



"The Leadership Paradox - A Solution!"

Tweet this... [#bealeadernotafollower](#)

A recent **Harvard Business Review** (HBR) piece based on research with **87,000** leaders identifies three core elements that contribute to a leader's credibility:

- *Positive Relationships*
- *Excellent Judgement; &*
- *Consistency*

In another recent survey of **10,000** senior leaders also published by the HBR, **97%** of respondents said that being strategic was the leadership behaviour most important to their organisation's success

In a further survey by the 'Strategic Thinking Institute', **96%** replied that they lacked the time for strategic thinking. Plus ca Change?

#MindfulLeadership

So, how can *Mindfulness* and more importantly #MindfulLeadership ensure a leader builds those *Positive Relationships* – is on point and generates trust; makes *great Judgement Calls* – anticipates, responds and achieves results; demonstrates *Consistency* – Walks the talk and does what they say they will do; & is *Strategic* – Making and taking the time to think, vision and act?

In this eBook I want to explore among other things what that looks like and means in our *modern volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world*.

I've already taken some of the big themes from my book, '[Uncovering Mindfulness](#)' to make the case for *Mindfulness* being present in all areas of our lives.

In the personal and professional. The universal and the particular.

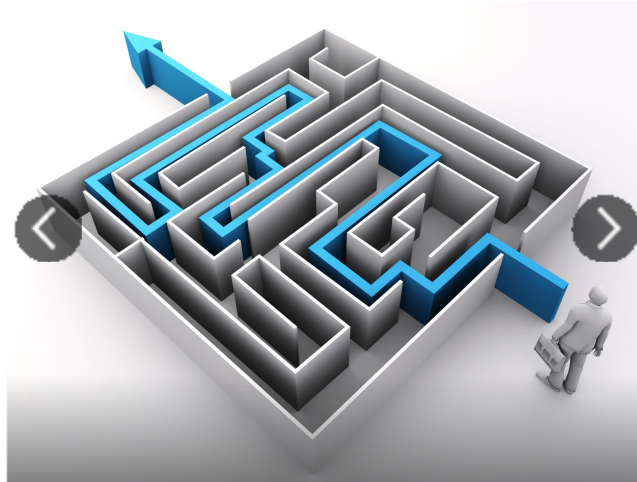
In business and the workplace. In education and across the health service.

So, let's start with three questions

1. *Is it possible to be a Mindful Leader?*
2. *Can Mindfulness enhance the practice of Leadership? &*
3. *How can being a Mindful Leader enable you to be the best Leader you can be?*

And apart from [Chapter 5](#) of my book where I take a deep dive into Mindful Leadership another question, *where are all the other books on this subject?*

Since **John Adair's** seminal book 'Training for Leadership' in 1968, there have been over **78,000** books written on Leadership – None of these however focus on Mindful leadership!



The Leadership Paradox

At the heart of Leadership there is a quintessential question that presents us with a paradox.

Namely, *"If leadership is about doing the right thing at the right time, how do you know on either score?"*

I would contend that *Mindfulness* can help us to know both the right time and the right thing, but how so?

Confusion, Friction & Under Performance

Only three things happen naturally in any organisation or business — confusion, friction and under performance — the rest as Peter Drucker says, require Leadership!

But the whole business of Leadership has become — well a business.

Did you know that if you Google the word 'Leadership' you can get upwards of **800 million** hits and some **130,000+** theories and models?

For instance, the *Trait*, *Style* or *Contingency* theories of Leadership. Or models of Leadership such as *Authentic*, *Distributed*, *Embodied*, *Narrative*, *Primal*, *Resonant* and *Servant*, and I have written about many of these and my work with them in other fora and on multiple [social media platforms](#) over the past few years.

And as a business, Leadership is currently worth a staggering **£45 Billion** per annum globally.

That's coming from your pocket, or your Company's bottom line, wherever you are in the world — And you've spent it in the pursuit of what?

Competitive advantage? Promotion? Magic Bullets? Snake Oil? The Holy Grail?

Better Leaders today?

But are today's leaders better than those that came before John Adair's' book in the late 1960's?

You might say yes. I would say it depends!

For Leadership is also at its heart both situational and context dependent.

If it's out of sync or time with either, then very rarely will it be the right Leadership and, in all probability, not great, or even good

Leadership.

A Leader today needs to be Present & in the moment, whilst being aware of the bigger picture and all the nuances at play.

A Leader today needs to engage and inspire, have great self-awareness and be curious.

A Leader today needs to know and live their values, be a great listener, authentic, trust worthy and have [humility](#).



Nothing new there then?

Of course, Leadership isn't a uniquely 20th, or indeed 21st century phenomenon, although the degree of scrutiny, hair-trigger accountability and court of public opinion that a Leader today must face, is more modern than not.

Whilst the focus has also shifted towards the practice of Leadership being seen both as an art and a science. After all, if all that money is being spent then there must be a concomitant industry of academic rigour to provide intellectual validation, kite-marks and accreditation!

