

OUR
AQQ



OUR
AQ
AWARENESS
QUOTIENT



*The Missing Link to Extraordinary
Leadership ...and Life*

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DEDICATION

*To all of the humans who show
up each day in service to life.*

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Introduction

The title of this book is actually reflective of the answer to one of the most important questions in our lives. That question is . . . *What is the real key to an extraordinary experience in leadership and life?* And the answer is . . . **Our AQ (Awareness Quotient)!**

It (life) all starts and ends with our Awareness, and everything in between is a function of our AQ (Awareness Quotient).

This is simply a universal principle for us. With no Awareness, there can be no perception of the stimuli of life, or of life itself. When our Awareness is more contracted, often by fear or resistance of some kind, we are also less able to manage the challenges of life. And this leads to much of the unnecessary struggle we see in our families and organizations. Yet when our Awareness is open

and more expanded through our acceptance of reality and our genuine commitment to the highest levels of service, we are better able to perceive and access the more creative options in a challenging situation and lead our teams, organizations and families with much more ease and grace. It is our level of Awareness (AQ) that forms the foundation for our entire experience in life.

And I know . . . there are lots of books out there claiming to share the “keys” to a better understanding and experience in leadership and in life. There are many books that share their EZ-secrets or their tips and tricks and hacks for the best leadership performance ever. However, these books are mostly focused on adding more “content” to the topic of improving our leadership. And although many of these books are actually quite good on some level, sharing more tools, techniques and research (content) has clearly not provided us with the deeper answers we seek. More content does not necessarily equal more competence in leadership.

Unfortunately, most leadership development approaches do not take us far enough into our potential in life. They may help us to better understand a few leadership concepts and to improve

our lives in some way, but they do not take us far enough into the deeper realities that form the foundation of our understanding and experience. However, the purpose of this book, this exploration, is to take us all the way. All the way into our highest expression of leadership service. We can take significant steps toward our highest potential only when we understand the foundational drivers of our leadership and our lives.

This book illuminates the understanding we need to facilitate our direct experience with these deeper realities of our leadership service, which we can then apply to all aspects of our life. This book shares the keys to the full context of our journey through life, so that we can better apply all of the content that others are sharing with us. It is through our understanding of the larger context of leadership that we are able to better apply all of its content . . . and not the other way around.

The purpose of this book is to share the key elements of our AQ in a way that is practical, functional and grounded in reality. So that we can immediately understand and apply these keys to create an extraordinary experience within our lives and our leadership service, from the most

complex issues we face in our workplaces and society, to the most mundane of our activities of daily living.

As we practice and apply the concepts discussed in this exploration, our entire life will be transformed. And the practices shared for this work are not complicated or time consuming at all. As a matter of fact, most of the practices can and should be done as we are moving through our day. These practices occur in real-time, right in the middle of our busy lives. This is a reflection of the practicality and functionality of this foundational approach to improving our leadership and life. Everything that follows is directly applicable to our experience in the field of leadership and the field of life. So, let's move forward with this groundbreaking journey into the deeper possibilities of our understanding and expression of our humanness.

CHAPTER 1

Why AQ

So, why do we need yet another set of initials (AQ) related to our growth in leadership and life? Well, it's because the previous sets of initials (IQ & EQ) did not take us far enough or deep enough into the foundational elements needed to lead our teams and organizations through the increasing complexity we face. And unless our efforts are grounded in this deeper foundation, the outcomes of our efforts will frequently fall short of the dreams and visions of those we serve. In fact, all complex dynamic activities require a solid foundation with deep roots that support the flexibility and adaptability needed to thrive in an ever-changing environment. And so it is with our journeys in leadership.

Historically, the most sought-after characteristics of a leader have been their experience in a given field. The theory being that the more experience we have in a given field, the more successful we will be in leading others in this field. And there is obviously some level of truth to this. After all, numerous industries have continued to thrive by building on the experience of those that came before them.

Yet as the complexities of modern business and life continued to evolve, our experience alone was no longer enough to meet the needs of our new and evolving challenges. As businesses, industries and markets continued to become more complex and more integrated, our past experience was no longer enough to keep up with these evolving needs. Something more was required. So, the business world and other elements of society also evolved in response to this and began to focus more on a leader's IQ (Intelligence Quotient) as the most sought-after characteristic for leading our teams and organizations into the evolving complexity.

Our IQ is essentially a numerical score based on the sum of the results of a standardized test of several domains of accepted knowledge and problem solving. Our IQ is not the same as our

intelligence, which is more a reflection of an individual's ability to learn and solve problems in key areas of life. When someone has a deep knowledge of a specific business or trade, we sometimes call this an individual's Industry IQ. This focus on IQ led to the expansion of university business programs racing to prepare this next generation of leaders. The new theory being that the smarter or more knowledgeable the leader was, the better they would perform in an increasingly complex environment.

