

You Are the Ceiling

Why Capable Leaders Become the Limit, and How to Stop

THE LEADERSHIP JOURNAL

Every Leadership Reflection and Leadership Task from the book, with room to answer

Name:

Started:

How to use this journal

This journal replaces the notebook the book asks you to keep. There is one section for each chapter. The Leadership Reflection comes first; answer the questions quickly, because first answers are usually more accurate than considered ones. The Leadership Task follows, with the structure each task asks for. At the foot of each task is a note telling you which section of the Aide-Mémoire it feeds, so that by the end of Part IV you can complete the sheet from what you have written here.

Two instructions, both from the book. Do not improve your answers. And do not diagnose the organisation or blame yourself: use each page to establish where you are standing today.

Work through it at one chapter a week and you will have a completed Aide-Mémoire in five months. Faster is possible; slower is fine.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: LEADERSHIP TASK: YOUR STARTING POINT

Begin with one page divided into two halves.

On the first, write what is working. Do not list results alone. Describe how those results are produced. Where does responsibility sit? What happens when you are absent? Which decisions move without your intervention? Where does the system think well without needing your answer?

On the second, write where effort remains high while impact feels limited. Where does progress depend heavily on your involvement? Which conversations repeat? Which decisions return to you? Where do other people seem less capable in your presence than they appear elsewhere?

Do not diagnose the organisation or blame yourself. Use it to establish a starting point.

The ceiling is rarely visible when you stare directly at it.

It becomes visible in the patterns that keep returning to you: the decisions that will not move without you, and the conversations you have already had three times.

What is working, and how those results are produced



Where effort remains high while impact feels limited



TEN QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The task above examined the system you are leading. These questions examine you.

There is no score and no result. They are not a diagnosis, and they do not sort you into a type; the premise of this book is that you are not a type but a way of being, and that a way of being can change. They are a record of where you are standing today.

Answer them in your journal. Write quickly, because first answers are usually more accurate than considered ones. The considered version has had time to become presentable. Then date the page and leave it alone until you reach Appendix A.

When did someone last tell you something about your leadership that you did not already know and did not enjoy hearing?

What happens in you when a decision you could have been part of is made without you?

Which part of your leadership would you defend most quickly if it were questioned in front of others?

What are you known for, and what does remaining known for it require you to keep doing?

Imagine your organisation running well without you for a month. What is the first thing you feel, before the answer you would give aloud?

What do you find hardest to say directly, and to whom?

Where is your effort highest, and what do you believe would happen if you stopped?

Who has learnt to bring things to you in a particular way, and what have they learnt to leave out?

What happens in a room when you disagree with something, and how would the people present describe it?

If your leadership continued exactly as it is for another three years, what would it produce, and what would it prevent?

One instruction, and it is the same one that governs everything that follows. Do not improve your answers. The version you would be willing to read out is not the version that will be useful to you at the end of this book.

Date:

CHAPTER 1: PROMOTED TO FAIL**Leadership Reflection**

Bring to mind three situations in which you feel a strong impulse to act quickly.

For each, describe the external facts without interpretation. Then record:

the first assessment that appeared;

the emotion you noticed;

what happened in your body;

the action that felt necessary;

what you feared might happen if you did not take it.

Now consider the effect on others. Did your involvement increase their capacity to act, or teach them to wait for you? Did you make responsibility clearer, or quietly reclaim it?

Do not use the reflection to prove that intervention was wrong. Use it to separate what the situation required from what restored your internal stability.

Leadership Task

Choose one recurring situation in which you normally intervene quickly.

When it arises, create a short pause. If immediate action is genuinely necessary, take it. If it is not, notice the impulse before deciding what to do.

Write a brief account afterwards:

What happened?

What did you make it mean?

What did you feel in your body?

What identity did the familiar action protect?

What other action, if any, was available?

Finally, identify five experiences you are most motivated to avoid in your leadership. Be precise. “Failure” may mean being seen as unreliable. “Conflict” may mean losing approval. “Uncertainty” may mean no longer being the person with the answer.

These are not admissions of weakness.

They are the first map of the ceiling.

