

THE
LEADERSHIP
REVOLUTION

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REVOLUTION

Because Evolution Takes Too Long

BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

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*Dedicated to
the courageous Leaders and Followers everywhere,
who show up every day in service to others.*

Contents

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction – Why Are We Here? 1

Part 1

“The Separation” The Hero’s Journey and The Call to Action 7

1. The Root Cause 9
2. The “Meaning” of Leadership 25
3. The Core Elements of the Foundation of Leadership: Being & Doing 29
4. Tool Sets, Skill Sets, Mindsets & Meta-Mindsets 37
5. The Energetic Threshold 47
6. The AQ Model: A Functional Model for Leadership development (that means it really works) 53
7. Level 1 Leadership: The Industrial Age & Authoritarian Leadership 63
8. Level 2 Leadership: The Information Age & Evidence-Based Leadership 99

Part 2

“The Initiation” Crossing the Threshold and Exploring a New Possibility (the journey into extra-ordinary Leadership) 129

9. The Importance of Our Leadership Purpose 133
10. The Drama Triangle 147
11. The Value of Others on our Journey 167
12. Level 3 Leadership: The Knowledge Age & Coaching Leadership 171
13. Level 4 Leadership: The Understanding Age & Transformational Leadership 205
14. Level 5 Leadership: The Wisdom Age & Servant Leadership 235
15. Level 6 Leadership: The Transcendent Age & Transcendental Leadership 263
16. Level 7 Leadership: The Mystic Age & “Leadership” 291

Part 3

“The Return” Integrating OUR Experiences and Sharing OUR Leadership Mastery (extraordinary Leadership in action) 305

17. Embracing the Totality of Our Leadership Performance 309
18. Level 8 Leadership: The Awakened Age & Awakened Leadership 335
19. Level 9 Leadership: The Integration Age and Integrated Leadership 361
20. Level 10 Leadership: The Unification Age & Unified Leadership 391
21. The BIG Complex Puzzle of Leadership 405
22. Closing the Circle on Our Hero’s Journey 415
23. The Full Application of the AQ Model (how to really do it) 419
24. The Revolutionary Leadership Opportunity 425

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Introduction

Why are we here?

Clearly, we must go much further in our explorations if we are to discover the deeper realities and possibilities of Leadership . . .

Welcome to what may be the most extraordinary and valuable Leadership development exploration that we have ever been a part of. I do not say that for dramatic effect. The journey that we are about to embark on here is both unique and innovative within Leadership development circles. There is so much more available to us from a Leadership perspective! And we are going to take this journey all the way! This exploration will finally position us to understand, experience and express the full possibility of Leadership. This model of Leadership understanding and development is proven to significantly transform the performance and impact of individual Leaders, groups and teams in the here and now of the challenges we all face together. This is the Leadership journey that so many of us have been, not so patiently, waiting for.

For far too long we have been faced with the challenge of sorting through the maze of Leadership development material, while trying to make sense of how it all fits together. And yet, through our efforts and our commitment, we have actually improved our Leadership performance in many areas. However, the deeper possibilities of Leadership have

continued to elude us, while we wait for the present Leadership development approaches to somehow complete their slow, *Evolutionary* process of transforming into something that more effectively works for us and for those we serve. But we don't have time to wait anymore! The complexity around us continues to increase exponentially, as do the challenges we face. Meanwhile, our groups and teams and organizations and customers and citizens everywhere continue to struggle unnecessarily, due to the clear and present insufficiency of far too many Leaders in far too many places.

Because of the rapid innovations of our technology and the amount of information we have access to, and the ongoing evolution of our expectations as customers and stakeholders, Leaders have been increasingly challenged to serve others and our organizations in a way that addresses these multiple types of issues. The gap between what is needed from Leaders in this day and age and what many Leaders are delivering, has continued to grow.

I will not waste our time with pointing out the numerous examples and results of questionable Leadership out there. If we simply look around, we can see far too many examples of unnecessary dysfunction and blatant *Leadership Malpractice*. While we are looking around, we may also find a few examples of great Leadership. It's just that these examples of great Leadership are too few and too far between. And there is no longer any reason why these examples of great Leadership should not be more a part of our daily experience.

My purpose in writing this book is to help to expedite, in a very real way, the next *Revolutionary* leap in Leadership understanding, development and practice. This book is for Leaders, and Followers, everywhere. It is for advanced Leaders as well as for beginning or aspiring Leaders, and for every kind of Leader

in between. It is for those who are inspired by Leadership and also for those who may have become more than a little critical or cynical about Leadership, due to the many examples of just plain poor Leadership performance out there. This book is also for the Leaders who are already clearly committed to and on a path to moving deeper into their potential, in service to others.

