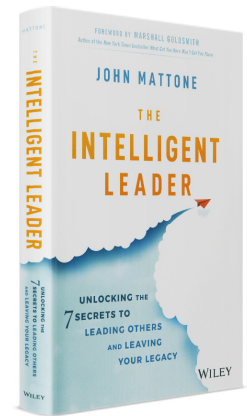


The Intelligent Leader

Unlocking the 7 Secrets to Leading Others
and Leaving Your Legacy

by **John Mattone**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What is great leadership? What separates the merely competent leaders from those rare individuals who leave a lasting impression on everyone around them? One of the world's most in-demand CEO coaches and top leadership gurus, John Mattone has identified the key qualities that, together, make up the mindset of great leadership.

In *The Intelligent Leader*, Mattone lays out an accessible, practical, and compelling path that anyone can take to become the kind of leader that brings enrichment to the lives of others, enjoys a more fulfilling life, and leaves a lasting legacy. The book presents Mattone's seven dimensions of intelligent leadership and offers proven strategies to help leaders put them into action.

The world today needs leaders who understand the subtle dynamics of the human heart, mind, and soul, starting with their own. For those willing to do the work to unleash their inner light and let it shine in every dimension in their lives, *The Intelligent Leader* is an indispensable guide.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why you must focus on your inner core to become an intelligent leader.
- To develop your core purpose statement.
- To cultivate a mindset of duty, leverage your gifts, and address your gaps.
- Skills to help you stay present and, when necessary, to correct your course.

Introduction: Do You Have What It Takes to Inspire Others to Follow?

True leaders are those who view leadership not as a benefit to themselves but as an obligation to others. That's why a great definition of leadership is one you can read right in the dictionary: "an example for others to follow."

These leaders are aware that people around them are depending on them and modeling their lives after them. Accordingly, these leaders strive to become better people.

The best leaders aren't necessarily those who are born with some special "gift." They've made a decision to take on the enormous responsibility of becoming an example for others—and you can too. Anyone can. Assuming the mantle of leadership is a choice anyone can make. Great leadership is a skill you can develop. That's what Intelligent Leadership is all about.

Your Inner Core

If you visualize an iceberg, you can see the white or blue ice towering above the water line. But below the surface, what you can't see is a giant mass that makes up the vast majority of the iceberg and that accounts for its movements through the ocean. So, like that iceberg, your inner core is everything in you that lies below the surface, all the "invisible" qualities that anchor your personality and that result in the skills and actions that people see.

The greatest leaders are those who are not only deeply aware of their inner terrain but also skilled at accessing it, changing it, and using it to guide and shape their actions in the world. Their connection to their inner core is the "glow" of great leadership. It's the indefinable quality that makes great people tick.

Intelligent Leadership, which is made up of seven dimensions, is the key to unlocking this powerful connection between the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, the invisible world below the surface and the visible qualities and capacities that make us great leaders.

Getting to Know Thyself

If you want to develop as a leader, which means developing as a human being, it's crucial that you examine yourself as deeply as you can. You need to understand what drives you, what tends to get in the way of your success, and what latent gifts you might possess.

What exactly is the inner core? The inner core is fundamental to who we are, and yet it is completely invisible to us most of the time. It is the "why" of everything we do. It's a kind of blueprint, constructed by our upbringing, life choices, and experience, that shapes our lives and determines the kind of person we are.

The inner core is broken down into four primary components: your character, your values, your self-concept, and your beliefs.

How strong is your character? Consider who you are when no one else is watching. In what ways do you exhibit strong character? Are there ways in which you are lacking character? Character has six elements: courage, loyalty, diligence, modesty, honesty, and gratitude.

Values: your criteria for life. Dr. Aldo Civico, an executive leadership coach and conflict negotiator, describes values as our "criteria for life." Our values, especially our deep-seated ones, are the lens through which we see the world. They are at play in every major decision we make.