Your answer

Keep this. It becomes the opening material for the Fears and the Needs Beneath Them section of your Aide-Mémoire in Appendix A. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 2: NEED: THE DIRECTION OF FEAR**Leadership Reflection**

Recall a recent moment when your impulse to act felt immediate. First, describe what happened without explaining why. Then ask:

What did the situation appear to put at risk?

What did I need to restore or secure?

What did the action give me internally?

What did others have to do in response?

Move beyond broad words. If the need was “control”, what did control provide, relief, predictability, protection from blame, proof of competence? If the need was “significance”, what would being less central have meant?

Finally, complete this sentence:

When I cannot secure _____, I fear that _____.

Treat the answer as a working interpretation, not a final truth.

Leadership Task

For one week, record moments when a leadership action feels necessary rather than chosen. Use five short headings:

Situation: What occurred?

Meaning: What did I make it mean?

Need: What did I feel compelled to secure?

Action: What did I do?

Effect: What did the action make more likely in other people?

At the end of the week, look for recurring needs. Write each as a direct, personal condition rather than a professional virtue:

If I am not involved, I am not needed.

If I do not have the answer, I am not credible.

If someone is disappointed in me, I have failed.

Do not try to remove the need.

See the contract it has been asking the world to honour.

Your answer

Keep this. It becomes the Fears and the Needs Beneath Them section of your Aide-Mémoire. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 3: THE UNSEEN STRATEGY**Leadership Reflection**

Return to one recent situation in which the outcome was uncertain and your reaction felt immediate.

Write five sentences:

My attention went first to...

I interpreted this as...

The action that felt necessary was...

Taking that action gave me...

Around me, the action made it more likely that...

Now identify what received less attention. Whose view did you not explore? Which possibility looked impractical? What evidence might someone using a different strategy have noticed?

The purpose is not to discredit your judgement. It is to see the lens taking part in the judgement.

Leadership Task

Map three moments of pressure using the five-part loop:

Attention

Interpretation

Action

Pay-off

System effect

Then write your working Strategy for Success in one sentence:

When I notice _____, I interpret it as _____, so I _____ in order to experience or protect _____. This teaches others to _____.

Do not make the sentence admirable. Make it recognisable.

You are not being asked to change the strategy yet.

You are being asked to see it before it becomes the world.

Your answer

Keep this. It becomes your Default Strategy for Success in the Aide-Mémoire. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 4: ASSUMPTIONS: WHAT YOU CANNOT SEE PAST**Leadership Reflection**

Recall a recent moment when a behaviour or issue captured your attention quickly.

Separate the account into three layers:

Observation: What could a camera or audio recording have captured?

Selection: Which part stood out to you, and what else was present?

Assumption: What background rule made that part significant?

Then consider the system around you. What does your attention repeatedly reward? Which people or behaviours are easiest for you to recognise as capable? What may others be learning to display in order to succeed with you?

Do not use the questions to invalidate your judgement. Use them to see what is participating in it.

Leadership Task

For one week, choose one interaction each day and record a moment when you felt certain that you knew what was happening.

Write:

what you observed;

what you noticed first;

the assumption beneath that selection;

two other explanations that could also fit the available facts;



one question you could ask before acting.



Then test the assumption in conversation where appropriate. Do not ask a leading question designed to confirm your revised view. Ask for the other person's experience.

The purpose is not to trade a negative story for a positive one.

It is to possess other eyes, if only for a moment.

Your answer



Keep this. It supports the Limiting Belief Pattern section, which you will complete after Chapter 7. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION: THE STORIES THAT SHAPE YOUR REALITY**Leadership Reflection**

Choose a situation in which you felt certain about another person's motives or capability.

Ask:

What did I directly observe?

What did I make it mean?

Which part of the story concerned the person?

Which part concerned what their behaviour meant about me?

How did my interpretation enter the relationship?

What response did it help produce?

Now identify what would be emotionally difficult about holding the interpretation more lightly. Would you risk appearing indecisive, naïve, less perceptive or less in control?

That cost often explains why certainty is maintained.