Now let's get very clear from the beginning as to what I'm talking about when I refer to the *Leadership Revolution*. I AM NOT referring to any kind of activity that would create anger or negativity toward others. There is already too much of that out there. What I am referring to, however, is a *Revolution* in the way we think about Leadership, talk about Leadership, and interact as Leaders; what we expect from Leaders and the way we transform or grow as Leaders ourselves. I am referring to the more rapid development of Leaders that our organizations, governments, teams and families deserve, and have long waited for. I am talking about a *Revolutionary* shift in the level of *Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus*, and the honesty, integrity, courage and performance of Leaders everywhere, and with those working hard and coming up soon to serve others as exceptional Leaders. I am talking here about a *Revolutionary* shift in how Leaders think and see and perform each and every day. *This is the Leadership Revolution that I am talking about!*

This book is not meant to simply add to the already voluminous collection of written material on the topic of Leadership. This book is meant to more directly provide the foundational means to deeply understand the possibility of Leadership, and in a way that is both accessible and applicable to the complexity of real-world Leadership. It is meant as a call to action for Leaders everywhere to take FULL responsibility for the privilege of Leading others, while providing us with a proven framework to do just that. This book is meant to help create a new and

functional paradigm for Leaders everywhere, including those who hire these Leaders and are responsible for keeping them on board.

We will accomplish all of this through a clear and focused exploration of the foundational challenges of Leadership, the foundational elements of extraordinary Leadership, as well as through the exploration of a comprehensive, functional model or framework for Leadership development to help us understand the full progression and possibility of Leadership. The unique and innovative model for Leadership development that we will be exploring together is called the **AQ Model** (AQ = Awareness Quotient). Our experience in life starts and ends with our awareness. Therefore, the boundaries of our understanding and performance as leaders are directly tied to the depth and breadth of our awareness, or our Awareness Quotient.

Clearly, we must explore much further and deeper and wider in our awareness if we are to discover the deeper realities and possibilities of Leadership, and to be able to genuinely express these within the complexities of our daily lives. The uniqueness of the AQ Model lies in its ability to clearly illuminate, connect and integrate the full progression of Leadership development, from more well-known and common approaches to Leadership, up through much more advanced and deeply impactful approaches to our Leadership. The AQ Model is structured in a way that clearly maps out a natural progression of Leadership development and, just as importantly, includes a practical process of “up-leveling” the Leadership performance of ourselves and others, in real time! This latter component is one of the true missing links in Leadership development practice.

The material we are about to explore has a purposeful rhythm to it, a flow to it, a repetition to it, and a structure to it that is supportive of accelerating our genuine understanding

and growth as Leaders. It is presented in a way that pulls us along as we absorb and integrate our discoveries. We will be guided through an exploration of the full progression of our Leadership expression, with all of its extraordinary possibilities. And although we will start in somewhat familiar territory, be assured that we will steadily move into higher and higher levels of insight, understanding and expression of the real possibilities of our Leadership performance. We will take this journey all the way, and then back around to reconnect us with where it all started. This is the Leadership journey that we have been waiting for!

And if you are one of the many Leaders out there who also desires to connect more deeply with a real expression of your “Leadership Purpose,” then this book will also speak to you very directly. When understood more deeply, the workplace is actually an incredible tool for personal, organizational, community, and planetary transformation (thank you for that one and so much more, David Dibble). And on an even deeper level, Leadership is an incredibly valuable tool and path to deeper levels of self-awareness and self-actualization. *This is the Leadership Revolution that I am talking about!*

This Leadership journey that we are about to embark on, will come alive for us as we explore, in a functional way, the potential and possibility of Leadership. The purpose of this book is to support this process in the here and now of the challenges we face as Leaders. The AQ Model serves to further clarify our commitment to excellence as Leaders, while supporting our expression of this much more consistently! This book is about you and me and us, stepping more fully into our duty and responsibility as Leaders, in service to others. I am confident that this exploration will take us on an inspiring Leadership journey, one that has the potential to transform our

teams, our organizations, our communities, and our lives. We have no more time for anything less! And since the complex challenges we face continue to come at us, even as we read these words, what is clearly needed is a *Leadership Revolution, Because Evolution Takes Too Long*.

