

Leadership

Leadership

THE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

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Curious Human
PUBLICATIONS, LLC

Published by Curious Human Publications LLC

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ISBN 978-1-7322507-5-8 (Paperback)

ISBN 978-1-7322507-6-5 (Ebook)

ISBN 978-1-7322507-7-2 (Audible)

Book design by DesignForBooks.com

Cover photo credit: Shutterstock © Nikolay_E

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Human Certified – This book was
written and edited by a real human.



DEDICATION

To Deborah & Lee

And . . .

Thanks Bob!

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A Brief Introduction

You have most likely never read a leadership book like this one. That’s because there are actually very few leadership experts who can detail our progression across the full continuum of our development as a leader. And even fewer who possess an experiential understanding of this essential growth process. Through their research, these experts may have come to understand some of the important pieces of the leadership puzzle, but not necessarily how all the pieces fit and work together in a way that reflects the realities of our evolving leadership experience. Therefore, most books on leadership . . . even many of the really good ones . . . can only take you so far.

However, this book will take you through the full range of your capabilities as a leader. This exploration will provide you with the insights you have been searching for to truly understand and express the best versions of your leadership service. This journey will ground you in the ongoing experience of your expanding awareness, as directly applied to the natural developmental progression of your growth as a leader and a human being. It will serve as a practical guide into the highest levels of leadership performance, as you develop your own unique expression of leadership mastery. And importantly, it will also provide you with the understanding needed to genuinely support others on their own journeys into higher levels of service.

Well, that’s quite a declaration! And yet all of this is now within your reach. And that is because this exploration will take you far beyond the more common approaches to our development as a leader. And far beyond much of the latest research claiming to have discovered the keys to the ultimate in leadership performance.

It is interesting to note that as the leadership research has continued to pile up, so too have the levels of dysfunction in many of our organizations and institutions. This dysfunction can be clearly seen and felt at every level in our business organizations, political systems, religious institutions, educational systems, and in just about every other industry on our planet. And no amount of tips, or tricks, or hacks, or the clever repackaging of previous leadership theories will move us beyond this growing dysfunction.

So, we can continue on with our journeys to collect more theories and concepts in an effort to try to improve our leadership performance. Or, we can step onto a more direct path of learning and growth. A more functional, practical, and adaptable path. A path that integrates all of our being and doing in the world, and provides the foundation for our understanding and growth in any field, and in any circumstances. A path of leadership that mirrors our natural growth and development as a leader and as a human being.

What follows in the pages of this book is such a path. This path is grounded in The Universal Principles of leadership and life. Universal Principles are precepts that are observably consistent across a broad spectrum of reality. In other words, Universal Principles are a more direct and reliable reflection of our experience in the world. It is these principles that actually underlie much of the research, theories, and concepts that drive our current understanding of leadership.

Yet because of the reductionist approaches that many researchers employ, their leadership theories tend to have only a limited impact on our overall leadership performance. Their theories tend to be only applicable within more narrow sets of circumstances, and often breakdown when we attempt to make use of them in new, or novel, or more challenging situations. While Universal Principles operate at a more foundational level of reality, and can produce more far-reaching impacts on our understanding and

performance as a leader. Which can serve us especially well in our rapidly evolving complexity.

The two Universal Principles that we will be immersed in underlie our entire experience in life, and provide us with the deeper insights we need to chart a more inspiring and impactful journey forward. Through our explorations here, we will come to deeply understand the natural simplicity, practicality, and critical importance that these two Universal Principles play in our lives. With just these two Universal Principles, we can completely transform our lives as we continue to expand our understanding and expression of leadership service. And, you will soon be able to prove this all for yourself.

Enjoy the journey!

Part I

Universal Principle 1

*It all starts and
ends with our awareness.*

Chapter 1

Foundations of Leadership and Life

In order to establish a more resilient structure in any field of pursuit, we must first develop a flexible, adaptable, and supportive foundation. And so it is with our leadership. Yet, so many leadership development approaches tend to jump right into sharing the latest and greatest tips, and tricks, and hacks, without much apparent understanding of the importance of building a stable foundation upon which to incorporate more complex skills and abilities. It is no wonder that despite the mass of leadership information and trainings that abound, the overall understanding and performance of leaders across the planet still remains relatively limited. Especially in comparison to what our rapidly evolving environments are requiring of us.

