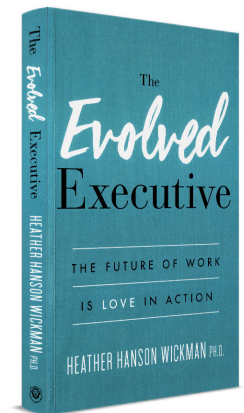


# The Evolved Executive

The Future of Work Is Love in Action

by **Heather Hanson Wickman, Ph.D.**



## Contents

Evolution: A Way Forward

Page 2

Leadership Beliefs and  
Consciousness

Page 2

Leadership Practices

Page 3

Healing the Organization

Page 3

Dare to Be Different

Page 4

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

We spend the majority of our lives at work, and what we give is infinitely greater than just our time and energy. Heather Hanson Wickman, author of *The Evolved Executive*, mines her experience to show us a better way to work. Her journey includes earning a Ph.D. and working as a senior level executive. It also includes a failed marriage and dropping out of the corporate world. To find success again, she evolved from fear to love and stepped up as a changed leader.

Organizations need evolved leaders who have developed beyond the needs of command and control management, who can take an honest look in the mirror and recognize that they first must be the change, and who can genuinely foster love, care, and humanness in the workplace.

*The Evolved Executive* is about embracing the evolution of our leadership beliefs, practices, and organizations. Evolved Executives and organizations not only thrive in the new world, often showing significant performance improvement compared to traditional organizations, but they do so while bringing purpose, meaning, and human connection to their employees and communities.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How love trumps fear in organizational leadership.
- That service benefits employees, not just customers.
- To identify practices to bring healing to your workplace.
- To recognize personal values for whole-self development.

## Introduction

Organizations are on the cusp of massive change as the world moves in more volatile and unpredictable ways. For organizations to survive, we need more adaptable leaders capable of moving us forward. We need a greater awareness and consciousness beyond simple black-and-white, quarterly report, profit-and-loss thinking.

Responsive organizations and conscious leadership hold a basic truth: people and purpose matter just as much as profit. The emphasis on profit alone, the high rate of failing companies, and the tremendous suffering that exists at work are all clear signs of the struggle that is seen in organizations.

The hard lines between leaders and workers, thinkers and doers, are becoming an active hindrance to success. We need a new way to work. Organizations don't change without leaders being willing to change, and we can't change without the courage to challenge long-held beliefs and practices. Fear is what holds us back. The only way to push fear out is to bring love in.

## Evolution: A Way Forward

### Leading with Love

The space between love and fear is vast but also simply a matter of intentional choice. The individual choice to operate from fear or love is one we get to make every day. When we choose fear as leaders, we create isolation and closed channels of communication, as well as a lack of transparency and alignment, which results in people who do not bring their full potential to their role or organization.

In a love-based organization, people feel safe to share information widely, provide open and honest feedback, stretch and grow themselves personally and pull together for the benefit of the entire organization.

Decurion is an organization that has built a deliberately developmental culture. In essence, they hold a core belief that investing in the development of people means investing in the future of the business. Where some organizations believe that money spent on people takes away from the bottom line, Decurion believes that the two run in concert with one another. Their successful results, they believe, are because they invest in their people.

### Leading to Serve

The evolved executive, instead of focusing on power and control, focuses on the growth and potential of the team

in pursuit of the shared vision. The traits that are most essential to the evolved executive and closely align to that of a servant leader include:

- **Authenticity:** the ability and desire to show one's true identity
- **Humility:** an honest understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses
- **Compassion:** the internal orientation to be other-centered, kind, forgiving and accepting
- **Courage:** being open to risk and assertively standing up for what one believes is right for the greater good

In traditional organizations, we've lost the ability to take time and simply "be" with people. Building a love-based culture means caring about people. That means watching for opportunities for clear communication, authenticity, and shared decision-making. It also means providing people with what they need to find work motivating and fulfilling.

## Leadership Beliefs and Consciousness

As we become changemakers in our own lives, teams, and organizations, we must ensure that the beliefs we hold, the values that underpin our mental operating system, are aligned with the future we want to create. Belief drives behavior.

### Horizontal and Vertical Learning

There are two distinct types of learning and growth for leaders in progressive organizations.

**Horizontal learning** focuses on the information, skills, and competencies we need to succeed as leaders. It is what you know: technical expertise, functional skills and behaviors.

**Vertical learning** adds the ability to interpret a complex situation in meaningful ways based on your beliefs. It focuses on developing your emotional intelligence, as well as upgrading your leadership operating system to be more wise, intelligent, intuitive, and caring.

Vertical learning first begins without understanding of consciousness. By expanding our awareness, we increase our consciousness—an essential component to vertical learning.

Consciousness is like an apartment building with many floors. People have different views of the world, depending on which floor they occupy. Every time we move up a floor, the world around us changes. We see the landscape differently. Those who climb the stairs have the drive to face the fear, embrace the unknown, and experience the new levels.

As a leader moves from the lower levels to the higher ones, he or she moves from leading from fear (self-protection and power) to leading from love (greater good and self-awareness).

### Mindset

Most leaders are skilled in the analytical thinking required to be good managers and the day-to-day skills of business, but they need to gain insight into the heart and the will. The heart accesses emotional intelligence, knowledge of people, and sensing the surrounding environments. The will can heighten your ability to connect with your authentic purpose and fulfil that purpose through action. Four critical leadership beliefs help you to connect with both the heart and the will: the connection mindset, the growth mindset, the trust mindset, and the purpose mindset.

Connection is a basic human need in all of us. How can we let go of the fear and instead begin to find human connection? When we model wholeness and imperfection, we create a sense of connection with others.

With a growth mindset, you believe “that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, your strategies, and help from others,” according to mindset expert Dr. Carol Dweck. This creates a love of learning and a resilience essential for great accomplishments. Why do we waste time proving over and over again how great we are rather than focusing on getting better?

The trust mindset means letting go of the need for certainty and the need to control. Trust gives you the ability to adapt and change even when you don't have all the answers.

The last critical belief system for evolved leaders revolves around purpose. Purpose, or a mission larger than ourselves, is a key motivator for all of us. The purpose mindset creates loyalty and commitment among employees and customers. It creates lasting organizations.

---

## Leadership Practices

Leadership growth is about lifelong learning and action. When you experiment with new practices, pay attention to the reaction of those around you. Watch for signs to help you determine if your current environment is a good place for you to continue your growth.

### Cultivating Values

Understanding values is essential for leadership success. Decision-making becomes easy when values guide the way. A

values discovery tool can help you identify the values most important to your leadership context. Once you identify what's most important to you, expand out from the specific words. If one of your core values is health, you might describe health as “living with vitality and energy every day.” Begin to test your values to see if they make sense for you. Ask yourself if this value truly feels consistent with how you want to lead and the leader you want to be.

People who don't have a clear idea of their values tend to be on autopilot in their career. In today's uncertain and ambiguous environment, values provide a guiding light with which to lead.

### Defining Purpose

Finding your purpose is a powerful leadership exercise. Discovery is an active process. You need to experiment to understand what brings you joy and energy and what drains the life out of you. Think about who you are and what's important to you. Tell your story. Common themes and patterns emerge in these stories. Ask others what they would say is your purpose. What are you uniquely skilled and positioned to do in the world? Objective perspectives can be more powerful than your own, even though feedback can be difficult to hear.

Based on everything you've uncovered from your life stories and feedback from others, find the elements most critical to your success and fulfillment. Being able to create a simple and concise statement is powerful; it allows you to get excited about what you're doing in the world. A purpose statement guides your decisions and clarifies your priorities. If it doesn't powerfully resonate with you, try again. Keep in mind that the most powerful purpose statements are those that are in service of others.

---

## Healing the Organization

Look around your organization. When was the last time you paid attention to the health and dynamics of the living, breathing system you call your company? Your employees do the work, but what do you really know about them?

### Servant Leadership and Healing

One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for healing yourself and your relationships to others, leading to a powerful force of transformation. An approach of compassion and care fosters healing, well-being, and engagement.

How leaders reward people and make decisions are great indicators of culture. Is there intense competition with one winner and one loser? Are people rewarded at the expense of others? Are there incentives that lead to perverse behavior—unintended consequences that may harm another colleague or a different part of the organization? In better situations, are teams rewarded as a unit? Team rewards and recognition versus individual rewards and recognition are often indicators of overall health.

### New Roles, New Conversations

Evolving as an organization may require re-design of policies, processes, and roles. And evolving requires new and different types of conversations—some which may be awkward to manage initially. Let's take an example.

A team is faced with a specific role or a set of roles that need to get done, but no one has interest in doing them. What happens now? This creates an incredible opportunity for a conversation about priorities and needs. Why is there no interest in taking on this role? Is the role even needed? Does it provide the team and organization value? The result of this conversation may require change. The point here is that it becomes a team conversation about what needs to be done to achieve the shared purpose.

Practices initiated in service to others highlight love in action at work. They also outline the shift in the role of a leader from that as an authoritarian to a servant and coach in pursuit of a shared purpose. Organizations of the future will rely on these structures and practices to fuel their success by tapping into the depths of talent, motivation, and passion that traditional organizations squelch.

### Dare to Be Different

The future of work will depend on organizations' and leaders' willingness to boldly pave a new path for others to follow. As the saying goes, with risk comes reward. Scribe Media is an organization that is practicing love in action from a very evolved and practical perspective. The Scribe mission is to unlock the world's wisdom. The organization believes human culture advances through people sharing their ideas, knowledge, and wisdom with each other. Scribe has thrown the book writing process on its head. They have created a seamless system for the book creation process that allows a writer to quickly move from idea to published work.

Beyond the obvious innovative approach to the process of book creation, they have evolved internal practices for a human-centered workplace. The company is guided by ten principles reflecting their core values. These principles drive both operations and culture.

Many organizations struggle with values that are words without actions. Evolved organizations find ways to breathe life into their values and ensure they guide the organization through purposeful business growth.

As we embark on a journey of evolution, one thing is certain: we will change. We are only beginning to realize that it will require a much different leader to get us to the next stage of business. Leading an evolved organization means living in a much more conscious way—being awake to the implications for the human, social, and economic issues we are facing at work and in the world. Creating a new future will require new beliefs, new practices, and new organizational structures that allow for humanness and wholeness to come alive at work.



Heather Hanson Wickman, Ph.D., successfully climbed the corporate ladder in healthcare before charting a new path to support senior leaders in evolving their leadership and building soulful organizations.

She specializes in organizational change and executive coaching, through which she has coached leaders on evolved business practices, deep self-awareness, and leadership development. Find out more at [UntetheredConsulting.com](http://UntetheredConsulting.com).

*The Evolved Executive: The Future of Work Is Love in Action* by Heather Hanson Wickman, Ph.D. © 2018 by Heather Hanson Wickman, has been summarized by permission of the author and Lioncrest Publishing. 237 pages, ISBN: 978-1-5445-1137-5.

Summary copyright © 2019 by Soundview Book Summaries ® [www.summary.com](http://www.summary.com), 1-800-SUMMARY.