I have organized this book, this journey, into three parts. Part 1 illuminates the key, foundational elements of genuine Leadership as well as the first two levels or the “status quo” of Leadership. Part 2 takes us into our Leadership purpose and on an extra-ordinary Leadership journey far beyond the status quo, through our exploration of levels 3–7. And Part 3 takes us even higher and farther and deeper into the genuine possibilities of Leadership with a focus on Leadership levels 8, 9 and 10. Along the way, we will explore a number of key pieces of the BIG, complex puzzle of Leadership. All together, these three parts take us on an experiential journey into the depth of real Leadership, the expression of Leadership that our groups and teams and organizations need and deserve.

This work could have been broken up into three separate smaller books, as more than one publisher recommended to me. However, it was important to me to include all of the key information necessary for the full Leadership journey in one place. We no longer need to pick through various books or sources of information out there to put together the full progression of Leadership possibility, now that we have a complete map of the terrain we must cover. And this map has the capability of taking us all the way. Enjoy the journey!

Part 1

“The Separation”

The Hero’s Journey and The Call to Action

One of the overarching themes of the exploration that we are about to go on through the pages of this book is “The Hero’s Journey,” as popularized through the brilliant and inspiring work of Joseph Campbell, an American educator, lecturer and writer, best known for his work with exploring the human experience through comparative mythology. Campbell illuminated the similarity of the hero stories that are characteristic of many cultures and religions and developed a model for the “Hero’s Journey” that describes the key elements of this progression as expressed through these stories. The three main phases of Campbell’s Hero’s Journey are, in summary:

1. **The Separation** – making the decision or “responding to the call to adventure”; to cross the threshold and to move well beyond the status quo.
2. **The Initiation** – jumping into an extra-ordinary journey and committing to the work, while enduring the trials and tribulations necessary for us to grow

significantly as human beings to achieve a much higher level of understanding and personal mastery.

3. **The Return** – crossing the threshold back into the world of the ordinary while keeping one foot in each world (the world of the ordinary and the world of the extraordinary); to serve as an inspiring model and an effective guide for others.

As a key theme for our incredibly challenging and rewarding exploration as Leaders, the Hero's Journey has many parallels that I hope will speak to you and support you, as they have me and many others. Our Leadership journeys can be extremely challenging, and they can have a significant impact, positively or negatively, on everyone we interact with. Therefore, we must step into this extraordinary journey with the courage necessary to withstand the challenges that will surely come to us, or we risk being pulled back again into the status quo of Leadership. Connecting with the archetype of the Hero's Journey can provide us with the inspired perspective that we may very much need to survive and thrive on this journey of service to others.

In Part 1 of this book, we begin our journey of "Separation" from the status quo of Leadership by exploring and coming to a deeper understanding of the foundational drivers of extraordinary Leadership, and the all-too-common expression of the status quo of Leadership (Leadership levels 1 and 2). This sets the stage for us as we prepare to *respond to the call to adventure* and cross the threshold to move well beyond the status quo while helping others do the same. And as one of my dear friends, who is also an extra-ordinary Leader on the Hero's Journey, is fond of saying, "buckle up, we are going for a ride!"

CHAPTER 1

The Root Cause

It all starts and ends with Awareness.

Let's begin our journey at the beginning, by first clarifying the deeper, root cause of the problem we all face related to the practice of Leadership. Let's begin to understand and prepare to steel ourselves for the reality of what we face together as Leaders. The root cause of the problem with Leadership everywhere is not the performance and results of our organizations, although there are certainly significant opportunities to achieve even higher-level results and to increase the ease with which these results are achieved. And the root cause of the problem with Leadership is also not our Leader's ability, or lack thereof, to engage with and to support and unleash the potential of those in the workplace, although there are certainly significant opportunities in this area. These issues are important to our Leadership responsibilities but they are still just symptoms of a deeper Leadership problem. The real problem of Leadership goes much deeper.

The root cause of the planet's Leadership challenges actually lies in the insufficient **Awareness**, **Attention** and **Focus** of too many Leaders, related to the levels of complexity and possibility in which we are all involved. Please think about that for a second.

We do not suffer from a lack of Leadership information, so much as from an insufficient *clarity of perception (Awareness)*, *directional discrimination (Attention)* and *spatial concentration (Focus)* with the foundations and possibilities of Leadership.

There is an enormous amount of valuable Leadership experience, research, education and training available in schools and universities across the planet. There is a vast amount of valuable Leadership information available through books, magazines, blogs, seminars, and podcasts. And yet, we still suffer unnecessarily, as a result of ineffective and often harmful Leadership approaches, since much of the information out there does not directly address the root cause of the Leadership challenge.

