



# Radical Inclusion

## What the Post-9/11 World Should Have Taught Us About Leadership

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

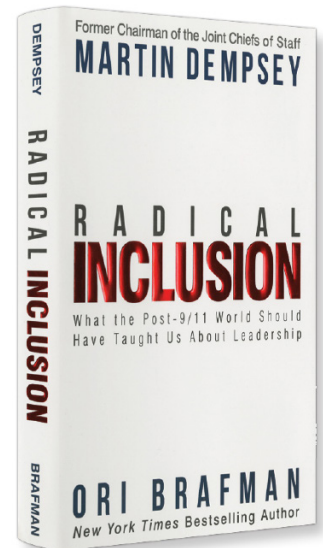
In *Radical Inclusion*, authors Martin Dempsey and Ori Brafman show that today's leaders are competing for the trust and confidence of those they lead more than ever before. The nature of power is changing and should not be measured simply by degree of control.

In today's environment, the speed and accessibility of information create "digital echoes" that make facts vulnerable, eroding trust between leaders and followers. Fear of losing control in our fast-paced, complex, highly scrutinized environment is pushing us toward exclusion — exactly the wrong direction. Leaders should instead develop an instinct for inclusion. The word "radical" emphasizes the urgency of doing so.

Power and control once went hand in hand, but no longer. Control is seductive but unlikely to produce optimum, affordable, sustainable solutions. *Radical Inclusion* demonstrates that leaders must relinquish and share control to build and preserve power. Through examples from business, the government and the military, the authors bring to life key principles for adapting to the new leadership landscape.

### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- To understand "the digital echo."
- Why narratives are so influential in today's leadership environment.
- The six key leadership principles of radical inclusion.
- Three essential leadership instincts for those who practice radical inclusion.



by Martin Dempsey and Ori Brafman

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: RADICAL INCLUSION

by Martin Dempsey and Ori Brafman

**The author:** Martin Dempsey served for 41 years in the U.S. Army, including as the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In 2015, he was named one of the most influential leaders in the world by *Time* magazine. Ori Brafman is a researcher, entrepreneur and author of three *New York Times* best-sellers. Brafman's ideas on leadership have been implemented by the U.S. government, Google, Microsoft, Cisco and Intel, among others.

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## PART I: THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

### The Digital Echo

People who have been to battle know that the most dangerous attacks don't announce their arrival. The most lethal attack is the one that catches us by surprise.

The military describes such blindness to impending attack as the "fog of war": the myriad things you may not know about your adversary — their location, numbers, capabilities and goals.

But think about this: What if the fog not only denied you access to the facts but actually convinced you of the validity of erroneous data? From a business perspective, imagine not merely being unsure about the number of your customers but being certain of an incorrect number. It's under this condition — of believing wrong information — that the most difficult issues emerge and take us by surprise.

There is always some fog present, and organizations try to diffuse it as best they can. Businesses analyze market trends to identify and outmaneuver the competition. But what if the information you see deceives rather than informs you?

Consider a recent hoax in which, with the aid of bots, the Twitterverse was convinced that a Louisiana chemical plant had gone up in flames — local news even reported on the fire. They eventually got the facts right when they sent a reporter to the scene, but what happens when local news gets replaced by distributed networks? In other words, what will happen when anyone can produce a news story? In a case like this false fire, social media might have two versions of the same story. One would say there was no fire — showing a video of the unburned

site — and then there would be another narrative, with photos purporting to show the explosion and its victims.

It's not always accurate to call instances like these "fake news." They can occur without any intentional deception. An inaccurate news story — even an accidentally inaccurate one — creates a "digital echo," and though the original source may be corrected, the echo — reverberating across distributed networks — endures forever.

In a world where verifying facts is becoming increasingly difficult, inclusion is imperative. It gives us sources as close to the ground or the action as possible, providing our best chance of getting at the truth. When we are forced to compete in a battle of narratives, inclusion is still our best weapon: Only by leveraging a diversity of voices can we create a winning narrative. ●

### The Power of Narrative

How many times during your personal or professional life have you been on the right side of an argument but been unable to convince others around you? How many teams have you been a part of that felt excluded from the overall organization?

Narratives are having greater and greater impact in industries and on the world political stage alike. The world is moving from debates about facts to battles of narratives.