Some of our values may be principles that we've cultivated ourselves. Others were instilled in us by our parents or by society. Whether we're aware of our values or not, they are informing our every move and to a significant degree determine our destiny.

We'll be exploring how each of the seven dimensions are rooted in and influenced by your character and values. They are the foundation of who we are, and if we want to develop into a powerful expression of great leadership, getting deeply familiar with our character and values is essential.

Who do you think you are? The final components of our inner core are our self-concept and beliefs. These are how our deeper character and values are translated into our outer core behaviors and capabilities. Self-concept is, quite simply, how you think of yourself. Do you consider yourself to be a successful person or a failure? A leader or a follower? Your self-concept will, to a significant degree, shape the kind of person and leader that the world experiences.

Beliefs are closely tied to your self-concept. Here, beliefs are the principles that we know to be true through repeated experience. For instance, we might believe that human beings are inherently good, because we've repeatedly experienced acts of goodness and kindness by others in our lives. This deeply held belief, then, shapes how we act in the world.

Think of each of the following seven dimensions as being

Thinking differently and thinking big require that you work at a deeper level than your outer core behaviors and dive into your inner core.

equal parts inner and outer core—a kind of connective tissue that binds them together. These are the unique qualities that collectively make up the true essence of great leadership.

These seven dimensions are the gateway that simultaneously gives us access to better understanding our inner core and the amplifiers that help our light to shine more beautifully, vibrantly, and powerfully through our actions.

Thinking Differently, Thinking Big

If you really want to become something more, to change, to become something different, it's inevitable that you're also going to have to change the way you think. You've got to be willing to think differently than you have before, bigger than you have before. This insight is the primary step on the journey of Intelligent Leadership.

Consider the following qualities and behaviors that are often associated with thinking differently and thinking big. These are “leading indicators” of how much you embody this dimension of leadership, and are meant to help you measure yourself so you can determine what areas need improvement:

- Setting aside time just to think.
- Remaining open to all potential ideas and opportunities.
- Zeroing in on what is real and actionable.
- Bouncing your ideas off others.

Thinking differently and thinking big require that you work at a deeper level than your outer core behaviors and dive into your inner core. Understanding your core purpose is the ultimate form of big thinking. It starts with asking yourself the really big questions: Why am I here? What was I put on this earth to do? What is the unique gift that I offer to the world? Grappling with your core purpose is meant to throw your life and personal pursuits into the biggest and brightest possible light.

From here, you can see your tremendous potential—and also the many ways in which you may be unconsciously holding that potential back.

Developing Your Core Purpose Statement

The core purpose statement (CPS) is a simple description of the biggest and most fundamental vision you can articulate for yourself. Your CPS should capture the essence of the person you want to become, what qualities you want to develop, what you want to accomplish, and what contributions you want to make.

For example, here is the CPS of Denise Morrison, CEO of Campbell Soup Company: “To serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and apply ethical principles to make a significant difference.” Amanda Steinberg, founder of DailyWorth.com, writes, “To use my gifts of intelligence, charisma, and serial optimism to cultivate the self-worth and net-worth of women around the world.”

Ask yourself the following questions: “What would I really like to be and do in my life? What are my greatest strengths? How do I want to be remembered? Who is the one person who has made the greatest positive impact in my life?”

“If I were to do one thing in my professional life that would have the most positive impact, what would it be? If I were to do one thing in my personal life that would have the most positive impact, what would it be? How can I best contribute to the world?”

Now, visualize the end of life. You are surrounded by your loved ones, friends, and the colleagues you have touched along your life's journey. One by one they lean over to whisper their final words to you. What would each person whisper to you? What difference have you made in their life? What qualities or characteristics will you be remembered for?

Write a draft, and then let it sit for some time. Return to it in a couple of days or a week, and look at it with fresh eyes. Adjust as necessary, and keep returning to it as often as you need.