Many books on the topic of Leadership focus are attempting to describe the main characteristics of “Great Leadership.” And while a good start, this information is not typically enough to help us to deeply understand where these characteristics come from, or how to manifest them in the here and now of our Leadership experience. Other materials share the latest research on the topic of Leadership in an attempt to prove to us what a great Leader looks like and acts like. And some materials will profess their *e-z* secrets to achieving Leadership greatness. These approaches can be helpful on some level. But, if these well-intentioned, well-read sources really had the *e-z* secrets to great Leadership, our organizations, communities, country and the planet would be teeming with great Leaders by now. We would see great Leaders everywhere! But that is clearly not the case.

And so, while there are certainly many great books and a lot of informative material available on various aspects of Leadership and on the various pieces of the puzzle of Leadership, this book will help us, perhaps for the first time, to really understand:

WHAT the deeper foundations and higher levels of Leadership are actually made up of, and how they are connected;

WHY it is critically important for us to understand the full picture of Leadership in order to move beyond the status quo of Leadership;

WHERE we and others are presently *grounded* as Leaders, along with where it is possible for us to progress to; And perhaps most importantly

HOW we can take some definitive steps towards *up-leveling* and *grounding* ourselves in higher levels of Leadership in order to perform as extraordinary Leaders. The kind of extraordinary Leaders that we are committed to *Being* and the kind of extraordinary Leaders that others deserve to be served by. Additionally, this book will illuminate how to significantly *up-level* the performance of other Leaders (and Followers), in real time.

We have no more time to waste with vague concepts or even with well-researched Leadership frameworks that do not lead to immediate and significant improvements in our genuine Leadership performance. We are facing too many serious issues within our groups, organizations, industries and governments to continue with Leadership information or theories that sound great, or make for good presentations or books, but, in the end, just don't work to the degree we all need today!

What we will NOT get from this book is more well-meaning Leadership information or research that, in the end, doesn't move us forward in the here and now. Research is a great place to start, and I have enjoyed and benefitted from countless hours of it. But unless our research is meticulously

explored and tested within the context of the realities of our present-day challenges, then all we are typically left with is an interesting theory. What we will get instead through the exploration of the AQ Model is a comprehensive and straightforward, reality-tested model of Leadership development that reflects the depth of what is really possible for us as Leaders within our complex workplaces. What we will get is, finally, a clear and systematic understanding of functional Leadership that has the potential to more immediately and more positively impact our performance as Leaders. The AQ Model will be illuminated and explored while providing us with a clear road map and process to grow our Leadership *Awareness, Attention and Focus*, to manifest our real potential as Leaders.

It is time to stop pretending that we are serving our organizations as fully responsible Leaders when we are too often falling far short of our potential. It is time to more consistently deliver what many really needed from us as Leaders, which is quite frankly, what we are being paid to do. It is time to take all that we have learned and understand how it fits together within the BIG, complex puzzle of Leadership, so that we can actually move forward into a level of Leadership that truly serves the needs of our teams, companies, communities, families, governments and the planet. It is time for a personal, group, local, regional, national and world-wide *Leadership Revolution*. That is our challenge and our responsibility as Leaders.

Now, let's jump into this mission-critical exploration related to our achieving extraordinary levels of Leadership performance. It all starts and ends with *Awareness*. That is simply a universal principle. It all starts and ends with *Awareness*, including Leadership. Without *Awareness*, there can be no comprehension of stimuli, or clarity of perspective within an experience. And

with limited *Awareness*, we get only limited comprehension and perspective.

A challenge in these types of discussions, however, is that there isn't a common understanding of what *Awareness* is. Additionally, interrelated words like *Consciousness, Awareness, Attention, and Focus*, are often times used interchangeably, creating even further confusion around these critical elements of Leadership.

Although these concepts are mission-critical to our growth and development as Leaders and human beings, very few people really understand how these concepts function and how they relate to and influence each other. Few have a real *working* knowledge of these somewhat obscure concepts, especially as related to Leadership. So, let's fix that right now.

The model we will explore here is based on the exploration and experience with how these elements function within our unfolding experience in life. There are certainly other perspectives on these terms and we are obviously free to adopt those or to create our own. What is most important here is the interrelatedness of these four elements, rather than what we call them. So, let's address this issue, simply and clearly, to create a common understanding and dialogue around these interrelated concepts, as these concepts are such critically important aspects of Leadership and our lives.