Leadership Task

Draw two circles for one current leadership issue.

In the first, record only observable or checkable claims. In the second, record the meanings, judgements and predictions you have built around them.

Notice the proportion.

Then ask:

What would I do next if I had only the observations?

You may still reach the same decision. If so, name the interpretation on which it depends and what evidence would cause you to revise it.

For the next week, practise one sentence in live conversations:

The story I am telling myself is...

Do not use the sentence to perform vulnerability. Use it to distinguish your account from the event.

That distinction creates room for another person to tell you what you cannot see from inside your story.

Your answer



Keep this. It also feeds the Limiting Belief Pattern section. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 6: BREAKDOWN: WHEN THE STRATEGY FAILS YOU**Leadership Reflection**

Bring to mind the problems in your leadership that keep returning.

For each, ask:

What intervention produces temporary improvement?

What does the system learn from that intervention?

What becomes more dependent on me afterwards?

What external explanation is true?

What does that explanation allow me not to examine about my own reaction?

Then consider your experience of work over the past year. Where is effort high but development low? Are people becoming more capable in your presence, or more skilled at navigating it?

Pay attention to unfinished questions, the questions you begin internally and then replace with a more comfortable answer.

Finish one.

One more test, and it takes about four seconds.

Take a sentence you have been carrying about the situation and change should to could. I should have seen it becomes I could have seen it. They should be further on becomes they could be further on.

Then notice what happens, because the interesting part is not that the second version is gentler. Often it is not. The interesting part is whether it still feels true.

Sometimes the sentence survives the swap intact, and what is left is a plain statement about what was available. It was possible to see this, and I did not. That is information, and information can be worked with.

Sometimes something protests. Could feels like a let-off, a softening, a way of avoiding what is owed. If that is what you notice, the should was never describing the situation. It was administering a penalty, and the penalty was the point.

Neither answer is a failure. The only question is whether the sentence you are carrying is doing analysis or doing punishment, because you cannot learn from a verdict.

Leadership Task

Choose three problems from the past year that returned after you addressed them. For each, map:

The problem as it first appeared.

The action you took.

The immediate benefit.

The lesson the system may have learnt.

The form in which the problem returned.

Then answer:

In what way might my reaction have contributed to the return?

Do not use the question to assume total responsibility. Identify your actual contribution.

Finally, write one sentence:

When breakdown appears, I return to _____ because I believe _____.

That belief is the next layer of the ceiling.

Your answer

Keep this. It becomes your Reaction When the Strategy Does Not Work. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 7: THE BELIEFS BENEATH THE BEHAVIOUR**Leadership Reflection**

Recall a moment when you acted with conviction and speed.

Ask:

What did I believe about the people involved?

What did I believe would happen without my intervention?

What did I believe the outcome would mean about me?

What evidence did I treat as decisive?

What evidence received less weight?

Now complete:

For my usual action to be necessary, I have to believe...

Then consider the opposite, not as truth but as possibility.

If the opposite were partly true, what would become available, and what would you have to give up?

Leadership Task

Choose one operating belief about the people you lead.

Write it plainly:

Unless I _____, they will _____.

Now design one bounded experiment. Specify:

The decision or responsibility another person will hold.

The boundaries and support required.

What your belief predicts will happen.

What evidence you will observe.

What you will refrain from doing during the experiment.

Afterwards, record both the external result and your internal experience.

Do not ask only whether the other person succeeded.

Ask what your belief did while you waited.

Your answer

Keep this. Write your Limiting Belief Pattern now, in a single sentence, while it is clear. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 8: THE PULL BACK: WHY YOU REVERT**Leadership Reflection**

Recall a recent moment when you intended to respond differently and returned to the familiar pattern.

Locate the point before the action:

What changed in your body?

Which emotion became prominent?

What story made the old behaviour feel necessary?

Which identity did the behaviour restore?

How did others respond when the familiar pattern returned?

Which of the three forces was strongest: emotional relief, identity coherence or social expectation?

Do not use the reflection to accuse yourself of failure.

Use it to identify the earliest visible signal.

Leadership Task

Choose one recurring situation in which reversion is likely.