The Vulnerability Decision

The willingness to be vulnerable is the key to unlocking truly great leadership. This dimension of Intelligent Lead-

ership presents a kind of paradox that many leaders don't understand but that the greatest leaders are intimately familiar with: Vulnerability doesn't make you weak.

Vulnerability will actually make you stronger. It will open you up to new possibilities for yourself and your team that you would never have thought possible. It will build trust among your team members. And perhaps counterintuitively, it can make you *invulnerable* to so many of the slings and arrows of running a team, company, or organization.

Opening up intentionally is the vulnerability decision. It's a conscious choice that you, as a leader, make to humble yourself, invite feedback from others, and search for answers that you don't already have.

It's with the vulnerability decision that the rubber really meets the road. "Without vulnerability, change isn't possible." It's a bold statement but true, made by Curtis Smith, a former Navy man who now runs a corporate consulting firm in Ohio.

One of the key components of vulnerability is humility, or the acknowledgment that you don't have all the answers yourself. This can be a tough one for leaders, who often have pretty big egos. But if you want to change yourself or your company, you need to muster enough humility to see and acknowledge that you aren't perfect and that there are elements of your personality, behavior, management style, or company culture that need improvement. That takes vulnerability.

Practicing Vulnerability

Vulnerability takes practice. It's not something you can just "get" and then be done. Below are a series of "igniter behaviors" that you can use to cultivate vulnerability. They are behaviors that you can put into practice right away to help expand the way you think.

Taking the time to reflect. There's no set way to do this—you can use any variety of methods for self-reflection. The key is to do something regularly to put yourself in a reflective mindset. The power to change for the better is always ignited paradoxically from connecting deeply and quietly with the depths of our inner being.

Being open to feedback. You don't have to do this every day, but it's important to take time, occasionally, to make sure that you're connecting to the impact that you're having on those around you. In what ways is your inner world spilling over onto others? Are your actions—which are reflections of your inner core—having a negative or positive

effect on your family, friends, and co-workers?

As you reach out, it's very important to cultivate a degree of being open to this feedback from others.

Being proactive. When you are trying to cultivate any new quality, it's crucial that you are proactive. This is especially true with vulnerability because the idea of being vulnerable can bring up tremendous fear, so actually making yourself vulnerable requires a lot of courage. You can't wait for vulnerability to come to you.

Don't wait for feedback, either internally or externally, to force you into becoming open. It's better to take the offensive. Become an expert in yourself, through reflection and feedback.

Having a Mindset of Entitlement Versus a Mindset of Duty

Being out of touch with what it takes to succeed, and expecting that the privileges that you have are, in fact, not privileges but your God-given right, creates a mindset that can inhibit your ability to work hard through unexpected challenges. And this entitlement mentality is having negative effects everywhere, from the classroom to the boardroom.

The duty mindset is a perspective in which you see yourself as a key cog in a much larger wheel. This wheel is defined by the intricate matrix of relationships that make up who you are: with your co-workers, your family, your friends, your superiors, as well as your mentors and peers.

In this larger context a lot is depending on you. You are not just an independent actor or solo operator. Your choices, your behavior, and your actions all really matter—they have consequences on all of the many relationships that make up your life.

The best leaders understand this, and they take action based on it. It doesn't mean that they don't act out of self-interest or on their own behalf. It's just that they see their own self-interest as part of something bigger. It's a kind of "enlightened self-interest" in which you are focused on your "self," but that self represents something much bigger.

In that light, the duty mindset inherently reorients all of the personal work you're doing. Your own improvement—your striving to become a better leader—becomes much more about the influence you can have on this complex matrix of relationships than it does on your own personal gain.

Cultivating a Duty Mindset

Below are a series of “igniter behaviors” for the duty mindset. These are actions that you can take to help expand your own perspective. The idea is that the more you are able to manually apply these behaviors, the more they will become second nature to you—an inherent part of the way you see yourself and the world.

Signature strengths are the innate abilities that each of us possess that have made us who we are today.