In order to create a more functional understanding around the critical concepts of *Consciousness, Awareness, Attention and Focus*, I would like to explore a fairly simple model or map. Hang in there with me on this one! The interrelatedness of these concepts should become very clear as we go along. And also remember, ***the map is never the terrain***. In other words, maps or models or frameworks are just tools to view and gain some degree of understanding about a set of interrelated

variables, or the “terrain.” Looking at a mountain on a map does not compare to climbing the mountain and experiencing it for ourselves. And just as this book represents a map or a model for extraordinary Leadership, our real purpose is to support each other in stepping into this map and stepping into and experiencing the realm of extraordinary Leadership for ourselves.

That being said, I would like to map out these four important and interrelated, foundational concepts for our Leadership growth. Let’s start at the macro level and then move down to the micro. We will start with the concept of *Consciousness*. Now as stated previously, this is a word that can take on different definitions or meanings, depending on where we look and who we are talking to. And since there are no governing bodies on these kinds of things, let’s create and explore our own model of these concepts, so that we can at least create a common dialogue and understanding related to our current exploration.

Let’s look at it this way. *Consciousness* is BIG. One way to think about it is that it represents the totality of everything we can potentially perceive and experience as humans. It includes the entirety of life, incorporating all of the phenomenon universally available to all of us. So, *Consciousness* is BIG, REALLY BIG. Think of it as a REALLY BIG BALL that contains within it a nearly endless number of small bubbles. And these bubbles represent anything and everything that we are potentially able to perceive, and therefore experience, as humans. There is a lot more going on in this field of *Consciousness* but, for the sake of our current exploration, this should begin to give us a functional understanding of what *Consciousness* is, and how to more purposefully access it and play in it.

Now, inside this REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*, there is another ball, only much smaller. And this ball is our

individual ball of *Awareness*. To be more accurate, it’s actually shaped like an amoeba, with tentacles reaching out in every direction. Remember that picture of the amoeba from grade school biology? And, no two people’s amoebas are exactly the same shape or size. Our *Awareness* represents a key element of our uniqueness as a human being. And since our *Awareness* sits inside the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*, which is filled with all those bubbles of possible perception and experience that I spoke about earlier, then any of these bubbles contained within our ball or amoeba of *Awareness* represent the perceptions and experiences that we have access to as an individual. Picture this in our minds for a second. Imagine a BIG BALL (*Consciousness*) filled with bubbles and a smaller ball (*Awareness*) inside the BIG BALL, and this smaller ball contains only a portion of the bubbles within the BIG BALL. That should clarify the model a little more so far.

So now, picture this ball or amoeba of our *Awareness* sitting in the BIG BALL of *Consciousness*, and this amoeba of *Awareness* is constantly undulating and expanding or contracting. Its tentacles have the ability to reach out in any direction, and this can happen consciously or unconsciously. Our *Awareness* can stretch outward to encompass even more of the individual or groups of bubbles, which represent additional perceptions and experiences available to us. At this point, this model or map should help us to clearly see and understand how these two elements (*Consciousness and Awareness*) relate to each other.

As stated earlier in this chapter, *Awareness* is the place within which our active experience in life starts, unfolds and ends (if there is such a thing), and the place that significantly influences our experience throughout life. *Awareness*, or our growing *Awareness*, is also then one of the keys for our growth as Leaders. *Awareness* could be described as the amount and

type of access we have at any given moment, to the numerous perceptions and experiences (bubbles) available within the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*. *Awareness* is our individual ability to see and know and experience a portion of the perceptions and experiences available to us within the field of *Consciousness*. In other words, it is our level, or degree, or more accurately, the three-dimensional shape of our *Awareness*, that allows us to access and operate or play in the field of *Consciousness*. More or greater *Awareness* allows us to access a greater degree (a greater portion of the bubbles) of *Consciousness*, or more of what's inside the REALLY BIG BALL and all the possibilities available to us there.

Another point that I would like to make here before moving on is that the size of the REALLY BIG BALL (*Consciousness*) is most probably outside our ability to directly manipulate. The field of *Consciousness* is what it is, or more accurately, it is what it continues to become. However, the size, or level, or degree, or shape of our *Awareness* is most certainly within our field of influence. And this is really important since, as we increase our *Awareness*, we are able to perceive more and experience more, and do more as a result. This is critical to us from a Leadership standpoint. Our ability to Lead exceptionally is based on our ability to perceive and understand the depth of the *what* and *why* and *where* and *how* of our Leadership, and this ability comes from our level of *Awareness* of all of this.