Before entering it, write:

What pressure usually activates the pull.

What you expect to feel in your body.

The argument that will make the old reaction sound necessary.

The identity the reaction will restore.

A ten per cent stretch that is responsible and observable.

During the situation, focus on recognition rather than perfect resistance.

Afterwards, record the first moment you saw the pull. If you reverted, note the immediate relief and the effect on the system. If you chose differently, note the discomfort and what actually happened.

The measure is not whether you defeated the pattern.

It is whether the pattern became visible early enough to offer a choice.

Your answer

Keep this. It becomes the section headed When I Notice I Am Slipping Back, and it is the part of the sheet you will use most often. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 9: THE WATER YOU ARE SWIMMING IN**Leadership Reflection**

Bring to mind one recent meeting in which your presence had a direct effect on others.

Begin with the body. What happened to your breathing, posture and pace as the conversation unfolded? When did you feel the urge to intervene, withdraw, defend or bring the discussion to a conclusion?

Then consider the emotion. What were you unwilling to experience for much longer: uncertainty, frustration, embarrassment, conflict, disappointment or the possibility that you were not needed?

Finally, examine the language. What assessments did you treat as facts? Which questions contained the answer you preferred? What request did you avoid making directly? What promise remained vague?

Do not use these questions to prove that your behaviour was wrong. Use them to discover whether another action was available.

Now identify the conversation you have been approaching indirectly or postponing. Ask what having it directly would require you to be willing to experience. The answer will show you where the current identity reaches its edge.

Leadership Task

For the next ten days, choose one leadership interaction each day in which your presence matters.

Before the interaction, record three things:

The story you are already telling yourself about what will happen.

The emotion and physical signals present as you prepare.

Who you intend to be in the room.

During the interaction, notice one moment when your established pattern becomes active. You do not have to defeat it. Notice it early enough to ask a single question:

What does this situation require, beyond what would relieve me?

Afterwards, write a short account of what you observed. Record the language you used, the language you avoided and the effect your way of being appeared to have on others. Treat that last observation as an interpretation, not a fact. Where possible, ask someone you trust what they experienced.

At the end of the ten days, return to the conversation you have been avoiding. Write the opening two sentences as they need to be spoken: directly, responsibly and without asking the other person to manage your discomfort.

You do not have to have the conversation yet.

But you do need to stop pretending you do not know which conversation it is.

That is where Part III begins.

Your answer



Keep this. The physical, emotional and linguistic signals you recorded belong in the Slipping Back section alongside the behavioural ones. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 10: THE ART OF LETTING GO**Leadership Reflection**

Complete this sentence:

When my leadership is going well, I am the person who...

Write until the answer describes being, not merely activity.

Then ask:

What does this identity allow me to contribute?

What does it require other people to do?

Which experience does it protect me from?

What would feel at risk if it were unavailable for one meeting?

Now identify a capacity that has received less room because the familiar identity dominates: listening without agenda, not knowing, allowing disagreement, trusting another person's form of excellence, or making a direct request instead of rescuing.

Name one situation in which that capacity could be given space.

Leadership Task

Over the next two weeks, choose three meaningful but bounded situations in which you will practise without one certainty of the established identity. Before each, write:

The identity under pressure.

The familiar action it will demand.

The feared cost of not taking that action.

The real responsibilities that must still be met.

The experience you are willing to allow.

During the situation, do not aim to appear transformed.

Notice the moment when the familiar self is no longer organising everything, and remain there long enough to learn what else becomes available. Afterwards, record:

what you felt;

what you chose;

what others did with the space;

what genuinely required your intervention;

what did not.

You are not learning to become less of a leader.

You are learning to stop requiring every act of leadership to preserve the person you have already been. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

CHAPTER 11: THE POWER OF NOT-KNOWING**Leadership Reflection**

Recall the last significant moment when you did not know the answer.

Ask:

Did I reveal the uncertainty accurately or move quickly to resolve its appearance?

What happened in my body during the pause?

Which answer or framework became available first?

What information did that framework make easier to hear?

What did it make harder to hear?

