

## 10 Practices of Conscious Leadership



### 1. Listen deeply

Listening deeply is one of the most important and most difficult practices of a conscious leader. We tend to listen superficially, and through the filters of our conditioning mind. We often do not have the time or patience to really be present for the other. We have our own agendas that we want to get to, and therefore only listen to what we want to hear, to what interests us and is relevant to us. The practice of deep listening requires us to be truly open and not be attached to any desired outcomes. To raise our awareness, create space and listen with empathy to really understand. To not impose one's point of view and be open to learn something new, even though it may not fit with our current model of reality.

### 2. Be an owner

We often go through life assuming a victim mentality. We feel we are a victim of situations, people and places, and that our happiness depends on outside circumstances. We feel we have no choice but to react to powers that are outside of us, feeling overwhelmed, dissipated, and uninspired. When we are faced with a difficult situation, our automatic self-talk is "why is this happening to me?", or "Whose fault is it, and who can I blame?". We

want the problem to go away somehow, so we can crawl back into our comfort zone quickly and avoid this uncomfortable feeling. To be an owner requires a different mindset. One that takes full responsibility for our happiness. It invites us to choose and own our own response to any situations. With this mindset, the power lies within us. When we are faced with a difficult situation, the questions that arise in our mind is “how can I use this, and what can I learn from this?”. With this mentality we always have the power to choose our own attitude in any circumstance.

### **3. Lead by agreement**

In our everyday interactions with people, we often carry a lot of expectations from each other. These expectations are often one sided, unspoken and not understood by the other. And as a result, it often leads to disappointments, betrayals, and resentments. What if we could drop all our expectations and lead our lives by agreements instead. Agreements by design are collaborative and creative in nature. Agreements take into account the needs and wants of both sides, encouraging clarity and understanding, which then leads to a sense of ownership and accountability. With that mindset, we can choose to turn all of our expectations, complaints or frustrations into requests which can then be turned into agreements through creative, collaborative conversations.

### **4. Suspend your judgement**

Have you noticed that as soon as judgement enters the mind, understanding stops? Once we make a judgement, our mind closes down and only look for that which supports our judgement. We start projecting our story onto the other and we are no longer listening openly and connecting objectively. The remedy for this situation is to raise our awareness to our own internal voice of judgement when it arises, and consciously suspend our judgement, at least during the course of the interaction, and instead open our channels of curiosity. Replacing our judgement with curiosity will invite us to learn something new, understand and connect to the other person at a deeper level, and be able to make decision that is more objective and reality based.

### **5. Be a creator**

This mindset is closely tied to practice 2 which invites us to take ownership of situations. Here, rather than reacting to outside circumstances, we want to be operating as a creator. The mindset of the creator is “the power lies within” and in every situation or circumstance, we can choose to create rather than react. Being a creator requires us to be driven by a vision bigger than ourselves. To serve, to be a problem solver, to be a change agent, to have the ability and desire to shift perspectives and create a new possibility. Rather than operating on auto pilot and reacting to people and situations automatically, be able to step back and asking ourselves “what do I want to create in this situation and why?”

### **6. Know your values**

As creators, we need to know our values, have clarity on what drives us, what do we stand for and what matter to us most. This provides us with a foundation to stand on and a guiding light for the direction of our decisions and creations. There are no right or wrong answers here. The most important is for our values to be real, authentic and truly ours, not an imitation of what is out there, just because it sounds good, or because people will respect me more. It needs to spring from inside of us, as our values define who we really are at the core. The same holds true for companies and organizations. In a sense the core values of an organization are a reflection of the values of their leaders, and for this reason it can serve as an alignment tool amongst the founders and leaders of the organization.

## **7. Be on purpose**

Conscious leaders are on purpose, often this purpose is far beyond the egoic self. They feel a calling, a sense of being on a mission to make a positive difference in their lives. Gaining clarity on our values is the first step that points us in the right direction, but then we need to get into the next level of specificity by asking ourselves: “what do I want to create? What am I here to do? What are my gifts that I want to share with the world?” This requires awareness. Both inner awareness, knowing our place and our purpose in life, as well as outer awareness, what does the world need right now and down in the future. With that level of wisdom and awareness the conscious leader gets to bring out what is inside, which often takes the form of “work”, but for them work is the same as play, and in a sense, it is life unfolding every day toward the realization of their deep-seated purpose. This is often referred to as being in the state of flow.

## **8. Know your impact**

Unfortunately, many of today’s leaders do not consider the potential impact of their creations in time and space. Being a creator and a conscious leader carry with it a lot of responsibilities. Leaders can literally change the course of history and can lead us into a new era. Often a conscious leader can have all the right intentions, but their impact may turn out to be different, sometimes completely contrary to their intention. For this reason, it is critical to realize that intent and impact can be very different. As conscious leaders, we are obliged to examine the trajectory of our creations in terms of their impact and help strategize and pave out a path toward the most positive and healthy outcome. This requires us to use our intuition, imagination and wisdom, and not get carried away with our positive intentions only.

## **9. Work together**

Magic happens when a group of people learn to align their talents and energies toward a shared vision. The most powerful aspect of a healthy startup is just that. This usually does not come naturally, as most of us are driven by our egos and have not learned to creatively collaborate with one another. Rather than celebrating and utilizing different point of views and perspectives to our favor, we quickly get into disagreements, frustrations and take any

conflict personally. We dissipate each other's energies by assuming a mental model that "I know better". We get defensive, closed, and committed to being right, and in the process neglect the opportunity and the hidden treasure that is right in front of us. The path of the conscious leader requires creative collaboration. It is the understanding that none of us might know the solution, but together we will figure it out. It is respecting and valuing each member of the group in their own way and knowing that each one of us can bring forth a unique gift to the table.

### **10. Operate from your zone of genius**

We tend to be fixated on our shortcomings and areas of development, rather than leverage from our strengths and superpowers. It is so much easier, more enjoyable, and more effective when we are operating from our zones of genius and invite others who can complement us and fill in the gaps by contributing their gifts and superpowers. This is the make-up of true partnerships and the essence of the whole, being so much more powerful than the addition of the individual members. This is where  $1+1=3$ . This does not mean we do not seek to improve ourselves and continuously grow. In fact, by partnering and exploring the chemistry of complementary skills, we create an environment where we learn from each other and expand our horizons to new heights we did not even imagine was possible.

### **About Nader:**

Nader is an Executive Coach, entrepreneur, and author based in Silicon Valley, California. His mission is to transform and elevate the lives of business leaders and high achievers to help them lead a life of joy, impact and abundance. He is the founder of SelfOptima Inc. a web platform for optimal health, and the founder and CEO of AuroraNetics which was acquired by Cisco. Nader has over 35 years of experience in executive roles in public and private companies. He served as an adjunct professor at Palo Alto University, Business Psychology program. He is an author, speaker, workshop leader, Vistage chair, musician, and energy medicine practitioner. His approach emphasizes a holistic view of leading a life of joy, impact and abundance.

*To learn more, or to help integrate these practices into your life, please contact Nader to schedule an exploratory session.*