So, let's build such a foundation starting with the first universal principle of leadership and life. This first universal principle represents the foundational experience of all of our *being* and *doing* in the world. And this principle is, *It all starts and ends with our awareness*. Without awareness, there can be no perception of life . . . period. Our awareness forms the essence of our entire experience in life. It is through our growth in awareness that we can perceive, understand, and adapt to the expanding nature of life. And very importantly, it is through our growth in awareness that we can access the more creative choices that abound in our increasingly

complex lives. Therefore, we could say that this first universal principle is THE foundational element on our journey in leadership and life.

However, the term “awareness” is one of those words that many people use, but few have a real working knowledge of. Our awareness is actually the gateway to our entire experience in life. Therefore, it is naïve for us to promote the development of more advanced leadership skills without first grounding ourselves in the importance of awareness itself. Grounding ourselves in awareness requires the development of a clear understanding of how our awareness operates in our lives, along with how we might be able to better apply our awareness to our emerging experience. Which can then further inform all of our learning, growth, and performance as a leader and a human being.

So, we will start our foundation building with a functional understanding of what awareness really is and how it operates in our lives. As a matter of fact, all of the explorations that follow will also be presented from a functional standpoint. Our purpose here is not to simply add more content and commentary to the growing body of knowledge regarding concepts such as awareness. Our focus will be on how these things actually work in our day-to-day lives, so that we can most immediately apply this material to the practical realities of our service to the world.

And in order to accomplish this, it will be important for us to clarify what we mean by the term awareness, since this word is often confused with other related terms such as consciousness, attention, and focus. These terms are often used interchangeably or combined together in a way that can further confuse or cloud their meaning and functionality. We often hear people use terms such as conscious-awareness, or focused-attention in their attempts at describing these things.

We often hear experts describe awareness as the act of being conscious. While then describing consciousness as the state of

being aware. This interchanging of terms does very little to help us to understand the form or the function of these important concepts. And it is this lack of functional precision that prevents us from being able to more readily access and apply these fundamental concepts to our growing experience in life.

The same goes for the terms such as attention and focus, and their combined forms like focused-attention or focused-awareness. These terms are also frequently used in ways that blur their specific functionality. And this ends up creating unnecessary confusion and uncertainty about how to directly access these fundamental drivers of our experience and growth in life. So, let's clarify these important terms and create a more functional understanding that we can immediately apply to our leadership and our lives. Let's start this clarification at a foundational level by first exploring the term consciousness.

Consciousness, or more accurately *The Field of Consciousness*, represents the vibrational, energetic, and informational matrix of the universe we inhabit. The field of consciousness contains all of the visible and invisible elements of creation, including the entire material existence of our physical reality. We spend our whole lives in this field of consciousness, while we explore and try to understand and interact with it more effectively. The history of all humans and all organic and inorganic life is written and unfolding in the field of consciousness. All fields of study are essentially examining and attempting to explain various aspects of this field.

The field of consciousness provides the tapestry for all of the perceptions and experiences that we could ever possibly have as a human species. It represents the entire web of life, and forms our collective playground as humans. The field of consciousness holds the space for the entire universe along with everything in it. The cosmos and all natural phenomena manifest, are sustained, and then dis-integrate back into the field of consciousness. Every experience we can possibly have, from brushing our teeth to falling

in love occurs within this same field of consciousness. And importantly, we do not HAVE consciousness, as much as we ARE consciousness. Consciousness then, is the field where the entire experience of life unfolds.

Now let's move from the field of consciousness into our functional exploration of the term awareness. Although these two terms are often used interchangeably, awareness is not the same as consciousness. But it is also not separate from it. We could say that awareness represents the pure perceptual aspect of consciousness. *If consciousness is the field, then awareness is the perception of the field.*

At this level, awareness represents the pure perception of undifferentiated reality that is beyond any form of distortion. This is the absolute awareness that underlies all experience within the field of consciousness. And it is this all-pervasive awareness that permeates and enlivens the perceived experience of every living entity.