And here is another BIG KEY related to *Awareness*. As our *Awareness* increases, so does our degree of choice. Our ability to choose is one of the BIG KEYS to our growth and effectiveness as a Leader and as a human being. As we may know by our experiences in life so far, not everyone has access to the same number or types of choices. Some react (usually out of fear) based on a more limited number of choices, while

others appear to have access to more and better choices within the same situation. This access to more and better choices is not necessarily an IQ (Intelligence Quotient) thing, or even an EQ (Emotional Quotient) thing. It is more of an AQ (*Awareness Quotient*) thing. Think about that one for a bit!

To summarize at this point, we have the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*, filled with bubbles. And inside of this, sits a much smaller ball (amoeba) of *Awareness*, which contains only a portion of the bubbles within the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*. And the ball of *Awareness* actually expands and contracts based on many factors, which is another exploration that we will briefly touch on towards the end of this chapter. And as our individual ball of *Awareness* expands or reaches out with its tentacles, we have access to more and better choices, which can lead to more and better Leadership performance. As our ball of *Awareness* contracts, we have access to fewer and more limited choices, which leads to lesser and more limited Leadership performance. It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway. We should clearly focus on things that help to expand our ball of *Awareness* and do less of or avoid the things that contract our ball of *Awareness*.

Well, that was interesting and fun but we are not done with this model yet. Next comes the concept of *Attention*. Think of *Attention* as an even smaller ball or, more accurately, an amoeba again. And our ball of *Attention* sits inside of our ball of *Awareness*, which sits inside the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*. *Attention* could be described as our *video camera*, which we can theoretically point in any direction we choose, towards any of the bubbles of perception and experience, or “scenery” within our *Awareness*. And with some practice, we can point our video camera in multiple directions at the same time. And this is really

important, and another BIG KEY. Where we place or point our *Attention* (our video camera) dictates, to a large degree, what we will see and experience in our lives. Obviously, right?

Where we point our *Attention* (our video camera) is actually dictated by our individual ability or power to choose. And once again, our ability to choose is based on our level of *Awareness*. So, our level of *Awareness* directly impacts our *Attention*, or our ability to point our video camera where we choose. Point our video camera at inspiring things and we and others are inspired. Point it at garbage or illusions and we get just that. So, we should choose wisely, where we place our *Attention*. We should “pay attention” to the direction of our vision and deeper purpose, as much as possible. The term, “paying attention” actually indicates that there is some kind of energy exchange happening here and indeed there is. Just as we would pay with money in exchange for goods or services, we must pay or purposefully exert some energy to guide our *Attention* to where we choose. Otherwise, our *Attention* just goes where it goes or where it has been programmed to go. And then, we get what we usually get. Simple!

Now moving right along to the concept of *Focus*. You can probably guess where we are going next with this Ball analogy. Think of *Focus* as an even smaller ball (amoeba) that sits inside the ball of *Attention*, which sits inside the ball of *Awareness*, which sits inside the REALLY BIG BALL of *Consciousness*. So, at this point, we have a ball inside a ball, inside a ball, inside a REALLY BIG BALL. It’s sort of like one of those Russian nesting dolls.

Focus could be described in our unfolding analogy as a combination magnifying, telephoto and wide-angle view *lens* for our video camera (*Attention*) that we can control to varying degrees. And what we *Focus* on, which specific bubbles of perception

and experience, is obviously partially dependent on what we are pointing our video camera (*Attention*) towards. Are we seeing another of the KEY relationships or interdependencies here? Each ball interacts with and influences the ball inside of it. And guess what else? Each ball also influences the bigger ball that it sits in. That is important because we can actually recalibrate, readjust or align any of the three smaller balls that are within our direct control (*Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus*) by using any of the other balls. Get that? By orienting ourselves towards any one of these areas, we can have an impact on the others. This principle will become quite valuable as we begin to explore the *how* of extraordinary Leadership.

Focus operates much like a camera lens that allows us to see and hold great expanses of scenery and experience the full breadth of a situation or to dial down to a discreet, minute level of detail. And with practice, we can *Focus* to a degree on both at the same time. And here is one more interesting and valuable element of the interrelatedness between our *Focus* and *Attention* and *Awareness*. We can also *Focus* our *Attention* both inwardly and outwardly simultaneously, within our field of *Awareness*. With controlled *Focus*, we can actually look inward and see and experience and connect with our *Attention* and *Awareness* as we look outward and see and experience the effect of our *Attention* and *Awareness*. This maneuver can produce some interesting insights and it is entirely achievable, even by us mere mortals. Just play with that one a little and see what we see.

