing child, how do you imagine I might’ve started to see and feel about Nancy?”

“Well, she probably seemed lazy to you,” I said. ●

Characteristics of Self-Betrayal

“To begin with, think about this: When did Nancy seem worse to me, before I betrayed myself or afterward?”

“Afterward, for sure,” I said.

“Yes,” said Bud, “and when do you suppose sleep seemed more important to me, before I betrayed myself or after?”

“Oh, I guess after.”

“And when do you suppose other interests — like my work responsibilities the next morning, for example — seemed more pressing to me, before I betrayed myself or after?”

“Again, after.”

Bud paused for a moment.

“Now here’s another question: Take a look again at how I started to see Nancy. Do you suppose that in reality she’s as bad as she seemed to me after I betrayed myself?”

“No, probably not,” I said.

“That’s true,” Bud agreed.

“Yeah, but what if she was?” I interjected. “I mean, what if she really *was* a lazy and inconsiderate person? Wouldn’t that make a difference?”

“That’s a good question, Tom,” Bud said, rising again from his chair. “Let’s think about that for a minute.”

He started to pace the length of the table. “Let’s just say, for the sake of argument, that Nancy *is* lazy. And let’s assume that she’s generally inconsiderate, too. Some people are, after all. Here’s the question: If she was lazy and inconsiderate after I betrayed myself, then she must’ve been lazy and inconsiderate before, right?”

“Yes,” I answered. “If she’s lazy and inconsiderate, she’s lazy and inconsiderate. Before, after, it wouldn’t matter.”

“OK, good,” said Bud. “But if that’s the case, then notice — I felt I should get up and help her *even though* she was lazy and inconsiderate. Before I betrayed myself,

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I didn't see her faults as reasons not to help her. I felt that way only *after* I betrayed myself, when I used her faults as justifications for my own misbehavior. Does that make sense?"

I wasn't sure.

"So think about it," Bud continued. "Here I am in self-betrayal, and I think that I'm not getting up to help Nancy because of what she's doing to me — because she's lazy, inconsiderate and so on. But is that the truth?"

"No," I said, beginning to see the picture. "You *think* that's the truth, but it's not."

"That's right. The truth is, her faults seemed relevant to whether I should help her only *after I failed to help her*. I focused on and inflated her faults when I needed to feel justified for *mine*. After I betrayed myself, the truth was just the opposite of what I thought it was."

"Yeah, I guess that's right," I said, nodding my head slowly. ●

Collusion

In the top left corner of a dry-erase board, Bud wrote the following principles about self-betrayal:

1. An act contrary to what I feel I should do for another is called an act of "self-betrayal."
2. When I betray myself, I begin to see the world in a way that justifies my self-betrayal.
3. When I see the world in a self-justifying way, my view of reality becomes distorted.
4. So — when I betray myself, I enter the box.
5. Over time, certain boxes become characteristic of me and I carry them with me.
6. By being in the box, I provoke others to be in the box.
7. In the box, we invite mutual mistreatment and obtain mutual satisfaction. We collude in giving each other reason to stay in the box.

Kate said, "So you see, Tom, from within the box, I end up undermining the effectiveness of everything I do. And the problem isn't merely that the box makes me ineffective, it's that it makes me *destructive*. Because from within the box, I end up inviting more of the very thing that I'm complaining about, as well as other behaviors that I will hate just as much, if not more."

"But that's crazy," I said, after a moment's reflection. "Why would you — or anyone else, for that matter — ever do that? Why would we keep such a destructive cycle going?"

Kate paused for a moment, apparently collecting her

thoughts. "I believe the answer to that, Tom, is that my box *needs* for it to continue."

"What?" I said reflexively. The answer didn't make any sense to me.

Kate smiled. "I know, it sounds absurd, doesn't it? Who would ever get themselves into a position where they actively invited others to continue treating them poorly, even miserably? Who would do that?"

"Exactly," I echoed, "who would do that?"

"And the answer, Tom, is that *I* would. And you would. And Bud would. And everyone else here at Zagrum would. Whenever we are in the box, we have a need that is met by others' poor behavior. And so our boxes encourage more poor behavior in others, even if that behavior makes our lives more difficult."

"How? Why?" I asked.

She said, "When I'm in the box, there's something I need more than what I think I want most. And what do you think that is? What do I need most when I'm in the box?"

I wasn't sure.

Kate leaned toward me. "*What I need most when I'm in the box is to feel justified*. Justification is what my box eats, as it were, in order to survive."

"Once in the box," Bud said, "we give each other reason to *stay* in the box. We do this not only by mistreating the other person directly, by the way, but also by how we might begin to talk about or gossip about that person with others. The more people we can find to agree with our side of the story, the more justified we will feel in believing that side of the story. Whether at home or at work, boxes want to spread in order to gather additional justification. And with every mistreatment, we give each other further justification for staying in the box." ●

PART III: HOW WE GET *OUT* OF THE BOX

Lou

The next morning, Bud wasn't in the conference room yet. It was 8:15, and I was starting to wonder if I'd heard him correctly about our meeting's start time. Suddenly, the doors burst open and into the room walked an elderly gentleman.

"Tom Callum?" he said with a hearty smile, extending his hand.

"Yes."

"Glad to meet you. My name's Lou. Lou Herbert. Bud's on his way. He's just checking on a couple of

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things for a meeting we have this afternoon.

“Look, Tom, go ahead, sit. Bud asked me to get started with you before he arrives.”

I sat in my familiar chair from the afternoon before, and Lou took the seat across from me.

“So how was yesterday?”

“It was quite an amazing day, actually. Quite amazing.”

“Really? Tell me about it,” he said.

“Well,” I said, “I hardly know where to begin. I learned a lot yesterday. But let me start with my son.”

Over the next 15 minutes or so, I told Lou about my experience the previous night. It was the best night I’d had with Laura and Todd in at least five years. It was extraordinary because I simply enjoyed being with them without anything extraordinary happening. I cooked. I laughed. I had my son teach me how to tune up the car. For the first time in I didn’t know how long, I enjoyed and felt grateful for my family. And for the first time in a long time, I went to bed with no hard feelings toward anyone in my home. ●

Toward Being Out of the Box

Lou said, “Think about your time last night with your family. What were they to you last night? Were you seeing them as people or as objects?”

“They were people,” I said, amazed by the discovery.

“So if last night you were out of the box,” Lou said, “then you already know how to get out of the box.”

“But I don’t,” I said in protest. “I have no idea how it happened. In fact, I didn’t even know I was out of the box last night until you just pointed it out to me. I couldn’t begin to tell you how I got out.”

“Yes you can. In fact, you already did.”

“What do you mean?” I was completely bewildered.

“I mean, you told us about yesterday and about your experience last night, about how you went home and spent the evening with your family. That story teaches us how to get out of the box.”

“But that’s my point. I don’t see it,” I said.

What Doesn’t Work in the Box

1. Trying to change others.
2. Doing my best to “cope” with others.
3. Leaving.
4. Communicating.
5. Implementing new skills or techniques.
6. Changing my behavior.

“And this is my point: Yes, you do. You just don’t realize it yet. But you will,” Lou replied. ●

The Way Out

Lou said, “It’s futile to try to get out of the box by focusing further on ourselves: In the box, everything we think and feel is part of the lie of the box. The truth is, we change in the moment we cease resisting what is *outside* our box — others. Does that make sense?”

“Yeah, I think so.”

“In the moment we cease resisting others, we’re out of the box — liberated from self-justifying thoughts and feelings. This is why the way out of the box is always right before our eyes — *because the people we’re resisting are right before our eyes*. We can stop betraying ourselves toward them — we can stop resisting the call of their humanity upon us.”

“But what can help me to do *that*?” I asked.

Lou looked at me thoughtfully. “There’s something else you should understand about self-betrayal — something that may give you the leverage you’re looking for. Think about your experience yesterday with Bud and Kate. How would you characterize it? Would you say that you were basically *in* or *out* of the box toward them?”

“Oh, *out*, for sure,” I said. “At least most of the time.”

“But you’ve also indicated that you were *in* the box toward your wife yesterday. So there is a sense in which you were both *in and out* of the box at the same time — in the box toward Laura but out of the box toward Bud and Kate.”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right.”

“This is an important point, Tom. Toward any one person or group of people, I’m either in or out of the box at any given moment. But since there are many people in my life — some that I may be more in the box toward than others — in an important sense, I can be both *in and out* of the box at the same time. In the box toward some people and out toward others.