However, and very interestingly, the structure of our human form seems to attenuate the full capacity of this absolute awareness. This awareness-constraining factor of the bioenergetic composition of our bodies is perhaps necessary for us to function and interact within our more finite, relative world. Incidentally, it is this clouding of awareness that also gives rise to the appearance of our separateness from each other and the world that surrounds us. We might then call this aspect of perception our individuated awareness. Our individuated awareness can be likened to the many waves that rise up out of a vast ocean of absolute awareness. Although we might perceive these waves of individuated awareness as separate from each other, we could never consider them as separate from the ocean out of which they arise.

It is our individuated awareness operating in accordance with our physical body that enables us to perceive and experience everything that is available to us within our lives. In fact, it is this specific configuration of energies and biological makeup that allows us to function as co-creators within our perceived

reality. This particular arrangement of form is responsible for the common patterns of how we see, hear, feel, sense, think, understand, and experience all the various stimuli and phenomena that are available to us as humans.

It is this form that constructs a flower as we would commonly perceive it as a member of the human species. While also providing for our own individual experience of this same flower. It provides us with the means for our subjective experience as an individual wave moving through the sea of life. Yet as an individual wave, we can never be disconnected from the whole of the ocean of undifferentiated awareness.

The fluctuating patterns of our bioenergetic density also greatly influence the clarity of awareness that we bring into our lives. Picture for a moment a pure light shining through a piece of glass. If the glass is in its raw, unpolished form, then the light shining through it will be obscured and scattered. Now picture the polished lens of a magnifying glass that allows this pure light to pass through it and converge to reveal the more subtle details of life. Our awareness is like this pure light. And the bioenergetic structure of our body is like the piece of glass. It is through the ongoing experiences of our lives that our clouded surfaces and rough edges are smoothed and polished, to allow the clear light of our awareness to shine through and illuminate the larger possibilities of our existence.

The clarity of perception of our bodily form is also influenced by a number of other factors, including our genetic patterns, our environmental and cultural upbringing, the predominant programming or conditioning we have been exposed to, and our karmic accumulations over the longer arc of our lives. These factors greatly contribute to our individuality and uniqueness as a human being. As no one else shares the exact configuration of our physical and energetic makeup, or the same collection of personal experiences.

And most importantly, while life itself is continuously shaping and polishing the perception of our experience in the world, so too are the moment-to-moment thoughts, words, actions, and the daily choices that we make. This is the co-creative process of our experience of life at work. And it is this understanding that provides us with a direct link to our more purposeful growth in awareness.

Our awareness therefore, is the foundation for our perception with all our being and doing in the world. Our awareness represents our direct link to life, and therefore it is the key to our growth and development in the world. And very importantly, our individuated awareness is within our sphere of influence. In other words, there are many things we can do to further expand the clarity of our awareness and to move into a more creative, productive direction in life. And conversely, there are also many things we can do that tend to contract or limit our awareness, which often leads to a diminished experience for us and for everyone else we impact.

As our awareness expands, so too does our understanding and agency in life. Which further informs our decisional capacity and our ability to choose in life. This is an important yet underappreciated quality of our expanded awareness. Many people have shared the observation that our experience in life is dictated in large part by the choices we make. That if someone appears to be having a more productive life, it is because they make better choices. And, that if someone appears to be struggling in life, it is because they just happened to make poor choices. The prevailing wisdom seems to be that we all have access to the same number and types of choices in life, and that some of us just make bad choices for some reason. Which then of course justifies our judgement of these people as being uneducated, lazy, or inferior in some way.