Our *Consciousness* could be viewed as all that we can potentially perceive or experience as a human being, while our *Awareness* incorporates everything that an individual currently has access to perceive and experience. Our *Attention* is reflected by what an individual is currently oriented towards and perceiving and experiencing right now. And finally, our

Focus represents the depth or breadth and clarity of what an individual is actually perceiving and experiencing right now. The field of *Consciousness* could be described as our shared playground as human beings, while it is our individual level or degree of *Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus* that largely influences our distinct perspective, experience and performance within this shared field of *Consciousness*.

Hmmm, maybe I should have just stated all that in the beginning, but I hope that the ball analogy and exploration helped to anchor these concepts more deeply. And here is one more KEY that I mentioned earlier in the chapter. In general, “acceptance” increases our *Awareness*, while “resistance” decreases our *Awareness*, and also our *Attention* and *Focus*. Think about that one. Think about all of the various forms of acceptance or resistance that we experience!

And why is all of this so important? Well, our individual *Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus* are foundational to our growth and performance as a Leader! This is where it all starts and this is where it all ends. So, we should start here. However, many Leadership development models start somewhere else. Many focus on attempting to acquire various Leadership “tools” or “skills,” or they will focus on attempting to adopt various and well-researched Leadership “traits,” such as integrity or courage or compassion. And, of course, there is some value in this type of exploration. But since these methods are approaching the concept of Leadership development from the middle or the end of the progression, or from somewhere downstream, the results they provide may still be sub-optimal or unnecessarily challenging and disconnected.

Why start somewhere downstream and then have to swim back against the current, when we can start at the foundation, at the “headwaters,” and develop our Leadership potential as a

participant in the more natural flow of things? Our Leadership performance and potential starts with, and is anchored in, our individual *Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus*. That is why the AQ Model of Leadership development starts with and puts so much *Attention* on this foundation throughout this book. Leadership traits flow out of our individual *Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus*, and NOT the other way around, typically. That is one of the reasons why methods that have us focus first on Leadership traits can have such variable results.

And now, to be very clear and to bring this exploration to a practical level, the AQ Model is designed around the experiential exploration and application of these foundational drivers of extraordinary Leadership (*Awareness*, *Attention* and *Focus*). The Leadership progression that follows, quite naturally introduces us to more expanded states of *clarity of perception* (*Awareness*). This can help us, in a very real way, to better understand the deeper reality of whatever situation we find ourselves in as a Leader. This is critical to our effectiveness and while most Leaders might believe that they are already operating at a high level of *Awareness* and with a deep understanding of reality, the blatant truth is that we are operating far below our potential in this area. Many of us can't even imagine how marginally we are performing in this critical area when compared with our potential. As a result, we often fall far short of our potential as Leaders, and our groups, teams and organizations and customers pay the price. But the good news is that we are all well on our way to addressing this issue in the here and now.

Secondly, the Leadership progression that follows, also quite naturally, introduces us to more expanded states of *directional discrimination* (*Attention*). This can help us, in a very real way, to better control where we orient our vision

and expression of Leadership. This is a critical factor in maintaining our commitment as an extraordinary Leader, while also supporting the growth, development and performance of those we are responsible to. Once again, while most Leaders would believe that they are already operating with a high level of *Attention* and with a consistent orientation to the most important elements of our role, the blatant truth is that we are also operating far below our potential in this area. We often fall far short of our potential in this area and our groups, teams and organizations and customers pay the price. But once again, we will be taking on this matter, very directly.

And thirdly, the Leadership progression that follows, also quite naturally, introduces us to more expanded states of *spatial concentration (Focus)*. This can help us, in a very real way, to better see and hear and pick up on even the subtlest forms of stimuli or feedback that the environment is sharing with us. This is a critical factor in our ability to gather the information and perspective we need to understand and make the best decisions possible, and to provide the best support possible to others, during our work within a complex situation. And again, while most Leaders would believe that they are already operating with a high level of *Focus* and with a consistent ability to perceive the most important elements of a challenge, the blatant truth is that we are also operating far below our potential in this area. We often fall far short of our potential in this area, and our groups, teams and organizations and customers pay the price. And we will be approaching this opportunity, very purposefully.

And very importantly here, we should not be offended by the reality of statements directly above. Most of us have been doing our best, given the training and programing we

have received up until now. The fact that we are operating far below our potential in these critical areas of our *Awareness, Attention* and *Focus*, should be exciting to us! To know that there is so much more within our potential as a Leader should inspire us to commit to this type of work, so that we can serve others and our organizations even better. Imagine, as well as we are doing now, we can do so much better and give so much more and serve in much more meaningful ways and achieve more sustainable results. We are capable of so much more as Leaders and recognizing our opportunities for further improvement is a key step on our journey into higher and higher levels of Leadership performance.