“This simple fact can give us leverage to get out of the box in the areas of our lives where we may be struggling.

“Here’s how we might depict what you were like yesterday,” Lou said. “You were in the box toward Laura but out of the box as you engaged with Bud and Kate. Now notice: Although you were resistant to Laura’s needs because you were in the box toward her, you nevertheless retained a sense of what people generally might need because you were out of the box toward others — namely, Bud and Kate. This sense that you felt honored regarding Bud and Kate, combined with the continual call of

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Laura's humanity to you — which is always there — is what made getting out of the box toward Laura possible.

“So although it's true that there is nothing we can think of and do from within the box to get ourselves out, the fact that we are almost always both in and out of the box at the same time, albeit in different directions, means that we always have it within our capacity to find our way to a perspective within ourselves that is out of the box. This is what Bud and Kate did for you yesterday — they supplied for you an out-of-the box environment from which you were able to consider your in-the-box relationships with new clarity. From the context of your relationships with Bud and Kate, you were able to think of a number of things you could do to help reduce your in-the-box moments and heal your in-the-box relationships. In fact, there is one thing in particular that you did while you were out of the box toward Bud and Kate that helped you to get out of the box toward Laura.”

Question Your Own Virtue

My mind searched for the answer. “What did I do?”

“You questioned your own virtue. While you were out of the box, you listened to what Bud and Kate taught you about being in the box. And then you applied it to your own personal situations. The out-of-the-box nature of your experience with Bud and Kate invited you to question whether you were, in fact, as out of the box as you had assumed you were in other areas of your life. And what you learned from the vantage point of that out-of-the-box space transformed your view of Laura.

“Now that probably didn't happen right off the bat,” Lou continued, “but I'd bet there was a moment when your blaming emotions toward Laura seemed to evaporate and she suddenly seemed different to you than she had the moment before.”

That was exactly how it happened, I thought to myself. I remembered that moment — when I saw the hypocrisy in my anger. It was as if everything changed in an instant. “That's true,” I said. “That's what happened.”

“You were seeing and feeling straightforwardly. Laura seemed different to you because in the moment you got out of the box toward her, you no longer had the need to blame her and inflate her faults.” ●

Another Chance

Bud pulled something from his briefcase. “Merely *knowing* the material doesn't get you out of the box. *Living* it does. And we're not living it if we're using it to

diagnose others. Rather, we're living it when we're using it to learn how we can be more helpful to others.

“Here are some things to keep in mind while you're trying to do just that,” he said, handing me a card.

This is what it said:

Knowing the Material

- Self-betrayal leads to self-deception and “the box.”
- When you're in the box, you can't focus on results.
- Your influence and success will depend on being out of the box.
- You get out of the box as you cease resisting other people.

Living the Material

- Don't try to be perfect. Do try to be better.
- Don't use the vocabulary — “the box,” and so on — with people who don't already know it.
- Do use the principles in your own life.
- Don't look for others' boxes. Do look for your own.
- Don't accuse others of being in the box.
- Do try to stay out of the box yourself.
- Don't give up on yourself when you discover you've been in the box. Do keep trying.
- Don't deny that you've been in the box when you have been.
- Do apologize; then just keep marching forward, trying to be more helpful to others in the future.
- Don't focus on what others are doing wrong.
- Do focus on what you can do right to help.
- Don't worry whether others are helping you.
- Do worry whether you are helping others.

I put the card in my briefcase, then stood up and turned to thank Lou.

“Just remember,” Lou said, shaking my hand with a firm grip, “we won't know who we work and live with — whether it be Bud, Kate, your wife or your son — until we leave the box and join them.” ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Leadership and Self-Deception*, you'll also like:

1. ***The Leadership Challenge* by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.** *The Leadership Challenge* is the gold standard for research-based leadership and the premier resource on becoming a leader.
2. ***The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* by Patrick Lencioni.** In this best-selling classic, Lencioni reveals the five dysfunctions that go to the very heart of why teams — even the best ones — often struggle.
3. ***Silos, Politics and Turf Wars* by Patrick Lencioni.** Learn how to transform confusion and infighting into clarity and alignment.