Working backward exercise. At least once per month take stock of all your successes—all the good things that have happened to you and all those situations that led to your feeling proud, happy, and fulfilled. Now create four columns, and list your successes, one by one, on the left. In the next column, write down the positive result that you experienced from each success.

In the next column, write down what you, personally, did that led to your success. In the next column, write down the names of everyone who made some kind of contribution that led to your success. These could be individuals with whom you work, as well as others, like family, friends, or past colleagues.

In the last column, write down your reaction to seeing that your success was the result of more than just your own effort (if that was the case). Once you see that you are actually a small part of a much bigger whole, it keeps you humble, which allows you to better appreciate all the value that others bring to your own success.

Taking pride in others. As you start to see yourself in a bigger and bigger context, the more you start to identify with that bigger whole. Consequently, you’ll start to take pride in it.

Take some time to consider the “greater wholes” that make you proud. Are there specific accomplishments that have

been achieved by others who are part of your group or by the group itself that have made you proud? How does that feeling of pride compare to your own personal pride? Just taking the time to reflect on this greater sense of pride starts to build the muscles of your duty mindset.

Leveraging Your Gifts and Addressing Your Gaps

As we move into the fourth dimension, we begin to make the shift into applying the perspective we’ve been cultivating to the concrete, nuts-and-bolts mechanics of great leadership.

This starts with leveraging your gifts and addressing your gaps, which is, in many ways, the crux of human development. It’s where we identify the ways we need to improve, embrace the areas in which we already shine, and then put those all together to unlock our leadership potential.

Signature strengths are the innate abilities that each of us possess that have made us who we are today. They are usually responsible for the majority of the successes we’ve experienced in our lives, and yet they are so “us” that we often don’t even acknowledge their existence or value. The key is to identify these signature strengths and then lean into them and see how far they can take us. The best leaders, the truly great ones, are able to do this, and you can, too.

Your gaps are simply the areas where you could really use some improvement. They could be skills that are underdeveloped, like strategic thinking, communication, or attention to detail. Or they might be character flaws, like having a hot temper or being too self-obsessed.

The key to identifying your gaps is seeking out the limiting factors to growth. We’re not looking to identify issues just for the sake of understanding yourself better. We want to find the areas that would have a significantly positive effect on everything else in our lives if we were to improve in them.

Below are a series of exercises and behaviors that you can use to put this dimension into practice.

A 360-degree view. This step involves assessing both your strengths and your weaknesses. It also includes seeing both gross and subtle aspects of your behavior or character—a combination of obvious characteristics, like your communication habits, and harder-to-see elements, like how you perceive yourself as a leader.

Use a combination of self-assessments and outreach to your

peer network. This provides a full-spectrum view of each person, using subjective and objective feedback.

Ask for go-forward suggestions. One way to help keep your mindset more future-oriented is to reframe the way you go about seeking feedback. Instead of asking others to simply tell you about things they think you do or don't do well, consider asking them for "go-forward suggestions" (GFS).

For example, "Mary Lou, what are some go-forward suggestions you have for me to consider in order to improve how I communicate?" The GFS approach is powerful because it will implicitly address your past mistakes and flaws but do so in a way that doesn't make you defensive or regretful.

Make a plan; keep it simple. Once you've gotten a clear sense of your gifts and gaps, it's time to make a plan for how to address them. For your gifts, you want to focus on how each one could be given greater focus in your life. For your gaps, you should look for ways to improve upon weaknesses and curtail the negative consequences of behaviors that aren't serving you.

As you develop your action plan, make sure to keep it simple. You want one or two strategies for each quality you're tackling. Keep those strategies concise. For example, "I will improve my ability to lead constructive team meetings by a) spending at least an hour preparing for each meeting and b) getting more input from stakeholders beforehand."

Make sure that you include target dates for each, and share your plan with someone you trust who can hold you accountable.

Having the Courage to Execute with Pride, Passion, and Precision

Much of the work in the first four dimensions primarily developed self-awareness. Now, the fifth dimension starts to translate this perspective into action.

Just because we plan to do something doesn't mean that we will. Executing requires courage. You need steel nerves to take a vision and actualize it, whether that vision is a project plan, a New Year's resolution, or a book.

Truly great leaders are those who are willing to lean into the often uncomfortable position of executing a plan. They are the ones who have the courage to step into the unknown on behalf of everyone involved. Cultivating this courage is something anyone can do.

Following are a series of igniter behaviors that you can take to develop, or accentuate, your own capacity for courageous action.

(Re)connect with your core purpose. The deepest possible source of courage comes from having a strong and well-considered vision for yourself—one that is big enough to keep you afloat in the rough seas of life. By tapping into the depths of your soul—perhaps for the first time—and creating the vision of the essence of the person and leader you must become, you start to see that your own journey is actually less about you and much more about others.

As you get in contact with the big vision that your CPS is based on, notice how it makes you feel. Do you feel you have more confidence to take action, regardless of what you're up against? The answer, for most people, is a resounding yes.

Assessing and taking pride. Having a healthy sense of pride in your work is a crucial part of courageous action. Think about the major actions you've taken over the past week, month, and year. Make a list of two or three actions for each timescale (week/month/year). Now go through your actions and reflect on how proud you are of the work you did for each. Did you feel that what you did reflected your best effort? Or did you cut corners just to get it done?

Rate each action on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the highest degree of pride. Once you've gone through your list, review your scores and reflect. Are these the measurements of someone who takes great pride in their work? Or do you have room to grow?

Finding and unleashing your passion. Passion is giving maximum effort toward something, not because you have to do it but because you want to do it. Passion is the engine that drives courageous action. Reaching out to others—your peer network—is a great way to get a sense of just how passionate you are and where your passions lie. You can talk to your loved ones, peers, or trusted friends.

Ask them how "passionate" they consider you to be. Ask for specifics as well, such as, in what areas of life are you most passionate? What are some examples where they've witnessed your passion?

Once you've gotten a good set of answers, review them. Do the responses surprise you? Do your peers see passion that you are not aware of? Are there things you are passionate about that no one mentioned? Most people find that this exercise gives them a new window into themselves.

You can't change what has happened in the past.
All you have is now and what you are going to do from
now on to create your compelling future.

Staying Present and Being Vigilant

In today's atmosphere of increased time pressure and information overload, there is a significant premium on leaders who are able to tune out the distractions and stay focused. This capacity is staying present and being vigilant. It is the sixth and perhaps most relevant dimension of Intelligent Leadership.

Staying present allows you to be awake to the multidimensional complexity of the situations you're involved in. Being present in your interactions and relationships with others builds trust and improves communications. The more vigilant you are, the fewer mistakes you'll make, and the more effective and efficient you'll become.

In his 2011 best-selling book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, behavioral psychologist and Nobel Prize-winning economist Daniel Kahneman identifies two different "systems" of thinking that we employ in any given situation. System 1 is intuitive—gut-thinking—based on our initial impressions.

System 2 thinking is analytical, based on careful reflection and problem solving. To be more effective thinkers, we need to prioritize our analytical System 2 thinking and deemphasize our intuitive System 1 thinking.

When we are moving fast, our natural tendency is to go with our guts (System 1 thinking). Mix into that what Kahneman says about our brains: They are wired to find patterns and create stories out of the information we are given, which helps us make sense of reality.

But this pattern-finding capacity can backfire, especially when we are moving too fast, because we often find connections and narratives that are inaccurate and based on incomplete information.

So in order to avoid making the mistake of going with our guts, or acting on incomplete information, we need to slow down and take the time to use the right kind of thinking. This is where being present comes in. When we are able to keep our attention focused and in the moment, we can start to understand the dynamics of our mind and be less

susceptible to drawing premature conclusions.

Below are a few principles and practices for being more aware.