The progression that we will follow is designed to quite naturally expand our Leadership capability and capacity with our *Awareness, Attention* and *Focus*. By exploring and playing with the key elements of the AQ Model, we will quite naturally develop expanded abilities with these three foundational elements of extraordinary Leadership, and with so much more. We will position ourselves to express these expanded states in real time and during the reality of our challenging work environments. The results of this can be profound. That's just how it works! But please don't believe me. Just continue along on this journey, in earnest, and we will prove this to ourselves.

There is so much more we could explore here, and the implications of playing with this, consistently and in real time, are incredibly valuable. This understanding is critical for us as Leaders in our efforts to bring all aspects of ourselves to an issue, especially a complex Leadership situation. There is more to come on this as we move forward and build on this foundational element of extraordinary Leadership, as we continue on our Leadership journey.

Please see Figure 1 for a visual image of this simple but very functional model of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness between *Consciousness, Awareness, Attention & Focus*.

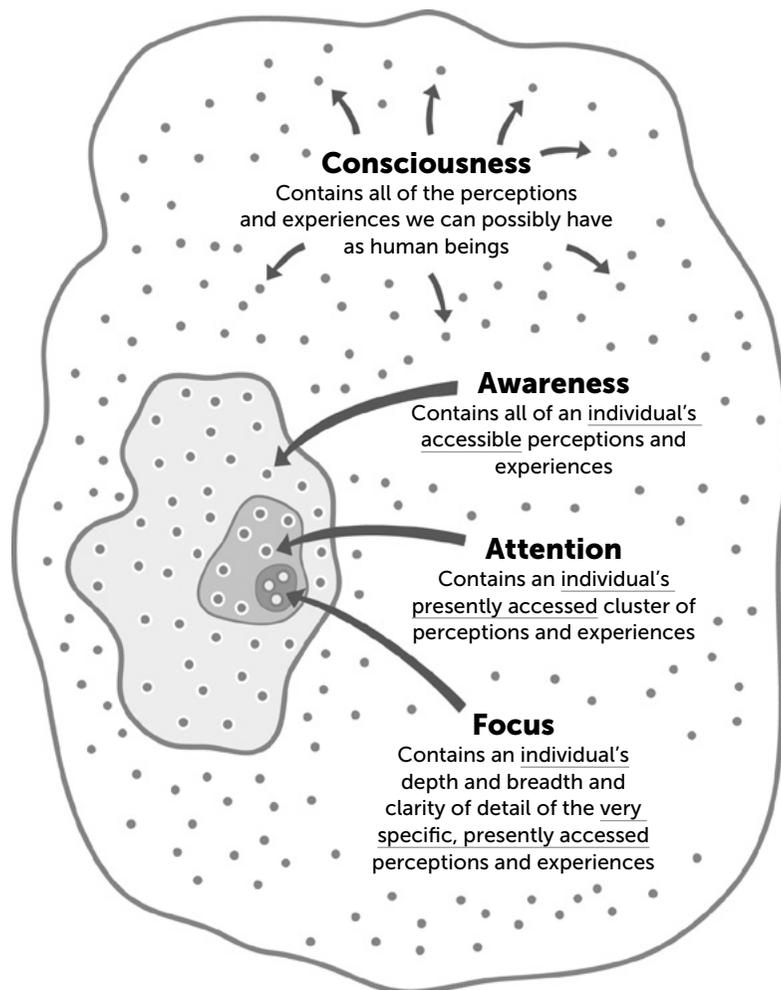


Figure 1. C, A, A, F Diagram

CHAPTER 2

The “Meaning” of Leadership

Leadership is simply, Love in Action.

While we are in the process of illuminating some of the key foundational challenges and opportunities with extraordinary Leadership, we must also explore and further clarify the often vague or overly confusing concept of “Leadership” itself. After all, how can we get really good at something if we are not crystal clear about what it really is, foundationally? We must be clear about what it looks like, and feels like, and smells like. There are many books available on Leadership and numerous definitions and quotes related to this topic. And many of them are quite good and inspiring. Yet there still seems to be an insufficient understanding of the more functional meaning of Leadership, one that helps us to more immediately “get it” or enables us to more immediately jump in and apply it! So, let’s address that here and now.

The meaning of Leadership, as opposed to the definition, pertains to Leadership from an experiential perspective. Knowing the meaning of a concept is to understand the concept from an experiential standpoint. So, let’s explore the meaning of