Now consider your team. Where does valuable but unfinished information currently sit? What does your competence make easier to bring to you, and what does it make more expensive?

The question is not whether your expertise is valuable.

It is what your expertise may be preventing from reaching you.

Leadership Task

Choose three situations in which you would normally arrive with a view already formed.

Before each, write the view down. Treat it as a working hypothesis.

During the interaction:

Ask one question whose answer you do not know.

Allow the first silence to remain.



Listen for information that does not fit your view.



Reflect back what you heard before applying your expertise.



State what has changed, if anything, in your understanding.



Afterwards, record what was present that your original view did not anticipate.

Do not celebrate contradiction for its own sake. Your first view may remain the strongest.

The practice is to let expertise arrive second often enough for reality to have the first word.

Your answer



Keep this. It will inform the Daily Reminders you write at the end of Part IV. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 12: CREATING A FUTURE THAT DOES NOT EXIST YET**Leadership Reflection**

Where are you using the language of intention?

"I am working towards..."

"I hope to..."

"My aim is..."

The language may be appropriate. Not every desire should become a declaration.

Ask what the qualification protects. Does it reflect genuine uncertainty about what you want, or does it keep the present identity free from exposure?

Then consider:

What future or commitment are you avoiding naming?

What would become insufficient in your current way of being?

Which constraints must be honoured rather than denied?

Who needs to know?

What would change in the next seven days if the declaration were real?

Leadership Task

Draft one declaration.

Use a form such as:

I commit to...

I will...

I am responsible for creating...

Then test it:

Is it mine to declare?

Does it depend on controlling another person?

Is it specific enough to organise action?

What identity does it make insufficient?

What reality must the plan account for?

Who should witness it?

Speak it to the relevant person or people. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

CHAPTER 13: FIVE ELEMENTS, ONE SYSTEM**Leadership Reflection**

Consider your leadership over the last six months. Look at the shape beneath individual decisions:

What do you consistently move towards?

What do you consistently move away from?

What do you reliably produce around you?

Which part appears chosen?

Which part appears automatic?

Then ask what the Engine has been running on: proof, avoidance, approval, interest, care, ambition, service, fear of being found out, or some combination.

None of these words is a verdict.

The question is what the fuel produces and what it costs.

Finally, sit with the question Gabriel could not answer:

What is my leadership for?

Allow the polished answers to pass.

What remains may be incomplete.

Incompleteness is a more useful beginning than borrowed certainty.

Leadership Task

For two weeks, observe one leadership interaction each day.

Before it, write what you expect yourself to do. Afterwards, record five brief observations:

Vessel: Who was I being?

Compass: What did my attention serve?

Driving Force: What supplied the energy?

Movement: What action did I repeat or interrupt?

Statement: What did my behaviour say I was committed to?

Do not try to improve every entry.

At the end of the fortnight, look for alignment and contradiction.

Then look for evidence in the system:

Which decisions moved without returning to you?

Where did authority remain clear when pressure rose?

What disagreement, judgement or initiative appeared earlier?

Where did the system still restore you to the centre?

Choose one finding and convert it into a Specific Practice on your Aide-Mémoire. Make it observable: name the decision right, escalation threshold, successor practice or system measure you will change.

The Engine does not pause while you study it.

It continues producing a version of your leadership.

Seeing it is the beginning.

Working with it is the practice of Part IV.

From this chapter onward, each task completes one line of Section Two of your Aide-Mémoire. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer



CHAPTER 14: VESSEL: WHO YOU ARE BEING**Leadership Reflection**

When were you last alone without a task, role or outcome?

Not a tightly planned holiday. Not the space between emails.

Time in which nothing was required of you.

Now try Catherine's daughter's question:

What do I like?

Not what you are good at, what impresses others or what your role rewards.

What draws you without needing to be useful? Then ask:

Which emotions are easy for me to show?

Which must be hidden for my professional identity to feel safe?

What does the performance protect?

What does it cost the people trying to be in relationship with me?

If your role ended tomorrow, the position would eventually be filled.

Who would walk out of the building?

How well do you know that person?