However, this perspective completely misses the deeper reality of the process of making our life choices. Yes, many of us do make questionable choices from time to time. And yet the deeper

reason for this can often be related to the degree of awareness we have about the possible choices in a given area. Our experience in reality tells us that it is just not enough to know about a potential choice for us to have full access to that same choice. As an example, we may clearly know about a better choice in our diet or lifestyle, and still not be able to access and make that choice on a consistent basis. And typically, people will blame this on a lack of willpower or some other failing of ours. However, *could it be that this issue is actually more related to a number of factors, including our level of awareness with the dynamics in this area of life?*

Our growth in awareness increases the depth, complexity, and diversity of our internal perspectives and can therefore broaden the external behavior patterns that we have access to in the face of life's challenges. This represents the basis for our degree of choice, or our "free-ish" will. And it represents the process for determining our specific way through life. The concept of our free-ish will refers to the varying degrees of active choice that we might have in a given situation. In other words, our ability to make choices within all of the possibilities available to us, will be limited by the depth of our ability to understand and access these choices.

With more limited levels of awareness, we may have a more limited understanding of the choices available to us in a given scenario. And therefore, we might only have access to a smaller subset of these possible choices. Our ability to choose can also be dictated or heavily influenced by our background programming, as well as a number of other unconscious processes. Yet as our awareness expands, we will find ourselves with the ability to understand a growing number of potential choices in a given scenario. And our direct access and utilization of these choices will also expand. As will our ability to co-create along with the more gross and subtle energies and elements of life.

So, the pathway to the next best version of our lives comes fundamentally through the purposeful exploration of our awareness.

Think about it. Every sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. And every thought, feeling, emotion, and experience we could possibly have, comes to us by way of our awareness. As our awareness grows, we grow. And as our awareness contracts, our ability to serve life is also limited to this same degree. Our experience in leadership and life is directly related to our level of awareness. *It all starts and ends with our awareness.*

We could actually take this exploration of the concept of our awareness much further and deeper. But our focus here is to understand its essential nature to the degree necessary for us to see how it functions in our lives, so that we can then make practical use of our understandings. So, let's move on and explore a few of the other important terms that are also frequently used or confused with the term awareness. Although these terms are often used interchangeably or in combination with awareness, they are not the same as awareness. However, these are important terms to understand, since they are directly involved in the application of our awareness in our lives.

This next exploration involves the term "Attention." Our attention represents our directional discrimination as it functions through our individuated awareness. It is essentially our ability to orient towards a specific bundle of perceptions within the sphere of our awareness. If we think of our attention like a video camera, it would represent the mechanism for framing and holding onto a particular scene within our awareness. Our attention is an incredibly powerful constituent of awareness and a key to expanding the possibilities of our experience in life. It is also a key for accessing and maintaining our sense of presence.

Our degree of attention is also directly related to our degree of awareness. With limited awareness, we also tend to have more limited control of our attention. With limited awareness, we may have difficulty orienting and maintaining our attention for any length of time, and it will simply drift along or jump from one shiny object

to the next. This can be a major cause of the ongoing challenges we face in life. When our attention is oriented towards the more positive and productive aspects of life, our experience tends to mirror this in some way. However, when our attention gravitates towards the more dysfunctional elements of life, our experience will often be a reflection of this.

Attention is not the same as awareness, but it is also not separate from it. It is part and parcel of it. As our awareness grows, our attention becomes more refined within our ability orient and hold onto the elements of our vision and purpose in the world. Our growing attention thus reinforces our growing awareness. It's all connected! When applied on purpose, through the consistent practice of placing our attention on our larger vision for life, our experience will begin to transform. Our attention is also one of the primary levers of our awareness. And this critical aspect of our awareness is naturally developed through our exploration of this first universal principle.

Continuing on, let's explore another related term. And that is the concept of Focus. Focus represents our spatial concentration, or our ability to adjust our degree of immersion into the objects of our attention. If we were to think of our focus as the lens of our video camera, then this represents our ability to both zoom into the finer details of the scene of our attention, while also being able to dial out by degrees into a wider view of things. As we adjust our focus in on the detail of things, we are able to perceive the individual parts and also how they work together. And when we dial out into a wider-angle view, we are able to then see the larger relationships between these things, along with the patterns and cycles of activity and interaction within our view. Our focus allows us to extract as much information as possible out of the scene of our attention.

Focus is not the same as attention or awareness, but it is related to these things and is a function of both. If our attention is not

refined enough to be able to maintain itself in a chosen direction, then our focus will not be able to fully engage and serve its purpose. And at the same time, if we have developed a level of control with our attention, but our focus has not kept pace, we will not be able to extract as much valuable information out of the scene of our attention. And our experience in life will reflect this. The good news is that as we come to understand the functionality of awareness and work directly with it, our interconnected attention and focus tend to grow together in alignment.

The primary function of our focus is to further clarify the scene of our attention and to extract as much information and experience as possible from this scene; that appears within the sphere of our awareness; that is manifested and sustained within the field of consciousness. *Can you see the relationships here?* Our focus then, represents another powerful lever of our awareness and a key feature of our attention that we can use to better understand the subtleties of leadership and life. As we improve our focus, our attention is similarly strengthened, and our awareness expands even further. Yes, it's all connected!

Taken together, we can see that our attention and focus are two of the primary levers for the direction of our growth in life. And these levers are always engaged to some degree within the moment-to-moment experiences along the journey of our lives. Where we place and hold our attention, and how we exercise our focus, in large part influences the experiences we will have.

This point cannot be emphasized enough. Our attention and focus are key elements for the co-creation of our experience. They serve as two of the primary levers for the creative power of our individuated awareness as it animates our experience in the world. This clarification should also begin to demonstrate for us why using terms such as focused-attention or focused-awareness, can cause unnecessary confusion and fail to illuminate their true function and potential. When the distinct yet connected function of

these levers of our awareness are more precisely understood, we can then apply this understanding more directly to our lives. Our attention and focus then become our super powers on our more purposeful journeys of growth and development.

An additionally important term that we will explore next, is the term Intent. Now this is an interesting term with many levels of meaning. But for the sake of this more practical exploration here, we can view our intent as the core impulse, or the primary catalyst for the direction of our being and doing in the world. Our intent is more foundational than other more commonly used concepts such as our purpose, or commitment, or even our intention. Our purpose, commitment, or intention represent the more specific perspectives we might choose to engage with as an expression of our foundational intent. Purpose, commitment, and our intentions are therefore important outcomes of our clarity of intent.

Our intent represents the why behind our why, behind our why, behind our why. In fact, we know we are beginning to get in touch with our intent when we can no longer find the words to adequately describe it. And although our intent is often beyond the meaning of any single word or phrase that we could use to fully describe it, we can very clearly know and experience how it influences our lives as we expand our connection with it. Our intent is a critical driver of our ongoing experience in life and provides the catalyst for the direction and quality of our attention and focus.

Our intent is not the same as our awareness, attention, or focus, but it is directly related to these things. Our intent acts somewhat like a compass or a GPS device, in that it provides for our sense of direction in life. Without clarity of intent, our lives just kind of go where they go, and we tend to just get what we get. Yet since our intent is also a functional component of our awareness, attention, and focus. As we work with these things, our intent also becomes more clear and active in our lives. If we were to continue with our current analogy, where our attention is represented by our video

camera, and our focus represents the lens of our video camera, then our intent would be analogous to the director of our movie who is guiding the movement of the video camera and adjusting the lens on the chosen scene within the sphere of our awareness.

Going further, our awareness, attention, focus, and intent represent the working unit of our individuated awareness. They form the critical elements for our growth and performance in leadership and in life. And when we understand their functional relationships, we can work directly with them on our journey through life. It can be extremely important for us to understand and work directly with these foundational elements to enable us to integrate them into a more coherent experience in life. In other words, it is through our understanding and practice with the key elements of our perception of life that we can more effectively apply them to our experience. This is true in any field of endeavor, such as a sport, a hobby, a work task, or any other type of activity we choose to take on. When we practice with the fundamentals of an activity, our real-time performance in this pursuit can improve greatly.

Yet, since our awareness, attention, focus, and intent are always operating automatically for us on some level, we often miss their significance. Most people just assume that they are already operating at a high degree of awareness, and with optimal levels of attention, focus, and intent. Even though the clearly observable reality of our lives might suggest otherwise. And this is understandable, since *how can we significantly improve in any area of our lives if we don't understand and practice with the foundational elements of our chosen path? How can we significantly improve in any area of our lives if we are not grounded in their related fundamentals?* However, now that we more clearly understand the foundational elements of our awareness, we can begin to practice with and integrate this first universal principle into our daily lives.

Let's pause for a moment here. As it can be very easy to read through or hear about what we have been exploring yet still miss the true significance of this understanding. It can be easy to just move on to the next paragraph and the next chapter, without fully appreciating the significance of this issue. What is being shared here are the fundamental building blocks for our growth and performance in all the areas of our lives. What is being shared are the keys to our entire experience in life. When we work directly with our awareness, attention, focus, and intent; directly with the foundational elements of our experience in life; our journey in the world is transformed.

Instead of leading a life based solely on the programming of the culture that we just happen to be born and raised in. And instead of being at the effect of the more dominant personalities and opinions in our lives and in society. We can connect with the deeper realities of life to inform and transform our journey. This is a most practical and impactful approach to our lives. When we approach our journey through life in this way, all our actions and interactions are infused with this more expanded perspective. We can then work directly with the foundational elements of our perception of life to step into a more expanded experience of our leadership service. And as you will see, this is actually the most natural thing we can do.

Now let's move into a deeper level of practicality with regards to this exploration of awareness and its functional components, so that we can ground ourselves in the real value of this understanding. As our awareness grows through the dynamic of life's compounding experiences, we finally get to the point where these components of our awareness begin to come more fully online for us. Prior to this point, many of us may have lived fairly large portions of our lives driven mostly by our societal conditioning and habits.

During these portions of our lives, we are most certainly still operating with some level of awareness, attention, focus, and intent.

We are always using these foundational elements of our being to some degree. We cannot NOT use them. Our awareness is always functioning at some level or to some degree. Yet, this question of levels and degrees is critically important to our more expanded understanding and growth.

With more limited levels of awareness, our clarity of intent as the guiding force in our lives is also more limited, and we will have less control and regulation over our attention and focus. And therefore, our experience in leadership and life will reflect these limitations. Now, that does not mean that we cannot become successful, or love our families, or have a positive impact with our work or life. It does mean however, that our understanding and performance in life might remain far below our potential in relation to who we really are and why we are here.

Without the requisite clarity of our intent, we will tend to be pulled in whatever direction the prevailing programming of society dictates to us. And our connection with our core motive in life will be unclear. Without a sufficient degree of attention, we will not be able to hold onto our deeper vision for our lives. And our efforts towards this purpose will be diminished. Without an adequate range of focus, we will be unable to extract the more subtle yet important information available to us from the objects of our attention. And our overall experience in life will tend to be more superficial. As a result, the level of functional awareness that we show up with will be insufficient for the actualization of the larger possibilities of our leadership and life.

To be even more clear. Through the exercising of our awareness, our attention and focus become a more direct reflection of the force of our intent. As our intent is re-established as the primary catalyst for the direction of our being and doing in the world, our attention and focus are further informed and supported with their roles in expanding our awareness and our expression of service in leadership and life. And as we then apply this expanding

awareness, attention, focus, and intent into the depth of our experience, our leadership and our lives take on new meaning. This is how we can more deeply understand the subtleties of life. These are the fundamental levers of our understanding, performance, and mastery in the world.

In our initial exploration of this first universal principle, we have begun to tease apart the interconnected and essential elements of our awareness so that we could examine how they function together on our journey through life. This foundational element is one of the big missing pieces of the puzzle in most leadership development approaches. Without this level of understanding of the foundational elements of our leadership, our efforts will fall far short of the larger possibilities of our service to our teams and organizations. It is critical for us to understand the key elements of our awareness and how they work together, so that we can begin to co-create more beneficial experiences in life. And so that we are able to utilize this understanding while in the whirlwind of today's increasing complexity and diversity.

As we ground ourselves in this understanding of our awareness, attention, focus, and intent, and work directly with these essential elements of our growth, we will soon experience the integrated nature of this fundamental unit of our perception. Our ability to apply and leverage the subtleties of our awareness across the full range of our experiences will continue to grow. And our leadership will become a direct reflection of our more expanded awareness of life's possibilities. This is our foundation for leadership and life. And . . . *It all starts and ends with our awareness.*