And in many respects, this also turned out to be true. As the number of university-prepared leaders began to flood every industry, the level of problem-solving and innovation boomed. And as the complexity and pace of change continued to increase, many of these high IQ leaders went on to create even more complex tools in the attempt to address the challenges that were coming at them: tools such as TQM, Lean, Six Sigma and many others. These logic-based tools were definitely helpful for us to begin to better understand and address the rising complexity in our workplaces.

But complexity is an interesting thing. It does not seem to rest. And by definition complexity

is, well . . . complex. It has a way of growing and reaching out and entangling itself in everything that surrounds it. So, although the best and brightest had been unleashed upon the business world's challenges, and even though they were armed with the power of the internet and instant access to all the data and best practice information imaginable, their impact on the challenges we face has grown more limited. Intelligent, well-researched approaches to problem-solving are most certainly important and will continue to be helpful to us, yet at the same time, this emphasis on intellectual excellence has still left us wanting.

Interestingly, as the complexity of our environments has continued to increase, so have the wants, needs and expectations of those in our workplaces and in most other elements of our society. It's all connected. Although we've gotten smarter and smarter and have increased access to more and more data, information and best practices, we've been missing a growing need in so many in our organizations. And this has taken a great toll . . . an emotional toll.

There is clearly more to life than the intellectual pursuits that have led us into further

iterations of innovation and disruption. There is more to life than striving to be smarter and more right than others. Our intellect is only one aspect of our being. And eventually, we became smart enough to realize that our emotions represent another important component of who we are as humans. Eventually, many business leaders began to understand the importance of a more evolved emotional intelligence (EQ) in leading and serving others. And the exploration of our EQ was born and quickly applied to the business world.

Capturing the minds of others definitely moved us further along in the face of our increasing complexity, but this came at the expense of our hearts and our emotional wellbeing. It is important to point out here that everything is evolving around us exponentially. As most of the world evolves out of the Industrial Age, everything is shifting. And this shift has moved the Industrial Age requirements of leadership from being focused solely on a leader's experience, to include the Information Age requirements of a leader's intellectual capacity and the logic-based approach that comes from this.

And as society's evolution has continued, we have moved even further, and into the Knowledge

Age, requiring a more creative intelligence with the ability to see our world as a complex and interconnected system. This continuing shift requires a focus on developing and recruiting leaders with the ability to more fully utilize both the logic and creative sides of their brain, to be able to make better use of all of the information and data we now have access to, so that we can more effectively move things forward in our increasing complexity and interconnectedness.

And yet at the same time, this evolution has continued on; from the Industrial Age, to the Information Age, to the Knowledge Age, and then into the Understanding Age, where getting in touch with our hearts and emotions has become paramount. Through Daniel Goleman's 1995 book on Emotional Intelligence, the importance of our Emotional Quotient (EQ) has continued to gain popularity, especially in the field of leadership. At this point, many industries have begun to realize the value of developing the EQ of their leaders and teams, and have been attempting to integrate the principles of our EQ into our workplaces and our lives. And this is a good thing.

Our EQ then, represents the sum of the key elements of our emotional understanding,

wellbeing and agility. There are currently numerous models describing the elements of our EQ but in general our EQ represents our:

1. Understanding of our own emotional states and the triggers for our emotions.
2. Developing the ability to manage our emotions.
3. Understanding of the emotional states of others.
4. Developing the ability to manage the emotional dynamic of social situations.

So, in addition to the importance of our leaders having a requisite level of experience and industry intelligence, it has also become important to develop a strong EQ. As a leader, when we are grounded in both our mind and our heart, our intelligence and our emotions, we are then in a position to connect with the minds and hearts of others in our teams and organizations, to call forth their best efforts. Many individuals, organizations, and our society as a whole, are deeply benefitting from this

exploration of our EQ. As leaders become more in touch with their own EQ, they will be in a position to better address the emotional well-being of everyone involved within the increasing complexity of our lives, to help everyone to bring more of who they really are to our organizations and to life.

It is at this point that, I would like to make something crystal clear. There is a fundamental principle that underlies our exploration here that also underlies everything being shared with you through this book. And that is that *all living systems unfold along a natural developmental progression*. This is such an important point, and when we understand the natural developmental progression of any system or process, we are then able to better align our efforts with it. This can allow us to more thoughtfully and purposefully work with the natural flow of life, and to grow and serve and move with more ease and grace. This is one of the BIG keys to life. Yet, few in leadership circles really understand this fundamental principle and process.

Since the understanding of the natural developmental progression is so foundational to our exploration, let's ground ourselves here in very

practical terms, so that we can see an example of the natural developmental progression unfolding for us in real-time. It should be clear to us that various areas of our planet are in the process of evolving through or into the:

1. Industrial Age . . . and Authoritarian Leadership (Experience-Based)
2. Information Age . . . and Evidence-Based Leadership (IQ, Logic-Based)
3. Knowledge Age . . . and Coaching Leadership (IQ, Creative-Based)
4. Understanding Age . . . and Transformational Leadership (EQ, Heart-Centered)
5. Wisdom Age . . . and Servant Leadership (AQ, Awareness-Centered)

There are actually five additional evolutionary stages of modern society (ten in all), each with an associated expression of more expanded leadership that are occurring and available to us in the present. And we will explore all of these further in Chapter 8. However, the above example

of the first five Ages should provide a glimpse of how this natural progression flows, and how the evolution of our society and its increasing complexity simultaneously produce the need for, and therefore the development of more expanded expressions of leadership.

With just these first five levels of our developmental progression, we can begin to see our evolution in very practical terms. We should be able to see that this is not just some arbitrary leadership model that brings together various sources of research and theory, as some leadership development models reflect. We should be able to see that our leadership growth is a function of and a direct outcome of the evolving complexity of society and its resultant needs, and that the possibilities of our growth as a leader follow this natural developmental progression. And, that when we understand this progression, we are in a position to grow and serve our teams and organizations much more effectively as we move into our ever-increasing complexity.

We should be able to clearly see this evolution of our leadership unfolding as it moves us from a predominantly experience-based focus, to further leveraging our IQ, to then incorporating our EQ,

and ultimately requiring the foundational element of our AQ. This is our developmental progression in action! As all growing systems increase in complexity over time, so will our society and so will the requirements of our customers, organizations and therefore our leaders. We can observe this happening all around us right now. It's just reality.

So, let's be clear that all living systems unfold along a natural developmental progression that is connected to the surrounding environment. Therefore, as society evolves into further complexity, it creates additional needs and requirements of leaders. As aspects of society continue to evolve, even deeper elements of our Awareness are called forth to meet the increasing pace and complexity of life. This natural developmental progression, which we are all part of, is pulling us deeper into the foundation of our being and doing. And this foundation is grounded in our AQ (Awareness Quotient).

We should still acknowledge the importance of our experience in life. We should still appreciate the value of our IQ in improving our journey in life. And we should still honor the importance of our EQ as an essential component of our well-being

in our lives and our workplaces. The focus on our body of experience, our growing industry IQ, and our expanding EQ has most certainly taken us forward. However, as important and valuable as these are to understanding our lives and with moving forward within the relentless complexity that continues to emerge, they are only aspects of a larger context for our understanding and experience in life. And therefore, they are inherently limited in their ability to bring about the deeper insights and experiences we seek.

In other words, they can only take us so far. As the pace and complexity of our world continue forward, our past experience and our growing IQ and EQ are simply not enough for us to fully integrate all of the key pieces of this complex puzzle we face. They have definitely moved us forward and will continue to be important to us, but in and of themselves they are unable to deliver on the larger challenges we face. They cannot, as they are only pieces of the puzzle. While our evolving complexity requires us to see and understand the whole puzzle itself. They have however, led us to the larger context that we are all a part of. And that is our AQ, our Awareness Quotient.

Incidentally, we have already been utilizing our AQ to some degree all of our lives, just as we have been using our IQ and our EQ to some degree. Yet, when we come to more fully understand what our AQ is made up of and how it functions in our life, we can significantly improve all areas of our life and our work. It's just like everything else. If we study and practice with it, we can significantly expand our potential with the growth of our AQ. And our life and our leadership will become a reflection of this.

As we explore further, we will discover that our AQ actually represents the wisdom that flows into and informs both our IQ and our EQ. It is this same wisdom that enlivens all aspects of our life, and the more expanded our AQ, the more expanded our experience is in life. Our AQ is the foundation for and includes the full continuum of our perceptions and experiences in life. The more expanded that our AQ is, the greater access we will have to all of the choices that exist within a complex scenario. When our AQ is contracted out of fear or resistance of some sort, we have less access to the choices available to us in our complexity. And our teams and organizations pay the price for

this. Our AQ can take us much further and much deeper into our experience and performance in all areas of our life. And the purpose of this book is to share this foundational experience with you.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding Awareness

Before we get into the more detailed exploration of the key elements of our AQ, let's be sure to clarify our understanding of the term "Awareness" itself, since Awareness is the fundamental constituent of our AQ and our experience in life. Remember . . . *It all starts and ends with our Awareness, and everything in between is a function of our AQ.*

Awareness is one of those words that many people use but few have a real working knowledge of. We may often hear people use the term "Self-Awareness," which is also now seen as an important component of our leadership. However, as we will soon see, Self-Awareness is only one aspect of our overall AQ. Adding to the confusion