Yet the concept of Leadership and what it is to be a Leader, can be traced back over two millennia to **Plato** and the Greeks; **Herodotus**, [Marcus Aurelius](#) and the Romans; & **Lao Tzu** in 5th century BC China.

In fact, it can be traced back almost as far as *Mindfulness* itself and that's over **2,500 years** and counting.

A VUCA World

In today's **Volatile**, **Uncertain**, **Complex** and **Ambiguous** world though we need first and foremost, certainty! But that is something that COVID_19 and the accompanying Pandemic has denied us!

Whilst traditional notions of Leadership have been challenged in favour of identifying Leaders and emerging Leaders who are *Authentic*, *Ethical*, *Trustworthy*, able to lead in both the good and bad times and provide that certainty.

Again not so easy or straightforward in the current crisis.

For me the essence of Leadership is to have a following, with the legitimacy or permission, if you will, coming from *influence*, *passion* and *purpose*, rather from any title or hierarchy.

Tweet this...[A great Leader moves us, they inspire us to dream more, do more, and become more](#) —

A truly great Leader gives credit where credit's due, creating loyalty. Asks how they can be better, by seeking feedback and engendering respect and trust — And they also understand the nature of 'Luck' and prepare for it accordingly.

They know their strengths and are also aware of their weaknesses. They surround themselves with the best people and

they really listen.

They are also curious and natural [Storytellers & Storydoers](#), able to create a compelling and resonant narrative that connects emotionally (connecting **Aristotle's** three core elements of persuasion – *Logos, Ethos & Pathos*).

And they are *authentic, ethical* and *trusted* as well.

So, what is Mindful Leadership?

It's engaging, inspiring, being authentic, curious and self-aware.

It's paying Attention and being Present in the moment, creating space and time and is about so much more than simply showing up and being in the room. Most Leaders show up of course, but they're not always in the moment. They find themselves distracted by whatever crisis, or issue or meeting is taking precedence, and this is a time-stealer that really undermines their ability to gather the necessary information and both effectively and consistently judge and weigh situations in order to make the best decisions.

It's surrounding yourself with great people and inspiring them by being genuinely interested in making an emotional connection.

It's being more deliberate, considered, grounded and far less likely to lose your cool.

It's having a finger on the pulse — being on point — and being aware of the questions to ask and the places to go for the answers. All actions that build positive relationships and affirm trust.

It's actively listening and tuning in to the “*song beneath the words*”, noticing the little things — the nuances of the language and the trends and undercurrents that can give a strategy wings and enable it to fly!

Key characteristics of a Mindful Leader

So, what might these key characteristics be? Here are some:

- *Being resilient, emotionally intelligent and comfortable in your own skin*
- *Having great humility but also an intense professional will that enables you to balance gentleness with strength and a steely resolve*
- *Being prepared to embrace failure, knowing this is where both learning and future success may come from*
- *Having great compassion and empathy*
- *Being thoughtful, considered and deliberate in making and taking decisions*
- *Being self-aware, knowing how you come across to others and being readily able to adapt for different audiences and situations*
- *Dealing with all situations with greater calm and being less judgmental*
- *Seeking to understand then be understood; & finally*
- *Having greater clarity and precision of thought, as well as greater creativity, energy, both insight and out sight, and a clearer sense of purpose*

A Mindful Leader will know that their vision will be bigger and last longer than they will, if they invest in a culture that provides a clear purpose, is compassionate and supportive, inspires and rewards creativity, & is transparent: Whilst their legacy will also be a more [Mindful Business](#).

If you're interested in finding out more about what I have to say on Leadership in other pieces featured on a range of platforms, including the Huffington Post, Medium and Thoughts & Ideas (India) you can check-out the following: '[Present Leadership is Modern Leadership for a V.U.C.A. World](#)', '[As A Leader are you a Story Teller and a Story Doer?](#)', '[As a Leader Are You Facing Up To Those Wicked Problems](#)', '[Real Leadership & Influence Tropes for 2017 — The Cialdini Way](#)', '[How To Turn Your Social Media Mojo On & Lead The Way](#)', '[Humility & leadership Should Go Hand in Hand — Do You Agree?](#)', & '[Leadership? Is It Just A Matter Of Getting The Midfield Right](#)'.

And Happy Reading!

End Piece

Having written a million plus published words over the past couple of years on leadership excellence, navigating complexity, working with change, well being, well doing and Mindfulness, I am all about making the complex less complex, the tough stuff not so tough and putting the unreachable within reach of everyone.

As well as being the author of '[Uncovering Mindfulness: In Search Of A Life More Meaningful](#)' – All new updated 2nd Edition now available on Amazon and www.bookboon.com where there are now a further 11 e-books in the '[Uncovering Mindfulness](#)' series; the '[Coffee & A Cup of Mindfulness](#)' and the '[Mindful Hacks For Mindful Living & Mindful Working](#)' series – I am also a Contributing Author with [The Huffington Post](#) and a Contributing Writer with [Thrive Global](#).

You can follow the continuing journey Uncovering Mindfulness on Twitter [@TheMindfulBook](#) and at [@Paul_Mudd](#) and check out my wider work [here](#).