Leadership Task

For one month, create three periods each week of thirty to sixty minutes in which no role has to be performed.

No improvement project.

No professional content.

No result to report.

At the end of each week, record observations rather than conclusions:

what you moved towards;

what felt strange;

when productivity tried to reclaim the space;

what felt quietly yours;

what you learnt about the gap between inner experience and professional presentation.

Also choose one leadership moment each week in which you practise congruence responsibly.

Name one relevant internal experience without making it someone else's burden.

The Vessel is not an identity to perfect, but the person becoming present enough to lead. Write your Vessel line now in one or two first-person, present-tense sentences. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

CHAPTER 15: COMPASS: WHAT TRULY MATTERS**Leadership Reflection**

Look backwards. How much of your direction was consciously chosen, and how much came from opportunity, expectation or what the environment rewarded?

Look at the present. What currently defines success? Does that definition belong to who you are becoming, or to an earlier identity?

Look ahead. What do you want to be true of how you lead, the capability you build, and the contribution that remains after the role?

Then the harder question:

What attractive opportunity, familiar reward or identity might this direction require me to decline?

Direction becomes real through exclusion.

Leadership Task***Part one: your Life Compass***

Write one sentence describing what you are here to make different. Not what you want to achieve. What you want to be less true in the world because you were in it.

Test it three ways.

Would it still be true if you lost your role tomorrow?

Would the twenty-five-year-old version of you recognise it?

Is there anybody it would irritate?

Part two: your Leadership Compass

Write three or four sentences on what that line requires of you as a leader.

What you are committed to creating through how you lead.

What you want people and systems to become more capable of.

What you will not protect at the expense of that commitment.

How this should settle a trade-off you currently handle inconsistently.

Put both aside for twenty-four hours.

When you return, remove borrowed language from the second. Replace words such as excellence, integrity or empowerment unless you can describe what they require in practice. Then check that the first has not quietly become a job description.

Then identify:

One recent decision inconsistent with the Compass.

One current decision it clarifies.

One person who can challenge whether you are living it.

The Compass is not what you say matters.

It is what continues to orient you when something good, urgent or flattering pulls in another direction.

Write the line first. Everything else is downstream of it. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

CHAPTER 16: DRIVING FORCE: WHAT FUELS YOU**Leadership Reflection**

Think about your first internal movement when something goes wrong.

Before the analysis, what question appears?

Is it about what the event means for your position, reputation or control?

Or is it about what the situation asks of you in relation to your Compass?

Now consider the end of a demanding week. When you describe what mattered, is your language organised around what you built or what you prevented?

Finally, identify where Protection Fuel is appropriate in your current leadership. The purpose is not to make it wrong. It is to stop using it indiscriminately.

Leadership Task

Complete this over several days.

First, reconstruct one representative working week. List the significant decisions, responses and conversations. For each, write one honest sentence:

This action was primarily coming from...

Name what you were protecting, avoiding, securing or creating. Begin with what was operating, not what you intended.

Second, look for the pattern and its exceptions.

Where does Protection Fuel activate most reliably? Which relationships, risks or types of decision bring it forward?

Where is Expansion Fuel already natural? What conditions make that possible?

Third, write your Driving Force declaration in one paragraph. Use the first person and plain language. Name what you will act from and the pull you expect to feel.

Keep it somewhere visible. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer



CHAPTER 17: MOVEMENT: WHAT YOU CONSISTENTLY DO**Leadership Reflection**

Audit direction, not effort.

Over the past three months, has the weight of your action moved outward or in circles?

Outward does not mean dramatic. It means your actions have brought you into contact with something not yet comfortable or fully known.

Circular means you have been active within territory you already know how to navigate.

Identify the last three occasions when you acted without being able to guarantee the interpersonal outcome.

If they do not come readily to mind, do not turn that into judgement.

Treat it as information.

Then name the action you are currently deferring because the existing version of you cannot control what happens next.

Leadership Task

First, write one honest paragraph describing the direction of your leadership over the past three months.

Where has genuine Movement been present?

Where have you managed around the edge instead of entering it?

Which fuel was active?