Facts are by definition grounded in logic. Narratives, however, are based on emotions. Facts need to be verified in order to have utility. But narratives gain power merely by spreading. Unlike facts, no one expects narratives to be exacting. They are derivatives of the truth, not pure versions of it. Thus, they're allowed to be more flexible and agile, because they spread by being



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service@summary.com

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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Sarah T. Dayton, Editor in Chief; Ashleigh Imus, Senior Editor; Kylie O'Connor, Graphic Designer; A. Imus, Contributing Editor

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interesting, not necessarily by being accurate. They don't have to be scientifically on point; they just need to have a compelling plot.

This brings us to the core of the issue. Facts depend on expert validation to persist, while narratives simply need to be retold. That means that you can't win a narrative battle by simply proving that the opposing narrative is in some way inaccurate. *A narrative battle is won by drowning out the countermessage.*

## The Boston Marathon Bombings

Exactly two years after the Boston Marathon bombings, a meeting was held at Harvard Business School where senior White House officials, entrepreneurs, members of the Islamic community, media strategists and policy experts were invited to discuss how we might prevent an attack like the one in Boston from happening again.

The group began by trying to understand how the Tsarnaev brothers were recruited to commit the terror acts in the first place. They weren't part of a formal organization that gave them commands, nor were they even members of an underground network that hatched a September 11-style attack. The terror networks had turned to technology and to narratives to stay alive.

Terror group members were posting their content online and hoping for the best. In the past several years, more and more videos had been posted. And remember: top-ranked videos are by definition compelling and easy to mutate or regenerate. The narrative continued to mutate until the Tsarnaev brothers learned from that content and committed their act of terror. In a very real way, the narrative had *become* the organization.

The Harvard group recognized that you couldn't contain the narratives through conventional means. Eliminating them from one social media site was like playing Whack-a-Mole, as videos would pop up on another site almost instantaneously. Trying to debunk the message (and win the debate) only gave the videos more attention.

We now need to start considering videos and other narrative-building content as their own entities. Online videos make it easy to belong, to feel an affiliation with a story, especially a memorable one. Lacking resources, the weaker player will often resort to fighting a narrative battle because — unlike court cases or massive protests — producing a story is cheap and easy. Instead of relying on centralized distribution channels, video stories are easily disseminated among members of a network and beyond.

The realization that narratives have become a new type of organization sheds light on how governments

and businesses alike can react to a market force that demands inclusion. For companies wanting to effectively engage in a battle of narratives, inclusion is becoming the new way of being heard. ●

## PART II: HARNESSING THE POWER OF INCLUSION

### The Economics of Inclusion

#### Participation, Personalization and Purpose

If you're able to give a marginalized community (be it a group of voters, the employees of a company or a segment of social media users) a chance to participate, to personalize content and to do so toward a common purpose, you can tap into an underutilized resource that can be harnessed very effectively using fewer resources.

Consider these three central points: First, not including — exerting control — comes at an economic cost, one that is increasingly difficult to bear and harder still to justify.

Second, the way to thrive in the age of the digital echo is to bring a cause to a preexisting community. That is, rather than trying to build a community around a specific idea or belief, identify existing communities with whom the cause will likely resonate.

Third, and most important, although much has been written about diversity and the importance of inviting more people — and more voices — to the table, many have been viewing inclusion through the wrong lens. Inclusion isn't necessarily the opposite of exclusion. Real inclusion isn't about letting just anyone in; it's about understanding the pillars of participation, personalization and purpose.

**Participation.** We often think of inclusion as simply the act of not excluding, of not barring anyone. We thus associate inclusion with, basically, letting anyone in the door. The kind of inclusion referred to here isn't necessarily about admission; it's about participation. The people in your organization need not be a part of every meeting, but are you enabling them to participate in furthering the organization's overall goals?

**Personalization: Humanizing the How.** Whether you're communicating with customers or managing employees, you can rely on inclusion to humanize your message and deliver it more effectively. Inclusion is about concentrating the *what* (i.e., the directive, the goal) and distributing the *how*.

**Purpose: Bringing the Cause to the Community.** Traditional efforts to mobilize groups of people follow the assumption that once you've identified a worthy cause

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(whatever it may be), you must then build a community around it. The problem with this approach is that it's hugely time consuming, and every new cause requires a new supporting community to be built from the ground up.

But what if we flip this notion and bring a cause to a preexisting community? Then the cause becomes the *what* and the community, already vibrant and thriving, rallies around to determine the *how*. ●

### The Power of Belonging

Since the 1940s, a sense of belonging has been recognized as a human psychological need and one of the major sources for human motivation. It's important to us; whether we're conscious of it or not, a sense of belonging keeps us healthy and happy.

Belongingness developed to serve an evolutionary need: those who formed mutual attachments to others enjoyed the safety of numbers and were less likely to wander off alone into danger. As social beings, we protected one another, shared resources and collaborated to gain advantages over other species.

Though deeply rooted in basic survival in a very different world, the need to belong hasn't faded over time. Today and millennia ago, belongingness consists of the combination of a sense of identity (how we distinguish ourselves from others), a sense of security (the opposite of powerlessness) and a sense of order (structure and predictability).

In the past, our sense of belonging was rigidly defined in terms of traditional markers of social identity: our families, close friendships, lifestyle choices, nationalities, professional identities and hobbies.

Today, for the first time in human history, via the Internet, people are able to create their own geographically dispersed belonging categories. We can seek and find groups whose members could be anywhere across the globe. Simply by participating in a social media network, an individual has the ability to start a movement, become a leader and gain a following.

Studies have demonstrated that the Internet environment is very supportive of friendships, romances, volunteerism, fund-raising and every variety of support group an individual might seek out. Yet research has shown that compared with traditional group behavior, people engage in aversive social behavior in the digital world extremely easily.

Research also suggests that in online groups, individuals feel stronger attachment to the group's identity than to their own personal identities; in fact, personal identity is

all but erased due to the lack of nonverbal cues highlighting individual differences. This makes for an extremely cohesive in-group: one that suppresses individuality and magnifies the differences between the in-group and outsiders. There are obvious implications for online communities espousing extremist views of any stripe.

The human desire to belong holds a key to understanding how to lead in our current environment. In a world where people are not readily feeling as if they belong to a positive cause, and where everyone has the ability to belong to something, we need to help our team members make good decisions regarding the efforts with which they choose to identify. We as leaders must create real and authentic ways for our subordinates to feel that they are a part of something meaningful. ●

### PART III: THE INCLUSIVE LEADER

## Belonging Isn't Optional

### Leadership Principle #1: Give Them Memories

If people don't feel like they belong to your group, department, company or corporation, they easily can and probably will find something else to believe in and belong to. The most important responsibility of leaders — no matter how busy they are and how many other priorities demand their attention — is to make their people feel like they belong.

Opportunities to make our followers feel they belong are all around us, opportunities to “give them memories” so that they know we care about them by investing in them our scarcest resource: time. Leaders have to develop an instinct for communicating a sense of belonging to their followers and then be alert for opportunities to do so. A private word in the hallway. A compliment at a meeting. The willingness to listen for just a few minutes beyond our usual attention span. Producing memories of success, memories of failure, reinforcing a feeling of commitment and belonging. Give them memories, or someone else will.

“Give them memories” is the ongoing practice of providing your subordinates with meaningful experiences from which they will learn and that they will carry with them into the future.

The kinds of experiences a leader should provide include the following:

**Successes:** Every team member should have memories of what success looks like. How the team

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accomplished its goal. How the individual himself contributed to that goal. And what it felt like to contribute to the success of the organization.

**Failures:** Everyone should also have memories of what failure looks like. What the team did wrong or what it could have done better to achieve the goal. What effect the failure had on the overall goals of the organization. And the feelings one must manage in the face of failure.

**Being cared for:** At the core of belonging are a sense of purpose and a sense of safety. When we show our followers that we care about them as individuals and as contributors to our teams, we reinforce the strength of their sense of belonging to the organization.

**What right looks like:** Leaders need to provide their team members with opportunities to learn how to decide what is the right thing to do and carry out those actions, even when doing so is the more difficult route.

**What wrong looks like:** Mistakes are bound to happen, and these are often the best learning opportunities.

Memories help to inspire and nurture in each individual a genuine commitment to follow the leader in his or her mission to serve the purpose of the organization. ●

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### Connect Effort With Meaning

#### Leadership Principle #2: Make It Matter

The movie *Saving Private Ryan* takes place during the initial days of the Normandy invasion in June 1944. It is a tale of unimaginable courage and leadership under the harshest of conditions.

A schoolteacher before being drafted, Captain John Miller and nine of his men survive the horrors of the landing on Omaha Beach and are sent to find Private Ryan, a soldier who has landed behind enemy lines with the 101st Air Assault Division and the sole surviving son of a mother who has just lost her other three sons in combat within days of each other.

There is a powerful scene at the end of *Saving Private Ryan* in which Captain John Miller, dying of his wounds and having lost eight of his nine men on the mission to find Private Ryan, whispers to Private Ryan, “Earn this!” Captain Miller is telling Private Ryan to make their sacrifices matter.

We all want to believe that what we do matters. That’s true whether we’re reflecting on our personal life or on our life in the workplace. One of a leader’s responsibilities is to make sense of things for their followers. As “sense makers,” leaders help those around them understand how their contributions fit into the organization’s accomplishments. They

help them appreciate how they matter. The best leaders do this deliberately and the very best do it often.

The ways leaders can “make it matter” include

**Define and allow others to understand who you are.** Leaders at every level must understand who they are individually and within the larger vision of the organization. The knowledge of where you fit in the organization gives you strength, aligns your values and encourages you to lead. The drive, passion and energy you feel should be worn on your sleeve each day to model desirable behavior and as evidence of how one’s individual purpose can coexist with the overall vision of the organization.

**Make each individual feel that they have the potential to be a better person.** By allowing your subordinates room to grow and fostering collaboration among team members, you encourage the entire team to use their work as a vehicle to the benefit of themselves and the organization.

**Make sense of things for the team.** It is the leader’s responsibility to instruct, to coach, to hold accountable and, importantly, to “make sense” of what’s going on around the team as it seeks to accomplish its goals. Only when the leader shares knowledge can individuals within the organization understand where they fit. ●

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### Think About What You’re Not Thinking About

#### Leadership Principle #3: Learn to Imagine

In team sports, what most often sets elite athletes apart is the ability to use their imagination in creating opportunities for themselves and for their teammates. Legendary hockey player Wayne Gretzky once attributed his great success to “skating to where the puck is going, not to where it has been.”

Imagination is a learned attribute. It’s some combination of training, experience and eventually instinct that produces creativity in complex environments at the speed of teamwork.

Leaders can learn to imagine if they place the emphasis on “learn.”

- If they learn to listen and to seek to know what the most junior member of their team knows.
- If they learn to be alert for weak signals and to avoid becoming complacent, satisfied with information affirming their beliefs.
- If they learn to find advisers who will challenge them, encourage them, surprise them.

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- If they learn to connect disparate thoughts and to become uncommonly articulate.
- If they learn to challenge assumptions and to ask the right questions.
- If they learn to become comfortable with complexity and wary of simplicity.

If you're a leader, you will need to exercise your imagination on behalf of your team. But learn first, and then you'll be able to imagine. Just like an elite athlete.

We as leaders must accept and understand that the environment in which we find ourselves leading today is constantly and rapidly changing, and the information we receive is affected by the digital echo. And this has a number of implications for how we run our organizations.

It means that what worked for us before may not work for us now, that the procedures manual on which we relied in the past cannot possibly cover all the issues we will face in the new environment. Our roles as leaders are continually increasing in complexity as the challenges we face become vaster and more diverse.

Instead of executing tasks as experts in our fields, we will be asked to solve problems that we may feel only somewhat able to handle. We will be responsible for carrying out tasks and completing missions for which we have no experience whatsoever, and with a lot at stake.

The solution is that when faced with any task, whether routine or extreme crisis, we must first imagine the possibilities, or "learn to imagine," in order to determine exactly what our team's goal should be in order to solve the problem.

As leaders we must avoid assuming that the first answer is the best answer. We cannot blindly follow existing procedures simply because they have worked in the past. Our environment is changing too quickly, and our challenges are becoming too complex. ●

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### Prevent Decision Paralysis

#### Leadership Principle #4: Develop a Bias for Action

As a leader in today's environment, you may not find yourself responsible for the outcome of an ongoing evolutionary contest, but you will find yourself responsible for the outcome of a contest for the success, the trust and the confidence of those who follow you in an ever-evolving, ever-changing environment.

And to prevail in that contest, you need to develop a bias for action. A bias for action is a leadership instinct based on the belief that in order to decide, you must learn, and in order to learn, you must alter the status quo.

A bias for action is a leadership instinct that mitigates decision paralysis and helps you avoid the endless pursuit of that one exquisite piece of information that seems to be all that stands between you and clarity.

A bias for action is the recognition that, in our complex world, learning is active and iterative. We act, we assess and we act again. A bias for action is the recognition that facts are vulnerable and that speed matters in the era of digital echoes. A bias for action won't solve all of your leadership challenges, but it will energize your organization, keep you alert to both vulnerabilities and opportunities, and illuminate the often-hidden cost of inaction.

The military has a saying: "Lead, follow or get out of the way." That's a bias for action.

In a well-known anecdote about Albert Einstein, he is quoted as saying that if he had 60 minutes to save the world, he would spend 55 of those minutes understanding the problem and five minutes fixing it. Many past leadership theories have echoed Einstein, encouraging leaders to carefully analyze problems before taking action.

Contemporary leadership theories, however, must understand the changing nature of time and how it affects us as leaders and the decisions we make in our organizations. Leaders cannot allow themselves to become paralyzed by a search for the perfect answer while information flows and technology updates at ever-increasing speeds.

Leaders are now facing scenarios that require action in the moment, before significant changes can occur in the environment and before we can possibly fully analyze the problem. The longer we take to respond to catalysts, the more our environment adapts, and the less we understand about the issue and how to solve it. So we must act quickly but intelligently.

To interact with the new environment, we need to change and evolve along with it. We need to act based on the information we have, not remain immobile waiting for "better" options to emerge.

Actively engaging with issues to influence their outcomes early, before they evolve in ways that may prove even more counter to our interests, is paramount. We need a bias for action not only to be decisive in our reactions to catalysts but also as part of our overall strategy in building and sustaining our power. Without it, companies and countries alike will simply be outpaced. ●

### Collaborate at Every Level of the Organization

#### Leadership Principle #5: Co-Create Context

Decisions are always made in some context. As a result, they produce second- and sometimes even third-order effects that inevitably affect future decisions. So gaining the best possible understanding of context before making decisions produces better decisions.

For example, military commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan quickly learned that destroying infrastructure used by enemy forces might make perfect sense militarily, but in that environment and in that kind of conflict the adverse effect on local civilians could be detrimental to the long-term objective of gaining their support and ending the campaign. The decision to destroy buildings, bridges and markets or leave them intact depended on an appreciation of context.

An understanding of context is best achieved when there is collaboration at every level of the organization. This is called the “co-creation of context,” to make the point that it is everyone’s responsibility and to highlight — again — that speed matters in the era of digital echoes.

Typically, senior leaders gain an understanding of context by “pulling” it from within their organizations. In the military, senior leaders publish “priority information requirements” (PIR), which tell subordinates what these leaders want to know.

But we would be more effective as leaders if individuals within the organization were organized and encouraged to tell us not just what we say we want to know but also what they think we need to know.

In discovering options, the best ideas do not always come from the top of the organization; in fact, it is often the team members on the front line who have the most creative solutions — which may turn out to be the ones that save us. Our challenge as leaders is to empower the entire organization to take part in understanding the problem the team is facing and to encourage individuals at all levels to suggest potential ways to reach our desired outcomes. ●

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### Expand the Circle

#### Leadership Principle #6: Relinquish Control to Build and Sustain Power

The era of digital echoes requires leaders to develop an instinct for inclusion, an uncommon commitment to reach beyond collaboration all the way to trust, and

a willingness to purposefully relinquish control to preserve power.

In these times, we can choose to see the world as a perpetually competitive arena where interactions result in winner-take-all outcomes, or we can see the world as an increasingly and inevitably collaborative space where common benefits accrue through common costs.

Rather than attempting to dominate, leaders instead should learn to relinquish control. Instead of grasping at the control we may feel slipping through our fingers, we should embrace the changing nature of power. We should allow control to flow out of our hands and into the capable, trained hands of the members of our organizations.

Without power, we cannot expect to lead. But leaders often exert control when it is not needed and at a cost that is not justified. In this new environment, concentrations of power cannot endure. While power remains necessary for effective leadership, the path to sustainable power is no longer through control. Real power is measured not in degree of control but rather in the ability to find optimum, affordable, enduring solutions to complex problems. In these times of complexity, speed and scrutiny, the best solutions, the most affordable solutions, the most enduring solutions will be the product of inclusion.

The energy sector provides a good example. For most of the last century, the energy sector has enjoyed a relative monopoly. However, that monopoly is rapidly eroding. Nineteen states have adopted competitive energy markets, and the other 31 are in various stages of reforming their regulatory structures.

Jim Rogers, former CEO and president of America’s largest energy company, Duke Energy, describes the changing energy environment as “the democratization of electricity.” Customers are increasingly going off the gas and electric grid in favor of renewable energy.

Jim also describes an industry where there have been few positive interactions with customers. “Everyone,” he says, “knows the cost of a gallon of gas. No one knows the cost of a kilowatt-hour of electricity.” The result is suspicion, mistrust and an adversarial relationship with customers, who have felt imprisoned by a lack of choice in energy providers.

Together these factors have made the cost of maintaining control of the traditional natural gas and electric utilities prohibitively high. Jim’s answer: Utilities need to take on the task of designing customer experience with energy. To preserve their power — their market share and influence — they must relinquish some control to renewables and to their customers.

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In his vision statement for National Grid, titled “The Democratization of Energy,” president Dean Seavers reflects on the tremendous change facing his industry and outlines three imperatives for managing that change: “First, we must put customers in charge. Second, we must embrace our technology partners. Last, yet most important, we must change how we regulate and finance the industry.”

What do Jim, Dean and most in the energy sector understand? That they must act now, that they must co-create the context in which energy decisions will be made with numerous — and even some unlikely — partners, and that they must relinquish control to create an optimum, enduring and sustainable outcome. ●

### The Leadership Instincts: Listen, Amplify, Include

There are three attributes that are essential in a leader. They interact in this way:

**Listen** to learn. Listen to make it clear to those who follow that you value their insights, their judgments and their advice. Listen to understand the organization and to become mindful of opportunities and vulnerabilities. Listen because it is most often “weak signals” that portend success or failure.

**Amplify** to establish expectations. Amplify the best ideas, the best recommendations, the best practices, and do so in a manner that encourages teamwork at every level of the organization. Amplify the organization’s values to strengthen the inner voice that reminds us what’s right, a voice that can sometimes be drowned out by digital echoes. Amplify because the best leaders establish a drumbeat of emphasis on values within their organization. Amplify because everyone benefits when there is a common vocabulary about what’s expected of them.

**Include** to empower. Go wide and deep in including members of the organization to share knowledge, to create a common understanding of problems and to encourage ownership of solutions. Include to inspire loyalty. Include as the first step in developing a climate of trust. Include because if you don’t, who will?

Leaders must understand that the instinct to listen is an art, a skill and a system that must be employed in order to build a team ethos, embrace a bias for action and relinquish control.

Opportunities to listen are all around us: personal interactions, structured and unstructured meetings, walking the halls, social media, town hall meetings, conversations in the elevator. Everywhere and anywhere are opportunities to listen.

By amplifying the successful ideas and solutions created by members of our teams, leaders show how relinquishing control, empowering the team and listening benefit the organization as a whole. They advance the mission of the organization by making positive examples of the kinds of ideas and actions that achieve results necessary for optimum, enduring and sustainable success.

When a leader amplifies the successes of the members of his organization at all levels of responsibility, it is not only a “pat on the back” for the individual whose success is amplified. It’s a memory, and it’s one that matters. It has helped to reinforce a sense of belonging and demonstrate the leader’s willingness to relinquish control.

All of these principles and instincts are what this new leadership theory deems necessary for companies and countries to thrive in the new environment. Through constant reinforcement of these principles and ongoing development of these instincts, leaders can develop teams and organizations that will build and sustain their power not through control but by radical inclusion.

For those who aspire to lead, the future is rich with opportunity. Issues will continue to become more complex, mutate more rapidly and draw more scrutiny. Technology will provide more data and more accessibility. Leading will be exciting, and it will be dynamic.

It will also be harder: harder in an environment that can produce paralyzing choices, ubiquitous distractions and dramatic polarization. Inclusion is harder and can be slower, but it is a necessary precondition for achieving effective, efficient and enduring solutions to complex problems.

It’s about persistent learning, shared ownership of decisions and deeper commitment to the implementation of those decisions. It’s about developing trust by listening, amplifying and including. ●

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