Less is more. None of us have infinite time and attention, so it's important for us to learn to get clear about what we should focus on and what we can cut out. As a leader, you have to do this not only for yourself, but you also must set and maintain priorities for the groups you lead. You must be the one to keep things focused, right the ship when it gets off track, and keep everyone focused on the few simple things that will make the most impact.

Remember, the past is over. As cliché as it sounds, you can't change what has happened in the past. All you have is now and what you are going to do from now on to create your compelling future.

Take the time to listen. Coach Avra Lyraki encourages managers to spend at least a short amount of time each week checking in with each member of your team. In these sessions, it's crucial that you don't talk much, and give the other person the floor, paying close attention to what they tell you, whether it's personal or work-related. This simple listening practice builds trust in your teammates. Most importantly, taking the time to listen establishes your credibility as a leader.

Course Correction

When things aren't working, you have to change course. And as a leader, you need to help others do the same. This gets to the heart of the final dimension of Intelligent Leadership: course correction.

The biggest obstacle to mastering the art of course correction is our own psychology. Our brains are literally wired to create habits and norms, both in ourselves and in our groups, to make life easier.

If you want to master the art of course correction, you must find a way to soften "the chains of habit" within yourself by cultivating a mindset that embraces change,

rather than resists it. This mindset is called “the psychology of adjustment,” and all great leaders possess this quality, at least to a certain degree.

The psychology of adjustment has four components: a hunger for constant improvement, seeing clearly, a willingness to pivot, and living outside your comfort zone.

Below are a series of igniter behaviors that will help you cultivate your own psychology of adjustment.

Refocus on the present. One of the keys to effective course correction is being able to see yourself and any situation as clearly as possible so you can make an accurate assessment of what steps may or may not need to be taken. Apply the sixth dimension of Intelligent Leadership, staying present and being vigilant, so you can be fully aware of what’s going on around you. As you begin to develop your own “psychology of adjustment,” make sure you are staying as present as possible.

Do what’s right, not what you think is right. Whenever you’re in a challenging situation where you perceive a change might need to be made, take a moment to question your own judgment. Don’t undermine yourself in an overly self-critical way. Simply ask yourself, “Are my thoughts on this situation based on what I think is right or what is actually right?” Sometimes, if appropriate, you can also do a quick poll of those you’re working with, to help further clarify the situation.

Just taking a moment to reflect honestly on the course you’ve chosen opens you up to the possibility of change.

Surround yourself with honest, courageous people. Surrounding yourself with honest, courageous people

will give you access to a strong group intelligence, which is almost always greater, richer, and more complex than the mind of even the most brilliant individual. Tapping into that collective mind will always give you a fuller picture of any given situation, reveal new and creative solutions, and position you to make the best possible choice about how to move forward.

Once you have your team on board, it’s crucial that you, as a leader, create an atmosphere in which honest feedback is not only accepted, it’s encouraged.

Each dimension of Intelligent Leadership is both inside of and in front of you. It is something to be unearthed and something to be strived for. Both perspectives are true and both are important. So as you move forward in your efforts to become an Intelligent Leader, understand that you can’t become a better leader—or human being—without changing.

At the same time, don’t overlook the fact that your own potential greatness isn’t somewhere outside of yourself. It’s deep inside you.

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- *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful* by Marshall Goldsmith
- *Lifestorming: Creating Meaning and Achievement in Your Career and Life* by Marshall Goldsmith



John Mattone is widely considered the world’s top executive coach and is globally respected for his ability to ignite and strengthen a leader’s inner self and talents. Since 2017, he has been ranked by Global Gurus as one of the top three coaching authorities in the world. He is the creator of the unique, powerful, and game-changing Intelligent Leadership (IL) Executive Coaching philosophy and process. Since 2012, he has used his proprietary coaching methodology with more than 50 global CEOs, top government leaders, and professional athletes to help them become stronger, more effective, and vibrant leaders and people.

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