Do not write the highlights. Write the pattern.

Second, choose three acts of Movement for the coming month.

Each act must:

Take you beyond what is currently comfortable without overwhelming your capacity to learn.

Connect directly to your Compass and Driving Force declaration.

Be specific and scheduled.

Include a fuel check before you act.

Include reflection and recovery afterwards.



At the end of the month, do not ask only whether the actions succeeded.

Ask what each action made available that was not available before.

You do not become a different leader by thinking differently alone.

You become a different leader through the actions your familiar self would prefer to avoid.

Write your Movement line now, and include the specific practices that express it. These become the Specific Practices section of the sheet. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer



CHAPTER 18: FULFILMENT ENGINE STATEMENT: WHAT YOUR LIFE IS SAYING**Leadership Reflection**

Read what you produced in the previous four chapters.

Look for the threads that connect them.

What appears in your Vessel and reappears in your Movement?

How does your Compass challenge the Protection Fuel you named?

Which practices would make the commitment visible to the people around you?

Now look for contradictions.

Where are the words more developed than the behaviour?

Where are you tempted to sound admirable instead of being specific?

What are you not yet ready to declare?

That boundary is useful. A Statement that reflects where you genuinely stand is more powerful than one written for the person you hope other people will see.

Leadership Task

Set aside uninterrupted time and write your Fulfilment Engine Statement.

Keep it to one page or less.

Write in the first person and plain language.

Include:

The future you are committed to creating through how you lead.

The source from which you choose to act.

The familiar pull you expect to encounter.

The repeated actions through which your commitment will become visible.

A sentence about what you will do when you drift.

Read it aloud.

Remove every sentence that could belong to any thoughtful leader.

Replace abstract values with observable commitments.

Then identify a witness. Ask for their consent. Explain what you want them to notice, how you want them to speak to you and how you will respond when the feedback is uncomfortable.

Speak the Statement to them.

Do not merely send the document.

Finally, complete the Aide-Mémoire in Appendix A and keep it where you can use it before a difficult conversation, meeting or decision.

Perfect words are unnecessary.

The purpose is to give your commitment a form that can meet you in real life.

Write your Fulfilment Engine Statement, then draft your Daily Reminders: one question for the morning, one for during the day, one for the evening and one for moments of pressure. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

CHAPTER 19: THE IMPOSSIBLE GAME: DESIGNING A FUTURE**Leadership Reflection**

Bring to mind the most ambitious future you are working towards.

Can the person you are now, using the strategies you already trust, produce it?

If yes, decide whether you want an ambitious plan or a transformative game. There is no virtue in labelling every goal impossible.

If you want the latter, ask what way of being would need to become more available.

Now examine your current conditions.

Where do you regularly encounter the edge of your capability?

Which situations do you avoid, delegate or manage from a distance?

Which avoidance points towards genuine development?

Which is a wise response to a real constraint?

Who would know if you retreated?

Who could support you without rescuing you?

Who would carry consequences they have not agreed to carry?

Finally, ask:

How could the Fulfilment Engine itself become my next ceiling?

Do not rush to answer.

Leadership Task

Describe the game you are currently playing.

Use the four conditions:

Does it bring you into regular contact with the edge of your present way of leading?

Is the commitment appropriately visible?

Does the timeframe require meaningful action now?

Are the consequences real and responsible?

Then add three safeguards:

Whose consent or authority is required?

What support, recovery and feedback will protect learning?

What evidence would tell you to adapt or stop the game?

Now design the next version.

Write:

the future you are committing to;

the date by which a meaningful result or milestone will exist;

the way of being it requires you to practise;

the actions that will bring you to the edge each week;

the people who will witness and support the commitment;

the consequences of retreat;

the boundaries you will not cross in pursuit of it.

Speak it to at least one person whose knowing changes the stakes and who is willing to play that role. Record your insights in your journal. You will use them to complete your Aide-Mémoire at the end of the book.

Your answer

Closing page

Return to the Ten Questions

Answer the Ten Questions again, without looking at your first answers. Then compare the two pages. What has changed is not the answers so much as who is answering.



Date:

